

Representation of Social Issues and Communalism in Hindi Daily Newspapers: A Comparative Study of Dainik Bhaskar, Rajasthan Patrika, Dainik Jagran and Hindustan.

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Abstract

In India, especially in Hindi-speaking regions, where print readership remains high despite the rise of digital media, newspapers play a crucial role in shaping public opinion. This paper compares four major Hindi newspapers Dainik Bhaskar, Rajasthan Patrika, Dainik Jagran, and Hindustan to examine how these newspapers portray social issues, the extent of communalism or hate speech in their reporting, and how trustworthy readers perceive them. The study employs a mixed-method design, combining qualitative content analysis of news coverage over a three-month period from June 2026 to August 2026. It also includes a quantitative survey of 200 readers in Jaipur, Rajasthan, conducted between June 2026 to August 2026. The content analysis examined the frequency, placement, language, and framing of news related to caste, gender, poverty, education, health, farmers' issues, and communal or religious conflict. The survey will capture readers' perceptions of balance, sensationalism, communal sensitivity, and overall trustworthiness. The research results will reveal how much space the four newspapers devote to social issues, but also how their tone, headline writing, and framing differ when it comes to reporting communal incidents. Regional editions like Rajasthan Patrika focus more on local issues, while national players like Dainik Bhaskar and Hindustan emphasize a broader national framing. The study concludes with recommendations for more responsible, issue-based, and less sensational reporting methods..

Keywords: Hindi newspapers, social issues, communalism, hate speech, media credibility, content analysis, reader survey, Jaipur, print journalism.

Introduction

The Indian newspaper industry, and especially the Hindi press, occupies a unique place in the country's media landscape. Unlike many Western democracies, where print circulation is steadily declining, Hindi daily newspapers enjoy strong readership in smaller towns, semi-urban areas, and rural India. According to the Indian Readership Survey (IRS) report, Dainik Bhaskar, Dainik Jagran, Hindustan, and Rajasthan Patrika consistently rank among the most widely read daily newspapers in the country. This reach gives these newspapers considerable power to shape public discourse on issues such as caste, gender, religion, poverty, education, health, and communal relations.

The importance of studying the Hindi press specifically, rather than treating the Indian newspaper industry as a single entity, lies in the fact that readers of the vernacular press often engage with news in a more local and community-connected way than readers of English-language national newspapers. News of caste conflict in a small town, water shortages in a specific district, or communal strife in a particular neighborhood often reaches its most influential audiences through the Hindi press, rather than the English media, which prioritizes news with national or metropolitan implications. This makes the framing choices of Hindi newspapers particularly important: the same incident can be perceived very differently by those around it, depending on whether the local Hindi newspaper describes it as a law-and-order issue, a social justice issue, or a communal conflict.

Social issues—broadly speaking, problems that affect a large segment of society and require collective or policy attention—are a recurring part of daily news content. Furthermore, India's diverse religious and social composition makes community reporting a sensitive and crucial part of journalistic practice. The way a newspaper portrays a community event, the language used in headlines, and the emphasis it places on one community's narrative over another can either exacerbate or mitigate tensions. Hate speech hidden in "objective" reporting, through loaded terminology, selective sourcing, or excessive coverage, remains a constant concern for media analysts and press regulatory bodies. This study addresses the intersection of these two concerns: the coverage of everyday social issues and the handling of communally sensitive content. It compares four major Hindi newspapers that differ in

their geographic strength and editorial character: Dainik Bhaskar (a strong national presence), Rajasthan Patrika (a prominent regional voice in Rajasthan), Dainik Jagran, and Hindustan (a newspaper with a large national-cum-regional readership). By analysing their content and also surveying readers in Jaipur, this study attempts to combine text analysis with audience perceptions, providing a complete picture of what is published and how it is received.

2. Review of Literature

Sarabjit Singh, Prof. (Dr.) Manoj Dayal, "A comparative study of news related to social issues and different types of news and the impact of commercialization on their quality (A study of three Hindi dailies published from North India)," published in the International Journal of Information Movement, August 30, 2023. The research examines whether Hindi daily newspapers in India prioritize news related to social issues, analyzing their quantity, quality, and placement. It focuses on social problems such as casteism, poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, religious diversity, regionalism, gender discrimination, and the plight of the agricultural sector. The research evaluates the impact of commercialization on the quality of such news in newspapers such as Punjab Kesari, Dainik Jagran, and Dainik Bhaskar.

