

A STUDY OF NEWS CONTENT ABOUT NORTH-EAST REGION OF INDIA IN NEWSPAPERS PUBLISHED FROM NATIONAL CAPITAL (DELHI)

Swapan Kumar Roy

Former M.Phil. Student

Department of Mass Communication & Journalism

B.B.A.U, Lucknow, INDIA

Abstract: This study has been undertaken to Investigate the News reporting about the northeast in Indian Mainstream newspapers. To analysis this phenomenon the researcher uses the content analysis method in four English newspapers which are published from Delhi. In the act of framing the news about the Northeast, the newspapers take a certain policy. Based on the quantitative study of a large scale newspaper in twenty (20) days this paper examines news circulation tendencies of English newspapers about northeast India.

Keywords: News reporting, mainstream media, northeast India, Content analysis, qualitative research.

INTRODUCTION

North-East India is the Easternmost region of India. It comprises the contiguous Seven states (Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, and Tripura) and the Himalayan states of Sikkim. The region covers a total area of over 262230(km)². Which is about 7.9% of the total Geographical area of India? The 2011 census shows the population of the region as approximately 45.5 million, which is about 3.8% of the total Indian population. The region shows more than 4500Kilo-meters of the international border (about 98% of its entire border area) with China (southern Tibet) in the north, Myanmar in the east, Bangladesh in the South-west and Bhutan to the Northwest^[i]. The Siliguri Corridor in West Bengal, the width of 21 to 40 km connects the Northeast region with the main part of India. The states are officially recognized under the North Eastern Council (NEC) constituted in1971 as the acting formulation of various northeastern organizations^[ii].

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The political conflicts and life situations of the people of India's northeastern corner comprising the eight states are some of many spaces of invisibility of regions every-day is indicative of a crisis of representation on newspapers or other forms of mass media, and the ignorance goes continuing deeper.

Northeast in the Delhi based English press means that no pressure is mounted on the central and /or state governments to address its problems. It is considered to the Indian English language national press based in New Delhi stands out for its contribution to national building, professionalism, and Freedom, It has failed to adequately report and represent the peoples, cultures, and issues of the country's north-east region.

RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The present investigation is expected to focus light on and contribute towards a better understanding of considerable contemporary interest and significance. Further, the research findings are likely to be of immense help and relevance to followings;

1. Policymakers dealing with north East Indian issues.
2. Media planners, programmers, producers in enhancing the effectiveness of northeast region news contents.

The study has been conducted with the hope that the research findings will provide an assessment of the name of the coverage of the northeast region of India's issues by the daily Newspapers or others' daily Mass media forms.

OBJECTIVES

1. To analyze the news content related to the eight states of the northeast region published in major English language dailies of the national capital of India.
2. To find the space allocated to north-east Indian issues in terms of square centimeters (sq cm).
3. To find out the tendency of published News categorizes issues from the northeast.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:

It is agreed that this study has some limitations as well,

These are:

1. The study involves data collection from a single state capital only.
2. The period of twenty (20) day's actually cannot dictate the trend of publishing houses, as they keep changing their patterns and policies according to the situations.
3. The present study is only involved with English dailies and no other print media is taken into consideration

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Agenda setting theory:

An agenda is a selection of items arranged to give some items more important than others. Agenda theory says that the news media presents the public net with a picture of the world as it is but with an agenda of their own - a selection of reports about what is happening in the world. The term agenda setting was coined by Maxwell McCombs and Donald L Shaw (1972) in the context of an election campaign where politicians seek to convince the voters about the party's most important issues. Agenda theorists try to describe and explain (a) how stories are selected, packaged and presented a process known as Gatekeeping, (b) the resulting agenda, and (c) how the agenda affects what people think about the relative importance of the issues presented [iii].

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Journalist and academician Prasun Sonwalkar also interviewed with senior New Delhi based journalists. Working for the English language press. Two aspects of the interviews have been conducted in New Delhi and the northeast is noteworthy. As for MR Sonwalkar in his article; the first is that journalists admitted that the low status of the northeast in the news discourse needed to be corrected, but said this was difficult due to the prevailing socio-cultural environment in their newsrooms in which the region is widely seen as one of little or no interest to readers. The second important aspect of the interview responses is that the terminology of the socio-cultural binary (US and THEM) was clearly reflected in the journalist's comments. None of them said they were prejudiced towards the north-east, and its people, but even while stating that conflicts in the region were serious and deserved serious attention, the journalists admitted that there was a strong feeling in newsrooms that there is no interest in the region among their readers and that the northeast, its people and issues do not seem to matter to them [iv].

METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

The study used content analysis methods for the collection of data for analysis. Content Analysis method had been carried out to know the coverage of north-east news contents in daily newspapers.

The present study comprised of quantitative analysis of northeast India coverage in the selected newspapers. Analysis of Four daily English newspapers (All are National newspapers) that were being circulated in the National Capital Region (Delhi) had been carried out.

Four daily newspapers had been selected for the present study:

- I. The Times of India
- II. The Hindustan Times
- III. The Hindu
- IV. The Indian express

Selection of Time Span:

The study was covered the selected four newspapers collected from 1st July 2018 to 20th July 2018 for twenty (20) days each.

I. The time of a selection of newspaper included the starting of several sevenths (7) month and as the second half of respected year as a general condition.

II. One of the most important festivals of the Jaintia people is the "Behdeinkhlam Festival" (Meghalaya). It is celebrating by the people of the Niamtrere religion and celebrated in July before the seed sowing season. <https://www.holidify.com/page>

So considering these events during this period, the researcher had selected the period.

The analysis had been comprised of a total of eighty (80) newspapers for a period of this research. No supplements and other extra edition pages (like city edition or others) had not been included for the analysis.

Selection of Units for Analysis

The units of analysis for the study were: news-articles, Photo/ graphics/ cartoon-illustrations, news analysis, interview/discussion, Science fiction, letter to the editor, editorials, and queries published in the selected four daily newspapers.

DATA CODE BOOK

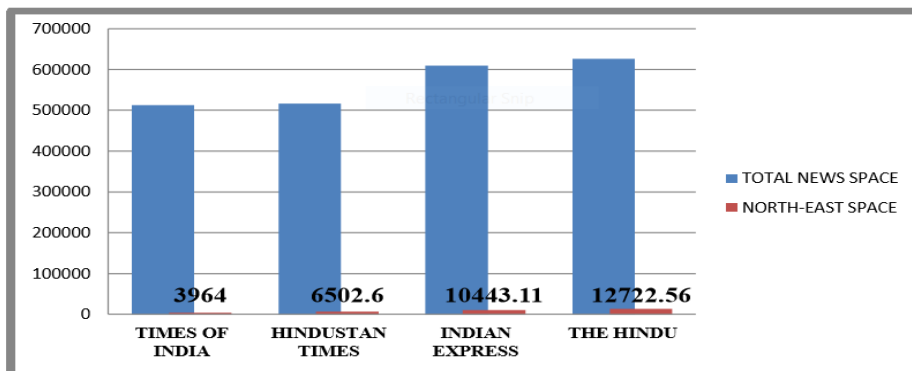
The codebook was prepared including all the categories of units and variables under study. The units and variables were coded by assigning numbers to specific units and variables. The data regarding each unit and variable was fed into Code Sheets using codebook. The data analyzed was arranged into tabular form and charts were drawn with the help of MS excel [v].

ANALYSIS

In this period of study the total news hole by all four (4) newspapers the TOI, TIE, HT, and TH, which was 2264394.91 Sq-cm out of which the space given to north-east issues was 33632.27 sq-cm. Therefore, the coverage given by all four newspapers to north-east issues was merely 1.48 percent of the total news hole areas. Times of India gave 3964 Sq-cm space to North-east out of 512770 sq-cm news hole areas. It accounted for merely 0.80 percent of the total content excluding ad areas.

