

*Content Diversity in Print Media: A study of 'Prabhat
Khabar'*

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Introduction

Print media has expanded in the hinterlands of India, the rural India and the margins of urban India. This is due to several factors like increasing rate of literacy, increasing levels of income; urbanisation and increasing social mobility are few of the reasons. A decade or so back there were lack of choices in newspapers, books and magazines. With increasing availability and affordability newspapers and magazines no longer are for minority few but it has reached the common man . Now the masses have choices. Literacy also has enabled the masses to make choices and read. Education and awareness of education has enabled the masses to read these newspapers and magazines.

Print Media is an important means of communication. It was expected that with the increasing popularity of digital/media/high speed technologies print media would lose its momentum. On the other hand print media no longer has sustained this competition but on the reverse, print media's popularity has increased. In a developing society like ours where coexistence of high speed technologies with print medium is a unique phenomenon on its own, print medium has many roles and responsibilities to play in society. It is interesting to note about this popularity and increasing presence of print media and its expansion in India which is unique.

Background & Rationale

The main impetus to study the print media has been the increasing realization of its potential as a powerful instrument of information for bringing about change and development in society. As Robin Jeffrey (India's newspaper revolution, 2010) aptly puts in 'Indian language newspapers acts as both mirrors and prisms. As mirrors they reflect the regional concerns and idiosyncrasies back to the society.....As prisms they refract those concerns and idiosyncrasies to an Indian nation and in turn interpret national and global issues to their regions'

Main Objectives

This study explores the diversity of content in a Hindi based small print medium called 'Prabhat Khabar' printed from Ranchi the capital of Jharkhand in North India. This newspaper called 'Prabhat Khabar' which prides itself in calling 'It's not only a newspaper, it's a movement'. This is an editorial based newspaper.

In specific this study is an in depth study of a regional Hindi print medium called "Prabhat khabar" located in Ranchi, Jharkhand This study attempts to analyse how the diversity of content in the newspaper reflects the agenda for development of the state. It attempts to answer few questions like do the content in the newspapers reflect the issues of the locals viz a viz the issue of development? Do the media play a role in gender sensitivity? Do the contents in the newspaper reflect issues of development?

Methodology

This study selected this newspaper across the time span of June 2011-June 2012. A random sample of newspapers dating the first of the month to the 10th of the month was selected. On holidays the next day was taken.

Methodology

The total number of newspapers studied over the period of Year 2011-2012 were **sixty nine newspapers**. Each newspaper was covering around hundred stories. Therefore the total number of stories studied for this research was **six thousand four hundred and forty stories**. A quantitative content analysis on the stories of the newspaper was conducted.

About Prabhat Khabar

Prabhat Khabar is located in Ranchi in Jharkhand. As soon as you reach the turn that earmarks the way to Prabhat Khabar one cannot just fail to notice a narrow white board in bold red mentioning and showing the way to its office space. One cannot miss the bold statement beneath that clearly states the mission and the vision of the newspaper -Prabhat Khabar 'Akhbar nahin aandolan '.It is extremely interesting and intriguing to begin with

Prabhat Khabar (PK) was one of the first newspaper that started with this entire idea of Localisation of news. Since it was a regional paper it took the stand of printing local news at the front page. Most of the local/regional newspaper during that period of 90s would print the national dailies headline as the headline of their newspaper. This worked under the assumption that local people liked to hear /read what was happening at the centre. This newspaper did not think so. This newspaper started its main headline with what was happening in their city/region.

This was a marked shift from the trend. This changed the course of history that others followed. There are several incidents when PK has highlighted the local news over and above national news.

The trajectory of the growth of newspaper when it was in Bihar and in 2000 when it came under the newly formed Jharkhand state. This newspaper was started in 14th August 1984. In the year 1989 it was taken by Usha Martin. At that time the circulation of the newspaper was 500 copies. The Ranchi edition of the newspaper currently (Year 2011), their circulation is close to 2,00,000 copies.