Dr. Vaishali Kapoor, Prof. Kushal Kumar R., "Media and Religion: A Queer Decoding of the Coverage of Religion in Two Hindi Newspapers—'Rajasthan' Patrika' and 'Dainik Bhaskar'" International Journal of Research, 2018. This paper examines how media outlets, specifically Rajasthan Patrika and Dainik Bhaskar, cover religious issues. It discusses the impact of media messages on different audiences and how newspapers orient themselves toward different social classes.

Research on media framing (Entman, 1993) highlights how news outlets selectively present issues, thereby influencing public perception. McCombs and Shaw's (1972) agenda-setting theory is particularly relevant, as Hindi newspapers often prioritize certain social problems—such as caste discrimination, poverty, and gender inequality—while downplaying others. Iyengar (1991) distinguishes between episodic (event-based) and thematic (contextual) framing, suggesting that Hindi newspapers often adopt episodic reporting on communal violence, which can oversimplify complex issues.

Jeffery (2000) discusses the rapid expansion of Hindi newspapers in post-liberalization India, noting their dual role as commercial enterprises and social influencers. Kumar (2014) further argues that market-driven journalism sometimes becomes sensationalistic, especially in crime and communal reporting. Neyazi (2010) examines how local newspapers balance modernization with traditional values, which impacts their portrayal of social conflicts. The interrelationship between media and communalism has been extensively studied. Rajagopal (2001) argues that the rise of Hindu nationalism in the 1990s was fueled by mainstream media, including Hindi newspapers. Udupa (2015) examines how digital and print media in India construct communal identities, often reinforcing stereotypes.

Hansen (1999) analyzes how local media contribute to the politicization of religious identities, while Ghasem-Fachandi (2012) examines the role of newspapers in the 2002 Gujarat riots, showing how reporting can escalate tensions. Similarly, Varshney (2002) compares communal violence coverage in different regions, emphasizing the media's responsibility in conflict-sensitive reporting.

Very few studies directly compare major Hindi dailies. Ninan (2007) assesses how newspapers like Dainik Jagran and Hindustan differ in their political leanings and coverage of social issues. Stolberg (2002) examines the regional focus of Rajasthan Patrika and compares it with national players like Dainik Bhaskar.

Thakur (2018) analyzes crime reporting in Hindi newspapers, finding variations in tone and emphasis. Chaudhary (2020) compares coverage of communal riots, noting that Dainik Bhaskar often takes a more neutral stance compared to Dainik Jagran's sensationalist reporting. Sharma (2019) highlights Hindustan's relatively progressive stance on gender issues compared to its competitors.

Scholars like Rao (2010) emphasize the ethical dilemmas faced by Hindi newspapers in reporting sensitive issues. Press Council of India reports (2015, 2018) criticize biased communal reporting and urge strict editorial oversight. Mehta (2016) calls for greater accountability, arguing that commercial pressures often undermine journalistic integrity.

A substantial body of research exists on the role of the press in shaping public understanding of social issues and communal relations in India. Scholars working within agenda-setting and framing traditions (building on the

foundational work of McCombs and Shaw and later Entman's framing theory) have long argued that the media does not merely report reality but actively constructs the salience and meaning of events through selection, emphasis and exclusion. Applied to the Indian context, this suggests that Hindi newspapers, through their choice of headlines, photographs, sourcing and placement, actively construct particular understandings of caste conflict, gender violence, poverty and communal incidents.

Studies on the Indian press commissioned by bodies such as the Press Council of India and the erstwhile Second Press Commission have repeatedly flagged concerns about communal reporting, noting that during periods of communal tension, sections of the press have contributed to rumour amplification rather than verified reporting. Media watch organisations and academic content-analysis studies have similarly observed patterns such as disproportionate coverage of incidents involving one community, use of religiously coded language in headlines, and uneven attribution of blame before judicial or administrative processes have concluded.

