

Study The Coverage Of Women Farmer's Related News During Covid-19 Lockdown In Print Media (With Special Reference To Banda-Chitrakoot District Of Uttar Pradesh)

Dr. Ramshankar^{1*}, Dr. Rakesh Kumar Dubey²

^{1*}Research Officer, BJRC and Course Coordinator, MCJ Dr. B.R. Ambedkar University of Social Sciences, MHOW, Indore, M.P. Email- ramwardha1986@gmail.com

²Assistant Professor & HoD, Journalism and Mass Communication IIMT College of Management, G.B. Nagar, U.P. Email-dr.rkdubey.bharat@gmail.com

***Corresponding Author:** Dr. Ramshankar

*Research Officer, BJRC and Course Coordinator, MCJ Dr. B.R. Ambedkar University of Social Sciences, MHOW, Indore, M.P. Email- ramwardha1986@gmail.com

Abstract

This study reveals that the news frequency related to women farmer's stress and development is low however the news frequency of farmer death and suicide is more than women farmer's stress and development news. But still it stays back when compared to other news in the newspaper. Media is not interested to broadcast the news of agricultural events and development. Paper has tried to look at the situation of farmers in Indian media. It has apparently focused upon the condition of farming and agriculture as a profession in our nation. How such news is reported and whether the attribute of this report is negative or positive is a chief problem which is to be analyzed. This paper analyze the ideology of Babu Jagjivan Ram for women empowerment.

Introduction

The agriculture industry is a prime contributor to Indian economy. In the rural areas in which agriculture products are grown, the industry is usually the economic leader. Also in these rural and urban areas, newspapers remain the most local source of news. The current generation is developing apathy towards noble, age-old profession of agriculture. Riedmiller¹ (1994) argues that people who had their schooling in desert rural area, migrated to towns and therefore their urban schooling alienated them from rural life. This created a negative attitude towards agriculture, and gave them unrealistic expectations of white collar jobs available in the towns. The stereotypical representation of the farming community by the media has lasting impact on the members of the society. The farmers' suicide had started aggravating from BT cotton and others. Thousands of farmers commit suicide due to crop loss in our country. Every year India witnesses few thousand suicides citing crop loss and agriculture loan as the reason.

Media is the fourth estate of the Indian democracy. It has the power of cultivating image, creating the opinion and casting the behavior. Media in India is very powerful and has reached to the population at grass root level. Media brings changes to and for society. It determines people's thinking, change their opinion, and

¹ <http://www.uasb.in/> visit of this site 03/05/2017

shape social interaction. It brings new values in the system. All around the world, it is observed that individuals and villages that welcomed modern media have more modern attitudes, are more progressive, and have moved to modern roles faster than those who did not. Media are often controlled by a few elite in these countries. Agriculture and rural development programs are less important to them compared to entertainment programs or advertisements. The present scenario related to farmers' suicide news coverage is not different as it was looked with TRP or circulation. So this study is based upon intersection between the print media and farmer; it examines how newspapers report on the farmer issues.

This is a human tendency of man that he has to live in the group. It is the natural urge of him to be dependent upon others for his survival. And therefore he needs society for his existence. Society is what makes a human life civilized in this universe. Society is a structure whose roots are in an individual themselves. Each individual occupies a unique position in this society and this is termed as his social status. Social status not only defines the position or ranking of an individual but also the groups of individuals. These groups can be the communities of individuals sharing same culture, tradition, economy, lifestyle etc. In a society social status can be inherited as well as achieved both.

India is predominantly an agrarian society. There is a linkage between land and individual's social status. 70% of population in India lives either in the form of farmers or farm laborers. India is the country where landlessness indicates the poverty of rural areas.

Being a part of society every individual attains social status. Each profession is stamped with particular social status in the society. This paper specifically focuses on farmer's social status. Farming is a profession in India which is opted by seventy percent of citizens. These citizens are considered as the backbone of our nation. It is said that Indian farmer is poor. And thus the question arises 'why'? This is indeed a fact that a farmer's life is dependent upon several factors. Any single factor is not the reason behind farmer's such condition but various factors together contribute in this. Farmer's life is tough. He has to directly depend upon the nature, the economic factors, the social factors and the cultural factors as well.