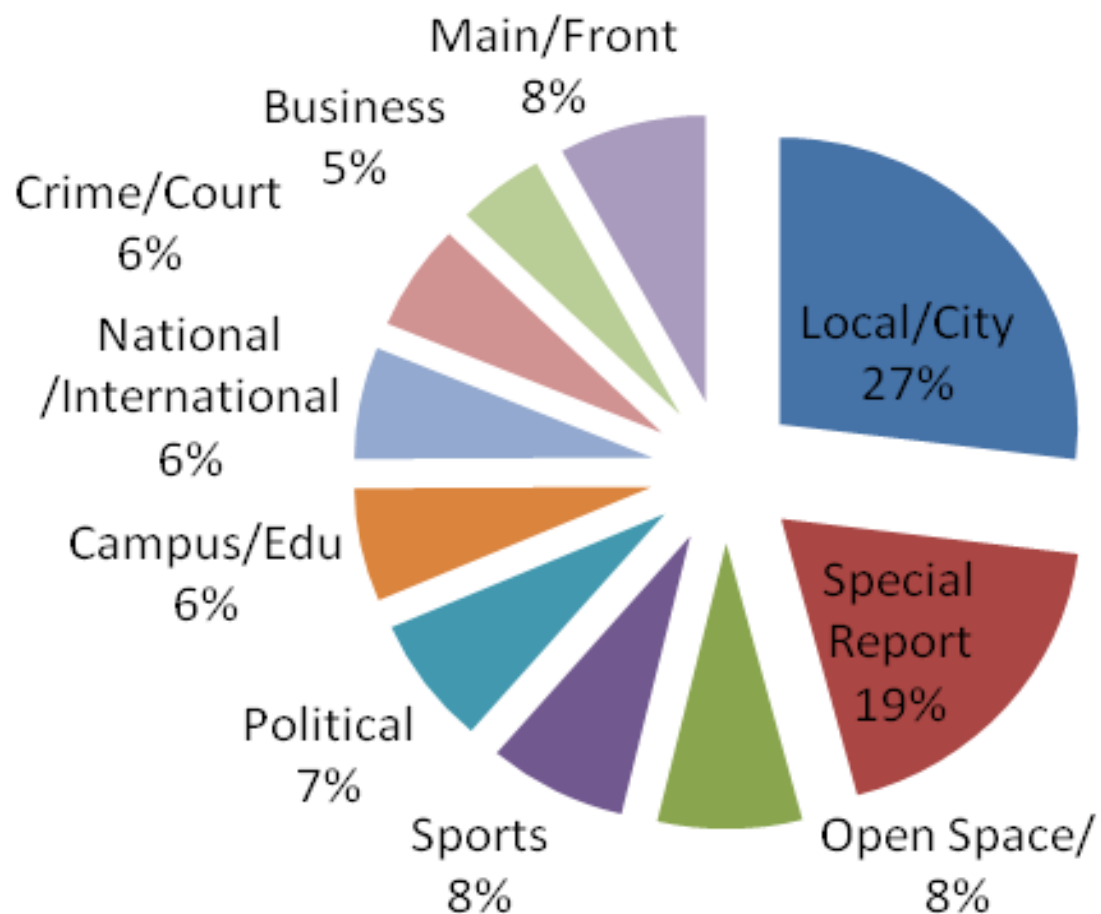
There are nine editions of PK. These are Ranchi, Patna, Jamshedpur, Dhanbad, Deoghar, Muzaffarpur, Bhagalpur, Kolkata, Siliguri. (Very recently a new edition from Gaya has also started) Apart from these there are Dak editions too, these are meant for areas surrounding Ranchi like Hazaribagh, Gumla, Rambagh and Dalton Ganj. It is interesting to note that each local edition has separate news that focus on the local news of that particular local area. Their local news forms the front page of their newspaper.

