

Newspapers Having ‘National’ Character Likely to Bring Out the Environmental News in Enhanced Numbers: A Serious Study

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1. Abstract

Media has a massive role in communicating information in various kinds. Particularly, the print media is serving society powerfully with their development in various fields including technological aspects. Within the sharp competition, each media wants to hold their audience with continuous innovative items. The environment is such a contemporary subject which has a fair demand. The space is so valuable. In this study, the status of the English and the Bengali dailies in connection with environmental journalism, especially the most available ‘categories’ in local newspapers have been scrutinised. All the local newspapers played an influential role to publish environmental news regular basis. But the local newspapers do not have the adequate infrastructure to carry ‘National News’ and ‘International News’ even ‘Local News’ on the environment. Newspapers having the national character encourages carrying more and more numbers of ‘National News’ and ‘International News’ as well as ‘Local News’ on environmental.

Keywords: Newspaper, Environment, infrastructure, national character.

2. Introduction

India is known as one of the largest democracies of the world. Indian Government has been selected by the Indian citizen every five years by the method of universal adult franchise. Geographically, it is a powerful country of Southern Asia, bordering the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal, between Burma and Pakistan having a total area of 3,287,263 sq. km. including 2,973,193 sq. km. land and 314,070 sq. km. water.¹ Area wise India is the seventh highest country in the world. It is 4 times larger than Pakistan, 12 times larger than the UK and 8 times larger than Japan. The mainland of India expands from latitude 8°4' north to 37°6' north and from longitude 68°7' east to 97°25' east of Greenwich. The southernmost point of Indian mainland is Kanyakumari, also known as Cape Comorin, while the southernmost point in Indian Territory, (in Great Nicobar Islands) is the Indira Point.² India sustains a gigantic 16.7% of the world population, being the world's second highest populated country³ with a population of 1,266,883,598 (July 2016 est.)⁴.

India is growing at rapid speed. Energy is the principal sector to achieve India's ambitious development, to upkeep expanding the economy, to fuel the demand for greater mobility, to progress the infrastructure and to meet the essentials to bring electricity to those who remain without it. India's economy, the world's third-largest, is growing swiftly and policies are in place to press ahead with the country's modernisation and an expansion of its manufacturing. India uses only 6% of the world's primary energy. India's energy consumption has almost doubled since 2000 and the potential for further rapid growth is enormous. If a well-managed expansion of energy supply can be achieved, improved welfare and quality of life for India's population can be provided.⁵ What is energy? What is clean energy? How does energy use impact the environment? These questions are now very important to the scientists, engineers, policy makers, environmentalists as well as mass media. Most of the environmental news maintain relation with energy some way. So, Indian mass media including print media are always searching for energy related news to make coverage in the environmental and developmental field.

Newspapers have been established as the primary source of communication for the general public on issues related to the environment. As per the annual statements received for 2014-15, the number of dailies being published in the country was 7,871, with Hindi, Urdu and English being the most dominant. The claimed circulation of dailies reached 29,63,02,606 copies per publishing day. Hindi had 3,698 dailies claiming a circulation of 14,13,61,942 copies, while 790 English & 1,121 Urdu dailies claimed 3,37,77,613 & 3,32,55,696 copies per publishing day respectively. Among daily newspapers, Hindi headed with a total of 3,698 publications followed by 1,121 in Urdu. The languages that brought out more than 100 dailies were English (790), Telugu (720), Marathi (369), Gujarati (350), Orissa (127), Kannada (125), Tamil (123) and Malayalam (107). Circulation wise, Hindi newspapers again continued their supremacy with 14,13,61,942 copies followed by

English dailies with a claimed circulation of 3,37,77,613 copies per publishing day. Daily newspapers were published from all the States. The largest number of daily publications (2,048) were published from Uttar Pradesh, followed by Andhra Pradesh(910), Madhya Pradesh (716), Delhi (658)and Maharashtra (539). Among dailies also, Uttar Pradesh with a total circulation of 6,33,54,550copies per publishing day booked its top position and was followed by Delhi with 2,72,42,906 copies, Madhya Pradesh with 2,68,14,189copies and Maharashtra with 2,53,37,444copies per publishing day. Daily newspapers of maximum 16 languages have been brought out from Delhi followed by Maharashtra in 12languages, Tamil Nadu in 10 languages and Karnataka in 9 languages out of the 23 main languages (including English) listed in the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution. Anandabazar Patrika, a Bengali daily newspaper published from Kolkata recognized to be the largest circulated single edition daily with a claimed circulation of 11,78,779 copies per publishing day followed by Hindustan Times, an English daily published from Delhi with a circulation of 10,18,367 copies per publishing day and The Times of India, an English daily published from Delhi with a claimed circulation of 9,72,180 copies per publishing day. The Times of India, having 33 editions (including Kolkata) in the English Language with a total demanded circulation of 46,30,200 copies per publishing day secured the first position among multi-editions dailies during 2014-15.⁶

