Media Awareness on River Pollution: A Case Study on Muttar River

Ann George, Salma Sulthana.K, Sreena.K

Abstract: ***This study is to identify the initiatives taken by media (print/broadcast) to report the threat of pollution in Muttar River. All the news regarding this river will be collected from last 3 years' record. The research will also ponder into the study of the media coverage of the current issue and how effectively this news addressed the problem. The frequency and the relevance given by different media over the years will be analysed. The survey conducted will help to know, how this pollution is affecting the life of people living along the banks of the river. The quantitative analyses carried out in this study will create an awareness regarding the negligence of media on reporting similar environmental issues and also lack of attention given to the depletion of such renewable natural resources.***

Keywords: Muttar River, Media coverage, Survey, Awareness, Pollution

I. INTRODUCTION

Water is the most important aspect of life. Water is life for some species while source of living for others. Water pollution is caused by too much of human involvement. It has bewildered the nature and the animals, making itself real leading worldwide cause of deaths and diseases. What we are doing and what we have done now, with such an important component of survival is disgusting. Almost 71% of Earth is covered with water. In developing countries, 70% of water sources are polluted due to dumping of untreated sewage and industrial wastes. About 96.5% of the water is covered by seas and rivers. While groundwater is almost 1.7% and the freshwater in rivers and lakes in less than 0.3%. In a country like India, with 29 states, Kerala alone has around 44 rivers. Most of them are almost dead, deducing their stretch due to human involvement for more land or budget keeping missions like industries, buildings etc. and some are dried out because of lack of rainfall or cutting down their tributaries for other purposes. Another major reason is pollution. The unwanted chemicals cause hyacinths and also accelerate growth of algae. Muttar River is an extremely polluted tributary of Periyar river. The river flows with 12 kilometres of length and 50 metres width. It originates from Cheranallor taking up, all the industrial as well as household wastes from main cities like Edapally, Kalamaserry etc. The Edapally canal carries all the wastes to Muttar river.

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The aquatic life has become unsustainable. The river is deducing its width. This river also has historical importance but it seems to ebb away with the pollution. The numerous industries surrounding the river are the major source of pollution. They dump all the chemical, medical as well as food waste, which has even darkened the colour of river to black colour.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

There are many research works carried out to check out pollution in natural water bodies throughout the globe.

Trivedy J.R. et. al., 1992 mentioned in their study that most of the cities and towns have come into being along the banks of rivers because of its overuse. But indiscriminate disposal of sewage and industrial wastes are polluting rivers. A survey carried out by the Centre of Resources Development and Management (CWRDM) has disclosed about the Impingement of saline water and disposing of solid waste. This has led to the erosion of water quality in Kottayam and Pathanamthitta dist. Surface water samples gathered from all the 18 locations in the river basin showed very bad quality. Wastes from hotels, houses, shops and construction sites is being introduced into the Manimala river at several locations. The percentage of Escherichia coliand faecal streptococci bacteria are very high in the post-monsoon season. Biological analysis of water exemplification showed high level of kelp pollution.

A newspaper article depicted that contaminated water from Punjab is a major cause of concern for the people in rich agricultural district of Rajasthan. Water-borne diseases are common in the region. In areas such as, Srikaranpur, Sadulshahar, Anoopgarh and Suratgarh, people allege that politicians have not paid any heed to the problem. While, the NGT noted on 20 September, 2018 that in the assessment of Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), there were 351 polluted river stretches in the country, in which the biological oxygen demand (BOD) content is more than 3mg/L.

Y. Sharma (1997), in his study "The Ganga River" looked over that how the holy river is getting polluted and how long the Ganga Action plan helped in resolving the pollution problem. Deforestation and urbanization are two factors contributing to pollution. Agricultural run offs containing remnants of harmful pesticides and fertilizers, animal carcasses, half burned and unburned human corpses thrown into the river and mass bathing and ritualistic practices are the other factors.

Delhi's wastewater streams are the main cause of effluents in the Yamuna, making the water of the river unsuitable for any use. Nearly half of Delhi's sewage water runs into the river completely untreated. *"Down to Earth"* magazine revealed that pollution in the Lidder river in Pahalgam, the base camp of pilgrims going to the Amarnath Cave in Jammu and Kashmir is rising at its peak. The major polluters of the river are the pilgrims. They generate tonnes of waste daily and dump garbage, sewage onto it. Excrement from hotels, camps and local residential areas are directly discharged into open drains, which flow onto to Lidder river.

