

**Press Coverage on Human Rights Issues:  
A study Two Hindi Dailies of Uttarakhand  
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**Abstract**

The history of mankind has been firmly related to the struggle of people against injustice, exploitation and disdain. The assertion of human rights is one among the outstanding manifestations of this struggle. Human rights have a special significance within the changing world situation, particularly within the Post World War democratic era. The Post World War era has witnessed the fast development of human rights culture. The General Assembly of the United Nations unanimously adopted The Universal Declaration of Human Rights on December 10, 1948. The domain of human rights is ever expanding in India. Many Laws, establishments and Organizations are enacted and established to confirm our citizens a better standard of human rights. The Protection of Human Rights Act was passed by the Indian Parliament in the year 1993 with an objective to protect the fundamental rights of the Indian individuals. It is in this context the study meant to assess the role of newspapers in the protection and promotion of Human Rights.

**Introduction**

The media coverage on human rights issues shows an increasing trend in recent years. In the news media content selection process, the issues related to human rights acquired an important position as a story subject. The media professionals not only covering the issues related to human rights violations but also they are taking keen interest about the organizations and institutions that are operating to protect and promote human rights. Several reasons may be cited for the increasing media attention towards human rights issues. Firstly, due to the fact that many governments and international institutions have integrated human rights principles into their policy frameworks. Secondly, a large number of human rights organisations have emerged from within civil society in many countries around the world. Thirdly, many humanitarian crises in the last decade have also caused media organisations to increase their coverage of human rights.

Though the news media coverage of human rights problems seems to be increasing and journalists entered into new areas, several human rights problems are still under-reported. Journalists rarely cover the problems that are less visible or slow processes. For some journalists human rights largely to mean political and civil rights, and therefore the importance of economic, social and cultural rights is ignored widely in their coverage of economic problems, together with, poverty, inequity and social and economic discrimination.

In India news media played an important role by exposing various scams, scandals, frauds, and many other cases of corruption. This has led to the initiation of enquiries and other processes of prosecution against the perpetrators of these crimes. In recent years due to the vigilant role of mass media some high profile people got punishments for committing crimes and atrocities on the people. At the same time media also suffers from some pitfalls; growing consumerism and materialism have adversely impacted our media. In the present market driven media environment, the social responsibility function of media is kept aside with ease when it comes to selecting profit making or saleable news stories.

**Objectives of the study**

Keeping in view of the above discussion the broader objective of the study was to assess the role of news media in protecting and promoting human rights of the common man. The specific objectives of the study were as follows: To measure the space devoted by the mainstream Hindi dailies on Human Rights issues;

- To measure the newspaper coverage on various issues related to human rights issues;
- To identify, the major issues relating to the Human Rights on which press pays attention and reasons behind them;
- To find out the status of Human Rights news in the priority list of issues covered in the print media and their reasons

**Methodology**

The content analysis method has been employed to track down the coverage of human rights news in mainstream Hindi daily newspapers. To represent the mainstream daily newspapers for the present study, the Dainik Jagran and Amar Ujala have been chosen because of their wide circulation, readership and reputation among the readers of diverse groups of people in the state. The study analyses the content of the selected newspaper to bring forth the trends in their coverage of human rights issues.

To find out the coverage of news related to Human Rights issues in the two selected Hindi newspapers in quantitative terms, the contents of selected samples of newspapers were analyzed precisely. Only selected issues of the sampled newspapers were analyzed by applying the systematic random sampling method. A total of 168 issues (84 issues from Dainik Jagran and Amar Ujala) were considered for analysis. In order to analyse the content on the issues related to human rights, the content was classified into the following three broad categories: 1) Social, economic and cultural rights, 2) Civic and political rights, and 3) Other rights (the rights do not fall under the above two categories). Further to give more focus on the specific aspects, the social, economic and cultural rights further divided into the following categories: Right to Food, Right to Livelihood, Displacement and Rehabilitation, Right to Education, Right to Education, Disabled, and Right to health. Similarly the civil and political rights further narrowed down to the following categories: Right to life, Torture, Harassment of women, Child labor, Child Marriage, Bonded Labor, and Discrimination. Finally the other rights sub-divided into the following categories: Migration, Environmental Degradation, Disaster, and Clamping down protests, and Poverty.