The India Government does not exercise any control over the free and fearless functioning of media. Though, all the media houses have their own ideologies. Newspapers used to disseminate information on political, sports, business, economy, development, entertainment, crime, violence, sex, art, culture, technology, agriculture, health, environment etc.⁷ Media reporting, however, differs depending on the status and place of publication of the newspapers.⁸ Newspapers are also a prospective medium for shaping people's opinion. The issues related to the environment have expected global significance incorporating a range of factors including political, social, economic, scientific etc.

The environmental coverage in media has shown differences among different countries of the same hemisphere. For example, a distinct difference has been found in global warming coverage in France and the US. France's coverage was more events based, concentrated more on international relations and presented a more restricted range of standpoints than the US coverage, which has a tendency to emphasise on conflicts between scientists and politicians.⁹

3. Conceptualization

In a broad sense, a newspaper is considered as a national one if it is circulated throughout the country contrasting to local or vernacular newspapers circulating in a city or a specific region. Basically, all the national newspapers usually have the expanded circulation network. But the critical meaning of national is something else.

There are nine newspapers have been considered for my research work. Four are them are Bengali dailies and for are English dailies. Bengali dailies are no way labelled as a national newspaper because the circulation of these vernacular newspapers is confined within the eastern region of India especially in West Bengal. On the other hand, among the four English dailies, The Telegraph and The Statesman do not have a such number of editions so that they could be called as national daily. The Telegraph of ABP group has a mammoth circulation mainly in West Bengal, Orissa and Assam. As English daily published from Kolkata, The Telegraph has the highest circulation though it does not have a dominating presence in most of the part of India. In the past, The Statesman had the national label. Mainly published from Kolkata and another eastern part of India, it had a tremendous image and dominating circulation in a various part of India. But now, The Statesman has lost its old charisma and now it is just local English daily. Besides that, The Times of India and Hindustan Times are two leading newspapers having a number of editions and millions of readership.

The meaning of national daily is something else. A national daily should run as a historian, report as a contemporary thinker and analyse facts as the country need. National dailies should have the broader heart to see things in a broader perspective only. They should not show any inferiority in publishing news. They should have a tendency to set agenda nationally. They should handle such issues that have the clear interest of the country. They often easily ignore the mere local issues.

Language is one of the major factors for a newspaper to get a national label. It is also being seen that English newspapers have been considered as national newspapers in many non-English speaking countries. English is considered as the universal language. In fact, all the popular local and regional newspapers are mostly based on vernacular languages. It is not possible for any vernacular newspaper to get a lofty circulation figure throughout the country like India. Even Hindi is the national language of India, but no Hindi newspaper could reach the same height of English national dailies ever.

In the case of handling environmental issues in India also shows the similar trend. So many reputed journalists started their career with writing environmental issues but occasionally. Very few journalists were serious in environmental journalism around the 1970s. This was because of lacking awareness at all levels of administration, judiciary and journalism also. Literally, environmental journalism was fun then. Scientific logic could not play all the time in journalistic writings. The environmental feature, stories even columns were written

then on the basis of prediction, speculation, guessing, and assumption. For example, at that time it was prominently discussed in various media including print media that delta-like Sundarbans in India or even a country like Maldives will disappear before the advent of the twenty-first century under rising sea due to increasing level of global warming. Readers found immense interest in those types of news or stories at that time. After four decades now, all the predictions seem to be a hoax. Fundamentally, there was a huge gap between environmental knowledge and journalism. Environmental journalism was based on personal experiences. Journalists were keen to find out any disequilibrium, manhandling, ignorance and other negative aspects of environmental issues. They used to write on those issues. But they did not have the broader perspective of those tiny events. Such as one journalist brought out a news of the destruction of greeneries of a park due to the negligence of local Corporation or Municipality without having knowledge of park's natural system, the significance of conserving greeneries to mitigate carbon dioxide emission, conservation of water table of local area etc.¹⁰In spite of that mushrooming of environmental news on issues like wildlife, forest, tree cutting and plantation were seen in print media then. Stories were written in a moronic style, apparently, story tellers who were confused regarding their own write-ups.¹¹

