

## CONTENT ANALYSIS OF PRINT NEWS COVERAGE ON RTI

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### Abstract

*"Media" refers to various means of communication. Media has a crucial role in everyone's life today. Media has done a great job of bringing transparency and accountability for combating the corruption. People also started realizing that corruption is the element to be eradicated. One of the most powerful tools in India that have a greater impact in the recent years to bring social change regarding corruption is the Right to information act (RTI). RTI enables every citizen to access the accessible information from the public body. This paper proposes to study the coverage of RTI related information and news in Selected National Newspapers.*

### Introduction

The impact of RTI since its advent in 2005, has given us new hope. The light at the end of tunnel has grown into a full blown torch of transparency held afloat largely by social activists and to some extent by a few dedicated government officials. An unexpected laggard who is yet to exploit the full potential of the legislation remains the Indian journalist. When the RTI Act came into force it was assumed that it would be the best tool in a journalist's hands. Sadly this has not been the case and social activists are filling in the gap left behind by journalists. They are taking a lead in acquiring information under the act and in giving it to the media. In media organisations the stress is on exclusives and deadlines. A typical day of a print journalist includes looking at rival publications to check if she has missed any story, getting fired by her boss at the morning meeting, visiting her beat and then reaching office in time to file exclusives as well as jot down spot news. Filing RTI applications, procuring documents after several appeals to the appellate authority and then going through them to first understand and then get a bigger picture means extra slogging. So she takes the easier way out and cultivates a source and gets the same information (even if half baked). She gets the by-line and the newspaper gets its exclusive. The story maybe short of proof and the "reliable source" may abandon the journalist midway but nobody thinks long term.

### Review of Literature

Jeannine Relly (2015), "Watchdog journalism: India's three largest English-language newspapers and the Right to Information Act", Available at: India's Right to Information Act (RTIA) has been described as one of the strongest laws in the world for access to public information. The preamble spells out its promise to expose government corruption. Given that the Indian news media is the largest in the world and has a storied history of unearthing public corruption, this exploratory study employed the normative theory of the monitorial role of the news media to examine the extent that the RTIA was used to uncover government corruption. This content analysis examined a census of 221 articles published in India's three largest English-language newspapers in the period after the RTIA was adopted in October 2005 and then five years later. Slightly more than 80% of the articles referencing corruption fell into four thematic categories: progress on implementing the law, public education about the legislation, the watchdog role of activists and other non-journalists, and a brief mention of the RTIA. During this period the English-language dailies reported their own use of the RTIA to expose corruption in 2% of the articles.

**M Manu. (2011), “A frenzied media fails to use the RTI Act”,**

In this paper writer express the concern over very limited use of RTI Act by the journalist. He said that, The problem, it seems, lies in the time and persistence needed in procuring and analysing the information. Take for instance the recent Adarsh Society Scam in Mumbai. The information sought by the National Alliance for Peoples’ Movement (NAPM) made a brilliant story which ran for several months and also had the desired impact. Any journalist would have loved to get a by-line on this story. NAPM began looking into the issue six years ago. It filed around seven RTI applications with the Mumbai collectorate, state revenue department, Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority, state urban development and environment departments asking for details of file notings, sale of land and environmental clearances. It had to wait for almost six months to get responses even though under the RTI Act, it is mandatory for authorities to reply within 30 days of receiving the query. Needless to say, the fight for release of information was diligently followed for months by members of NAPM. To imagine a journalist doing something similar seems implausible.

**Objective**

- To study the coverage of RTI related information and news in Selected National Newspapers.

**Hypothesis**

- News Based on RTI act gets very low coverage at front page.

**Methodology**

The methodology adopted for this study is content analysis. In print media, the content analysis of two National English dailies namely The Times of India and Hindustan Times were done and their coverage on RTI issues was analyzed for a period of three months and the analysis was done. A Sample size of 30 days of newspapers is spreaded over to three months as only one newspaper on a day.

**Content analysis**

- Frequency of News

Frequency of the news helps the researcher to understand how often the news item comes in the newspaper.

- Placement of News

The importance that a news item gets can be judged through their placements. All the news items on the first page are considered as the most important news of the day.

- Selection of Units of Analysis:

The units of analysis for this study are: news, articles, editorials and features.

**Data Analysis and Interpretation**

Content Analysis of Two Selected News Papers

The data is presented and analyzed in the following tables and graphs.

Table1.1

TOTAL NUMBER OF NEWSPAPERS	180
PUBLISHED STORIES	
THE TIMES OF INDIA	HINDUSTAN TIMES
51	27

The Times of India and Hindustan Times were the selected newspapers for this analysis, from both of these the researcher collected the 180 newspapers and out of that the above data reveals that The Times of India published 51 stories and Hindustan Times published 27 stories in. We observed in the span of 3 months The Times of India has devote more space in giving stories related to RTI act as compare to Hindustan Times.

