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Content Analysis of Environmental Articles Covered by English Dailies

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ABSTRACT

Newspapers constitute primary source of communication for general public on issues related to environment. Unlike in many other emerging economies, the press is free in India and the State does not exercise any control over its free and fearless functioning. The newspapers raise various environment issues such as climate change, global warming, air pollution, noise pollution, soil pollution, water pollution, natural disasters, nuclear issues, hydrology and overpopulation of human etc. Now- a -days, newspapers are used to provide the awareness regarding various environmental issues which are occurring in daily routine activities for the betterment of the society. The researcher has selected three Indian national dailies like Times of India, The Hindustan Times and The Hindu for her study. The researcher has selected the content analysis method for this study.

Key Words: Environment, Global warming, Climate change, English-language newspapers.

Introduction

According to the Government of India, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (2018) provide awareness regarding solid waste management through waste segregation and on the concept of 4Rs i.e. Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Recover among students through establishing 2- Bins in schools such as Blue Bin and Green Bin. Blue Bin used for dry waste like paper waste, Glass Waste, E- waste and Green Bin used for wet waste. The objectives of these programme is to support capacity building activities and to impart skills to students of Eco – Club on various thematic areas like Bio- diversity conservation, waste management and sustainable development goals for climate change related issues with focus of adaptation and mitigation and control of pollution etc.

Significance of the study

India is characterized by its diversity- each of its regions exhibits striking contrasts in physical features, biodiversity, soil, climate etc. Different classifications are necessitated by this diversity for demarcating homogenous regions. For instance, in respect of forests, the country can be stratified into 14 physiographic zones based on the forest types. The current issues related to environment especially of climate change, warming, air pollution, water wastage etc. have assumed global significance encompassing a range of factors including social, political, economic, and scientific etc. The present paper attempts to find out the various environmental issues covered by English-language newspapers such as Times of India, Hindustan Times and The Hindu in India.

As per the Envistats India 2018 states that earth is abundant with natural resources that develop on this planet using its surrounding environment. Few of them are used for our survival like land, water, air, rest of them like minerals, coal, gas, oil are used for satisfying our daily needs. From forests to wetlands, mountains to coastal shores and crops & livestock to minerals – each of these resources has its own importance.

Objective

To analyse the articles related with environment issues from the leading English dailies.

Research methodology

To fulfil the view point of objective, the researcher has selected the content analysis method for this study. For this research paper, three Indian leading English newspapers were chosen by the researcher i.e. The

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Times of India, the Hindustan Times and the Hindu. For data Collection, the researcher has chosen the month of December to study the content published in these newspapers regarding the current environment issues.

Time Span of study is December 2018

Major Findings

As per the article 'Cleaner air and tiger conservation need of the hour' published in The Times of India states that the Union budget turned out to be a big disappointment for environmentalists and wildlife conservationists, because they are hoping that environment policies will not be neglecting this time. India was among the bottom five countries on the Environmental Performance index 2018. People expected from the government to increase funds for the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) as well as more transparency in the process. Apart from this, reducing emission from transport sector should be prioritized in the upcoming budget. Separate funds should be allocated for increasing mobility through non-motorized and public transport in urban cities. Another disappointment of wildlife buffs, the allocation for 'Project Tiger' fund was limited to 350 crore for providing financial assistance to 50 tiger reserves. Conservationists are expecting substantial increase of funds for National Tiger Conservation Authority. The relocation package given by NTCA also needs to be revised. The human-wildlife conflict, livestock losses in carnivore attacks is growing throughout the country along with huge un-accounted crop losses. The tribal and farmers living around tiger habitats are suffering the most. There should be some provisions for aggrieved farmers and focus should be on centrally schemes to introduce group solar fencing projects in major corridors.

An another article published in Times of India about the air pollution states that air pollution is increasing day by day in Beijing. In China, air pollution may contribute to low levels of happiness among urban population, according to a study which combed through millions of social media posts from residents of 144 Chinese cities. For many years, China has been struggling to tackle high pollution levels that are crippling its major cities, said researchers from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in the US. The study, published in the journal Nature Human Behaviour, found that higher levels of pollution are associated with a decrease in people's happiness levels. Despite an annual economic growth rate of 8%, satisfaction levels amongst China's urban population have not risen as much as would be expected, researchers said. Alongside inadequate public services, soaring house prices, and concerns over food safety, air pollution — caused by the country's industrialisation, coal burning, and increasing use of cars — has had a significant impact on quality of life in urban areas. The air pollution is damaging to health, cognitive performance, labour productivity, and educational outcomes.