Rama Rao, et al (2006) in the article "Pollution through Aqua Culture", Kolleru Wildlife Sanctuary, one of the Asia's largest fresh water lake made clear linkage between human involvement and the ruination of environmental balance. The complication with the aquaculture is that, it needs saline water, chemical fertilizer, dung, chicken wastes etc. Once the reaping is over, this water stagnates and pollutes rest of water. It resulted in frequent fish kills, lack of drinking water and poisons ground water around the lake in Krishna and West Godavari districts of Andhra Pradesh. Another study by *Gowda TPH* showed the existence of two dissolved oxygen sags, one is due to a high degree of nitrification and the other is mainly due to the collaboration of all the dissolved oxygen sinks.*Bilgrami (1991)* reported the biological description of River Ganga. In the information it is clear about the biological community between Rishikesh and Kanpur along the river bank is really insufficient.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Theoretical Framework

Pollution is adding some undesirable elements into the environment, physically, chemically or biologically that causes adverse effects on it. In whole, there are four types of pollution, i.e., air pollution, water pollution, land pollution and noise pollution. Water pollution, in the present world has reached a catastrophic level. Soon, there won't be any freshwater left. The wastes like sewage, garbage, liquid wastes from households, agricultural lands, factories, oil spills and other solid wastes are also being dumped into waterbodies. The situation of the waterbodies now is very crucial.

Research Design

Quantitative analysis will be done by conducting surveys amongst the people living in the banks of the river, or around the area. Questions will be designated, in the sense, to check the media involvement and negligence. Content analysis will be conducted on articles to ponder into significance of the reports in terms of its effectiveness and impact.

Objectives

To find out media involvement in showing up Muttar river pollution.

Research Questions

Is media much concerned about the environmental issues?
Has government worked well to save the Muttar river?
Are there any health complications in the area due to Muttar river pollution?

Hypothesis

Media isn't much concerned about environmental issues.
Government isn't working in progress to rescue the Muttar river.

The situation of the Muttar river is arising health issues among the natives.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS ANDINTERPRETATION

Frequency Table

The frequency table determine the percentage analysis of the questionnaire. For the survey 100 samples were taken. All of them live in the area besides the bank itself. Out of those 100 samples, 64 were males and 36 were females.

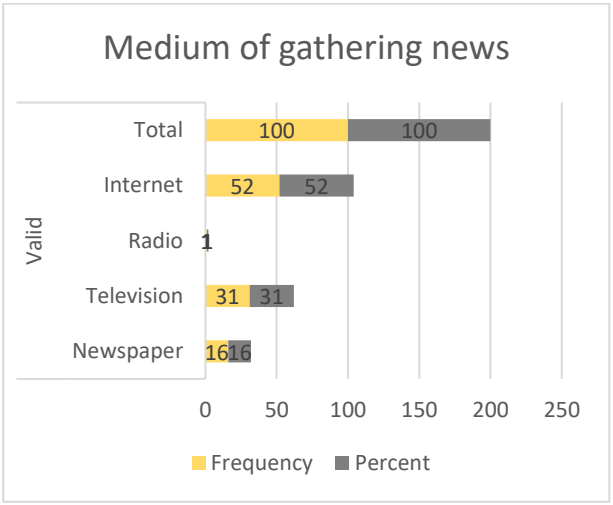

Fig. 1 Bar chart

In bar chart, the medium through which they stayed updated were taken. Most of them stayed updated through internet i.e., social media, YouTube or e-paper that predicts the use of internet i.e., 52%. Television is another medium that is most preferred as can be seen 31%. Newspapers on the other hand are preferred as well i.e., 16% and radio on the other hand is used the least 1%.

Table. 1 Any Impact or change in the situation Of river

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Yes	26	26.0
	No	74	74.0
	Total	100	100.0

In the table , they were asked if the news articles published or the ones broadcasted had any impact or change in the worsening situation of Muttar river. Most of them i.e., 74% pointed out there no any impact or change in the situation of the river. When articles pop-up, all of certain there are meetings. While 24% say that there have been

brought changes after the publishing.

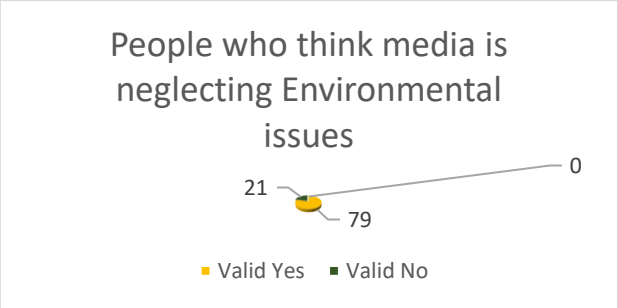

Fig. 2 Pie-chart

In the pie-chart, when asked if they think media is avoiding environmentally sensitive issues and most of them think that media do avoid environmental issues. Almost, 79% of the people think that media is avoiding such environmental issue, they think that media is more interested in covering other matters, while environment is mostly not bothered. But 21% pointed that media do care about environmental issues.

