

## **The Role Print Media Coverage in Promoting 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyan' A study with reference to leading newspapers in Rajasthan**

**Vinod<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Jayati Sharma<sup>2</sup>.**

<sup>1</sup>Research Scholar, Amity School of Communication, Amity University Rajasthan, Jaipur

<sup>2</sup>Associate Professor, Amity School of Communication, Amity University Rajasthan, Jaipur

**Article History:** Received: 10 January 2021; Revised: 12 February 2021; Accepted: 27 March 2021; Published online: 28 April 2021

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### **Abstract**

The media plays a significant role in our lives by informing us about the happenings across the world and shaping our opinions on various issues. In this context, different forms of media have distinct utility in the dissemination of news and other important information. Print media is one of the most powerful and omnipresent tools for spreading information to a vast number of people in a cost-effective manner. The impact of the written word has never been underestimated and it remains a strong medium of communication and conversation. It is worth noting that reading written information leaves a long-lasting and deep impact on individuals and helps guide their views on a subject. Therefore, print media is of great significance in conveying information to different sections of the society and understanding their opinions which, in turn, has an impact on policy making.

This study is aimed at ascertaining and analysing the role of print media in spreading awareness on the issues of cleanliness and sanitation amongst the people of India. In this context, the study involves the analysis of news-related data of two leading national newspapers, namely 'Dainik Bhaskar' and 'Rajasthan Patrika'. The overall levels of cleanliness in India are alarmingly low with minimal facilities for disposal of waste which is a major challenge for many people. Although there have been several programmes and campaigns drafted and launched by the government of India to improve the mechanisms of waste disposal and enhance the cleanliness levels across the country, the issue of waste management remains a persistent problem for most Indians.

Furthermore, the research methodology adopted for the study is 'Content Analysis' which is an appropriate technique to analyse the contents of national English dailys. The study is focused on assessing the level of importance that the aforementioned newspapers have assigned to news related to cleanliness and sanitation issues. In this context, the findings of the study have revealed that both the newspapers have provided due significance to the aforementioned issues in their news coverage.

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**Keywords-** Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Clean India Campaign, Media reports on Cleanliness

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### **1. Introduction**

The levels of sanitation and cleanliness across India are far from ideal. In this context, there is a lack of access to clean drinking water, tap water, adequate waste management mechanisms, and sanitation facilities for a substantial percentage of the population, particularly in rural areas. The aforementioned issues cause a range of health problems and infections which is a major cause of concern for the government of India. To address this issue, the government of India launched the 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyan' (SBA), that is, 'Clean India Mission', on October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2014. It is important to note that the main goal of the mission was to make the entire country 'open-defecation free' by the year 2019. Therefore, the mission is aimed at ensuring that every household in the country has a toilet, with particular emphasis on rural households. In this context, the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi has stated that the cleanliness levels of India have a direct bearing on the country's economic growth and

development, thereby inviting and encouraging participation in the 'Swachh Bharat Mission' from a majority of the population.

In addition to the above, the 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyan' is one of the largest social initiatives in the world because of the sheer size of the population of India'. The mission has increased the livelihood opportunities for the people of India and driven an increase in the 'Gross Domestic Product' (GDP) of the country. Furthermore, the mission has improved the global perception on India as a tourist destination. In this context, the aforementioned perception has registered a drastic shift from India being viewed as a country that places minimal emphasis on cleanliness and sanitation facilities to India now being viewed as a nation that places a high value on sanitation and hygiene. This has led to a rise in the tourism levels in India and increased the associated revenue to the government. In addition to this, the mission has made the roads of India cleaner and improved the levels of hygiene and sanitation infrastructure in cities and villages alike.

The infrastructure and awareness established by the 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyan' has led to a reduction in the levels of open defecation in the country. With the installation of toilets in rural households, the aforementioned levels have declined substantially. This has significantly reduced the health-related risks and vulnerability associated with open defecation. It is important to note that although the mission has made huge strides in achieving a cleaner and more hygienic India, there remains a significant gap between the goals of the mission and the actual implementation owing mostly to the sheer size of the territory of the country. Furthermore, the levels of hygiene in rural India, particularly amongst children, are still very low because of limited or no access to clean drinking water, inadequate sanitation infrastructure, and poor hand hygiene practices.