As per the article published as 'Organic food good for you, but not for planet' in The Times of India reports that Organic food has a bigger climate impact than conventionally farmed food, due to the greater areas of land required. Researchers from the Chalmers University of Technology in Sweden developed a new method for assessing the climate impact from land-use, and used this, along with other methods, to compare organic and conventional food production. The study reveals that organic peas, farmed in Sweden, have around a 50% bigger climate impact than conventionally farmed peas. For some foodstuffs, there is an even bigger difference such as organic Swedish winter wheat the difference is closer to 70%. The reason why organic food is so much worse for the climate is that the yields per hectare are much lower, primarily because fertilisers are not used. The researcher said that to produce the same amount of organic food, you therefore need a much bigger area of land. The greater land-use in organic farming leads indirectly to higher carbon dioxide emissions, thanks to deforestation. If one can use more land for the same amount of food, one can contribute indirectly to bigger deforestation elsewhere in the world.

According to the article published 'India at bottom of 2018 global environment performance index' in Times of India about the air pollution that India is Unable to improve its air quality, protect its biodiversity, and cut its greenhouse gas emissions. In 2016, the country had ranked 141 out of 180 countries. In 2018, according to the just released State of India's Environment (SoE) 2018 audit has slipped to the 177th position. India scored 5.75 out of 100 in air quality. India's disappointing performance and the gravity of the situation is further highlighted when compared with countries such as Switzerland and Japan which have scored over 90. Delhi is always in the news for its poor air quality. However, an analysis of the winter (November and December 2017)

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and summer (April and May 2018) air quality levels of 10 state capital cities shows that they too are in the dangerous grip of multi-pollutant crisis and are currently facing a severe health challenge. While in the summer Delhi had 65% days when poor and very poor air quality was recorded, in winters this percentage increased to 85. On only about 1 per cent of the monitored days in summer months was the air quality observed to be satisfactory in the city.

The ministry of Drinking water and Sanitation provide various policies such as Har Ghar Jal Yojana to supply the water in every household by 2030 to meet the sustainable goals. However, in 18 Indian states and UTs, over 82 % rural households. Under the Swachh Bharat scheme, 72.1 million individual household toilets have been constructed. Funds allocated for spreading awareness among people, crucial for success in rural areas, have been lying unused. The Central government, on an average, gave clearances to close to six developmental projects a day in forest areas. Overall, there has been a 146 per cent increase in forestland diversion for non-forest activities in the past one year with maximum diversions recorded in Madhya Pradesh, Telengana and Odisha, which together accounted for 54 per cent of the total diverted area. Adding to the woe is the increasing number of forest fires in the country – which have gone up by 125 per cent within just two years. The government, in this regard, has not only failed to utilise funds earmarked to contain forest fires but has also missed two NGT deadlines for coming up with a national policy to fight the fires.

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) was set up in 2010 for the number of environment-related police cases seem to be gradually decreasing. However, the number of court cases has drastically gone up. In 2016, the number of registered environment-related crimes stood at 4,732, while 1,413 cases were pending police investigation. Cases pending in the courts were at a staggering 21,145. This made up for 86 per cent of the total environment-related offences in the country. With the NGT forced to close its regional benches in 2018 due to staff crunch, the situation is likely to worsen. The number of cases being disposed per day stands at 9.3 on an average, according to 2016 data. At this pace, it will take six years for the court to finish the existing backlog. To make matters worse, 15 states registered an increase in environmental crimes between 2015-16 in Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra and Assam were among the states that witnessed the highest number of registered environmental crimes.

