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Coverage of Rural Development News In Print Media With Special Reference To Rural Areas of Delhi

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research investigation is to find out what role media can play in rural development and to what extent is the print media, and particularly the newspapers, are serving or promoting rural development. This study tries to find out the extent of coverage and treatment given to rural development news in print media with reference to rural areas of Delhi. Print media specially the newspaper is one of the important tools to communicate about development information to the rural population. How far newspapers are catering to the informational needs of the rural folk regarding development is under scrutiny. The content analysis of the two leading newspapers of Delhi, *Amar Ujala*, Hindi daily and *The Times of India*, English daily have shown that rural development news hardly appears in newspapers. The maximum rural news published in newspapers is not related to rural development; it is only concerned with accidents, scandals, controversies, corruption, crime and politics. Hence, the development cycle is hampered resulting in the gap between the rural and urban India and the gap is widening rapidly. Rural keeps on remaining the same underdeveloped, laid back or deprived; the first step towards bridging this gap would be equal or due coverage information access and inclusion of rural issues in coverage, it's about time that print media consider this duty important. The reasons for this lack of coverage of rural development news may be varied but gatekeeping due to commercialisation in journalism might stand out as the key reasons for the same. The dream of a developed nation cannot be realised until the rural areas develop and access to information is vital for the same.

KEYWORDS: development, rural, newspaper, coverage, news

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INTRODUCTION:

Rural Development is need of great importance for a nation like India, which is heading for being a developed nation. However, this of dream being a developed nation can be become reality only when India turns into a nation with no interior frictions and hardship, a nation with solid financial framework and cohesive social order. The embodiment of improvement lies in comprehensive and exhaustive development in which everybody assumes participatory role. The journey for rural development must lead us toward engaging those areas of society who are in the need of being enabled. The print media has a big role to play in the development communication of both developed and under developed countries (Patil, 2011). The motivation behind this research is to discover what part media can play in rural development and to what degree is the print media, and especially the daily paper, serving or advancing rural advancement. Media are great devices to build information. Regularly rural people in creating nations are barred from the media-based political discussion and do not have a source of specialized information. With the appearance of the Internet time, the 'digital divide' among industrialized and creating nations has turned into a noteworthy issue of worldwide imbalance. However, we ought to consider the all-pervasive Internet, as well as the conventional media for information. Print Media work well with participatory approaches. They include newspapers, posters, photo albums, wrappers, folders, stickers, calendars etc. The general use of print media in development is to provide information, to sensitize, reach and stabilise groups of rural people.¹

Information and knowledge sharing are essential for democracy; they are the tools of development. Information and knowledge sharing are indispensable for people to effectively respond to the opportunities and challenges of social, political, economic changes, and technological advancement. Information and knowledge will be useful only if it is effectively communicated to people.

Media has a social obligation in news inclusion towards the majority of the population which for India's situation is the rural population; where 70% of the population dwells in the country side. In this way, media has noteworthy job to give balance to both rural and urban reporting, to have reasonable portrayal of both rural and urban issues in news inclusion. Media plays an important role in development communication through circulation of knowledge, providing forum for discussion of issues, teach ideas, skills for a better life and create a base of consensus for stability of the state².

For rural development to be accomplished, the press has a task to carry out. The utilization of print media, particularly daily papers, for being developed is to give information and empower or aware the rural people. In rural areas, the test is to expand the amount and availability of information, to

guarantee its exchange in suitable ways, and to evoke more data from rural people themselves to make development planning more inclusive. The mass media can be a powerful tool for information dissemination within the rural masses³. Mass media should work as a watchdog, bringing to light the government and non-governmental efforts for development, the pitfalls and can work as an intermediary, i.e., it can bridge the communication gap between the development planners and those who need development⁴.

The newspaper is covering various important news in all areas of human life to a great extent. However, maximum number of stories come from crime, accidents, politics, agitation, education, film art and culture areas. News about sports and business subjects has been given on separate pages in the newspaper. The problems related with road, electricity, water health have widely been covered. Similarly, the news of strikes, processions have also been widely covered. But the news about development programme which are being conducted by different agencies and organization of the government is hardly given in by the newspaper⁵.