Like many developed and developing countries India has also seen a decline in people adopting agriculture. The government estimates that in between 2001 to 2011 i.e. in almost a decade, farmers in India have declined by 9 million people and farmers now constitute less than a quarter of India's population. But the major question that arises is that is the information of farmer's activity, his condition and his achievements being circulated in the country. Has government taken any steps regarding control of this depletion? Or to what extent has media played role in convincing the entire public and government to turn their sights towards farming community.

This is the current situation that in almost all the agricultural states of our country the use of Oxen in ploughing of fields has ended. Only those who cannot afford to buy tractors plough their fields with the oxen. India's farming community is plagued through several problems. Few of these problems are caused by nature but few are caused by human beings. The problems caused by human beings are the societal conditions. Scarcity of capital is one of the major issues for farmers.

With the advancement of technology the need for capital increases and therefore it becomes obligatory for a farmer to take loan or borrow money from big land lords for the consistency of tempo of production. Farmer's borrow money from the money- lenders, private agents who take commission at very high rate and the traders. They charge them high interest but buy the produced grains and all kinds of agricultural produce at a very less price. And if there is poor production through any cause, the farmer falls into debt. And he does not find any single reason to escape apart from committing suicide. The reason is that our government has started providing more and more compensation to the families of farmers who commit suicide.

There are a lot of negative elements that play in ground when discussing about farmers and their conditions. If a farmer is not facing bad because of farmers then the monsoon will do that, and if the monsoon fails in doing so then definitely the money lenders will not foot back. Another factor that is a warm obstacle is the excess use of chemicals and if it also fails then the person who pays less for production to the farmer adds on in bringing a depressive stage for the farmer.

There is an appropriate connection between poverty, illness, needs of family and suicide when we talk of farmer's condition. A farmer can easily clear off the debt from banks as bank do not charge high rate of interest. But to stand in a queue for hours and fulfill several formalities of banks a farmer does not bother to

take loan from banks. The rather choose private money lenders and rich people of village to borrow money. And these money lenders charge a huge amount of interest from the farmers. This helplessness brings a farmer to reach the stage of committing suicide. Marriage, education and health, of himself and his family members act as a powerful drag for resources of an indebted farmer's.

The rate of farmer's suicide in many states is more than the general average. Maharashtra occupies the top most position in this. But these records are limited to the record books or reports of organizations who work for such communities whereas media should play a vital role in this scenario as well. ADSI (accidental deaths and suicide in India) reports and NCRB (National crime record bureau) reports evaluate the rate of deaths almost every year but it becomes very important how media portrays such information in its various mediums or whether it significantly does its duty or not. In 2014 around half of all suicides committed by farmers were in Maharashtra alone, and Telangana followed.

This news was to be the highlights of news channels, papers and several other medium of news. But it was not happen so. Things did not go accordingly and the usual format of notifying other news above farmer news was followed.

Such issues are routinely limited to census or evaluation by organizations for social welfare, group discussions or seminars, but it requires its space in media. It becomes so important because media is the watch dog and an ultimate source of revolution. Media in true terns reflect a lot of defects. Its irresponsibility and waywardness has taken it away from rationality. Issue of a farming community or any subaltern group is a sensitive issue and twisting of facts should not work here. The trend of portraying real issues as insignificant and non- issues as real issues is depleting media culture.

In a report of Ministry of Rural Development it was added that there is an immense need for a National Land Policy. This policy should be based upon master plans of Tehsil, District, Region and states. Under this policy the areas that are unfit or unfertile for agriculture should be used for non- agricultural purposes like industrial purposes. This will definitely add upon minimizing the demand of acquisition of land. Acquisition of land leads to landlessness and displacement of more than half of the farm population. This policy suggests an equitable method of honoring each farmer and his family by equal allotting of land to the marginalized population and with special focus upon marginalized women.

