

Covering Sports: A Content Analysis Of Sports News In Times Of India And Dainik Bhaskar

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Abstract: The sports columns in newspapers have become extremely popular. There is probably more universal reader interest in the sports pages, than in any of the other parts of the newspapers. Sports throughout the world have assumed an importance beyond the recreational aspect. As a result readers are demanding more & more reading matter on sports events that's why newspapers creating a major role in the propagation & promotion of sports therefore this study is helpful to find out space devoted to a particular sport and the importance given to National and International sports. This study primarily builds on the quantitative content analysis of selected mainstream dailies of Jaipur to track down the trends in coverage of sports in Indian main stream print media and bring out the comparative analysis between them.

Keywords: Sports, Newspaper, Comparative, Print media, Coverage

Introduction

Sports journalism is much more than the “toy box” or “sand box” of the newsroom. Similar to music, sports have great abilities of transcending cultures and societies. Sports are a global language that brings a stable and steady common ground. Print media coverage of the endeavours of performers played an important role to provide information about the athletes and get a feedback from the society. Aspect of the media's coverage of sport has been the way in which it has allowed the community to recognize the outstanding contributions of athletes. All commercial television, radio and public broadcasters offer significant sporting coverage as well. Sport is a factor or a media or an agent or a force which humanizes and socializes the individuals. He becomes social by virtue of socialization and through socialization we lead an approved way of life. Sport is the common activity for the whole world. World cup, Olympic Games and other International competition exhibits and reflects the various cultures of the nations. Olympic Games and world level matches and tournaments came to review for the achievement of high standard in human relationship. They will construct, reconstruct and review the respective cultures in the world.

Print media has become the part and parcel of our life today. Media sports became a new cultural fusion of sports with communication. Through media the feelings, values, priorities of sports are communicated with the general spectators. Print media helps us to visualize the happenings of everyday life in more realistic way that compels us to think deeply about the incident. We can't think a daily newspaper without its sport coverage. In such a way various popular and less popular newspapers are covering different intensities of competition and sports program, the related sports persons, their life, their performance. So this is quite important for all of us to go through the sports related news in newspaper.

The development of newspaper sports reporting, and the continued expansion of the sports pages, coincided with, and was at least partly the result of, the influence of television. The emergence of extensive sports telecasting meant newspapers spent less effort on recounting

the story of the game. Thus, 'sportswriters for newspapers have had to come up with stories that go beyond the action and scores'. Interest has grown in sports issues off the field, with more analysis, more interviews, and greater coverage of areas such as the business of sport. Newspapers no longer need to provide up-to-date results and statistics, as these are available through other media such as television or the internet. As a result, newspaper sports stories now provide a more in-depth coverage that is different, but complementary, to radio or television.

The sports pages have undergone continual change and expansion since the first reports and scores began appearing in eighteenth century newspapers, and most major Indian dailies have now introduced a lift-out sports section. This separation of sport from the rest of the newspaper has continued the expansion of the print space devoted to sport, while further reinforcing sport's importance to the newspaper and its equality with other forms of news. The one-time 'toy department' of the newspaper has progressed into a mature and legitimate news gathering section, and it can be argued that the sports pages are the most widely read segment of the newspaper. Lawrence Wenner capably summarizes the aim, appeal and success of the sports section, stating:

"The sports pages of the newspaper reflect upon the significance of the events that are so often broadcast. The sports pages ready the fan for the event. The sporting event is heightened in importance by 'insider's gossip' about the players, coaches, strategies, and historical context for the sporting event. After the contest has been played, the sports pages recap these same themes, placing the game and its heroes into a 'fantasy world' that both sportswriters and readers have had a hand in creating".

Review of Literature

According to a research study done by *thehoot.org* on coverage of sports in the Indian dailies it was found that there is almost a complete absence of reportage on Indian sports apart from cricket. The Hoot did a quantitative analysis of the coverage of Indian states among five English news dailies- The Times of India, The Indian Express, Hindustan Times, The Hindu and The Economic Times. Delhi editions of these papers were taken. The period covered was April and May, 2012. News coverage was tracked for 50 issues, in 28 states.