Unfortunately, the media in India is not concerned about the rural majority rather their focus is the urban minority. The news and issues related to rural areas are not given due coverage in the print media⁶. Newspapers should not leave its responsibilities of development communication and help in achieving the economic and social well-being of the present and future generations⁷. Media has high impact for creating awareness amongst rural masses⁸. Media has the power to expose people to new ideas both locally or globally, hence its potential as a change agent is perhaps the strongest⁹.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To study the coverage of rural development news in two national dailies of Delhi, Hindi daily *Amar Ujala* and English daily *The Times of India*.
2. To find out the projection and treatment given to the rural development news by the print media.
3. To study the comparative analysis of the two newspapers, in terms of their rural development news coverage.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The Content analysis method is adopted to analyse the coverage of the rural development news in the two national dailies of Delhi, *Amar Ujala* and *The Times of India* (Hindi and English daily respectively). Sample study or content analysis was done for 31 days on regular bases. The universe of the study comprised the all-news items and articles appeared during one month that is from 1st August-31st August, 2017 in the two selected newspapers.

RESEARCH FINDINGS & DATA INTERPRETATIONS:

The following table 1 depicts the total news covered by the newspapers and the total rural news covered and the percentage of the same within the given period i.e. 1st August-31st August, 2017. Total news published in Amar Ujala is 4201 and total rural news covered is 38 which is 0.90 %. Total news published in The Times of India is 4377 and total rural news covered is 11 i.e. 0.25 %. The data is dismal and shows the sad stage of rural news coverage by these leading dailies.

Table 1: Number of rural news published in newspapers of Delhi

S. No.	Newspaper	Duration	Total news	News related to rural areas	Percentage
1	The Times of India	August 1-31, 2017 (31 days)	4377	11	0.25
2	Amar Ujala	August 1-31, 2017 (31 days)	4201	38	0.90