Journalists interested in environmental journalism should follow some basic criteria. Without knowing the subject, no one can plan for writing an environmental story. Besides that, every journalist who is interested in environmental journalism should have passion in the subject, communicating power so that true story could be obtained from the public for cross checking. Environmental journalists should have the cunning ability and high graded observation power so that he or she can meet his or her curiosity. Every journalist should have follow-up ability and should have historical knowledge so that continuing facts of an event could be written and comparison between two similar events past and present could be sketched. Finally, a journalist should have the eligibility of journalistic writing. That means environmental journalism is very much a specialised form of journalism. Journalists who are enthusiastic in environmental journalism, they should focus on specific areas for obtaining specialised information and should be equipped with environmentalism.

Few years before starting of this new century, environmental practices like tree conservation, tiger conservation, wetlands conservation got preference in the newspapers – mainly in local vernacular languages. Gradually, other wings of environment emerged in public media sphere. But those were not sufficient enough to draw national attention due to lack of adequate information on air, water and pollution. Even lack of information on land use pattern, livelihoods and changing eco-system was felt extremely. Mainly the worth of environmental news did not match the real status of the environment. Journalism's yardsticks like truth, analysis and credible information were not manifested in presenting environmental degradation. As a result, public domain was flooded with ordinary information that failed to make any sense. The actual cause for the poor coverage of environmental news in India's media is not controlled by the government, but the screen of over-commercialism and the pressure of media owners that is leading to John Pilger told 'the censorship by exclusion'.¹²

Now the research questions are: What is the status of local newspapers in regards to publishing environmental news in number? Do the local newspapers have the adequate infrastructure to carry 'National' and 'International' environmental news in rational number? Which newspaper does encourage to carry more and more numbers of environmental news?

4. Methodology

Nine prominent newspapers of five long years (edition of 1st January, 2005 to 31st December, 2010) have been monitored critically. In the category of prominent dailies, following publications published from Kolkata have been studied:-

1. The Telegraph (English)
2. The Statesman (English)
3. The Times of India (English)
4. Hindustan Times (English)
5. Anandabazar Patrika (Bengali vernacular)
6. Bartaman (Bengali vernacular)
7. Aajakal (Bengali vernacular)
8. Sambad Pratidin (Bengali vernacular)
9. Ganashakti (Bengali vernacular)

These are the most populated and widely circulated newspapers during 2005 and 2010 in Kolkata. One glimpse of average qualifying circulation of those newspapers are mentioned below:-

SR. NO.	NEWSPAPER	JANUARY - JUNE 2010	JULY - DECEMBER 2010
1.	The Telegraph	4,73,690	4,81,755
2.	The Statesman	1,72,195	Not accepted by ABC
3.	The Times of India	3,93,587	4,06,133
4.	Hindustan Times	60,000	60,000
5.	Anandabazar Patrika	11,73,751	11,85,779
6.	Bartaman	4,85,449	4,88,425
7.	Aajkal	1,81,431	1,81,353
8.	Sambad Pratidin	3,06,644	3,06,337
9.	Ganashakti	1,51,822	1,57,502

{Source: Audit Bureau of Circulations(ABC), excepting the data of Hindustan Times}

To find the status of media coverage and the current trends in local print media coverage of environmental news in local leading print media, the news items published in aforesaid nine different prominent dailies were collected according to a well-defined sampling procedure through which a broad spectrum of environmental science categories may be covered for long 72 months during 1st January, 2005 to 31st December, 2010. No promotional feature has been considered.

This was a very sturdy task to organise all the information, which has a significant position in this research. All the available paper clippings on environment related news published in previously mentioned newspapers for long 72 months during 1st January, 2005 to 31st December, 2010 have been organised month wise so that the convenient information can be marked out easily. All the information including different “News Type” have been analysed by specially made software prepared on access platform.

5.1.A. Explanation:

Total news published under ‘Environmental Sub-Category’ during January, 2005 to December, 2010 have been shown in the Table – 1 and Chart – 1.