According to the article ‘plastic wastage’ published in Hindustan times that it should be the responsibility of companies to take back plastics and multi-layered packaging that they introduce. As Delhi observes yet another World Environment Day on June 5, this time the theme being ‘Beat Plastic Pollution’, NGOs, private companies and pollution controlling agencies have organised a flurry of activities to beat the plastic menace. But even more than two years after the Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016, came into effect, its provisions have largely remained on paper. The rule, which was notified by the union ministry in March 2016, had introduced several new features such as the extended producers’ responsibility (EPR) to pin responsibilities of producers and generators in the plastic waste management system and a collect-back system to deal with such waste. The only provision that the city has tried to enforce is the ban on polythene bags less than 50 microns. Following an order of the National Green Tribunal in 2017, the Delhi government and civic agencies had initiated a crackdown on polythene bags measuring less than 50 microns. Till date, apart from penalising a few traders and seizing a few tonnes of polythene bags measuring less than 50 microns from Delhi’s markets, little has been done to enforce the rule. The amount of seized polythene bags is, however, just a fraction of what is used and circulated in the national capital.

The only way to stop the plastic menace is a blanket ban. Else, it would be difficult to tackle the issue as vendors and local shopkeepers would continue to use them. It is impossible to visit every shop and vendor with a machine to measure if the polythene bags are less than 50 microns. As far as promoting the use of plastic waste for road construction is concerned, there are no such practices in place at present.

In the midst of news of the on-going environmental disasters and stories of human courage and resilience, it is important to remember that compromised decision-making and government faith in project proponents rather than the public have made us all defenceless against the perils of development. Floods have become a recurrent form of disasters in India. As has been stated after every such event, there is little that is “natural” about these terrible occurrences. Compromised decision-making on development and infrastructure

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projects have already wrecked the lives of rural and forest dwelling people. Mining and industries pollute their water sources and farmlands and prohibit their access to forests. Increasingly, environmental crises in urban areas remind us that disaster geographies are no longer distant from us.

As per the article on climate change published in Hindustan Times reports that the Paris Agreement of 2015 proved to be a game changer. It focused global efforts towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions as well as strengthening the ability of countries to deal with the unavoidable impacts of climate change. At CoP-24 in Katowice, Poland, world leaders have reconvened to strengthen the global movement for a climate resilient growth. Since the Paris agreement, developing countries like India have made a significant progress in meeting their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). This year's climate talks at Katowice focuses on establishing the "Paris Rulebook" that will set out to enable implementation of the Paris Agreement, as well as in mobilising capital needed to implement the agreement. This provides a window of opportunity for the private sector to step up and demonstrate its commitment towards positive climate action.

The private sector is increasingly taking heed of the strong signal sent by the Paris Agreement. According to an International Finance Corporation (IFC) report, 179 companies across all sectors have committed to set an emissions reduction target that supports the global effort to combat global warming. Companies are increasingly engaging in the sector, not just by means of investments, but also by building resilience into their own functions. To scale up the momentum, it's important for the governments to mobilise private capital. For instance, enabling reliable policies and eliminating counterproductive policies will help strengthen the investment climate. One such example is the Clean Environment Cess on the use of coal in India that discourages the production and consumption of coal by increasing its cost, while part of the government revenue from the cess is reallocated to support renewable energy development.

Another classic example of reforming a government policy from India is on amending the Electricity Act, 2003 that allowed up to 100% foreign direct investment (FDI) under the automatic route for renewable energy generation and distribution projects. Since the early 2000s, incentives offered by the federal government to attract FDI have allowed the country's emerging wind and solar power industries to lower their per unit generation cost, thereby making them cost-competitive with other fossil fuels. These forward-looking reforms are undoubtedly benefiting mitigation actions. However, there is a dire need of replicating this practice to adapt for improving the investment climate. More can be done to build a comprehensive robust environment to promote capital flows and ensure that climate considerations are integrated into sector policies. Strategic measures to internalise climate change as a risk, build competition and measures to promote investment are crucial.

The changing climate is disproportionately impacting the economically disadvantaged and slowing development; a disparity which is likely to increase as climate change accelerates. The enormous burden cannot be carried out by national governments alone and needs the buy-in and participation of the private sector. Mainstreaming climate-smart investment from the private sector will be instrumental to enable a resilient, equitable, and sustainable society.