In addition to the inadequate levels of sanitation facilities in India, the waste management mechanisms across the country are also insufficient as compared to the requirement. It is important to note that around 60 million tonnes of garbage are generated in India on a daily basis and almost three-fourths of this waste is left undisposed and untreated. In this context, about one-sixth of the daily garbage generated in India is accounted for by metro cities. According to some reports, the urban regions of the country are estimated to produce garbage to the tune of 170 million tonnes every day by the year 2040. The rise in the levels of garbage and the poor mechanisms for its disposal are major concerns for the government of India. With no place to dispose the daily household waste, people sometimes throw it out on the streets, leading to piles of garbage accumulating out in the open. Such situations increase the probability of the outbreak of many communicable diseases.

Furthermore, practices like spitting on the roads, throwing garbage anywhere, not considering public assets shared assets and mishandling them, and urinating and defecating in the open are commonplace in India. All of the aforementioned practices further exacerbate the sanitation and hygiene situation the country. Therefore, the government may try as much as it can to make India cleaner and safer but until the citizens realise that it is their responsibility as well to keep the country clean and take full ownership of said task, it is going to be almost impossible to achieve the 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyan'. Hence it can be inferred that the successful implementation of the mission needs a collaboration between the government and the citizens. It is important to note that the mission can drive huge improvement in the levels of cleanliness and sanitation across the country and reduce the risks of various diseases and infections, thereby leading to a lower health care cost and a healthier population.

In the context of raising awareness amongst the public on the importance of cleanliness and sanitation, the role played by various forms of media cannot be ignored. Print media, electronic media, and social media are all instrumental to disseminating important information and influencing people to act in a positive manner towards the attainment of national missions such as the 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyan'. In addition to this, the media also

helps make people aware of important issues, thereby shaping public opinion and, in turn, driving real change in the concerned policy or system. Therefore, the media can use its power and network to raise public awareness and sentiment on the importance of cleanliness, sanitation, and proper disposal of waste. An aware population leads to a more aware and accountable government, leading to enhanced levels of commitment on the part of both on matters of national importance, including health and hygiene.

Furthermore, the media provides a voice to the public by giving their views a platform in columns that are based on interviews and surveys. This increases the participation of the people, albeit indirectly, in the policy making of the governments at various levels. Therefore, the media holds great power and responsibility, especially in the implementation of important campaigns. In this context, newspapers, which are considered windows to the common man's mind, are of paramount significance in spreading information and driving public opinion on a subject. This study is aimed at analysing whether the print media in the state of Rajasthan has effectively played its part in driving awareness amongst the population on the 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyan' and its goals. In addition to this, the study seeks to ascertain whether the coverage of the mission by the print media in the state is in alignment with the objectives of the aforementioned mission. To answer these questions, the study has applied the technique of 'content analysis' on the news-related data of two national dailys, namely 'DainikBhaskar' and 'Rajasthan Patrika'.

## 2. Literature Review

This section presents a summary of available and relevant literature on the subject of the study. In this context, a study conducted by Badra, S. Sharma Management in the year 2015 has shed light on the role played by media in disseminating information to the public and shaping public opinion and attitude towards cleanliness campaigns. The findings of the study have revealed that the situation of waste disposal in India's cities is alarming, with about 80 percent of the daily waste being dumped without treatment. The author has further observed that the various awareness and social media campaigns of the government have led to minimal actual impact in the hygiene related behaviours and practices of people.

Pradhan, P. (2017) has analysed the role of the media, a key player in the campaign, in taking the message to the people, and impact of the campaign on the public attitude towards cleanliness. The newspapers are expected to play a very significant role in educating and empowering the public towards cleanliness. Is the Indian print media effectively playing the role expected of it? Is the editorial space devoted to SBA in keeping with priority of the campaign? Is the media reporting in tune with the theme of the campaign? This study attempts to answer these questions through content analysis of four mainstream newspapers. The study revealed that media play an important role to develop positive attitudes towards cleanliness. It spreads awareness and changes other people's behavior towards SBA. Media has played an active role in taking the campaign to the door steps of the people from the urban to the rural areas. Newspapers, because of their wider presence, play a lead role in spreading awareness of sanitation to involve every individual from each sectors of the society. Newspapers give knowledge about diseases which spreads due to lack of sanitation and moreover informs people regularly about the ranking of the Swachh States. Newspapers continuously published SBA news daily to aware the condition of the garbage treated in market areas, streets, parks, roadsides, construction of public and community toilets and provide water facilities etc.

According to the study conducted by Poonam Singhal et. al. in 2018, various channels of social media have played a substantial role in generating awareness amongst the people on issues of environmental protection and the importance of cleanliness and the 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyan'. In this context, several studies have revealed that social media is a powerful

platform for raising awareness on various topics and inviting public interest and engagement. Furthermore, Dr. Pitabas Pradhan who published a paper titled 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyan and the Indian Media' in the year 2018, has stated that the newspapers in the English language have had more coverage of the news related to the 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyan' during the preceding two years.