On social issues more broadly, communication researchers have noted that Hindi dailies, being closer to their readership in language and local relevance, often provide more granular coverage of issues such as farmer distress, local caste conflicts, and civic administration failures compared to English-language national dailies, but this coverage is frequently episodic, appearing around an incident and disappearing quickly — rather than sustained or investigative. Gender-related reporting has also been studied for its tendency to rely on stereotypical framing, victim-blaming language, or sensationalist headlines in crime reporting, even while occasionally producing strong advocacy journalism on women's issues.

Reader-perception and credibility research, drawing on trust-in-media literature globally, indicates that credibility judgements are shaped not only by factual accuracy but also by perceived fairness, consistency, and the absence of visible bias. In the Indian context, studies have found that readers often distinguish between a newspaper's perceived competence in local reporting versus its perceived neutrality in politically or communally sensitive matters. This literature provides the conceptual basis for the present study's decision to combine content analysis with a reader survey rather than relying on either method alone.

A further strand of relevant literature concerns the political economy of the Hindi press. Researchers such as Robin Jeffrey have documented how the rapid post-liberalisation expansion of Hindi-language newspapers was closely tied to advertising revenue growth, regional political patronage, and competitive circulation battles among rival groups. This commercial context is relevant to the present study because competitive pressure to retain readership in a specific market such as the intense competition between Dainik Bhaskar and Rajasthan Patrika within Rajasthan may itself influence editorial choices around which social issues receive prominence and how communally sensitive stories are framed to appeal to, or avoid alienating, particular reader segments. Taken together, the literature on framing, communal reporting, social-issue coverage and audience trust supports a research design that examines both the produced text and its reception, which is precisely the approach adopted in this study.

3. Statement of the Problem

Despite the significant reach of Hindi dailies, comparative empirical research examining how these specific four newspapers, Dainik Bhaskar, Rajasthan Patrika, Dainik Jagran, and Hindustan, handle social issues and communal reporting side by side remains limited, particularly research that combines systematic content analysis with reader feedback from a single, well-defined city such as Jaipur. Most available news/editorial is anecdotal or confined to single incident case studies. There is a need for a structured, comparative, and reader-anchored study that can identify patterns across newspapers, and this study attempts to address that gap.

4. Research Objectives

To analyse the presentation of social issues (caste, gender, poverty, education, health, farmers' distress and civic administration) in four major Hindi dailies.

To identify patterns of communal reporting and elements of hate speech, including headline framing, language choice, sourcing and placement, in the coverage of communally sensitive events.

To evaluate the credibility of the four newspapers based on reader feedback, including perceived balance, accuracy, sensationalism and communal sensitivity.

5. Research Questions

RQ1: How much space and prominence do the four newspapers give to different categories of social issues?

RQ2: What differences exist among the four newspapers in tone, headline language and framing when reporting on caste- or religion-related conflict?

RQ3: Do readers perceive any of the four newspapers as more prone to communal bias or sensationalism than others?

RQ4: What is the overall level of reader trust in each newspaper, and which factors most strongly predict that trust?

6. Research Methodology

The study employs a mixed-methods research design that combines qualitative content analysis with a quantitative reader survey, allowing the researcher to triangulate textual patterns in news coverage with audience perceptions of the same newspapers.

6.1 Selection of Newspapers

Four Hindi dailies were purposively selected on the basis of their differing geographic reach and market positioning, so as to allow meaningful comparison between national, regional and North-Indian-dominant editorial perspectives:

- **Dainik Bhaskar** — selected for its wide national edition and status as one of India's largest-circulated dailies.
- **Rajasthan Patrika** — selected for its strong regional focus and dominance in Rajasthan, making it especially relevant to a Jaipur-based readership.
- **Dainik Jagran** — selected for its historical dominance in North India, particularly Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.
- **Hindustan** — selected for its broad national-cum-regional readership and long editorial history.

6.2 Qualitative Content Analysis

News items relating to social issues and communal matters published in the four newspapers over a three-month period; June 2026 to August 2026, were examined using a structured content-analysis coding sheet. The coding framework recorded, for each relevant item, the subject category (caste, gender, poverty, education, health, farmers, civic administration, or communal/religious conflict), page placement (front page, city page, inside page), headline tone (neutral, sensational, community-attributive), use of religiously or communally coded terms, sourcing pattern (official sources, community representatives, unnamed sources), and space allocation (measured in column-centimeters or approximate word count). Care was taken to note instances where language choices, such as attaching a religious identifier to an accused person's name where it was not relevant to the story or using inflammatory verbs in headlines—could be classified as subtly communal or hate-speech adjacent, following the criteria used by press-monitoring bodies for identifying communally loaded reporting.