5.1.B. Observation:

1. Most of the ‘Environmental Sub-Category’ could not cross even 100 number barriers of news in respect of different newspapers.
2. News under ‘Public Comments’ was published a highest number of total news (965) during considerable six years.
3. News under ‘Public Comments’ was published in maximum number than any other ‘Environmental Sub-Category’ in The Telegraph, Anandabazar Patrika, Aajkal and Sambad Pratidin during considerable six years.
4. Surprisingly, news under ‘Research / Study / Invention / Discovery / Testing’ were published in higher number than other ‘Environmental Sub-Category’ in The Times of India and Hindustan Times during considerable six years.
5. News under ‘Writer's / Reporter's Comment’ were published in higher number than other ‘Environmental Sub-Category’ in The Statesman during considerable six years.
6. News under ‘State Government’ were published in higher number than other ‘Environmental Sub-Category’ in Bartaman and Ganashakti during considerable six years.
7. Moreover, news under ‘Court's verdict’, ‘Writer's / Reporter's Comment’, ‘Corporation / Municipality / Panchayet’, and ‘Global Warming’ were published In fair number in all the newspapers.

5.1.C. Remarks:

1. ‘Public comments’ topped the chart means all the newspapers carried the public opinion generously on environmental issues or rather a news.
2. The Telegraph, Anandabazar Patrika, Aajkal and Sambad Pratidin preferred most the news under ‘Public comments’.
3. It signifies that most of the local print media complied the role of ‘fourth estate’ by maintaining democratic process.
4. It also proved the persuasive role of the media.
5. The Times of India and Hindustan Times preferred ‘Research / Study / Invention / Discovery / Testing’, focusing that the newspapers having ‘national’ character liking to bring out the progressive news in enhanced number.
6. The Statesman published healthy numbers of news under ‘Writer's / Reporter's Comment’. Normally, the media should not deliver comments or project his views. In spite of that news-contributors made their comment to highlight the concerned environmental issues time to time.

7. The Statesman played an influential role to upgrade society environmentally by mentioning the proper way of balancing environment.
8. Bartaman and Ganashakti published a good number of news relating to 'State Government', revealing that both the newspapers published from Kolkata preferred local news.
9. It also showed the keenness of newspapers to project the local government's role in environmental activities, which may aware people or which may encourage people to claim healthy environment.
10. Prominent numbers of news were published under 'Court's verdict', telling that law has an important role to resolve environmental conflicts.
11. Fair numbers of news were published under 'Global Warming', mentioning that local print media had a fondness to cover globally burning issue.

5.2.A. Explanation:

Year wise total available 20,697 news on different 'News Type', published in nine different newspapers during six years as shown in the Table – 2 and Chart - 2. Out of total available news, 'Local news' were published highest in number (15,360). 'National News' and 'International news' were published 2,819 and 2,518 in number respectively.

5.2.B. Observation:

1. The highest total number of news (15,360) were published in 'Local News'.
2. The maximum numbers of 'Local News' were clearly published in all years as a whole.
3. In the most of the years (excepting 2005), 'Local News' crossed the 2,000 number barriers.
4. In the year 2009, 'Local News' were published maximum in number (3,499).
5. 'National News' were published better in number than 'International News' in the years 2005, 2006 and 2010 as a whole.
6. 'International News' published more in number than 'National News' in the years 2007, 2008 and 2009 as a whole.
7. 'Local News' (15,360) were published more in number (15,360) than the aggregate of 'National News' and 'International News' (2,819+2,518=5,347).

5.2.C. Remarks:

1. Local news (74.21% of all news) were preferred by all the newspapers in all the months of considered six years. News published comparatively lesser in numbers under other two major 'News Type' like 'National News' (13.62%), 'International News' (12.17%).
2. It brings to light that all the newspapers as whole favoured local news.
3. It also indicates that local newspapers do not have the adequate infrastructure to carry 'National News' and 'International News' in a rational number.

5.3.A.Explanation:

Total available 20,697 news on different 'News Type', published in nine different newspapers during six years as shown in the Table – 3 and Chart - 3. Out of total available news, 'Local news' were published highest in number (15,360). 'National News' and 'International news' were published 2,819 and 2,518 in number respectively.