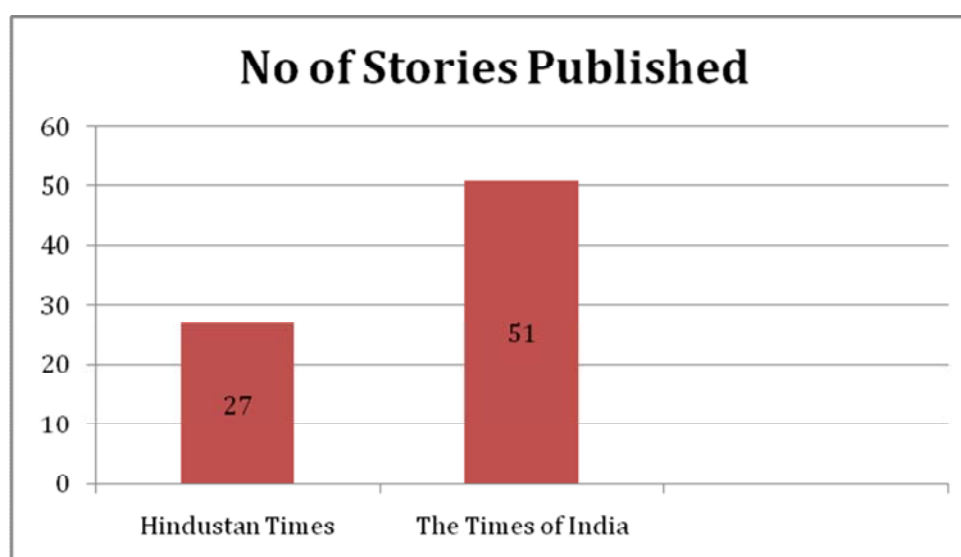
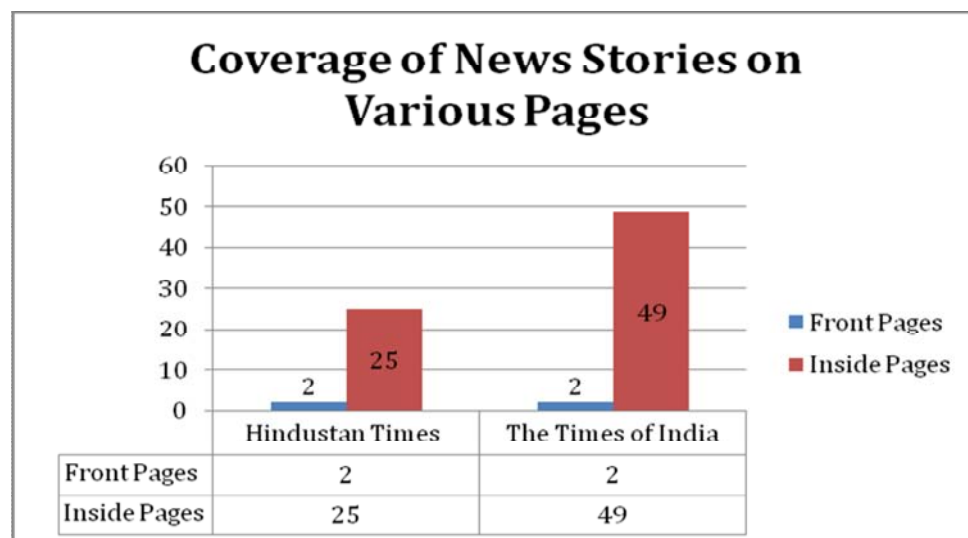


Table1.2

TOTAL NUMBER OF NEWSPAPERS		180	
COVERAGE OF STORIES ON VARIOUS PAGES			
THE TIMES OF INDIA		HINDUSTAN TIMES	
Front page	Inside Pages	Front Page	Inside Pages
02	49	02	25

The Times of India and Hindustan Times were the selected newspapers for this analysis, from both of these the researcher collected the 180 newspapers and out of that the above data reveals that The Times of India and Hindustan Times both has given 2 stories on front page which has placid on inside pages. On the other side Hindustan Times and

The Times of India has given space to 25 stories and 49 stories respectively in inside pages. The researcher observed in the span of 3 months both the newspapers devoted same space on front pages while The Times of India has devote more space in giving stories related to RTI act as compare to Hindustan Times on Inside pages.



### Findings

The main findings of content analysis of 2 major English newspapers i.e. The Times of India and Hindustan Times are:

1. Among both selected newspapers The Times of India gives more stories than Hindustan Times.
2. The Times of India published 51 News stories out of 180 Newspapers While Hindustan Times published only 27 Stories.
3. As far as front page is concerned, both the newspapers has published only 2 news stories related to RTI issue.
4. Findings proved that RTI related stories gets very low coverage on front Pages.

### Conclusion

Right to information enabled the media professionals to facilitate timely redressal of public grievances. Right to information enabled the media professionals to fight against injustices to the people. They are approaching government offices to collect information for different reasons. At present, RTI are becoming a regular part of content of mass media. Newspapers and other mass media channels are continuously covering different aspects of this act. At the same time, Media reports also indicate that all things are not going in right direction. The contents of mass media in reference to right to information throw a light on the various practical aspects of this act. Several websites have been developed to give various information about RTI. We can know a lot about the practical aspects of this acts by the stories published in various newspapers.

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