Findings

Sections of the Newspaper

The Prabhat Khabar newspaper comprises of eighteen to twenty two pages .The newspaper has ten different sections. They are Main/Front page, Special Report, Entertainment Section, Sports Section, Political Section, Business Section, Crime/Court Section, National/International Section, Campus/Education Section and Local/City Section.

Sections of Newspaper



Sections of Newspaper

- Stories relating to Local/City page were the maximum; it comprises 27% of the news. Special Report came close second with 19% of the total stories. This reflects clearly that in terms of diversity of content of news, its priority was local /city news. Local content be it related to social, economic or political issues was the priority.

- Special Report comprises of specific issues of corruption, health, environment, gender, tribal and related issues that the newspaper covered and closely followed. For example take the case of story of 'Nirmal Baba' this was not only the front page story but this story was followed for complete seven days in the newspaper.

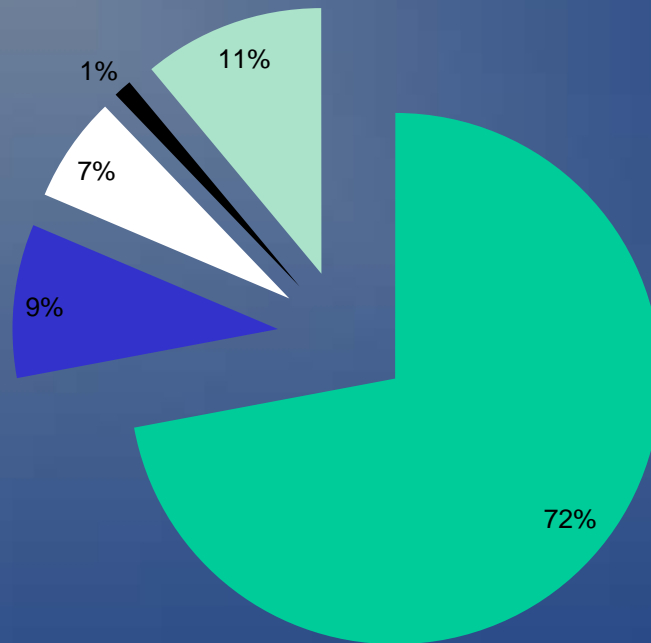
Main Content of News

The main content of the newspaper can be broadly classified into Social Content, Political Content, Economic Content, Natural Disaster and Others. As can be seen from Table 2, it was found that 72% of news was focussed on social content, 9% on Political content, 7 % on Economic content and the remaining on others.