### Profile of Newspapers

Amar Ujala is the largest circulated broadsheet Hindi Daily published in the state. According to the Indian Readership Survey Quarter-4, 2010-11, Amar Ujala has maintained its leadership in the state with an AIR of 8.88 lakh, adding 57,000 readers in a year with a year-on-year growth of seven per cent. This paper was launched its new edition in Uttarakhand on January 1997 in Dehradun. And after seven year Amar Ujala established its press in Haldwani (Kumaun Region) on 28 June 2004. It contains 13 edition in Uttarakhand, of which six (Almora, Pithoragarh, Bageshwar, Champawat, Nainital and U.S.Nagar) are published from Kumaun region and seven (Dehradoon, Haridwar, Rishikesh, Vikasnagar, Rudraprayag, Kotdwar and Garhwal) from Garhwal region.

Amar Ujala publishes a 16 page daily issue with more than four colour pages in all its editions. It has diversified its content and has added colour supplements on four days in a week targeting special categories of readers with: Career Plus - Turning Point: tabloid size supplement published on Tuesdays every week on career related topics for the youths. Rupayan - Aapki Personal Friend: a weekly magazine published on Fridays meant for women. Teen World – Total Masti: A fortnightly special supplement for teens on alternate Saturdays. Rangayan – Bole to Direct Bollywood se: A Sunday special supplement on Hindi film industry.

Dainik Jagran is the second largest circulated newspaper published in Uttarakhand. With a growth of two per cent in AIR over last year and seven per cent over the previous quarter, the current AIR of Dainik Jagran stands at 6.19 lakh. It is also a popular newspaper in the state. The paper was launched its new edition in Uttarakhand on May 1997 in Dehradun. And after seven year the paper established its press in Haldwani (Kumaun Region) on 3 May 2004. The paper contains 13 editions in Uttarakhand, of which six (Almora, pithoragarh, bageshwar, Champawat, Nainital and U.S.Nagar) are published from Kumaun region and seven (Dehradoon, Haridwar, Rishikesh, Vikasnagar, Rudraprayag, Kotdwar and Garhwal) for Garhwal region. In order cater to the special interests of its readers the Dainik Jagaran publishes special supplements like Jhankaar, Yatra, Sangini, Josh, Nai Rahein, etc.

### Newspaper Coverage on Human Rights Issues

In total 84 sampled issues in a year, the Dainik Jagran published 52 news stories (12003 square centimeters), three editorials related to human rights issues. In addition the newspaper also covered 20 feature stories, 18 photographs and 35 letters to the editors. The overall coverage in terms of space in the newspaper in sampled issues over a period of one year was 20683 square centimeters.

**Table- 1: Space provided for the news items on Human Rights by Dainik Jagran**

Type of newspaper content	No. of Items	Space in sq.cms
News	52	12003
Editorial	03	627
Feature	20	5093
Article	01	184
Letter to editor	35	1452
Photograph	18	1324
Total	129	20683

Amar Ujala published 35 news items with 3963 square centimeters space related to human rights issues. Its coverage is less than Dainik Jagran. In addition, the paper published seven editorials with 2240 square centimeters, 13 features with 2524 square centimeters space and nine photographs with 844 square centimeters space in 84 sampled issues in a year. It provided 683 square centimeters space for 17 letters of readers to editors, which is also very less as compared to the Dainik Jagran.

**Table- 2: Space provided for the news items on Human Rights by Amar Ujala**

Type of media content	No. of Items	Space in sq.cms
News	35	3963
Editorial	07	2240
Feature	13	2524
Article	10	1682
Letter to editor	17	683
Photograph	09	844
Total	82	11092

The below table and shows the Monthly space for news items published by both newspapers i.e. Dainik Jagran and Amar Ujala for issues related to Human Rights. During the study it was found that the months of the year which have any grand festival or special day, the papers reduced the number of news because of heavy advertisement. Beside this, stories based on crime, celebrity, sensation, entertainment, sports etc. are given precedence over the stories related to Human Rights issues. In the month of June and July Dainik Jagran provided 1877 centimeter squares of space and 5677 square centimeters of space for human rights issues respectively. Whereas, Amar Ujala Provided 2790 square centimeters and 3258 square centimeters space for human rights issues in these months.