Thus, the overall sports coverage in national newspapers is skewed. It could be due to the IPL matches played during the two months; however it goes to show the tendency of these newspapers to choose a news item based on the popularity and the glamour associated with it. Readers with other sport interests are not left with any other choice. And there's a complete absence of sport reportage in Indian sports apart from cricket. With special features and guest columns by experts and cricketers, newspapers too have been following the same trend as the television news channels." (*thehoot.org*, 2012)

Shourini Banerjee (2016) in her paper, "Coverage of Women's Sports in Two English Dailies of Karnataka: A Comparative Study" observed that "The women sports are a neglected lot. The sports categories are abundant with news related to cricket. In spite of several laurels, other sports do not have that place in the news items of the newspapers. Women athletes are soaring high with their achievements, yet the news items do not have enough space for them. The most interesting thing to note is that the pictures of the women sports players are significantly low. Except National Games and few other sporting events, women athletes' pictures did not find a place in the newspapers. In the coming days, it is needed that sports of both male and female are given equal coverage. Media has enormous responsibilities in rendering proper coverage to all the news items.

Research Objectives

1. To analyse the trends in the coverage of different sports in the mainstream print media;
2. To analyse and understand the comparative coverage of sports in the two sample newspapers.
3. To find out the relative coverage of cricket vis-a-vis other sports, such as Football, Tennis.
4. To find out the relative coverage of IPL with regard to overall coverage and other sports.

Research Terminology

- **IPL:** The Indian Premier League (IPL) is a professional Twenty20 cricket league in India contested during April and May of every year by teams representing Indian cities. The league was founded by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI).
- **International:** All the sports or sports related events held outside India.
- **National:** All the sports or sports related events held within India other than those under city sports.
- **City:** All the sports or sports related events held within Jaipur and sports related events of state of Rajasthan reported from Jaipur.
- **TOI:** It stands for Times of India (Jaipur edition).
- **DB:** It stands for Dainik Bhaskar (Jaipur edition).
- **Others:** It includes all the sports and sports related news in the sports pages of the sample newspapers other than cricket, football and tennis.
- **Rest:** It includes all the sports and sports related news in the sports pages of the sample newspapers other than IPL.
- **Sports pages:** The pages with the heading Times Sports (Times of India) and Sports(Dainik Bhaskar).
- **Sports news:** All the news related to sports and sports events on the sports pages.
- **Main sports news:** The news occupying the top centre space in the main sports page (first page under the sports page section).
- **Sample newspapers:** Times of India and Dainik Bhaskar both Jaipur editions.
- **Time Span:** The data was collected for a period of 14 days from 24/04/2019 to 07/05/2019.
- **Counts:** Number of items under each head in a table.

Research Design and Methodology

This study primarily builds on the quantitative content analysis of selected mainstream dailies of Jaipur to track down the trends in coverage of sports in Indian main stream print media. A quantitative content analysis was conducted to identify the quantum and tone of coverage of sports. To represent the mainstream print media for the present study, two national level dailies i.e. the Times of India and Dainik Bhaskar have been chosen. The selection of the two newspapers was based on the arguments that these newspapers represent the widely circulated, popular newspapers, catering to different geographic regions and ideological interests. The papers also appeal to divergent intellectual classes. The study was conducted from 24/04/2019 to 07/05/2019 for a period of fourteen days. All the news related to sports and sports related events was taken into account. Only the news covered on sports pages were considered for selection.

Results and Discussions

The analysis of trends in sports coverage in The Times of India for the sample period has been quantified in the table 1. It is clearly evident from the data below that cricket has received the maximum coverage. Of the total 249 counts 118 were about cricket. Out of these 118 cricket counts 91 were IPL counts. It clearly shows that IPL got a major coverage as

compared to other sports. Cricket got 47% of the total coverage done by the newspaper. IPL alone got 37% of the total coverage which more than one-third of the total coverage and hence it is very clearly evident that Cricket is the most covered sport during this period. Football got the second most coverage during this period. Football got 29% of the total coverage. Out of the total 73 football counts 43 are international and 30 are national. This shows that international football receives a good coverage as compared to the national football events, it also draws attention towards the lack of major football events at the national level and lack of popularity of the most popular game of the world in India. Tennis got only 9% of the total coverage. But the most important revelation was that all the 22 counts were international and hence its clear that tennis at national level is hardly coverage worthy as per the newspapers. Others got 15% of the total coverage, out of this majority of the counts were international. In terms of National, International and City coverage, out of the total 249 counts 144 were National , 93 were International and City were only 12. It must be noted that since IPL was being played during this period, hence it received maximum coverage both in terms of National and total coverage.

