Chapter VI
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The findings of "Language Press and Social Issues: A Study of Bengali Newspapers in Cachar District of Assam" now may be summarized as follows:

Social issues may be defined as those issues which are related to important social processes. These issues are matters which directly or indirectly affect a person or many members of a society and are considered to be problems, controversies related to moral values, or both. Moreover, social issues are matters which directly or indirectly affect many or all members of a society. These include issues which are categorized under: i) corruption, ii) sexual harassment, iii) rape, iv) kidnapping and abduction, v) Communalism, vi) insurgency, vii) terrorism, viii) employment, ix) unemployment, x) women empowerment, xi) rape, xii) prostitution, xiii) poverty, xiv) female foeticide, xv) untouchability, xvi) communal harmony, xvii) violence, xviii) casteism, xix) crime, xx) domestic violence, xxi) naxalism and Maoism, xxii) peace initiatives

The placement or position of any news story is vital in attracting the readers to the news story. Placement also speaks of the emphasis given to any news story by the newspaper organization.

The data reveal that both the newspapers have more or less the same patterns of coverage so far as placement of news stories on social issues is concerned. While Dainik Jugasankha devoted 16.91% of its space in the front page to socially relevant issues, Samayik Prasanga on the other hand
devoted 15.95% in the front page to the same. In contrast, the remaining social issue-based stories that appeared in the inside pages are 83.09 % and 84.05% respectively in the two newspapers.

Inferences therefore can be drawn that both the two leading newspapers of Cachar district have the same patterns of placing social issues in front and inside pages.

On social issues that got prominence in both these newspapers, the data reveal that Dainik Jugasankha has given more prominence to corruption (23.14%) followed by terrorism (14.97%), crime (12.21%), Naxalism and Maoism (8.75%) and so on. Almost similar findings have been revealed after analyzing the news stories of Samayik Prasanga. Corruption (22.09%) tops the list in Samayik Prasanga, followed by terrorism (16.75%), Crime (11.50%) and Naxalism and Maoism (7.19%).

In order to find out the nature of coverage of the social issues, an attempt has been made to analyze those under three different categories: i) positive, ii) negative, iii) neutral. The basis of analysis of positive news stories were contents dealing with social cohesion, co-operation, stability, strength, any plan, programme or policy of the government for the benefit of the people or place, financial assistance, developments and growth pertaining to social subjects. The negative contents included those dealing with conflicts, death, murder, suicide, negligence, indifferent attitude of the government or any other group of individuals, instability etc. Neutral contents were analyzed by taking those news stories which reflected neither positive nor negative conditions.

The data reveal that 20.23% of news items in Dainik Jugashankha are positive in nature, 10.07% are negative in nature whereas 69.70% news items are neutral in nature. On the other hand, the analysis of Samayik Prasanga show that 17.30% of the news content are positive in nature, 10.38% are negative in nature and 72.32 % news items are neutral in nature.
The format of the news stories have also been qualitatively analyzed and have been categorized on the basis of i) hard news, ii) soft news, iii) articles, iv) features, v) editorials, vi) post editorials, vii) letters to the editor. **Hard news** includes news reports that are presented in an objective and dispassionate manner answering five Ws and one H about any event. **Soft news** are those news items that present a human interest angle to any news story with an element of the reporter’s subjectivity getting into the story. **Articles** are a special piece of writing on a particular topic written by an expert on the subject. **Features/ Human interest** include news stories which involve adventure, a disaster, or a triumph. Human interest is also involved when it depicts extra-ordinary persons in ordinary situations. Human interest stories also resembles anything that appeals to everybody not because of interest in the subject but because everybody shares human experience. **Letters to the Editors** are the letters or written materials on relevant issues sent by the public to the editors of the newspaper concerned. **Editorials** which form an important article in a newspaper express the editor’s opinion about an item of news or an issue. **Post Editorial** is an Opinion Piece which may or may not reflect the editorial policy of the newspaper and can be an invited or Syndicated Article. It actually reflects the newspaper’s commitment to plurality of opinion.

After comparing the data regarding format of the news stories it was found that 50.13% hard news are published in Dainik Jugashankha compared to 53.43% found in Samayik Prasanga. Amount of soft news published in Dainik Jugashankha is 28.20% compared to 27.41% in Samayik Prasanga. Features amounting to 7.93% are found in Dainik Jugashankha as compared to 8.55% in Samayik Prasanga. 5.27% and 4.42% of editorials are found in Dainik Jugashankha and Samayik Prasanga respectively. Post editorials found in both these newspapers are of 5.29% and 4.27% in Dainik Jugashankha and Samayik Prasanga respectively. Articles and Letters to the Editor are found in negligible amount as compared to other formats.

**Context** are dateline specific news stories published from various locations. It also shows the extent of dependence of newspaper organization on
external agencies. It has been categorized under: i) local ii) regional iii) national iv) international. Local news stories here refer to all those news stories that have originated from places within the three districts of Barak Valley. Regional news stories here stands for news stories originating from the entire northeastern region. National news stories are those news stories which come from any region of India and international are those news items that are datelined from outside India. The percentage of distribution of news stories in terms of its place of origin show that in Dainik Jugashankha 36.23% of the news stories of local origin as compared to 37.13% of Samayik Prasanga. Regional datelined news stories found in both these newspapers are 19.57% and 16.32%. National news stories amounting to 24.66% and 28.03% are found in Dainik Jugashankha and Samayik Prasanga respectively. International news stories found in both these newspapers are 19.54% and 18.52% respectively.