As per the article on Govt. issues norms for minimum Ganga flow published in Hindustan Times state that minimum environmental flows for river Ganga that has to be maintained at various locations on the river by the Centre. Environmental flows refer to the acceptable flow regimes required to maintain a river in the desired environmental or predetermined state. Environmental flows refer to the acceptable flow regimes that are required to maintain a river in the desired environmental or predetermined state. The government aims to ensure that the river has the minimum required environmental flow of water even after the river flow gets diverted by projects and structures for purposes like irrigation, hydropower, domestic and industrial use. The draft Act addresses critical issues pertaining to Ganga on its cleanliness and uninterrupted environmental flow and provides corresponding provisions thereof. The existing projects which currently do not meet the norms will have to ensure that the desired environmental flow norms are complied with within a period of three years. The notification also states that the centre through the National Mission for Clean Ganga may direct the release of additional water in the river to meet special demand as and when required.

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According to the article published on impact of climate change in The Hindustan Times that the Indian government urged all countries including the United States to act like a global community when it comes to fighting climate change and not deny the real impacts many parts of the world are already facing. The IPCC report finds that limiting global warming to 1.5°C would require “rapid and far-reaching” transitions in all sectors. Global net human-caused carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions would need to fall by about 45% from 2010 levels by 2030, reaching ‘net zero’ around 2050. This means that any remaining emissions would need to be balanced by removing CO₂ from the air. It has also stated that estimates of global emissions reductions based on intended nationally determined contributions (INDCs) submitted under the Paris agreement would not limit global warming to 1.5°C, even if supplemented by very challenging increases in the scale and ambition of emissions reductions after 2030.

As per the article published in Hindustan Times regarding air pollution that the overall air quality index of Delhi was recorded at 392, which falls in the ‘very poor’ category and is just eight points from turning severe. An Air Quality Index (AQI) between 0 and 50 is considered ‘good’, 51 and 100 ‘satisfactory’, 101 and 200 ‘moderate’, 201 and 300 ‘poor’, 301 and 400 ‘very poor’, and 401 and 500 ‘severe’. The PM2.5 was recorded at 235. Fine particulates can be a matter of more serious health concern than PM10 (particles in the air with a diameter of less than 10 micrometres). It has also directed the pollution control bodies of Punjab, Haryana and Delhi to start criminal prosecution against agencies or individuals who do not comply with directives to check pollutant levels.

According to the article published regarding Climate Change in Hindustan Times that the rising temperatures, increased precipitation and rainfall have resulted in greater frequency of climatic events ranging from fires and floods to droughts and heat waves. In India alone, such events have been encountered at regular frequency in the last two decades. Air quality is a threat, vector-borne diseases are increasing, and depleting water resources are affecting agricultural production. The resultant direct and indirect impact on health, nutrition and economic development spans all ages and genders. Low and middle-income countries like India with the most vulnerable populations are likely to be worst-affected, given weaker health systems and poorer infrastructure. This translates into further widening of existing health and economic disparities.

Climate change resulting from growing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from human (anthropogenic) activities is a prime cause for global warming and at current GHG emission rates, rising temperatures can have potentially harmful effects on ecosystems, biodiversity and human health and livelihoods. In India, the major sources of anthropogenic carbon dioxide (major component of GHG) emissions come from combustion of fossil fuels, principally coal, oil and natural gas, apart from emissions from transport, industrial activity, deforestation, changes in land use, agriculture (including livestock) and waste management. Reducing our carbon emissions therefore becomes of prime importance. Other short-lived climate pollutants include black carbon, methane and ground-level ozone which along with other air pollutants and particulate matter from these same sectors combine to aggravate air quality and cause climate change. The health and environmental co-benefits of addressing air pollution and climate change are therefore increasingly evident.

Climate change impacts health. Air pollutants, including particulate matter, sulphur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, volatile organic compounds (VOCs), carbon monoxide, black carbon, methane and ozone can affect respiratory and cardiovascular health. The physiological impacts of rising temperatures causing heat stress, heat exhaustion and stroke are particularly harmful, with children, elderly and those with pre-existing illnesses being particularly vulnerable. Exacerbations of heart failure and acute kidney injury from dehydration can also occur during heatwaves. Heatwaves in Ahmedabad in 2016 accounted for a 43% increase in all-cause mortality. The change in geographical distribution of disease transmitting agents (vectors) owing to climatic conditions affect disease trends for dengue and malaria, with annual waves of dengue-related hospital admissions and deaths increasing the burden on the health sector. Drought situations affecting crop yield as well as nutritive value and nutritive diversity of food production can have deleterious consequences on the nutritional status of affected populations, compounding effects in already malnourished communities. Increased incidence of post-flood water-borne diseases occur both because of affected water supplies infiltrated with disease agents and poor sanitation and hygiene conditions during these periods. The mental health impacts of climate change including

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stress in post-climatic events and increased suicides by farmers in post-drought situations have also been documented in several regions.