### **3. Research parameters considered for the analysis of current study**

Following parameters were considered profoundly while conducting 'content analysis' of news-related data compiled from two of the leading Hindi Newspapers 'Dainik Bhaskar' and 'Rajasthan Patrika':

- ❖ News and advertisements linked to 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyan' (SBA) : Frequency Analysis
- ❖ Preference given to news and advertisements on SBA;
- ❖ Newspapers' page number where most amount of SBA linked news is published;
- ❖ The titles of pages concerning most with the news related to SBA;
- ❖ Various news columns covering SBA content to the great extent;
- ❖ News coverage on SBA with more photographic exposure;
- ❖ Different sections covering news mostly related to SBA on different pages of the newspaper;
- ❖ Published SBA Article's dimensions;
- ❖ Newstone about the SBA – Whether message is positive or negative.

### **4. Research Methodology**

Nature of the current research is descriptive since the focus of the researcher is to describe the characteristics of both the newspapers covering news or other printable material related to SBA. Majorly data has been extracted from various secondary sources i.e. news database of 'Dainik Bhaskar' & 'Rajasthan Patrika'. News and advertisements related to the 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyan' have been solely considered for current study.

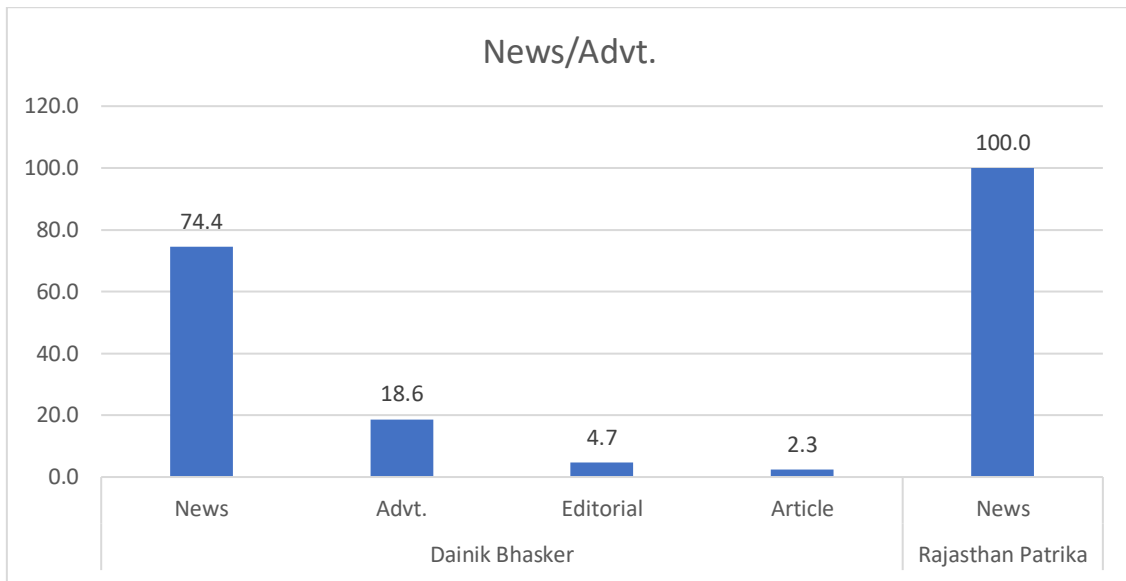
'Content Analysis' method is used to investigate the facts and figures. Various parameters defined in earlier section have been compared and appropriate inferences were drawn by comparing the content published in selected newspapers to draw conclusions.

### **5. Data Analysis and Discussion**

After collecting data, it is vital to analyse it properly so as to achieve and accomplish the pre-set objectives of the study. This section of the study presents required statistical analysis with all inferences drawn. The data collected in prescribed format and tabulated then for further analysis. The computation and final results are as under:

- ❖ **Parameter 1 –News and advertisements linked to 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyan' (SBA) : Frequency Analysis**

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The data of news published in 'Dainik Bhaskar' and 'Rajasthan Patrika' was compiled between January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018 to June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018. For the study the news and advt. on 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyan' were collected and analyzed. The findings revealed that between January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018 and June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018, almost three-fourths of the entire contents of 'Dainik Bhaskar' comprised news whilst 18.6 percent of the contents were advertisements. However, during the same period, the entire contents of 'Rajasthan Patrika' comprised news. Therefore, it can be inferred that 'Rajasthan Patrika' has performed better than 'Dainik Bhaskar' on this parameter.