In quantitative aspect the extent of each social issue covered in these newspapers show that corruption (24291.45 column cm & 22062.86 column cm), terrorism (15714.91 column cm and 16726.29 column cm), violence (6298.56 col. cm and 7815.43 col. cm), Naxalism and Maoism (9185.40 col. cm and 7189.71 col. cm)- related news items have got extensive coverage in Dainik Jugashankha and Samayik Prasanga respectively. Similar is the case found to be after analyzing the number of occurrence of these issues in the period of study.

In the month of January, 2010, in Dainik Jugasankha, 3765.5 column centimetre of news was on terrorism. The total print space was 137088 column centimetre, non news space was 15238 column centimetre and newshole was 121850 column centimetre. That is, among the total newshole of January 2010, terrorism covers 3.08%.

In the month of February, 2010, in Dainik Jugasankha, 3528.9 column centimetre of news was on terrorism. The total print space was 127296 column centimetre, non news space was 13945 column centimetre and
newshole was 113351 column centimetre. That is, among the total newshole of February 2010, terrorism covers 3.11%.

In the month of March, 2010, in *Dainik Jugasankha*, 4586.65 column centimetre of news was on terrorism. The total print space was 146880 column centimetre, non news space was 16445 column centimetre and newshole was 130435 column centimetre. That is, among the total newshole of March 2010, terrorism covers 3.52%.

In the month of April, 2010, in *Dainik Jugasankha*, 3842.86 column centimetre of news was on terrorism. The total print space was 137088 column centimetre, non news space was 16250 column centimetre and newshole was 120838 column centimetre. That is, among the total newshole of April 2010, terrorism covers 3.18%.

Likewise, among the total newshole of January 2010, corruption covers 5.66% and among the total newshole of February, 2010, corruption covers 5.14%.

In *Dainik Jugasankha*, 5623.15 column centimetre of news was on corruption. The total print space was 137088 column centimetre, non news space was 16250 column centimetre and newshole was 120838 column centimetre. That is, among the total newshole of January, 2010, employment covers 0.44% space.

In the month of March, 2010, in *Dainik Jugasankha*, 324 column centimetre of news was on employment. The total print space was 146880 column centimetre, non news space was 16445 column centimetre and newshole was 130435 column centimetre. That is among the total newshole of March 2010, employment covers 0.25% space.
In *Dainik Jugasankha*, 64.65 column centimetre of news was on rape. The total print space was 137088 column centimetre, non-news space was 15238 column centimetre and newshole was 121850 column centimetre. That is, among the total newshole of January 2010, rape covers 0.05% space.

In the month of February 2010, in *Samayik Prasanga*, 3992.9 column centimetre of news was on terrorism. The total print space was 139536 column centimetre, non-news space was 12947 column centimetre and newshole was 126589 column centimetre. That is, among the total newshole of February 2010, terrorism covers 3.15%.

In the month of March, 2010, in *Samayik Prasanga*, 4020.9 column centimetre of news was on terrorism. The total print space was 155040 column centimetre, non-news space was 13622 column centimetre and newshole was 141418 column centimetre. That is, among the total newshole of March 2010, terrorism covers 2.84%.

Other social issues also find very less space in both these papers when their percentage in newshole is counted.

In editorials, letters to the editor and post editorials some amount of the presence of the social issues on which the study has been undertaken can be seen. But, still it can be concluded that both these newspapers have a long way to go so far as editorials and opinion pieces on social issues are concerned.

Preliminary analysis of data shows that there are lots of variations in space coverage assigned by the two leading newspapers to not only newshole but also various social issues. To check if this difference between these two newspapers is by chance only or statistically significant a paired ‘t’ test was conducted. The results of ‘t’ test for differences in average space coverage in the two newspapers by newshole and three most widely covered social issues. The results suggest that whereas difference in space coverage is highly significant the same for other variables is not significant.
The findings show that regional language newspapers are usually considered to be indifferent to most pressing social concerns and in the process neglect social obligations, likewise the language newspapers of this part of the country also do not give reasonable importance to various social issues. But these newspapers highlight different women-related issues in their reports. But this is not the scenario in the whole wide spectrum of social issues. This shows that language newspapers in this region are very less conscious of their social responsibility thrust upon them and their editorial policy shows the sign of being only to a limited extent aware of their responsibilities towards the society and readers. There have been many a occasion when newspapers have been known to be a little carried away by their proclivity to set an agenda on a particular issue, but in case of Barak valley language newspapers, it is found that both the newspapers have tried to show restraint in terms of pursuing any particular line on the issues discussed earlier. Both the newspapers are seen to have adopted a balanced approach in their lack of presentation of social issues are concerned and it also acts as a pointer to the existing competitive environment. On the whole though these language newspapers have been able to establish a healthy set of journalistic practices in an age of cut-throat competition but still they have a long way to go so far as coverage of various socially relevant issues are concerned.