**Table- 3 Total space covered (Monthwise) by Danik Jagran and Amar Ujala**

Space covered	Dainik Jagran (in cm/sq)	Amar Ujala(sq.cms)
June09	1877	2790
July 09	5677	3258
August 09	1609	838
September 09	958	251
October 09	165	342
November 09	1571	295
December 09	172	935
January 10	1157	390
February 10	723	1151
March 10	1586	551
April 10	3129	516
May 10	2059	619
TOTAL SPACE	20683	11936

In the Month of August because of the Independence Day as well as festivals the newspapers under the study reduced their coverage on human rights issues. In this month Human Rights issues got only 1609 square centimeters space in Dainik Jagran and 838 square centimeters space in Amar Ujala. In month of September and October Dainik Jagran provided 958 square centimeters and 165 square centimeters and Amar Ujala provided 251 square centimeters and 342 square centimeters space respectively. In November Dainik Jagran increased space for human rights issues as it given 1571 square centimeters space. While Amar Ujala given only 295 square centimeters space on this. In month of December again it has shown the reduction in space for human rights issues. As Dainik Jagran given 172 square centimeters space and Amar Ujala given 935 square centimeters space for human rights news. In month of January Dainik Jagran dedicated 1157 square centimeters space and Amar Ujala 390 square centimeters space. Whereas, February month shown the increase in space for human rights news provided by Amar Ujala with 1151 square centimeters space. While Dainik Jagran provided only 723 square centimeters space for this. In month of March, April and May Dainik Jagran provided

more space for human rights news than Amar Ujala. As Dainik Jagran allotted 1586 square centimeters space in March, 3129 square centimeters in April and 2059 square centimeters in May. While Amar Ujala provided only 551 square centimeters in March, 516 square centimeters in April and 619 square centimeters in May.

#### Coverage of major issues related to Human Rights

In this section newspaper coverage is analyzed on the basis of issues under the Human rights, which is also show the space allotted for the different news items like news, editorials etc.

#### Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

The below table shows the space given for the different news items on human rights issues, under the Economic, social and cultural rights. Dainik Jagran provided 120 square centimeters space for news item, 507 square centimeters for editorials and 155 square centimeters for the right to food issue, while, Amar Ujala provided 312 square centimeters for feature items and 90 square centimeters for the letters for this issue. Total space given for right to food issue by Dainik Jagran is 782 square centimeters and by Amar Ujala is 402 square centimeters.

**Table-4: Economic, Social and Cultural Rights covered by Dainik Jagran**

Issues	News (sq.cms)	Editorial (sq.cms)	Feature (sq.cms)	Article (sq.cms)	Letter sq.cms	Photo (sq.cms)	Total space (sq.cms)
Right to Food	120	507	--	-	155	-	782
Right to Livelihood	1557	117	836		605	753	3868
Displacement and Rehabilitation	1557	-	80	184	44	168	2030
Right to Education	158	-	552	-	178	208	1096
Disabled	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Right to health	846	-	588		54		1488

In Dainik Jagran space dedicated for Right to Livelihood was 1557square centimeters for news items, 117 square centimeters for editorials, 836 square centimeters for features and 605 square centimeters for letters, 753 square centimeters for photos and 3868 square centimeters space in the sampled issue over the year. Whereas, Amar Ujala dedicated 1240 square centimeters space for news, 196 square centimeters for editorials, 750 square centimeters for features, 715 square centimeters for articles and 250 square centimeters for letters and 513 square centimeters for photos. Total 3664 square centimeters space was provided on the sampled issues by Amar Ujala.

Dainik Jagran dedicated total 2030 square centimeters of space for the Displacement and rehabilitation issues, in which 1557 square centimeters space was given for the news, 80 square centimeters for feature, 184 for articles and 44 square centimeters for letter and 168 square centimeters for photos. While Amar Ujala contains 357square centimeters space for news, 247 square centimeters for articles and 44 square centimeters for letters and 240 square centimeters for photos for Displacement and Rehabilitation issue.

There were total 1096 square centimeters of space dedicated for the Right to Education issue by Dainik Jagran, Which comprise 158 square centimeters space for news, 552 square centimeters for features, 178 square centimeters for letters and 208 square centimeters for letters. Whereas, Amar Ujala dedicated only 554 square centimeters space for this issue, which comprises 288 square centimeters space for editorial, 176 square centimeters for articles and 90 square centimeters for letters.

**Table-5: Economic, Social and Cultural Rights covered by Amar Ujala**

Issues	News (sq.cms)	Editorial (sq.cms)	Feature (sq.cms)	Article (sq.cms)	Letter sq.cms	Photo (sq.cms)	Total space (sq.cms)
Right to Food			312		90		402
Right to Livelihood	1240	196	750	715	250	513	3664
Displacement and Rehabilitation	357			247	44	240	888
Right to Education		288		176	90		554
Disabled							
Right to health	170			240		56	466

Dainik Jagran provided 846 square centimeters space for news, 588 square centimeters space for features and 54 square centimeters for letters and in total 1488 square centimeters space for the Right to Health issue. While, Amar Ujala provided 170 square centimeters space for news, 240 square centimeters for articles and 56 square centimeters for photos and in total 466 square centimeters for this issue.