❖ **Parameter 2- Newspapers' page number where most amount of SBA linked news is published**

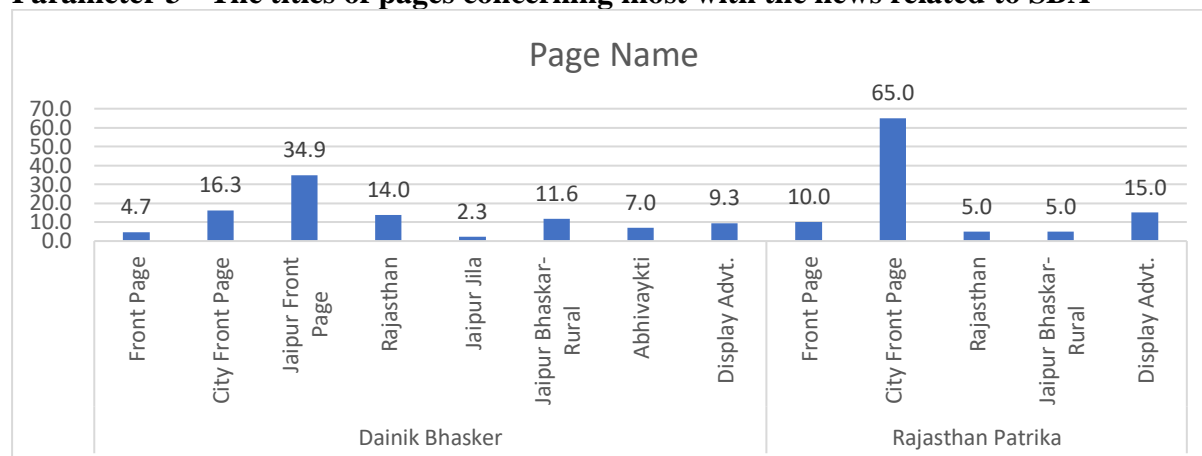


It is clearly evident from above graph that 30.2 percent of the news on the 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyan' (SBA) published in 'Dainik Bhaskar' was on the front page of the national daily. Similarly, almost 28 percent of the news on SBA found its way on page 2. The fact that more than 50 percent of the total published news on the SBA was on first two pages of the newspaper is a positive revelation because those are the pages that carry the highest readership and generate the highest impact in shaping the opinions of the readers. However, during the first half of 2018, 45 percent of 'Rajasthan Patrika's' total published news on the SBA was on page 13. In addition to this, pages 3 and 12 carried 15 percent of the news on the SBA. The fact that almost half of the newspaper's total news on the 'Swachh

Bharat Abhiyan’ was published on page 13 is not a positive sign because very few people read or pay attention to the latter pages of a newspaper. Therefore, the most important pieces of news should always be published on the front page or the pages following it.

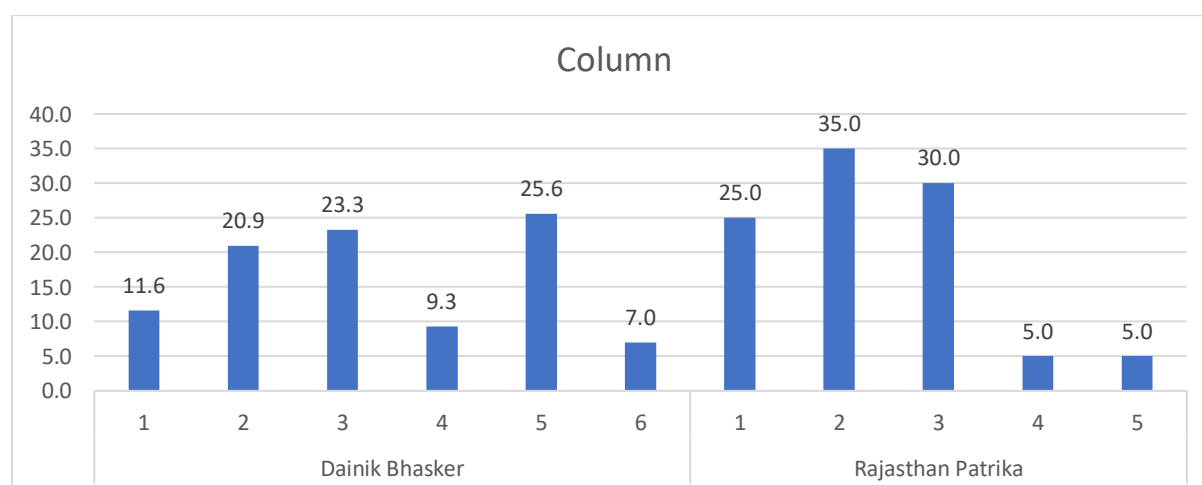
Therefore, it can be inferred that by publishing a majority of its SBA related news on the first two pages of the newspaper, ‘Dainik Bhaskar’ has performed better than ‘Rajasthan Patrika’ on this parameter.