Table. 2 People who think government has helped out

	Regional			English		
Newspapers	Frequency			Percent		
	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018
Valid Manorama Yes	37	2	1	37.0	100.0	--
Valid Manorama No	63			63.0		
Manorama Total	100	2	1	100.0	--	--
Rashtradeepika	1	0	0	--	--	--
Narada News	1	0	0	--	--	--
Suprabhatham	0	1	0	--	--	--
The New Indian Express	--	--	--	0	2	0
Deccan Chronicle	--	--	--	0	1	1
The Times India	--	--	--	3	1	0
The Hindu	Regional	--	--	Malayalam		
				0	2	1
Television	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018
Manorama	0	2	0	-	-	-

In the table 4.4, they were asked if the government authority has taken preventive measures to resolve the issue. Most of them i.e., 63% answered no government authority has taken any preventive measures to resolve the issue of Muttar river pollution. Only when problems arise, they make up meetings, and then disperse without implementing any strong policies. 37% think that government is trying its best to resolve this issue.

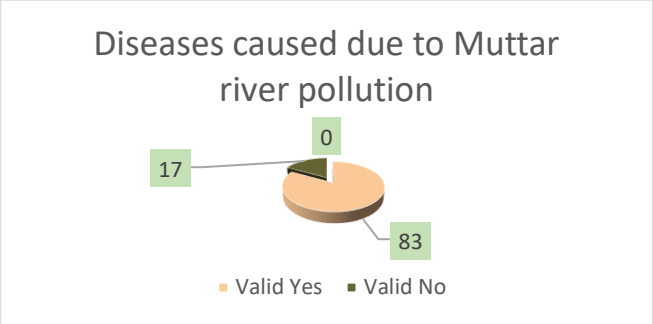

Fig. 3 Pie-chart

In the pie chart 4.5, they were asked how frequently they face health issues. 83% frequently face health issues, due to mosquitoes, which has proliferated due to dumping of sewage, chemicals and all other sorts of wastes onto the Muttar river. While 17% don't face much problems.

The survey conducted make it quite clear that the natives are facing lots of trouble due to the Muttar river pollution. When enquired to the natives regarding the issue, they evoked about the government negligence to save the river. They elicited about the problems, they face due to this river pollution especially the water-borne diseases. They even think media isn't contributing in resolving the issue. The little is not any worth, as per them, the little involvement made yet, has not made any changes. The situations are still back to same, or better to say worsened now. They expect to have more media involvement and make the river flow magnificently, as once upon a time it used to.

V. DISCUSSION

As part of content analysis, the frequency of the articles related to Muttar river pollution appeared in different media has to be analysed.

Table 3. represents the number of articles appeared in the mentioned newspapers, in accordance to the year

Table. 4 represents the number of times the issue of Muttar river pollution is being broadcasted on television.

Going through the articles it's found that, they

were mostly placed in the city page and not in state or main page. This shows quite clearly that environmental issues such as pollution is mostly neglected or not given so much importance. By analysing the frequency and the number of articles published in both the regional and national newspapers, it is clear that the news is least represented and gained the attention of media. The placement of the news in the case of Muttar river pollution is also relevant in comprehending the neglection that this news had among the various media. On the other hand, the broadcasting media has given least attention to the matter. It is just 2 news stories in past 3 years data and also by a single channel, Manorama News alone in March, 2017.

The related articles analysed in the study, focus on the problems of the locals. These reports also address the pleas the natives in and around Muttar river put forward to different governments officials, starting from the panchayat level and to the police. It is also significant to note that, no organised movement occurred as an initiative to protect the river. All the political and other special groups retained from any kind of actions favouring the rescue of river.

The Hindu has mentioned in one of their articles about the efforts taken by the government officials and also one detailed article about the residents' problems. While all the other newspapers mention the government talks to be 'as usual' one. They claim no strict actions are taken to improve the situation of the river. They depicted the serious issue of dying river, in fragmented manner. While Deccan Chronicle mentioned in detail about a voluntary association, but none of the other newspapers did.

VI. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. Due to limited time, other languages cannot be preferred.
2. All news channels cannot be included, otherwise it would turn out to be vast topic, which is not possible to be completed in given time.
3. The survey was conducted randomly.
4. There might be immigrants included in the survey.

V. CONCLUSION

The core of the study is to check media awareness given on the Muttar river pollution, implemented through survey and the content analysis of the articles published as well as broadcasted in media. The survey made it quite clear that the natives suffer a lot of problems due to the current situation of the river. They face regular diseases and could not depend on the river for anything, for which they were once dependent on. They strongly stated that Government wasn't doing anything to rescue the river and help them come out of the dreadful situation they are facing now. Theyfeel that, the little media involvement is not doing anything much to resolve their problem or to save the river.

The media involvement appears to be quite less. As, in content analysis it is clearly depicted when and how each media writes up or publicized the issue about the river. The media is not at all concerned about such issues. Even, being at the heart of Kochi, the metropolitan city, the concern to save the river is barely done. Looking onto the future, we expect media to be alert and get out of the world of paparazzi, and instead, be concerned as well as focus on the environmental issues and cling to it, unless or until a strong policy is made by the government, that prompt the people to change and keep their natural resources clean.

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