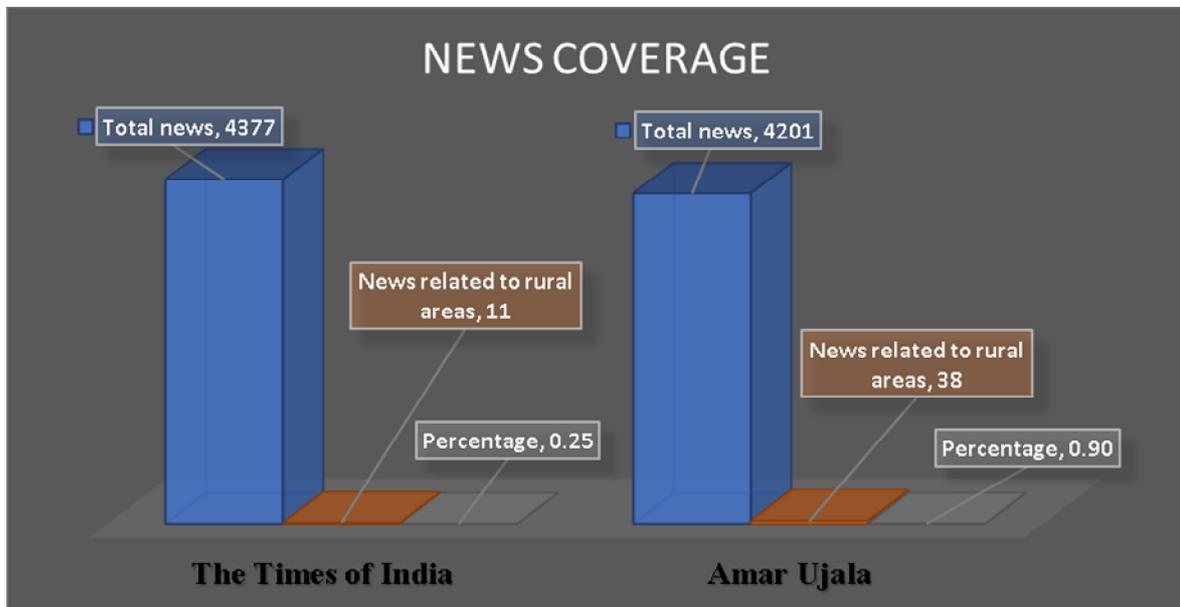


Fig. 1: Number of rural news published in newspapers of Delhi

Table 2 depicts the total news, total rural news covered by the newspapers and the percentage of the same within the given period. Total rural news published in Amar Ujala is 38 and total rural development news covered is 3 which is 0.07 %. Total rural news published in The Times of India is 11 and total rural development news covered is 2 i.e. 0.05 %. It is clearly depicting the sorry state of rural development news coverage in newspapers.

Table 2: Number of rural development news published in newspapers of Delhi

S.No.	Newspaper	Duration	Total news	News related to rural areas	Rural Development News	Percentage
1	The Times of India	August 1-31, 2017 (31 days)	4377	11	2	0.05
2	Amar Ujala	August 1-31, 2017 (31 days)	4201	38	3	0.07

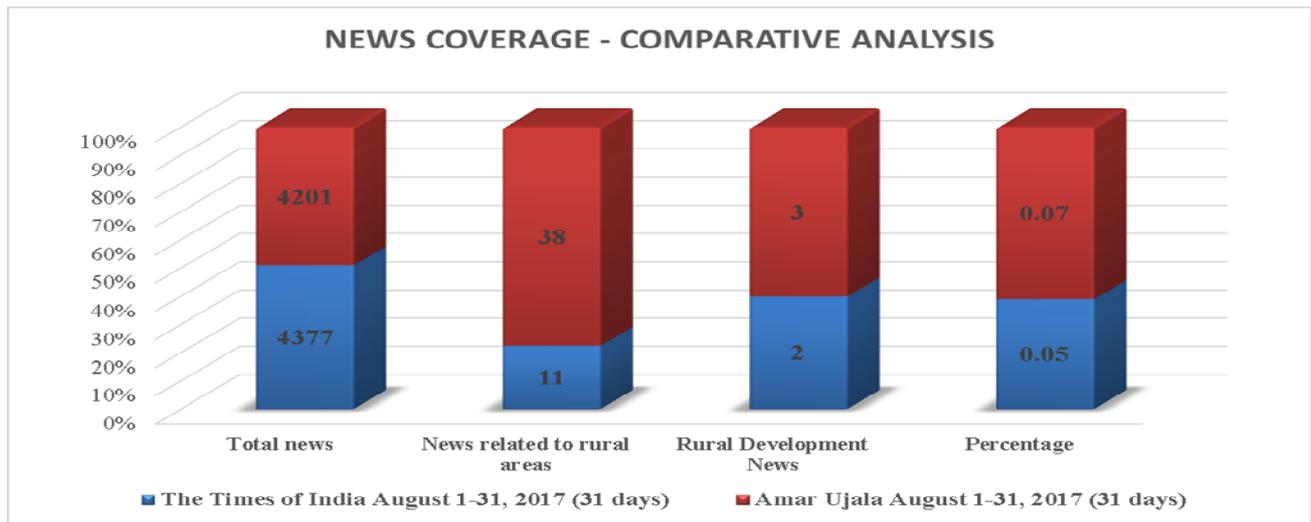


Fig 2: Number of rural development news published in newspapers of Delhi

Table 3 shows the rural news distribution in The Times of India August 2017. Total rural news published in The Times of India during these 31 days is 11 out of which 1 is crime news, 4 are political news, 4 are accidents news and only 2 are rural development news. Rural development news is not what this newspaper is into.