**Table-1: Trends in Sports coverage in Times of India
 (dated: 24/04/2019-07/05/2019)**

S.No.	Sport	National	International	City	Total
1	Cricket	107(91)	4	7	118(91)
2	Football	30	43	0	73
3	Tennis	0	22	0	22
4	Others	7	24	5	36
5	Total	144	93	12	249

The analysis of trends in sports coverage in Dainik Bhaskar for the sample period has been quantified in the table 2. It is clearly evident from the data below that cricket has received the maximum coverage. Of the total 97 counts 66 were about cricket. Out of these 66 cricket counts 38 were IPL counts. It clearly shows that IPL got a major coverage as compared to other sports. Cricket got 68% of the total coverage done by the newspaper. IPL alone got 39% of the total coverage which more than one-third of the total coverage and hence it is very clearly evident that Cricket is the most covered sport during this period. Shockingly Football and Tennis got just 4% and 7% coverage only respectively. Others got 21% of the total coverage, out of this majority of the counts were international. In terms of National, International and City coverage, out of the total 97 counts 54 were National , 32 were International and City were only 11. It must be noted that since IPL was

being played during this period, hence it received maximum coverage both in terms of National and total coverage.

**Table-2: Trends in Sports coverage in Dainik Bhaskar
(dated: 24/04/2019-07/05/2019)**

S.No.	Sport	National	International	City	Total
1	Cricket	50(37)	8	8(1)	66(38)
2	Football	1	3	0	4
3	Tennis	1	6	0	7
4	Others	2	15	3	20
5	Total	54	32	11	97

Comparative Analysis of The Times Of India and Dainik Bhaskar

The comparative coverage study of the trends in the coverage of sports by the two sample newspapers reveals few very important points. They are as follow:

1. Both the newspapers gave maximum coverage to cricket. Times of India carried 118 stories and Dainik Bhaskar carried 66 stories about cricket or cricket related events respectively. The coverage of cricket by Times of India is nearly 1.8 times that of Dainik Bhaskar.
2. Times of India covered Football extensively with 73 stories whereas Dainik Bhaskar just carried 4 stories about Football during the same period.
3. Tennis followed the same trend as Football as Times of India carried 22 stories of tennis whereas Dainik Bhaskar carried just 7 stories. The coverage of Tennis by TOI is more than three times that of DB.
4. As for Others both TOI and DB carried 36 stories and 20 stories respectively.

Conclusion

The study of the two sample newspapers clearly strengthens the viewpoint that cricket is the most popular sport in India and also the most covered sport by the print media. Both the newspapers gave maximum coverage to cricket and IPL. The English newspaper, The Times of India (TOI) gave ample coverage to other sports too as it had two or more sports pages daily. But the Hindi newspaper, Dainik Bhaskar (DB) did not cover the other sports significantly, it carried only one sports page daily. Proper coverage of all the sports is important for the promotion of sports culture in the country. Since Hindi language newspapers have greater reach and circulation as compared to English, the Hindi newspapers should also focus more on sports coverage and increase the number of sports pages as well as give enough coverage to sports events of National and International level other than related to Cricket.

Besides, a look at the sports pages of mainstream newspapers reveal that the concept of sports journalism has evolved over time by incorporating innovative features in news presentation to make sports news continuously interesting. In response to the increase in market competition owing to advent of visual media like television and new media, news papers increased the usage of pictures and graphics to enhance the visual appeal. To make the news piece interesting and in attempt to drag the reader, sports pages widened the spectrum of news content related to sports. Controversies are investigated, off and on field news are gathered and reported to bring in spice in the sports stories.

Future Scope

Future avenues for research on newspaper sports coverage are numerous. This study has concentrated on two major Jaipur dailies, The Times of India and Dainik Bhaskar, over a 14 day period. A longitudinal study of major daily newspapers from each state of India, using an identical methodology to examine each, would permit the trends in newspaper sports coverage to be placed in a national perspective. At an international level, research comparing Indian newspaper sports coverage with newspapers published in other countries would help provide an understanding of what is unique in an Indian context, and reflect both common features and contrasts in the sports coverage of the selected locations. Further investigation of the sports coverage in the two sample newspapers, and of print media coverage of sport in other Indian newspapers, would build on the foundation provided by this thesis, and allow a greater understanding of both the impact of the press in creating a wider sporting community, and of the print media's effect on Indian sporting culture.

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