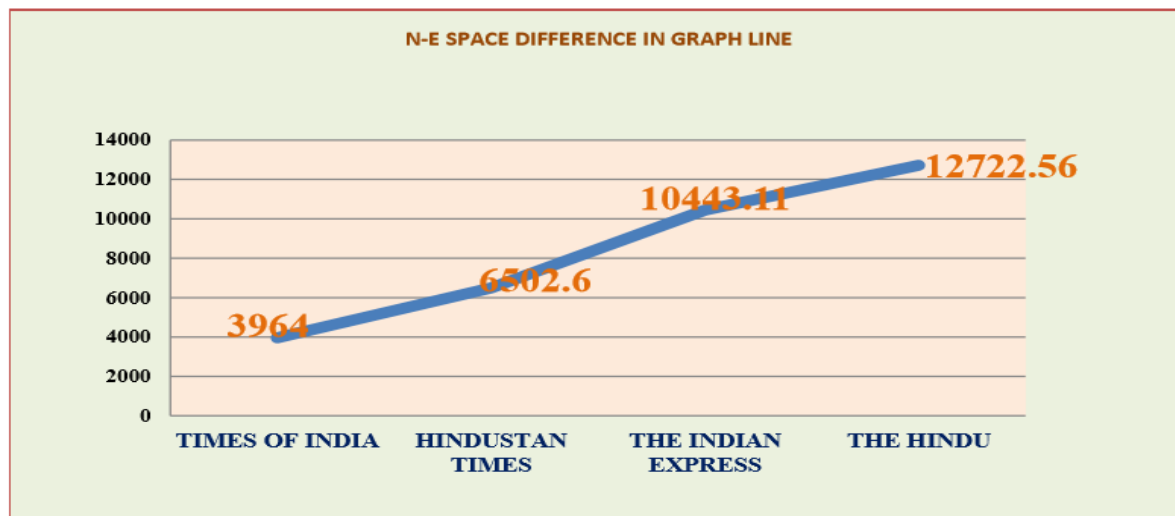
Hindustan times giving the highest amount of news hole area 516390.91 sq-cm space of total news hole and the space given to N-E Issues was 6502.6 sq-cm. according to the percentage of 1.25 percent. The Indian express gave an area of 608995.94 sq-cm to news hole out of which 10443.11 Sq-cm coverage had been given to north-east news issues. The Indian Express came to second place with a 1.71 percent contribution to N-E issues. And The Hindu gave the highest 12722.56 sq-cm news hole area. It contributes to N-E news of 2.03 percentages of its news hole.

Graph 1: Comparative weight of News space and Northeast coverage spaces



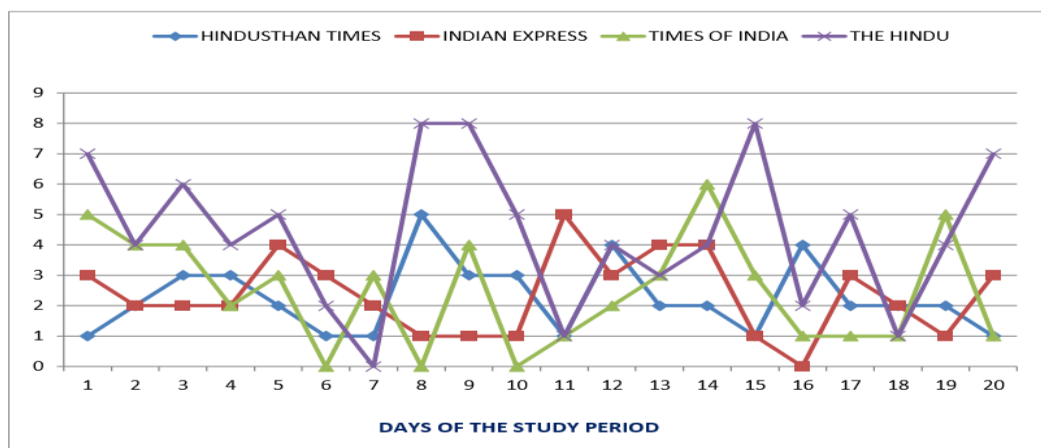
In this study, the researcher has tried to find out the total no of news/pictures published in this study period of four newspapers. The total no of newspapers and also try to get identified individually amounts. The highest number of north-east news/picture items was published by The Hindu, accounting to the study this amount of total 89 news/photos, followed by Times of India 48, and The Indian Express has 49 news/photo items. The number of N-E issues appeared in the Hindustan Times also similar that is 48, Only The Hindu makes a big clear difference in terms of North East news issues publications (89).

Graph 2: Northeast news space differences in the graph line



The graph below depicts the flows of North-East news in the selected newspapers during the period of study. It is shown that The Hindu has the highest point of scale of news items maximum times. In one day wise it had published the highest 8 items 3times in the study period, 7 issues 2 times, 6 items one time, and also 5 issues covered on 3 times during the study. Also only one day The Hindu had not devoted any news about the NorthEast in this study period. In The Hindu Edition, it had published East section page some days in a week. This day's The Hindu's contribution of news was heavy and it allots higher space also. During the period of study, the North Eastern sportswomen Hima Das from Assam win the International under 19 junior athlete championship and made history in Indian athletes.