According to the article published in The Hindu about the National Clean Air Programme that the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP), which was envisaged as a scheme to provide the States and the Centre with a framework to combat air pollution. The National Clean Air Programme is a pollution control initiative that was launched by the Ministry of Environment with the intention to cut the concentration of coarse (particulate matter of diameter 10 micrometer or less, or PM10) and fine particles (particulate matter of diameter 2.5 micrometer or less, or PM2.5) by at least 20% in the next five years, with 2017 as the base year for comparison. Maharashtra tops the list with 17 cities in the list, including Pune and Nagpur, while Uttar Pradesh is second with 15 cities chosen, including Lucknow and Varanasi. A city from Jharkhand, Meghalaya, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal too are in the list.

According to the article published in The Hindu about the air pollution that As an environmental scourge that killed an estimated 1.24 million people in India in 2017, air pollution should be among the highest policy priorities. But the Centre and State governments have tended to treat it as a chronic malaise that defies a solution. The deadly results of official apathy are outlined in the Global Burden of Disease 2017 report on the impact of air pollution on deaths, disease burden, and life expectancy across the states of India, published by The Lancet. Millions of people are forced to lead morbid lives or face premature death due to bad air quality.

India's national standard for ambient fine particulate matter, or PM2.5, is notoriously lax at 40 micrograms per cubic metre, but even so, 77% of the population was exposed to higher levels on average. No State met the annual average exposure norm for PM2.5 of 10 micrograms per cubic metre set by the World Health Organisation. If the country paid greater attention to ambient air quality and household air pollution, the researchers say, people living in the worst-affected States of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan and Jharkhand could add more than 1.7 years to their life expectancy. Similar gains would accrue nationwide, but it is regions with low social development, reflected partly in reliance on solid fuels for cooking, and those with ambient air pollution caused by stubble-burning, construction dust and unbridled motorisation such as Delhi that would benefit the most.

Sustainable solutions must be found for stubble-burning and the use of solid fuels in households, the two major sources of pollution, and State governments must be made accountable for this. The Centre should work with Punjab and Haryana to ensure that the machinery already distributed to farmers and cooperatives to handle agricultural waste is in place and working. A mechanism for rapid collection of farm residues has to be instituted. In fact, new approaches to recovering value from biomass could be the way forward. The proposal from a furniture-maker to convert straw into useful products will be keenly watched for its outcomes. A shift away from solid fuels to LPG in millions of low-income homes has provided health benefits, The Lancet study says, underscoring the value of clean alternatives. The potential of domestic biogas units, solar cookers and improved biomass cook stoves has to be explored, since they impose no additional expenditure on rural and less affluent households. Such measures should, of course, be complemented by strong control over urban sources of pollution. India's commitments under the Paris Agreement on climate change require a sharp reduction in particulates from fossil fuel. Fuels may be relatively cleaner today and vehicles better engineered to cut emissions, but traffic densities in cities have led to a rise in pollution. Real-time measurement of pollution is also lacking. There are not enough ground-level monitoring stations for PM2.5, and studies primarily use satellite imagery and modelling to project health impacts. Rapid progress on clean air now depends on citizens making it a front-line political issue.

Conclusion

Yes, definitely Indian English dailies published various articles related with environmental issues. The newspapers cover all the policies and strategies of government regarding the environment to provide awareness about the burning issues of environment such as air pollution, water pollution, minimum Ganga flow, plastic wastage, climate change, global warming etc. The people are also taking initiative in the activities like Swachh Bharat Mission, which is directly linked to a sustainable development. Over 85 million households now have

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access to toilets for the first time. Sanitation coverage is up from 39% to 95%. These are landmark efforts in the quest of reducing the strain on our natural surroundings.

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