5.3.B. Observation:

1. The highest total number of news (15,360) were published in 'Local News'.
2. The maximum numbers of 'Local News' were clearly published by all newspapers as a whole.
3. 'Local News' crossed the minimum 900 number barriers in all newspapers.
4. The Times of India published the maximum number (2,560) 'Local News'.
5. Anandabazar Patrika published the second maximum (2,491) 'Local News'.
6. The Telegraph published the third maximum (1,939) 'Local News'.
7. No newspaper published the 700 number barriers of 'National News'.
8. No newspaper published the 850 number barriers of 'International News'.
9. The Times of India and Hindustan Times published minimum 500 numbers 'National News' and 'International News'.
10. Only The Times of India published a better number of 'International News' than 'National News'.
11. Aajkal, Ganashakti, Sambad Pratidin and The Statesman published below the average (1,706.7) numbers of 'Local News'.
12. Aajkal, Anandabazar Patrika, Bartaman, Ganashakti and Sambad Pratidin published below the average (313.2) numbers of 'National News'.
13. Aajkal, Anandabazar Patrika, Bartaman, Ganashakti and Sambad Pratidin published below the average (279.7) numbers of 'International News'.

5.3.C. Remarks:

1. The highest total number of news (15,360) were published in 'Local News'.
2. The maximum numbers of 'Local News' were clearly published by all newspapers as a whole.
3. 'Local News' crossed the minimum 900 number barriers in all newspapers.
4. No newspaper published the 700 number barriers of 'National News'.
5. No newspaper published the 850 number barriers of 'International News'.
6. It brings to light that all the newspapers as whole favoured local news.
7. It also indicates that local newspapers do not have the adequate infrastructure to carry 'National News' and 'International News' in a rational number.
8. The Times of India and Hindustan Times published minimum 500 numbers 'National News' and 'International News'.
9. Having the national character of The Times of India and Hindustan Times (editions from Kolkata) encourages carrying more and more numbers of environmental news.
10. Aajkal, Ganashakti, Sambad Pratidin and The Statesman published below the average (1,706.7) numbers of 'Local News'.
11. Aajkal, Ganashakti, Sambad Pratidin and The Statesman do not have proper infrastructure to publish even 'Local News'.
12. Aajkal, Anandabazar Patrika, Bartaman, Ganashakti and Sambad Pratidin published below the average (313.2) numbers of 'National News'.
13. Aajkal, Anandabazar Patrika, Bartaman, Ganashakti and Sambad Pratidin do not have proper infrastructure to publish 'National News'.
14. Aajkal, Anandabazar Patrika, Bartaman, Ganashakti and Sambad Pratidin published below the average (279.7) numbers of 'International News'.
15. Aajkal, Anandabazar Patrika, Bartaman, Ganashakti and Sambad Pratidin do not have proper infrastructure to publish 'International News'.
16. It is observed that Hindustan Times, The Telegraph and The Times of India have the reasonably good infra infrastructure to publish all 'News Type' above the average numbers of news.

5.4.A. Explanation:

Year wise total available 20,697 number of news published in nine different newspapers during January, 2005 to December, 2010 have been shown in the Table – 4 and Chart – 4. The highest number (4,723) of news were published in the year 2009 and the least number (2,300) of news were published in the year 2005.

5.4.B. Observation:

1. The Times of India carried the highest total number of news 3,987 (19.26%) as a single newspaper during January, 2005 to December, 2010.
2. The Times of India also carried the maximum number of news in every year during January, 2005 to December, 2010.
3. The Times of India published the highest number of news (1,088) in the year 2009.
4. Anandabazar Patrika secured the second spot by publishing a total of 2,897 number of news as a single newspaper during January, 2005 to December, 2010.
5. The Telegraph (2005, 2006 and 2009) and Anandabazar Patrika (2007, 2008 and 2010) shared the second spot by publishing a second maximum number of news in three years each.
6. Excepting 2005, Hindustan Times published a third maximum number of news in all the considered years. This may be called a fair enough performance.
7. Aajkal published the least total number of news (1,399).
8. Aajkal also published the minimum number of news (132) in the year 2005 comparing to all other newspapers during six years.
9. Aajkal (2005, 2006 and 2009) and Ganashakti (2007, 2008 and 2010) published the minimum number of news in three years each.
10. In 2006 and 2009, there are five newspapers which published minimum 400 number of news. In the year 2007, four newspapers which published minimum 400 number of news. The only year 2009, in which three newspapers published more than 600 news.

5.4.C. Remarks:

1. The Times of India carried the highest total number of news(19.26%) throughout the six years, the highest number of news in every year and also the highest number of news in the year 2009.
2. Hindustan Times published a third highest total number of news (13.2%) during considered six years.
3. Having the national character of The Times of India and Hindustan Times (editions from Kolkata) encourages carrying more and more numbers of environmental news.
4. Anandabazar Patrika secured the second spot by publishing a total of 2,897 number of news (13.99%)

as a single newspaper during January, 2005 to December, 2010.