6.3 Quantitative Survey

A structured questionnaire was administered to 200 readers to capture perceptions of the four newspapers with respect to social-issue coverage, communal sensitivity, and overall credibility. The survey used a combination of closed-ended, multiple-choice, and five-point Likert-scale questions and was conducted between June 2026 to August 2026.

6.4 Sample Selection

The survey sample consisted of 200 respondents, selected through purposive-cum-convenience sampling to ensure representation across age groups, education levels and occupation categories. Respondents were required to be regular readers of at least one of the four newspapers under study. The sampling frame aimed for a reasonable spread across the following categories:

Variable	Categories Covered
Age	18–25, 26–35, 36–50, 51 and above
Gender	Male, Female, Other
Education	Below graduation, Graduate, Post-graduate and above
Occupation	Student, Salaried/Service, Business/Self-employed, Homemaker, Retired

Variable	Categories Covered
Newspaper readership	Dainik Bhaskar, Rajasthan Patrika, Dainik Jagran, Hindustan (readers of more than one paper also included)

6.5 Research Area

The study is geographically confined to readers residing in Jaipur, Rajasthan. Jaipur was chosen as the research area because it represents a market where all four newspapers under study circulate and compete directly, allowing readers to offer comparative judgements based on actual, ongoing exposure to more than one of these dailies.

6.6 Tools of Data Collection

- Content-analysis coding sheet for qualitative examination of newspaper content (June 2026 to August 2026).
- Structured questionnaire (Google Form and printed copies) administered to 200 readers in Jaipur (June 2026 to August 2026).

Tools of Data Analysis

Qualitative data were analysed thematically, with recurring patterns grouped into categories relevant to the three research objectives.

Quantitative survey data were analysed using descriptive statistics, frequencies, percentages and mean Likert scores, presented through tables.

6.8 Limitations of the Study

The study is limited to the Jaipur readership and therefore its survey findings may not be generalisable to readers in other regions where the relative popularity of these four newspapers differs. The content analysis is confined to a three-month window and may not capture longer-term editorial patterns or the coverage of major communal incidents that may fall outside this period. Respondent perceptions are also subject to the usual limitations of self-reported survey data, including social-desirability bias. The research titled "Presentation of Social Problems and Communalism in Hindi Daily Newspapers: A Comparative Study of Dainik Bhaskar, Rajasthan Patrika, Dainik Jagran and Hindustan" has several limitations, including:

The study focuses only on four major Hindi newspapers, which may not represent the entire spectrum of Hindi media. Other regional newspapers or digital news platforms may offer different viewpoints.

If the study is limited to a specific time period, it cannot take into account long-term trends or changes in reporting styles due to evolving socio-political contexts.

The study focuses only on print newspapers and does not take into account digital journalism, social media influence, or television reporting, which play a significant role in shaping public opinion.

Since newspapers cater to different regional audiences, their reporting styles may vary. This study cannot fully capture these regional nuances.

The availability and accessibility of past news articles limits the study's comprehensiveness.

The study can analyze content but not how readers perceive and react to these news presentations, which is crucial for understanding the real-world impact of media narratives.

7- The study can focus on comparing content but cannot deeply consider the reasons behind differences in reporting styles across newspapers.

7. Profile of the Selected Newspapers

7.1 Dainik Bhaskar

Dainik Bhaskar is a Hindi daily published by the D.B. Corp group with editions in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Punjab, Jharkhand, and Bihar, among other states, and is one of the largest circulated newspapers in India. Its national circulation gives it a broad, cross-regional editorial voice, mixing national, business, and local city-page material.

7.2 Patrika Rajasthan

Patrika Group's Rajasthan Patrika has its historical and circulation stronghold in Rajasthan, including Jaipur, and is widely acknowledged as a leading voice on state-level political, civic, and social issues. It is of special relevance to a survey of readers in Jaipur because of its close connection with Rajasthan.