**Parameter 3 - The titles of pages concerning most with the news related to SBA**



It is clearly stated from the above graph that ‘Jaipur Front Page’ carried almost 35 percent of the total news published by ‘Dainik Bhaskar’ on the ‘Swachh Bharat Abhiyan’ during the first six months of 2018. On the other hand, the front page of the newspaper carried less than 5 percent of the news on the SBA. Since the front page is the page with the most readership and impact, the newspaper missed a trick by not utilising it for news on the SBA. 65 percent of the total news published by ‘Rajasthan Patrika’ on the SBA was on the ‘City Front Page’ whilst the front page of the newspaper carried only 10 percent of the news concerning the SBA. This can be interpreted as being an opportunity missed by the newspaper because a majority of the readers are more likely to read the front page of any newspaper with high levels of attention as compared to the city front page which is meant to convey local news. Therefore, it can be inferred that both the newspapers have failed to make optimal utilisation of the front page to publish a majority of the news about the ‘Swachh Bharat Abhiyan’

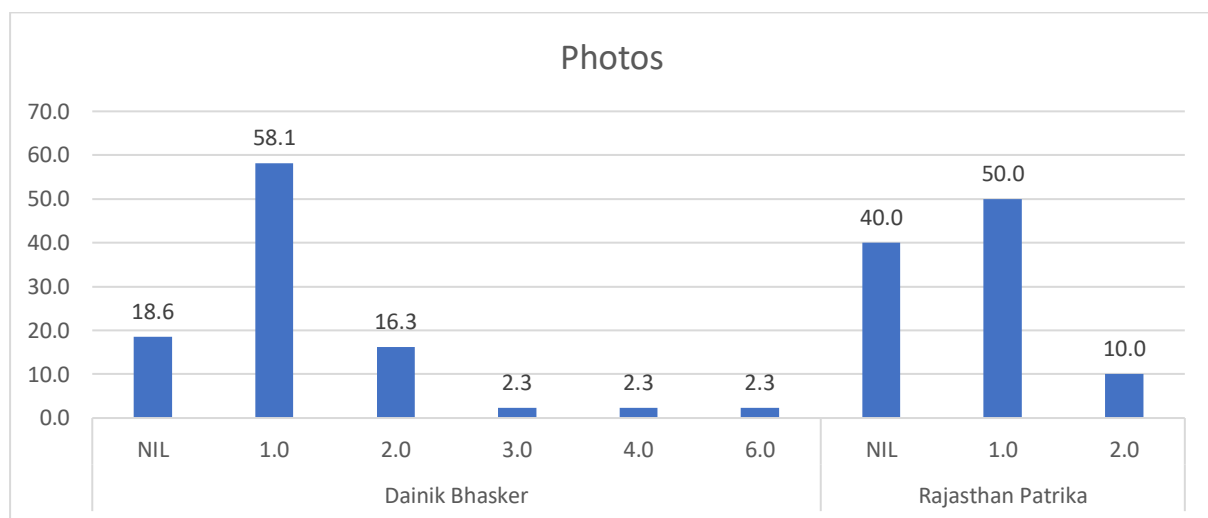
❖ **Parameter 4– Various news columns covering SBA content to the great extent**



As stated above, 25.6 percent of the total news published in ‘Dainik Bhaskar’ about the ‘Swachh Bharat Abhiyan’ was published in column 5 of a newspaper page. In addition to

this, only 11.6 people percentof said news was published in the first column of a page. It is important to note that since the first and second columns on a newspaper page are usually the most read sections of thepage; the newspaper’s editorialteammust ensure that the most important pieces of news are published in those columns.35% of the total news published in ‘Rajasthan Patrika’ on the ‘Swachh Bharat Abhiyan’ was published in column 2 of a newspaper page. In addition to this, a further 30 percent of said news was a part of column 3 of the respective page. It is important to note that by placing 55 percent of the news on the ‘Swachh Bharat Abhiyan’ in the second and third column of the respective newspaper page, ‘Rajasthan Patrika’ was able to ensure that the news would have high levels of readership and impact on the readers. Therefore, it can be inferred that ‘Rajasthan Patrika’ has made a much better utilisation of the most read columns on any newspaper page as compared to ‘Dainik Bhaskar’.