Graph 3: Comparative graph of newspapers per news items



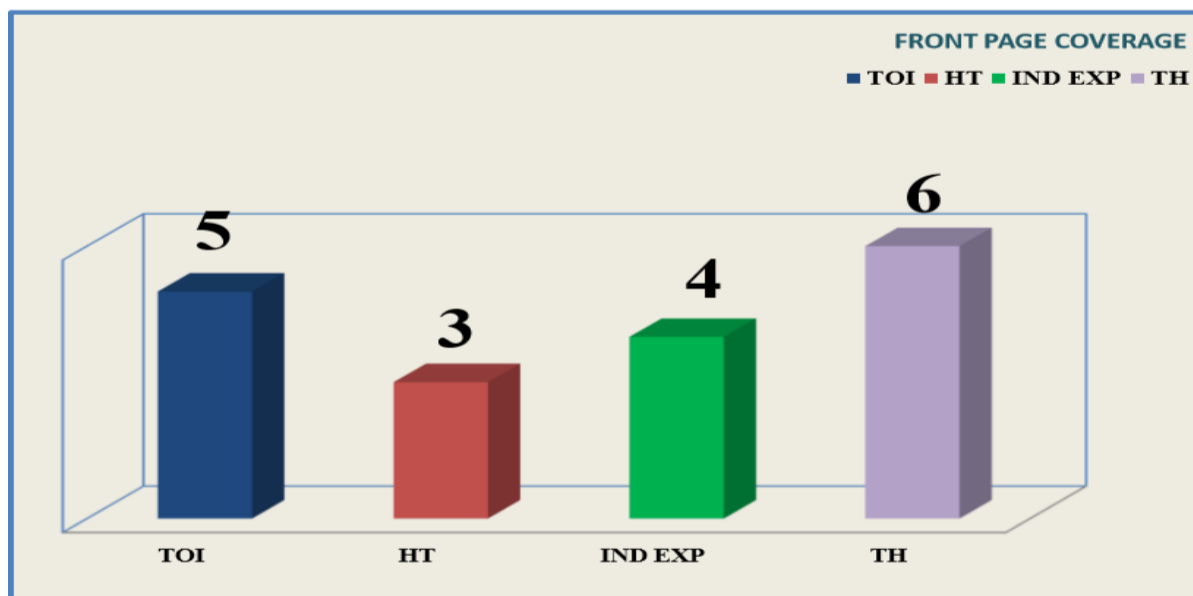
The graph depicts TIMES OF INDIA had also the second-highest no of news items in terms of a day. It had started its first day with 5 news issues. The times of India had no specific page as The Hindu had. In terms of the highest issues published in a day it was 6 news items, this is because of about Hima Das's victory of the world championship on athletic. During the period of study, it was 3 times had no news of the research period.

According to the graph The Indian Express had published 3 issues on the first day of the period of study and 3 news on the last day also. Its highest circulation on North East news coverage was 5 issues on a single day. It had got one issues on 5 days on the study period. And one day that was not any news on North East coverage.

The Hindustan Times had the most non fluctuate news flows among those newspapers. The first day of sampling it had 1 news and also one news item on the last day. The highest scale of the graph in the newspaper was 5 items in a single day. Hindustan Times was the only newspaper that had not any blank day of news coverage of the North East.

The percentages of north-east news coverage as The Hindu devoted 38% of the total four newspapers. Its counterpart Hindustan Times shares a 20% contribution and the Indian Express and Times of India share the same percent 21% as a whole contribute.

Graph 4: News share of the front page



The graph reveals The Hindu had the highest items of news stories on the front page (6) among the four newspapers while the Hindustan Times was only 3 news items on the research period that the researcher had done. Concurrently the Times of India and The Indian Express had published N-E news on the front page namely 5 and 4 items.

In terms of Comparative placement of news, The Times of India had placed the highest amount of stories on the upper half, nearly 73.57%, while The Indian Express had merely 37.1% space of its stories in upper half as a higher amount of its news placed lower fold nearly 62.90%. Concurrently the Hindustan Times and The Hindu had placed its news on the upper fold as 58.24 and 64.77. Similarly the amount of lower fold 41.76% and 35.23% as following.

The researcher found that a higher amount of space had been placed on the upper fold of the selected newspapers during the period of study. On the contrary, The Indian Express had maximum news at the lower fold of the page.