Table 3: Rural news distribution in The Times of India August, 2017

Newspaper	Duration	Total News related to rural areas	Crime	Politics	Accident	Rural Development
The Times of India	August 1-31, 2017 (31 days)	11	1	4	4	2

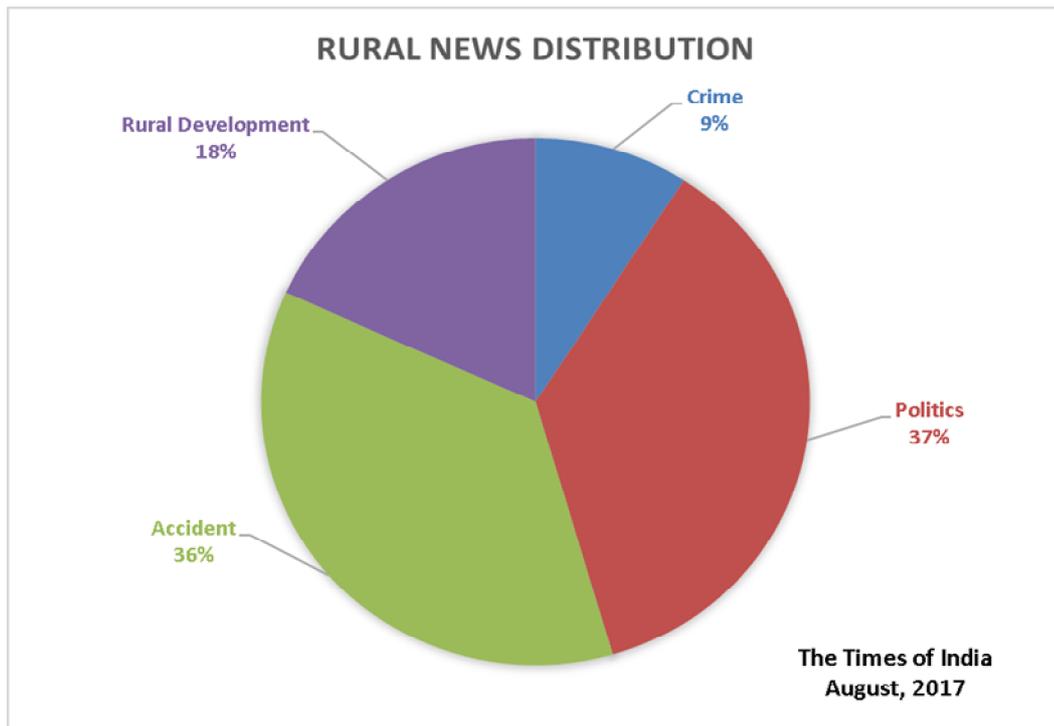


Fig 3: Rural news distribution in The Times of India August, 2017

Table 4 shows the rural news distribution in Amar Ujala August 2017. Total rural news published in Amar Ujala during the month is 38 out of which 1 is sports news, 14 are crime news, 15 are politics news, 4 are accidents news, 1 is education news and only 3 are rural development news. Within rural news the political news is given maximum coverage followed by crime news at the second place. Clearly enough the rural development news is not the priority even if there is any rural news coverage in the newspaper.

Table 4: Rural news distribution in Amar Ujala August, 2017

Newspaper	Duration	Total rural news	Sports	Crime	Politics	Accident	Education	Rural Development
Amar Ujala	August 1-31, 2017 (31 days)	38	1	14	15	4	1	3