It is never late to learn something good as long as the life continues and this should also be followed by the policy makers, the media and the government. Our country needs to acknowledge the efforts made by several other agricultural countries for development of agricultural societies. This is very true that there are several negative elements that have depleted the profession of agriculture in all parts of the world and especially India as rural poverty is highest in our country. But there are countries like Germany where all negativities have motivated the German setup and they have looked upon it has several upcoming fresh opportunities. With this they have tried to solve the farmer related issues in their country. Foreign organizations want to save farming in India. Like, (PEAT) Progressive Environmental and Agricultural Technologies, a German Setup has been working with around 30,000 Indian farmers. When foreign setups are ready to work for the agricultural development then our country should also try to be capable of establishing such organizations or making public aware regarding the benefits of agricultural development and farm safety. According to the records of World Bank², the total land available for cultivation in India is 395 million acre but only 215 million acre is cultivated. Not only the government and media but even the general public must be aware of this fact and engage in utilizing the land that is left frittered.

Farming is also not untouched by patriarchy. Here women farmers work day and night. From the planting of the crop to its harvesting, women farmers work hard but do not get proper appreciation. If they look at the ownership of farming, they have very few. Yes, in some years, people are doing land in the name of women in the form of government subsidies, also because there is some exemption in the registration fee. Pictures of male farmers are also shown in media organizations on the day. The research is based on news coverage of farmers and women farmers. The agriculture is a prime contributor to Indian economy. In the rural areas in which agriculture products are grown, the industry is usually the economic leader. also in these rural and urban areas, newspapers remain the most local source of news.

² [https://m.yourstory.com/2017/02/peat/visit of this site 03/05/2017](https://m.yourstory.com/2017/02/peat/visit%20of%20this%20site%2003/05/2017)

The current generation is developing apathy towards noble, age-old profession of agriculture. Riedmiller³ (1994) argues that people who had their schooling in desert rural area, migrated to towns and therefore their urban schooling alienated them from rural life. This created a negative attitude towards agriculture, and gave them unrealistic expectations of white collar jobs available in the towns. The stereotypical representation of the farming community by the media has lasting impact on the members of the society. The present scenario related to farmers' suicide news coverage is not different as it was looked with TRP or circulation. Vahini⁴(2012). State that her research *Impact of mass media on the image formation of farmers among young generation: case study of farmer's suicide news coverage among Karnataka news channels*. Karnataka is the eighth largest state of India in geographical area. It covers around 1.92 lakh sq.km area. The major occupation in this state is agriculture. The 2011 population census implies that agriculture supports 13.74 million workers in Karnataka, of which 23.61 per cent are cultivators and 25.67 per cent agricultural workers, most of agricultural worker is women. This indicates that more than 67 percent population is engaged in this occupation. So this study is based upon intersection between the print media and farmer; it examines how newspapers report on the farmer issues.

Objective

To study the coverage of farmer related news in media.
To analyze the perspectives of women farmer related news in media.

Research Question

What is the ratio of women farmer's social status related news in media?
What is the coverage of farmer related news as compare to other news.

Research Methodology

Local context of study: The unit that has been analyzed is the columns of daily Hindi newspaper. Following purposive sampling of two newspapers that have been considered in the research are Amar Ujala and Hindustan.

Research Type- Descriptive research

Approach: Deductive approach has been used in the research.

Duration: The duration of the analyzed newspapers is four months, i.e. two months for each newspaper. For Amar Ujala newspaper the duration is 01/03/2020 to 30/04/2020 and for Hindustan newspaper the duration is 01/03/2020 to 30/04/2020.

Data type and source: Newspapers are considered as a secondary source and therefore data collected is also secondary.

Sampling: Sampling method used is purposive and the sample size for Amar Ujala newspaper is 5425 (columns) and for the Hindustan news paper is 7077 (columns)

Technique: The research technique used in this is content analysis.

Area of research: Banda-Chitrakoot of Bundekhand Uttar Pradesh.