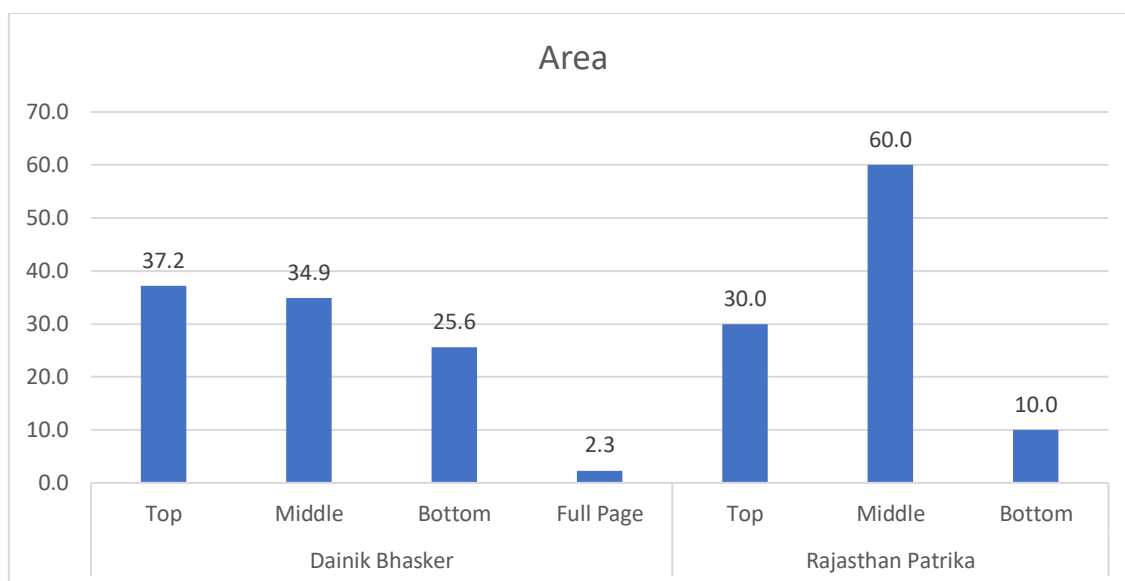
**Parameter 5 - News coverage on SBA with more photographic exposure**



As stated in the above table, during the first half of the year 2018, 58.1 percent of the total news published by ‘Dainik Bhaskar’ about the ‘Swachh Bharat Abhiyan’ carried one photograph whilst 16.3 percent carried two photographs. However, only 4.6 percent of the aforementioned news carried 4 or 6 photographs. It is important to note that pictures have a higher impact on a reader’s mind than words. Therefore, the newspaper must have more photographs as a part of the news.

Very significantly 50 percent of the total news published by ‘Rajasthan Patrika’ on the ‘Swachh Bharat Abhiyan’ carried one photograph whilst 10 percent carried two photographs. In this context, the newspaper must include more pictures with news to have a higher impact amongst the readers. On a concluding note it can be inferred that ‘Dainik Bhaskar’ has ensured higher impact forthe SBA-related news published on its pagesby including more pictures in the contents as compared to ‘Rajasthan Patrika’.