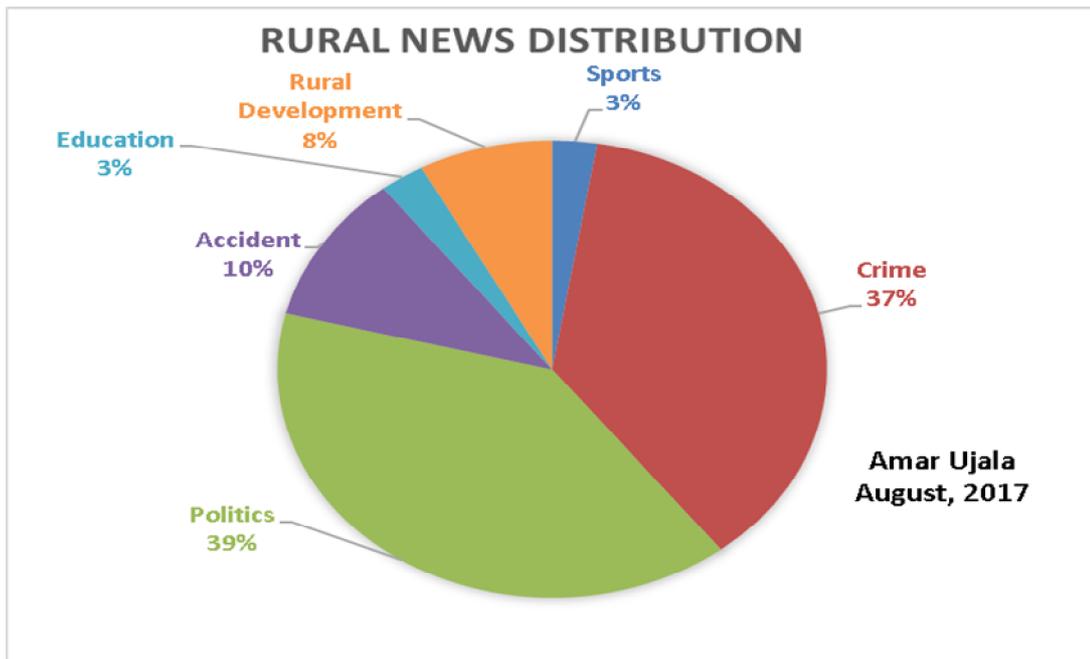


Fig 4: Rural news distribution in Amar Ujala August, 2017

Table 5 and table 6 clearly states that both the newspaper have not published even a single editorial or article on rural development during the period of 31 days. This shows that rural news and issues are not of much concern to newspapers and their editors or gatekeepers. Hence, rural issues fail to get any serious attention by both the society and the policy makers. It may reflect total lack of empathy at the part of mainline print media for rural people and any issues they have to tackle.

Table 5: Editorial on rural development in newspaper

Newspaper	Duration	Number of Editorials	Percentage
The Times of India	31 Days	0	0.00%
Amar Ujala	31 Days	0	0.00%

Table 6: Articles on rural development in newspaper

Newspaper	Duration	Number of Articles	Percentage
The Times of India	31 Days	0	0.00%
Amar Ujala	31 Days	0	0.00%

The following table 7 shows comparative analysis of rural development news in The Times of India & Amar Ujala the percentage of the same within the given period i.e. 1st August-31st August, 2017. At times data can be deceptive as it reflects The Times of India has 18.18 % of rural development news out of total rural news published whereas Amar Ujala has published only 7.89% of rural development news out of total rural news published but only the exact figures can give us true picture i.e 18.18% amounts to only 2 rural development news out of 11 on the contrary 7.89%

amounts to 3 rural development news out of 38. Ironically bigger percentage is less in number and the smaller percentage is larger in number. Hence, such data should never be studied in isolation because they are contextual and statistical depictions only and it needs meticulous data interpretations before drawing any inferences from the same.

Table 7: Comparative Analysis of Rural Development News in The Times of India & Amar Ujala

Newspaper	Duration	Total rural News	Total rural development news	Percentage
The Times of India	31 Days	11	2	18.18%
Amar Ujala	31 Days	38	3	7.89%