³<http://www.uasb.in/> retrieved on 03/05/2017

⁴Mrs. Vahini.(2012). Assistant Professor, Department Of electronic media, Bangalore University retrieved on 19/04/2017 from http://www.uasb.in/yahoo_site_admin/assets/docs/366.35232924.pdf

Social status of the farmers- In ancient times in India three traditional systems of agricultural land tenure was known. Firstly the Ryotwari that indicates rights of property are held by the holder. In this system the rights of ownership were directly handed over to the peasants. Collection of taxes from peasant was done by British Government. Second was *Mahalwari* that indicates that there was unincorporated property ownership by community and third was the *Zamindari* system. In Zamindari system the Zamindar meant a man of land or the owner of the land. He used to live a life of king who ruled the territory. He collected taxes, solved the internal disputes of his territory. Indian farmer is divided into several categories and in its basis this economic and cultural status is also defined. In this way, the condition of farmers is not only bad, but the condition of women farmers is worse. She works in the fields but does not get any respect. Women Farmers are categorized into three types of farmers: 1. Farmers with their own land, 2. those who own land and agriculture resources, 3. Landless farmers (farmers working on control/ leased land). This is the true fact that usually working with these early adopters as leaders always has a pull effect on the other groups that is the wait-and-see group.

Farmers and Media - India has a primarily agrarian economy with about 70% of the population dependent directly or indirectly on agriculture. One would expect given such high dependence that a farmer must hold high precedence when considering the social hierarchy. However, it's striking that as reported by the National Crime Bureau of India, the number of farmer suicides in 2014 rose to about 5650. As stated by P. Sainath in his book *everyone loves a good drought*, 'Too often, poverty and deprivation get covered as events. That is, when some disaster strikes, when people die. Yet, poverty is about much more than starvation deaths or near famine conditions. It is the sum total of a multiplicity of factors'.

Misreporting and conspiracy have been made many times when analyzing the rate of farmer suicide and theorizing the issue. Those farmers who do not possess land of their own are not recognized as farmers. Their numbering is artificially lowered. Negative reporting in media has increased by leaps and bounds. Such reporting of farmer suicides will also be an encouragement and motivation for police to report such deaths as one.

Data Analysis and interpretation -Data was collected through the content analysis method applied in two daily Hindi newspapers of Banda-Chitrakoot District of Bundelkhand. First newspaper was Amar Ujala and second was Hindustan. The data was collected and analyzed for the months of March and April, 2020 in both the newspapers. The analysis of news coverage in both the newspapers is done in several ways that are shown in a table or graphical form below:

A comparison of two leading Hindi newspapers in Banda-Chitrakoot District of Bundelkhand		
	Amar Ujala number of news	Hindustan number of news
economic news	399	280
political news	2262	1783
socio news	1133	3715
sports news	616	879
entertainment and other news	943	369
farmer's suicide and death news	7	12
agricultural development news	42	21
Women farmer's related news	23	18
Total News	5425	7077

Table: Comparison of Amar Ujala and Hindustan news coverage

This table depicts that total news published in Hindustan daily is more than the news published in Amar Ujala in Banda-Chitrakoot of Bundelkhand. The data shows that in both the newspapers, Amar Ujala and Hindustan the maximum news coverage is of socio cultural news. At the second position is the coverage of political news. The coverage of entertainment and other news is more than the economic news for the month of March and April. And the lowest coverage is of farmer related news that depicts almost null coverage. Not a single newspaper of both has portrayed the news related to farmer suicide and Wmen and from the field of agricultural development.

A comparison of two leading Hindi newspaper in Banda-Chitrakoot District of Bundelkhand (%)		
	% of Amarujala news	% of Hindustan news
economic news	7.35483871	3.956479
political news	41.69585253	25.19429
socio news	20.88479263	52.49399
sports news	11.35483871	12.42052
entertainment and other news	17.38248848	5.214074
farmer's suicide and death news	0.129032258	0.169563
agricultural development news	0.774193548	0.296736
Women farmer's related news	0.423963134	0.254345