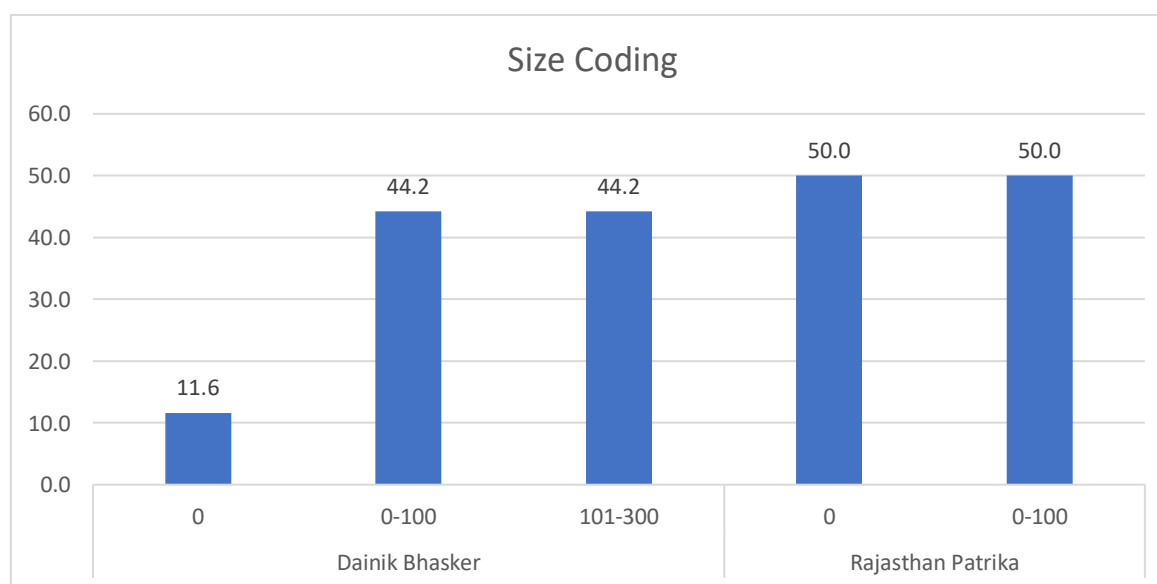
**Parameter 6–Different sections covering news mostly related to SBA on different pages of the newspaper**



It was found that 72.1 percent of the total news published by ‘Dainik Bhaskar’ on the ‘Swachh Bharat Abhiyan’ was placed in either the top or the middle section of each newspaper page. In addition to this, 25.6 percent of said news was placed on the bottom of each page whilst 2.3 percent of the news covered an entire page. It is important to note that by placing a majority of the news related to the SBA in the top and middle sections of the page, the newspaper increased the chances of said news being read and having an impact on the reader’s mind.

As a matter of fact, 90 percent of the total news published by ‘Rajasthan Patrika’ on the SBA was placed in either the top or the middle section of each newspaper page. In addition to this, 10 percent of said news was placed on the bottom of each page. By placing most of the news pertaining to the ‘Swachh Bharat Abhiyan’ in the top and middle sections of each newspaper page, the newspaper made the chances of the news generating readership and impact higher. Overall ‘Rajasthan Patrika’ has performed better than ‘Dainik Bhaskar’ on this parameter by publishing most of its news related to the SBA in the top and middle sections of each newspaper page.

**Parameter 7 – Published SBA Article’s dimensions**

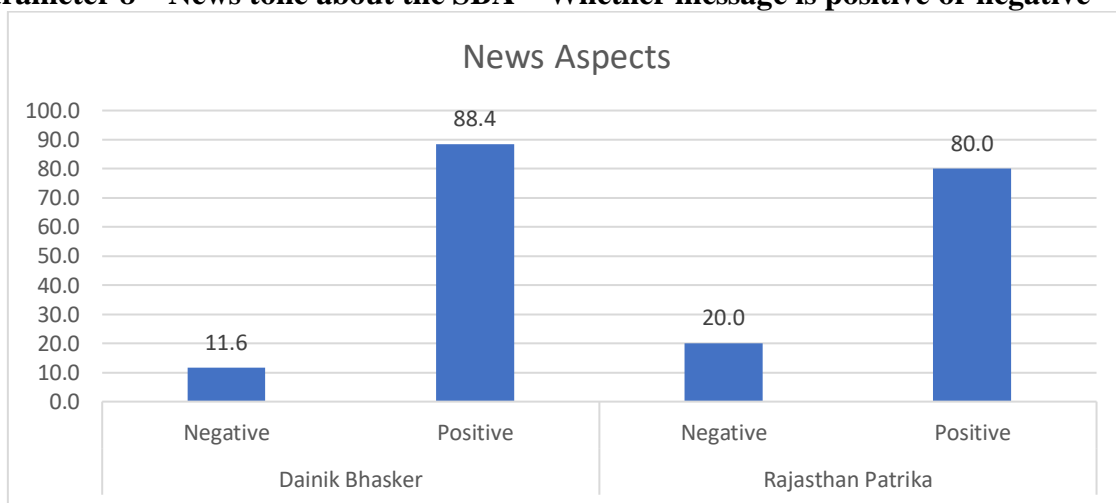




Researcher acknowledged that 88.4 percent of the total news published by 'Dainik Bhaskar' about the 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyan' was placed in articles that covered either 0 to 100 cm or 101 to 300 cm of a newspaper page. It is important to note that the area covered by an article has a direct bearing on the visibility, readership, and potential impact of the news it carries. By placing news in articles of substantial sizes, 'Dainik Bhaskar' has ensured higher visibility and impact for the news related to the SBA. 50 percent of the total news published by 'Rajasthan Patrika' on the 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyan' was placed in articles that covered 0 to 100 cm of a newspaper page. In this context, the newspaper could have placed a higher percentage of the news in articles that covered a good proportion of the area on each newspaper page.