5. The Telegraph grabbed the fourth spot by publishing a total of 2,732 number of news (13.19%) as a single newspaper during January, 2005 to December, 2010.
6. Moreover, The Telegraph (2005, 2006 and 2009) and Anandabazar Patrika (2007, 2008 and 2010) shared the second spot by publishing a second highest number of news in three years each.
7. Both The Telegraph and Anandabazar Patrika are published by ABP Group, Kolkata.
8. Local media group also used to publish fair numbers of environmental news when it takes into consideration the importance of the environment.
9. Performances of Bartaman (9.22%), Sambad Pratidin (8.74%), The Statesman (8.38%), Ganashakti (7.22%) and Aajkal (6.75%) are not fair enough because these media houses do not have the enough awareness on the environment or they don't sense the importance of the environment.

6. Conclusion

From the above study, this may be concluded that the local newspapers do not have the adequate infrastructure to carry 'National News' and 'International News' on the environment in a rational number. Newspapers like Aajkal, Ganashakti, Sambad Pratidin and The Statesman do not have proper infrastructure to publish even 'Local News' on the environment. Newspapers like Aajkal, Anandabazar Patrika, Bartaman, Ganashakti and Sambad Pratidin do not have suitable set-up to publish 'National News'. Newspapers like The Times of India and Hindustan Times (editions from Kolkata) having the national character encourages carrying more and more numbers of 'National News' and 'International News' as well as 'Local News' on environmental issues.

Row Labels	Corporation / Municipality / Panchayet	Court's verdict	Global Warming	Public Comments	Research / Study / Invention / Discovery / Testing	State Government	Writer's / Reporter's Comment	Grand Total
Aajkal	32	38	15	127	6	52	13	1399
Anandabazar Patrika	47	74	28	147	17	91	39	2897
Bartaman	46	48	12	42	8	69	27	1910
Ganasakti	47	19	21	47	5	58	27	1495
Hindustan Times	65	40	76	38	79	57	71	2733
Sambad Pratidin	47	53	18	76	13	67	49	1809
The Statesman	26	39	42	37	32	35	47	1735
The Telegraph	41	68	51	306	41	60	37	2732
The Times of India	64	57	105	145	160	77	109	3987
Grand Total	415	436	368	965	361	566	419	20697