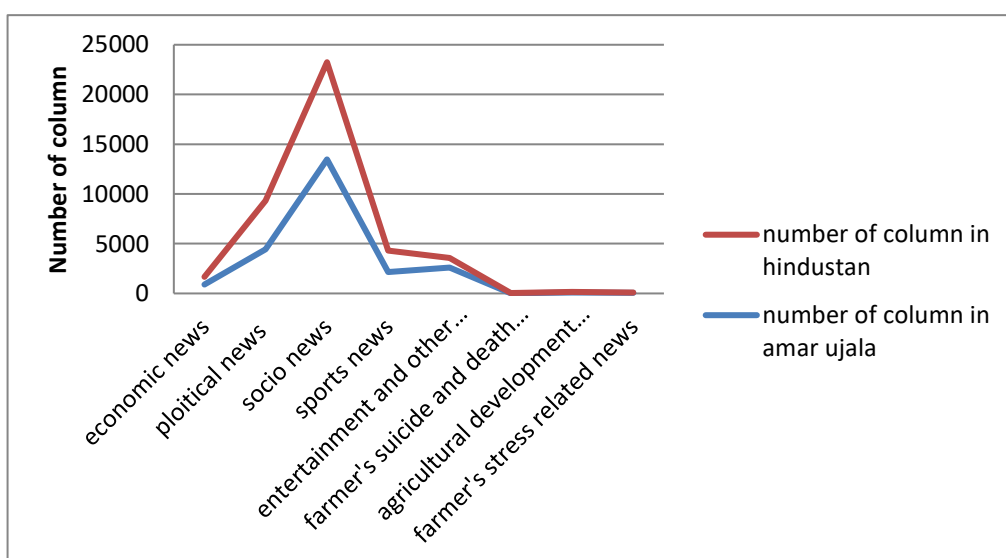
Table: Table showing the percentage of news coverage in two leading newspapers

The data shows that highest percentage of news coverage of Hindustan newspaper is of socio cultural news and in Amar Ujala the percentage of news coverage is highest of political news. The second highest news coverage in Hindustan newspaper is of political news and in Amar Ujala is of socio cultural news. Percentage of Sports news coverage in both the newspapers is almost equal. But the percentage of farmer news is negligible in both the leading newspaper.

A comparison of number of column in two leading Hindi newspaper in Banda-Chitrakoot District of Bundelkhand		
	number of column in amar ujala	number of column in Hindustan
economic news	907	752
political news	4447	4887
socio news	13475	9772
sports news	2151	2142
entertainment and other news	2617	954
farmer's suicide and death news	13	30
agricultural development news	101	56
Women farmer's related news	58	44

Table: Table showing number of columns given to different news categories.

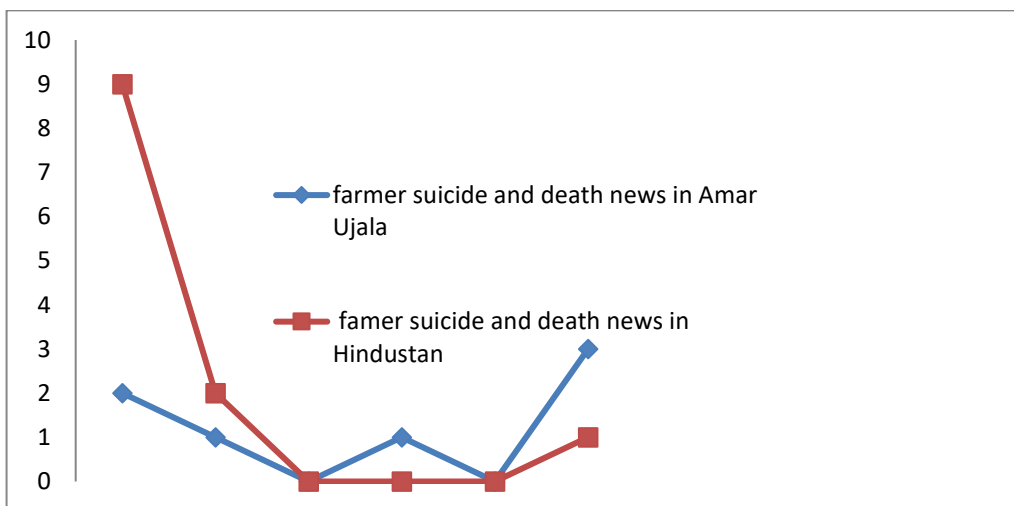
Maximum number of columns is provided to socio cultural news in both leading newspapers. The second highest column owning category is political news. It has 4447 columns in Amar Ujala and 4887 columns in Hindustan. Amar Ujala has given third highest columns to entertainment and other news but in Hindustan the third highest column ranking is of sports news. The minimum news columns has been given to farmer’s suicide and death news in both the newspapers, 13 in Amar Ujala and 30 in Hindustan. Agricultural development news has 101 columns in Amar Ujala and 56 in Hindustan. And women farmer’s news covers 58 columns in Amar Ujala and 44 in Hindustan.