Both newspapers have not given any attention on the rights of Disabled persons. Not a single story was covered by both of the newspapers under the study.

### Civil and Political Rights

Dainik Jagran dedicated total 587 square centimeters space for issues related to the Right to Life, which comprise 497 square centimeters for news, 36 square centimeters for letters and 54 square centimeters for photos. And Amar Ujala dedicated 1327 square centimeters space on this issue, which comprises 976 square centimeters for news, 306 square centimeters for editorials and 45 square centimeters for letters.

Dainik jagran published only news items on the issue related to torture with 203 square centimeters space in whole of the year. While Amar Ujala only published a letter to the editor with 35 square centimeters space.

In Dainik Jagran total space provided for the Women's Harassment issue was 1699 square centimeters, which comprises 1014 square centimeters for news, 641 square centimeters for feature and 44 square centimeters for letters. Whereas, Amar Ujala provided 688 square centimeters space for news, 727 square centimeters space for editorials, 736 square centimeters space for features and 45 square centimeters for letters and in total 2196 square centimeters space was provided for the Women's Harassment issues by Amar Ujala.

Issues related to Child Labor has got the total 543 square centimeters space in Dainik Jagran, in which 427 square centimeters space provided for features, 60 square centimeters for letters and 56 square centimeters space for photos. Amar Ujala dedicated 351cm/ sq total space on these issues, which comprise 108 square centimeters space for news, 143 square centimeters for article and 100 square centimeters space for photos.

Both of the newspapers have not covered any news story on the Child Marriage and Bonded labor issues. Whereas Amar Ujala Provided 443 square centimeters space for the Discrimination issue, which comprises 120 square centimeters space for news and 323 square centimeters space for editorials, Dainik Jagran has not given any attention towards this issue.

**Table-6: Civil and Political Rights covered by Dainik Jagran**

Issues	News (cm/sq)	Editorials (cm/sq)	Feature (cm/sq)	Article (cm/sq)	Letter (cm/sq)	Photo (cm/sq)	Total space (cm/sq)
Right to life	497				36	54	587
Torture	203						203
Women Harassment	1014		641		44		1699
Child labor			427		60	56	543
Child Marriage							
Bonded Labor							
Discrimination							

**Table7: Civil and Political Rights covered by Amar Ujala**

Issues	News (cm/sq)	Editorial (cm/sq)	Feature (cm/sq)	Article (cm/sq)	Letter (cm/sq)	Photo (cm/sq)	Total space (cm/sq)
Right to life	976	306			45		1327
Torture					35		35
Women Harassment	688	727	736		45		2196
Child Labour	108			143		100	351
Child Marriage							
Bonded Labor							
Discrimination	120	323					443

### Other Rights

Dainik Jagran dedicated 80 square centimeters of total space for Migration issue as feature items. While, Amar Ujala was not covered any news item on this issue.

**Table-8: Other issues under the Human Rights covered by Dainik Jagran**

Issues	News (sq.cms)	Editorial (sq.cms)	Feature (sq.cms)	Article (sq.cms)	Letter sq.cms	Photo (sq.cms)	Total space (sq.cms)
Right to Food			312		90		402
Right to Livelihood	1240	196	750	715	250	513	3664
Displacement and Rehabilitation	357			247	44	240	888
Right to Education		288		176	90		554
Disabled							
Right to health	170			240		56	466

Total 1361 square centimeters space provided for the Disaster issue in Dainik Jagran, which comprises 1019 square centimeters for news, 257 square centimeters for feature and 85 square centimeters for photos. Whereas, Amar Ujala provided 140 square centimeters for news and 288 square centimeters for article and in total 428 square centimeters on this issue.

**Table-9: Other issues under the Human Rights covered by Amar Ujala**

Issues	News (cm/sq)	Editorial (cm/sq)	Feature (cm/sq)	Article (cm/sq)	Letters (cm/sq)	Photo (cm/sq)	Total space (cm/sq)
Migration							
Environmental Degradation							
Disaster	140			288			428
Clamping Down Protests							

Dainik Jagran also provided total 468 square centimeters space for Poverty issue, which comprised of 384 square centimeters for editorials and 84 square centimeters for letters. Amar Ujala has not given any attention on this issue also. It is disheartening to know that both of the newspapers under the study had not shown any concern on the issues related to environmental degradation as well as on clamping down Protest.