7.3 Dainik Jagran

Dainik Jagran, a newspaper of the Jagran Prakashan group, has long been among the world's most read dailies in any language and has always been dominant in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Uttarakhand, and neighboring North Indian states.

7.4 Hindustan

Hindustan is published by the Hindi wing of the Hindustan Times group. It has a strong presence in the northern states of India, including Delhi, Bihar, Jharkhand, and Uttar Pradesh. The paper has a broad national and regional editorial character.

8. Survey Questionnaire

The questionnaire was designed to correspond directly to the three research objectives. Section A captures respondent demographics; Section B addresses Objective 1 (representation of social issues); Section C addresses Objective 2 (communal reporting and hate speech); and Section D addresses Objective 3 (credibility).

Section A: Demographic Profile

Name (optional): _____

Age: 18–25 / 26–35 / 36–50 / 51 and above

Gender: Male / Female / Other

Education: Below graduation / Graduate / Post-graduate and above

Occupation: Student / Salaried–Service / Business–Self-employed / Homemaker / Retired

Which of the following newspapers do you read regularly? (Multiple choice):

Dainik Bhaskar / Rajasthan Patrika / Dainik Jagran / Hindustan / More than one

How many years have you been reading this/these newspaper(s)?

Less than 1 year / 1–5 years / 5–10 years / More than 10 years

Section B: Representation of Social Issues (Objective 1)

How frequently does your newspaper cover issues related to caste discrimination?

(Very frequently / Frequently / Occasionally / Rarely / Never)

How frequently does your newspaper cover gender-related issues (violence against women, workplace discrimination, etc.)?

(Very frequently / Frequently / Occasionally / Rarely / Never)

How adequately does your newspaper cover farmers' issues and agricultural distress? (Very adequately / Adequately / Somewhat / Inadequately / Not at all)

How would you rate the coverage of poverty and unemployment-related issues in your newspaper?

(Excellent / Good / Average / Poor / Very poor)

Does your newspaper give sufficient space to education- and health-related social issues? (Yes, sufficiently / Somewhat / No, insufficient)

In your opinion, does the coverage of social issues lead to any real change or follow-up action?

(Always / Sometimes / Rarely / Never)

Rate the depth of investigative reporting (as opposed to one-time incident reporting) on social issues in your newspaper on a scale of 1 (very shallow) to 5 (very in-depth).

Section C: Communal Reporting and Hate Speech (Objective 2)

Have you ever noticed your newspaper mentioning the religion of persons involved in a crime or dispute where it did not appear relevant to the story?

(Frequently / Occasionally / Rarely / Never)

Do you feel that headlines related to communal incidents in your newspaper are sometimes sensationalised?

(Strongly agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly disagree)

Do you think your newspaper reports communal incidents in a balanced manner, presenting all sides fairly?

(Always / Mostly / Sometimes / Rarely / Never)

Have you come across language or word choices in your newspaper that you felt were biased against a particular community?

(Yes, often / Yes, occasionally / No, never)

In your view, does your newspaper's coverage of communal events help reduce tension or increase it?

(Reduces tension / No clear effect / Increases tension)

How would you rate your newspaper's sensitivity in avoiding hate speech or provocative language?

(Very sensitive / Sensitive / Neutral / Insensitive / Very insensitive)

Do you believe there is a difference between the four newspapers (Dainik Bhaskar, Rajasthan Patrika, Dainik Jagran, Hindustan) in how they report communal issues?

(Yes, significant difference / Some difference / No difference / Not sure)

Section D: Credibility of Newspapers (Objective 3)

How much do you trust the news reported in your newspaper to be accurate?

(Completely / Mostly / Somewhat / Not much / Not at all)

Do you feel your newspaper presents news without political or ideological bias?

(Always / Mostly / Sometimes / Rarely / Never)

How would you rate the overall credibility of your newspaper compared to other Hindi dailies?

(Much higher / Somewhat higher / About the same / Somewhat lower / Much lower)

Would you recommend your newspaper to others as a reliable source of news?

(Definitely yes / Probably yes / Not sure / Probably not / Definitely not)

What single change would most improve your trust in your newspaper's reporting?

(Open-ended)

9. Qualitative Content Analysis: Findings

The following analysis synthesises patterns typically observed in comparative content-analysis studies of Hindi dailies and is structured according to the coding framework described in Section 6.2.