Graph: Graph depicting column distribution to news categories

This graph depicts the columns given to different news in the newspapers. The maximum number of columns has been given by Hindustan newspaper to socio cultural news. Amar Ujala newspaper has also given maximum columns to socio cultural news but it is way less than the columns of Hindustan. The second maximum columns have been given to political news by both leading newspapers but even here Amar Ujala has given lesser columns as compared to Hindustan.

Farmer suicide news in Amar Ujala and Hindustan (1 march- 30 April 2020)



Graph: farmer suicide and death news from March 1 to April 30, 2020

The count of farmer suicide and death news from 1st of March 2020 to 30th of April 2020 is only 7 in Amar Ujala newspaper of Banda-chittrakoot of Bundelkhand and the count for similar news category in Hindustan newspaper of Banda-chittrakoot of Bundelkhand is only 12.

Farmer stress news in amar ujala and Hindustan (1 march-30 April 2020)

The count of farmer stress news from 1st of March 2020 to 30th of April 2020 is only 21 in Amar Ujala newspaper Banda-chittrakoot of Bundelkhand and the count for similar news category in Hindustan newspaper of Banda-chittrakoot of Bundelkhand is only 17. The coverage of farmer stress news is more than the coverage of farmer suicide and death in Amar Ujala and Hindustan both.

This graph presents that the coverage of farmer stress news is maximum in Amar Ujala that is in between the period of 12 to 16th of March 2020. Then from 25th to 30th of March 2020 Hindustan has covered the farmer stress news more than other days of March and April.

Conclusion

The lowest news coverage in both the leading newspapers is related to farmer, women farmers and agriculture news category. Farmer news category is divided into farmer suicide and death news, farmer stress news and agricultural development news. Media is always working to aware, to educate, to entertain for development of society and civilians of the country. But there is more clear evidence that in recent decade media has emerged out as an entertainer and political announcer only. In many regions changes in rainfall systems, melting snow and ice have altered the hydrological system, affecting water resources in the terms of quantity and the quality of crops. Changes in climate and in the agricultural policies are forcing farmers to commit suicide and the evil eye of nature as draught leads to increase in number of farmer death rate. The soul of Indian constitution says that the Indian democracy is “To the people, by the people and for the people” and is not going to get his fate in the subject of agriculture, crops and the farmers of India. In this way, the condition of farmers is not only bad, but the condition of women farmers is worse. She works in the fields but does not get any respect.

Reference and Bibliography

1. Bottomore, T.B. (1979) Sociology. George Allen & Unwine Ltd., London, 19-27.
2. Durkheim, Emile. (2014). Division of Labor in Society. Free Press New York London Toronto Sydney New Delhi edition.
3. Giddens, A. (2009) Sociology. 6th Edition, Wiley India Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 329-331.
4. Giddens, A. (2009) Sociology.6th Edition, Wiley India Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 87
5. Green, Marcus E. (2011). Rethinking Gramsci. Routledge publishers. page (68-89)
6. McQuail, D. (2002). *McQuail's Mass Communication Theory*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
7. Pitale, R.L. (2007). India Rich Agriculture Poor Farmers: Income Policy for Farmers. DAYA publishing house.
8. Sainath, P. (1996) Everbody loves a good draught. Penguin groups publication, New Delhi, 23-43 373-417.