### Findings of the Study

After careful analysis the content in the sampled newspapers, i.e Amar Ujala and Dainik Jagran the following assumption have been drawn. Both of the newspapers under study neither given adequate space nor the angle and framing of the stories were in favour of the afflicted persons. Among the two newspapers under study Dainik Jagran provides more overall coverage on human rights issues than that of Amar Ujala. However, a peculiar development can be inferred by making a comparative analysis between table1 and table2. The Dainik Jagran contained only three editorials with a space of 627 square centimeters whereas Amar Ujala contained seven editorials with a space of 2240 square centimeters. This shows that the editorial department of Amar Ujala which decides the direction and policy of newspaper is more concerned about human rights issue than Dainik Jagran. With this Amar ujala also contained 10 articles on the issue which is much more than of one article published by Dainik Jagran. Apart from editorials and articles Dainik Jagran provided more space for news, feature, photographs and letters to editor. Dainik Jagran published 35 letters of readers with a space of 1452 square centimeters whereas Amar Ujala published 17 letters of readers with a space of 683 square centimetes. It seems that Dainik Jagran welcomes its reader's views and wants to give more space for their sufferings.

Rights of disabled persons, child marriage, bonded labour, discrimination, migration, environmental degradation, clamping down protests are major and gruesome issues related to human rights violation in the state, but

both of the newspaper had not shown any concern about the issues as both of them had not contained any story whole of the year. Whereas, both of the newspapers have contained many stories regarding the harassment of women issues with an essence of sensation, entertainment and negligence. This shows that our hypothesis Proved to be right though with a caveat. The newspapers have given adequate coverage on human rights violations against women not because they are concerned about their rights but because of the sensational angle associated with those stories.

In both newspapers, most of news has been written in the same manner or routine type with same angle. The issues related to basic necessity of human being like water, electricity, employment crisis were became the news only when people protest against it, means both gives preference to Event base activities. Journalists have not taken any special trouble to raise these issues related to people with some new and fascinating angle. Along with this News based on big personality or celebrity get the preference in both newspapers. The news coverage on human rights issues by both of the newspapers mostly event or personality based rather than process oriented.

### Conclusion

Human rights and journalism are always complementary to each other. In fact, the emergence of journalism has been for the protection and promotion of Human Rights. From the beginning the media has taken great strides in solving and promoting human rights cases. But today's media is somewhat distracted from its basic social responsibilities. Reasons for this may be the lure of money and glamour as well as the unawareness of essential rights of human being to lead a free and fearless life in society.

Today media fails to connect with the social, political and economic policies, which are generally the root cause of particular happenings. This fact also seems to reinforce that media is purveyor of power instead of people. Whenever, situation needs to clear and sharp target on government policies, media seems to crosses on other ways. The most common way to create sensation on issue related to crime, celebrity and even on the very serious issue of concern. With this the media repeatedly diverts the attention of the people from the real issues to non issues. The real issue in state are gruesome crises of Water, Electricity, employment, basic, practical and equal education for all, medical facilities in rural areas, migration, disaster etc. instead of serious coverage on these issues with pinpointing the root cause, the media focuses on deceptive issues like new trends of fashion, glamorization of valentine, friendship days, astrology, cricket matches, etc, which are not associated with general people's life who need the food, water, home and a job to survive.

Media often face the allegation of being commercialized. Not only people but also some journalists believe the advertisements are given more importance in media now. Rather, the direction of newspaper is also determined by advertisements. Generally, the prescribed standard of 60:40 ratios (60%news and 40% ad) is being reversed by the newspapers, in the time of major festivals, Independence Day, republic day etc. On this basis, newspapers are full of ads and have very less space for news in the most of the days in a year. This reflects that media spends most of its time in gathering the huge advertisements than giving focus on the deep rooted issues related to human rights and their violations. The market driven media produce a heavy dose of sensational content. It often trivializes issues related to public.

Finally, we can sum up with Prof. K Nageshwar comment on this condition that "the brazen commercialization of media, the trivialization of the content, sensationalism etc., create a great disconnect between the media and the people. Thus, the mass media is devoid of mass reality. The media obsessed with the reality shows, personal and private lives of celebrities ignore the real lives of millions of people. Media suffers from a content disease called celebrity gauging and crime chasing syndrome. In such a media milieu, human rights coverage is an obvious casualty. The civil society should act as a watch dog. India urgently requires a media literacy movement. A critical evaluation of media should form part of academic curriculum of schools and colleges. A grass roots social pressure would only provide a human rights perspective for the media".

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