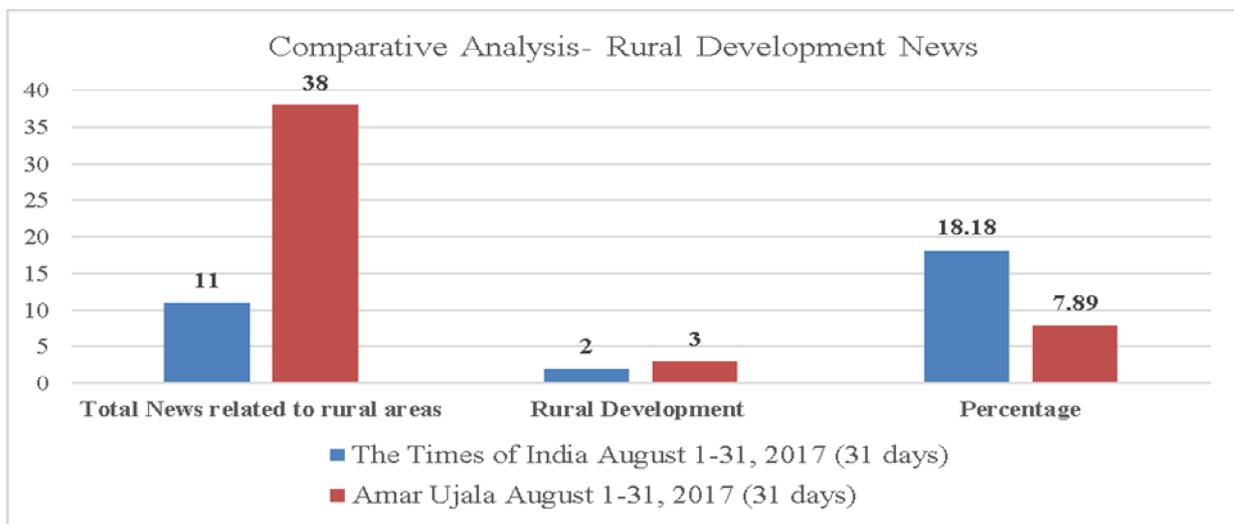


Fig 5: Comparative Analysis of Rural Development News in The Times of India & Amar Ujala

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS:

The data of the two selected daily papers demonstrated that they didn't charge well in their social obligations and development roles. Delhi, the political capital of India, is a metropolitan city it has an amazingly enormously large part of it which is rural. A long way from balance among urban and rural reporting, there is hardly any rural reporting especially in the English dailies. These daily papers gave more consideration to the urban issues to the disregard of the rural segments may be such is their news priority. The only cases where rural news got any considerable media attention was when negative stories broke out. The maximum rural news distributed in daily papers isn't identified with rural development; it is just worried about scandals, mis-happenings, crime and governmental issues. This pattern nullifies social duty and national development. Thus, only focus newspapers have is on urban elite, hence the development cycle is hampered resulting in the gap between the rural and urban India in achieving development.

As stated the picture portrayed by content analysis of the two leading national newspapers of Delhi in this study is gloomy as far as the coverage of rural development stories and news related to rural areas are concerned. It was found that Amar Ujala has covered more rural news in comparison to The Times of India. Amar Ujala has published 0.90% rural news in whereas The Times of India has published only 0.25% rural news during the month of August 2017. It is also clear from the table 1 and figure 1. Total rural news published in Amar Ujala is 38 and total rural development news covered is 3 which is 0.07 %. Total rural news published in The Times of India is 11 and total rural development news covered is 2 i.e. 0.05 % refer table given above. It is more than clear here rural development news is definitely not what the newspapers want to cover. It is also clear after the content analysis that both the newspapers are totally unable to publish editorials, features and article related to rural areas development in their respective editions. Not even a single editorial related to rural development during the study period i.e. August 1st–August 31st, 2017 was published in either of the newspapers.

The research study proves that these newspapers have miserably failed at their duty towards the rural society. The two leading newspapers of Delhi have totally failed to cover the rural development news. They published only 0.50-1% rural news in the given period. This pretty much says it all, not even 1% of the total news is allocated to rural news.

Based on the research findings of the study following deliberations can be made:

- The coverage of development programme is very small. It is almost negligible in the newspaper.
- The news is not informative about different development programme going on in various areas.
- There is not any regular column regarding reviewing the progress, success and failure of development programme.
- Development programme activity is not considered news unless there is any big corruption.
- The editorial page of the newspapers also does not give any articles about development programme.

The development could only be achieved when every section of society develops, and hence rural population should be equal and integral part of development process. Communication is the first basic step towards inclusion of rural folk in development process. Print Media especially the newspapers could be one of the important tools to communicate the development information to rural people. So far newspapers are not catering to the informational needs of the rural folk. Rural keeps on remaining the same underdeveloped, laid back or deprived; the first step towards bridging this gap

would be equal or due coverage and information access to rural areas, it's high time newspapers take this responsibility seriously. In a nation like India, where many development issues should be tended to, media can feature the issues and the difficulties of the rural population.

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