Table – 1

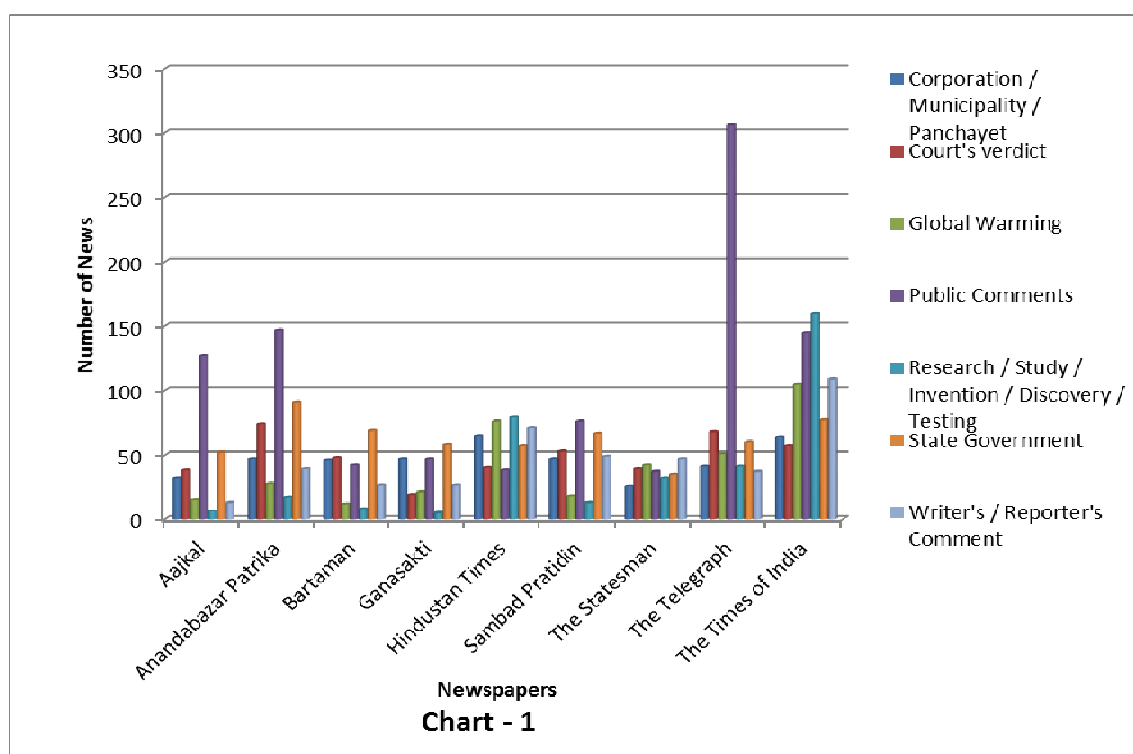


Table – 2

Row Labels	International	Local	National	Grand Total
2005	184	1848	268	2300
2006	318	2505	652	3475
2007	641	2654	530	3825
2008	346	2550	253	3149
2009	676	3499	548	4723
2010	353	2304	568	3225
Grand Total	2518	15360	2819	20697