Hence 'Dainik Bhaskar' has performed better than 'Rajasthan Patrika' on this parameter by placing a majority of its SBA related news in articles that cover a good proportion of the area on each newspaper page.

**Parameter 8 – News tone about the SBA – Whether message is positive or negative**



It was recognized that 88.4 percent of the total news published by 'Dainik Bhaskar' on the 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyan' reflected a positive tone, thereby helping shape the readers' opinions in favour of the SBA. 80 percent of the total news published by 'Rajasthan Patrika' about the 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyan' conveyed a positive tone, thereby placing the SBA in a good light and driving the readers to support and participate in the campaign.

Therefore, it can be concluded that both the newspapers have helped create a positive response and opinion about the 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyan' amongst the readers. However, 'Dainik Bhaskar' has published a higher percentage of its total news, conveying a positive tone on the campaign as compared to 'Rajasthan Patrika', thereby making it the better performer on this parameter.

**6. Findings of the study**

This section is aimed at summarising the findings from the data analysis conducted using the 'content analysis' technique. In this context, the aforementioned findings are listed below.

- ❖ 'Rajasthan Patrika' performed better than 'Dainik Bhaskar' by assigning 100 percent of its page space to news as compared to a corresponding 88.6 percent for the latter.
- ❖ 'Dainik Bhaskar' ensured better visibility, readership, and impact for the news related to the 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyan' by placing 50 percent of said news on the first two pages of the newspaper.

- ❖ Both ‘Dainik Bhaskar’ and ‘Rajasthan Patrika’ have failed to make optimal utilisation of the front page to publish a majority of the news about the ‘Swachh Bharat Abhiyan’. They have opted instead to publish a majority of the aforementioned news on the ‘city news’ pages.
- ❖ ‘Rajasthan Patrika’ has made a much better utilisation of the most read columns on any newspaper page as compared to ‘Dainik Bhaskar’ by placing more than 50 percent of its total published news on the SBA in said columns.
- ❖ ‘Dainik Bhaskar’ has ensured high impact for the news published on its pages about the ‘Swachh Bharat Abhiyan’ by utilising more pictures in the contents as compared to ‘Rajasthan Patrika’.
- ❖ ‘Rajasthan Patrika’ has placed a major proportion of its total published news on the SBA in the top and middle sections of each newspaper page, thereby increasing their visibility and impact amongst the readers.
- ❖ ‘Dainik Bhaskar’ has placed a majority of its total published news on the ‘Swachh Bharat Abhiyan’ in articles that cover a good proportion of the area on each newspaper page, thereby ensuring high visibility, readership, and potential impact for said articles.
- ❖ ‘Dainik Bhaskar’ as well as ‘Rajasthan Patrika’ have helped generate a positive response on the ‘Swachh Bharat Abhiyan’ amongst their respective readers.

## 7. Conclusion

After the analysis of the data revealing the news patterns of ‘Dainik Bhaskar’ and ‘Rajasthan Patrika’ on publishing the news pertaining to the ‘Swachh Bharat Abhiyan’ during the first six months of the year 2018, it can be concluded that both the national dailies have been effectively playing their part in disseminating the relevant information on the campaign amongst their readers. In this context, the newspapers have provided due weightage to the news related to the SBA on various pages and in the columns with the highest average readership.

Furthermore, both the newspapers have maintained a positive tone whilst publishing news on the ‘Swachh Bharat Abhiyan’ and created a positive response on the campaign amongst the readers. It is important to note that ‘Dainik Bhaskar’ has outperformed ‘Rajasthan Patrika’ on some parameters of this study whilst the latter has outperformed the former on the remaining parameters. However, both the newspapers have helped raise awareness on the campaign to promote cleanliness and sanitation facilities and practices across the country.

Therefore, it can be concluded that print media can be a powerful tool for disseminating information and driving awareness amongst the population on important issues. Hence all the newspapers across the country must take their role in such campaigns seriously and assist the government in the effective implementation of said campaigns. In addition to this, newspapers can also enhance the levels of government accountability in the implementation of such programmes by making their readers more aware of the promises and commitments made by the government with regards to the goals of said programmes. In this context, the combination of an aware population, an independent media, and a responsible government can make the nation progress at a healthy rate and attain sustainable and inclusive growth.

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