Main Content of News

Chart Title

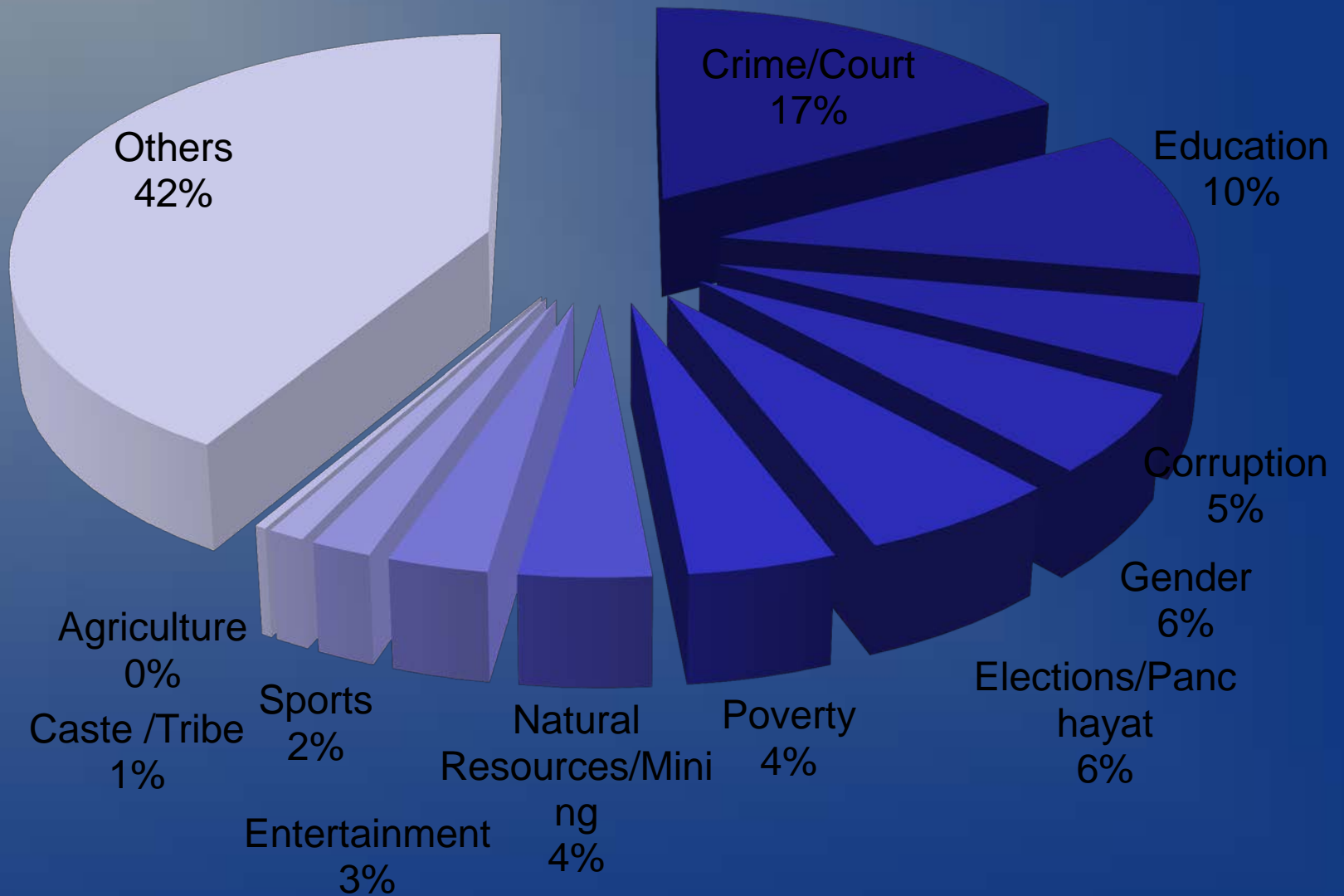
■ Social theme ■ Political theme ■ Economic theme ■ Natural Disasters ■ Others



Sub-Contents of Social Issues

The number of stories under crime and court covered were maximum that is seven hundred and ninety seven. Next highest were the number of stories on education that was four hundred and eighty six. Interestingly the number of stories on elections, gender and corruption respectively were covered. They were two hundred and seventy six, two hundred and sixty two and two hundred and twenty seven respectively.

Diversity of Social Content of News



Case 1 Crime and Court

News falling under Crime and Court were of different kinds they were from petty crimes to cases of acquisition of Land. There were stories of land grabbing that were taken up by the newspaper. During the course of my research it was brought to my notice that in the year 2002 in the Block Angadda in the district of Ranchi, land of the locals had been grabbed. Prabhat Khabar newspaper followed this story as a result in the year 2003 five and half acres of land was returned to their rightful owners.

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Case 2 Education

News falling under education was ranging from primary level education to College level education. Apart from this from the year 2008 Prabhat Khabar organises Award Programs to felicitate Class 10 and class 12 Toppers of the State. Similarly they award students who have ranked top in Engineering or Medical examinations. In this way they make their contribution towards education in society

Case 3 Corruption

Let us take the example of corruption, that Prabhat Khabar right from its inception not only published several stories but has also taken special drives against Corruption. Take the case of 'Nirmal Baba' the newspaper for close to a week followed this story. Similarly take the example of the Fodder Scam; this was the first newspaper that had published this story (1992). It was much later that other newspapers followed (1996). Similar other scams were taken up fervently by the newspaper.

Thank You