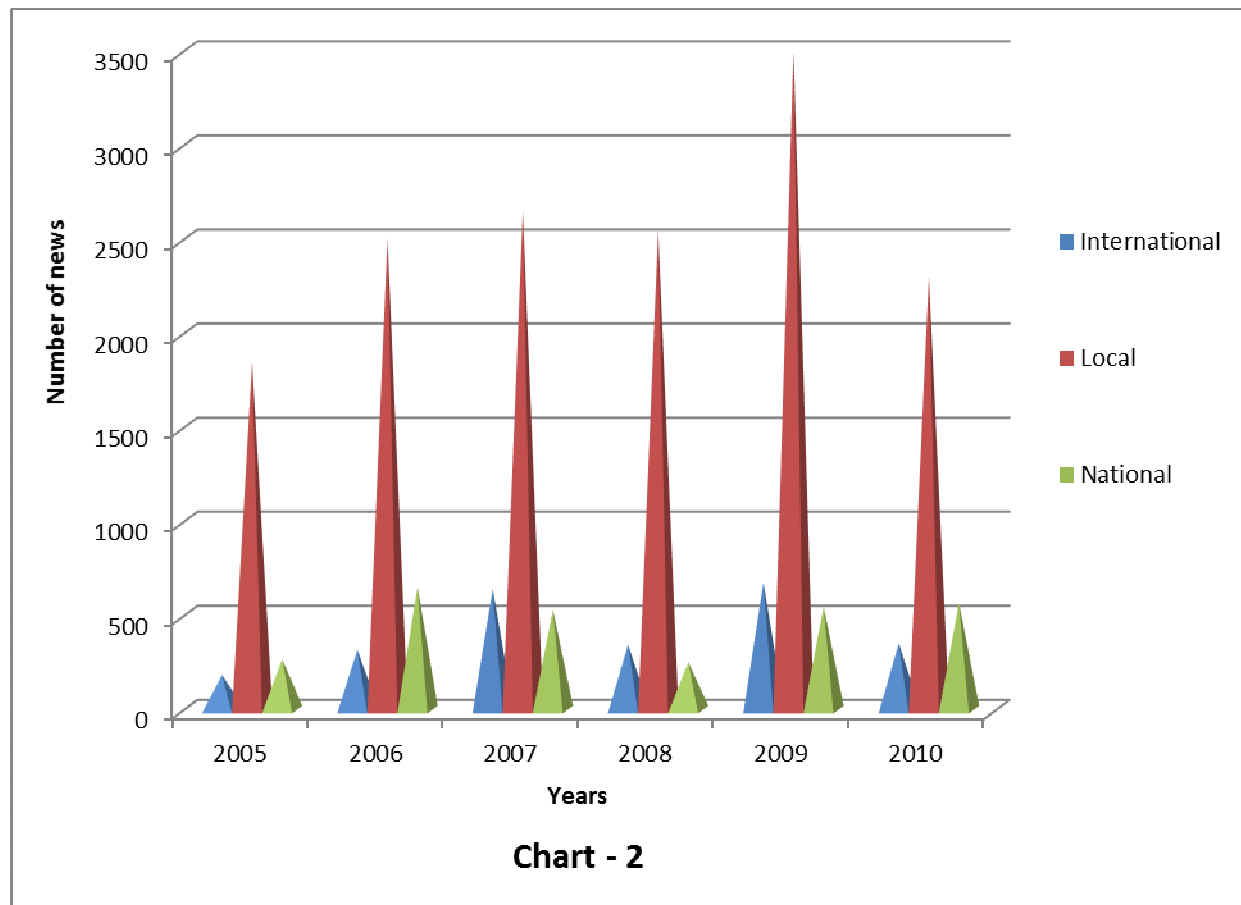
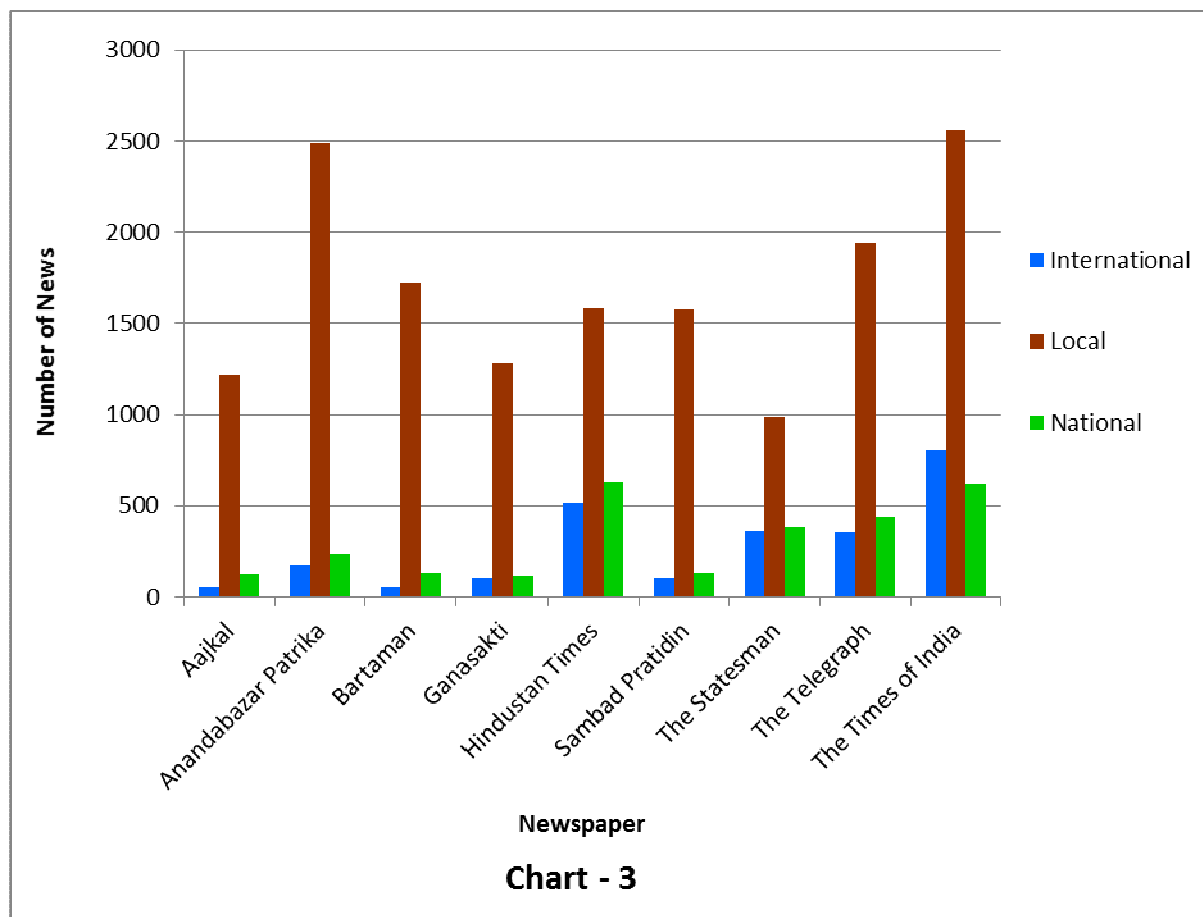


Table – 3

Row Labels	International	Local	National	Grand Total
Aajkal	55	1219	125	1399
Anandabazar Patrika	170	2491	236	2897
Bartaman	52	1725	133	1910
Ganasakti	99	1279	117	1495
Hindustan Times	517	1585	631	2733
Sambad Pratidin	100	1578	131	1809
The Statesman	365	984	386	1735
The Telegraph	357	1939	436	2732
The Times of India	803	2560	624	3987
Grand Total	2518	15360	2819	20697



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