Table 1: Comparative amount of categorical unites of news content

S. NO	NEWS CATEGORICAL UNITS	TIMES OF INDIA	HINDUSTAN TIMEA	THE INDIAN EXPRESS	THE HINDU	TOTAL
1	POLITICAL	12	13	8	15	48
2	CRIME	10	10	12	10	42
3	TERROR	2	0	0	3	5
4	LAW & ORDER	2	6	5	4	17
5	CONFLICT, PEACE & RECONCILIATIONS	1	1	7	6	15
6	ACCIDENT & DISASTER	1	2	1	3	7
7	HUNAN INTEREST	0	1	2	2	5
8	AGRICULTURE & ENVIRONMENT	1	4	0	3	8
9	HEALTH	0	0	0	2	2
10	MILITARY	1	2	0	2	5
11	EDUCATIONS	2	0	5	2	9
12	ART & CULTURE	0	0	1	1	2
13	SOCIAL UNREST	0	0	0	7	7
14	SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY	3	2	1	1	7
15	SPORTS	9	7	5	16	37
16	RELIGION	1	0	0	0	1
17	OTHERS*	3		2	12	17
18	TOTAL	48	48	49	89	234

*TRADE/PUBLIC POLICY/SOCIAL POLICY / INTERNATIONAL RELATED and like other least several items that the researcher couldn't fix the above category or neither create a suitable category.

The table above depicts the distribution of the subject area of various North-East topics, during the study period. The Times of India had given its maximum number of news coverage on political (12), crime (10) and sports(9). And it published 3 science news in this study period. These four sections had got 34 items Out of a total of 48 news stories covered by The Times Of India in this study period. Which had posses 70.83% of its North East coverage in this study period.

The Hindustan times had given its maximum space and number of news coverage on political(13), crime(10), law and order(6), and sports(7) also agriculture and environment(4) items had been published in this study period. This seven(7) subject area had got its 83.33% coverages out of its total 48 news items.

The Indian Express had given its cover on political issues of 8 items, on crime its coverage was 12 items, it's the highest number on crime issues in the selected newspapers during the period of study. Concurrently law & order (5), conflict-peace and reconciliation (7) education (5) and sports (7) items had been found majorly. It had been found 44 (89.79%) items in these six issues. There was found that the conflict issues had published in the highest(7) number in the Indian express among the selected newspapers during the period of study.

The Hindu has published the maximum no of items in this period of the study also, it had contributed its higher amount of space on North East coverage. The researcher found that a regular tendency to a variety of issues on The Hindu published on its coverage. During the period of study, there was found that The Hindu covered on social unrest issues (7) as high proportions only these newspapers. Similarly, it had published political category news of 15 items, on the crime of 10 issues. It had also published terror-related news about 3 items, law and order were 4, and conflict-related 6 issues covered on the study period. Coverage about sports(16) was highest in the Hindu in this period. The percentile of 68 The Hindu's reporting on that seven categorical issues had founded as the above table that the researcher found on during the research period.

The two topmost English newspaper of Delhi namely Times of India and Hindustan Times had been published most of its issues on political curriculums, crimes, and sports. It had not found any human interesting news on the period. On the other hand, The Indian Express had given exposure to some little different issues. Some Educational issues, human interest issues made the different modes of The Indian Express from above mentioned two earlier newspapers. It had been published national interest issues with highly satisfactory explaining mood.

Conclusion:

As far as the space given to NORTH-EAST in national edition newspapers is concerned, it was found that the North East issues are not getting ample space, as total space devoted to North East content is as less as 1.48% of the total news space of all the selected newspapers.

Merely 5.44% of total North East news space placement in front page out of 1.48% of total space for the northeast. Out of half of these percentages had found in only one newspaper, namely The Hindu. And there was found only one Editorial in The Hindu placed at the lower fold. However rarely one op-ed article published by Hindustan Times.

One of the interesting things that no single letter to the editor about northeast issues or from any person to northeast found in this study period of four newspapers total of eighty (80) newspapers. The maximum amount of news found about political, crime, and social unrest. Also, sports issues came in front of that time for two big events.

References:

1. "North East India international border", https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northeast_India, Retrieved on 12 September 2018.
2. "North Eastern Council". Retrieved on (22-4-2018) <http://necouncil.gov.in>
3. Aggarwal Vir Bala & Gupta V.S (2001) Handbook of Journalism and Mass Communication, New Delhi, Concept Publishing Company.
4. Prasun Sonwalkar (2004) Mediating otherness: India's English-language press and the Northeast, Contemporary South Asia, 13:4, 389-402, DOI: 10.1080/09584930500070613
5. Monga prem, (2014).Science coverage and readers perception: an analysis of the science contents of daily newspapers. Ph.D. thesis. Hisar: guru jambheshwar university of science and technology: find on [http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in:8080/jspui/bitstream/10603/43066/8/08_chapter %203.pdf,p42](http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in:8080/jspui/bitstream/10603/43066/8/08_chapter%203.pdf,p42). Retrieved 25 August 2018.