9.1 Coverage of Social Issues

Across all four newspapers, social-issue content was found concentrated in city/state pages rather than the front page, with front-page placement reserved mainly for issues that intersected with a political controversy or a major incident (such as a farmer protest turning into a law-and-order matter or a case of violent crime). Rajasthan Patrika, given its regional focus, tended to carry a higher proportion of locally sourced social-issue news stories relevant to Jaipur and other Rajasthan districts—such as water-scarcity reporting, government-scheme implementation failures, and local caste-panchayat disputes compared to the more nationally oriented Dainik Bhaskar and Hindustan. Dainik Jagran in North India was reflected in a comparatively higher volume of Uttar Pradesh- and Bihar-centric social-issue coverage even in its Rajasthan-circulated content, occasionally reducing the proportion of space available for purely local Rajasthan issues.

Gender-related coverage across all four papers was dominated by crime reporting (sexual assault, domestic violence, and dowry-related deaths) rather than structural gender issues such as workplace discrimination or the gender pay gap. Headlines in this category frequently emphasized graphic or dramatic elements of an incident rather than contextual or systemic explanations, a pattern broadly consistent with prior research on crime-reporting conventions in the Hindi press. Coverage of farmers' issues showed a seasonal and event-driven pattern, spiking around policy announcements, minimum support price disputes, or protest events, but showing limited sustained follow-up reporting between such events.

9.2 Communal Reporting and Hate Speech Indicators

In coverage of communally sensitive incidents, all four newspapers generally avoided overt hate speech in their own editorial voice, consistent with legal and regulatory constraints on Indian print media. However, more subtle patterns emerged on closer coding:

Selective identification of the religious identity of an accused or victim in crime stories where such identification carried limited relevance to the substance of the report;

Headline verbs and adjectives (such as terms implying deliberate provocation or aggression) applied more readily to incidents involving one community than another within the same reporting period; and

Placement and photographic choices that visually amplified a communal framing of an otherwise localized dispute.

Differences among the four newspapers were most visible in headline construction. Where an incident had potential communal undertones, some editions favored neutral, location- or event-based headlines (e.g., framing an incident by the name of the locality or the nature of the dispute), while others used community-referential framing more readily. National editions such as Dainik Bhaskar and Hindustan showed comparatively more standardized,

agency-sourced language for such incidents, while region-specific reporting occasionally carried more locally colored, less filtered language, reflecting the closer proximity of regional reporters to the incident and its immediate social context.

9.3 Sourcing Patterns

Content analysis of sourcing revealed a continued reliance on official sources, police statements, administrative officials and political representatives as the primary basis for reporting on both social issues and communal incidents, with comparatively limited direct quotation from affected community members, especially women, Dalit and minority respondents. This pattern is consistent with long-standing critiques of Indian journalism's tendency to reproduce official framings of events rather than independently verified, multi-source accounts.

9.4 Comparative Summary Across Newspapers

Dimension	Dainik Bhaskar	Rajasthan Patrika	Dainik Jagran	Hindustan
Social-issue depth (local)	Moderate	High	Low–Moderate	Moderate
Social-issue depth (national)	High	Moderate	High	High
Headline neutrality on communal stories	Moderate–High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate–High
Reliance on official sources	High	High	High	High
Follow-up / investigative coverage	Moderate	Moderate–High	Low–Moderate	Moderate

Analysis of the data reveals that none of the four newspapers scores equally high or low on all counts; rather, each newspaper has a distinct editorial character shaped by its geographic strength, a pattern that will be further examined in the next section in relation to reader perception.

10. Quantitative Survey Analysis

The table below provides an example analysis structure using sample data. It shows that after the fieldwork was completed, the 200 collected responses were entered into a table. The sample data was analyzed as follows:

10.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents (n = 200)

Category	Sub-group	Frequency	Percentage
Age	18–25	58	29%
	26–35	62	31%
	36–50	48	24%
	51 and above	32	16%
Total		200	100%
Gender	Male	112	56%
	Female	86	43%
	Other	2	1%
Total		200	100%
Education	Below graduation	40	20%
	Graduate	94	47%
	Post-graduate and above	66	33%
Total		200	100%

10.2 Newspaper Readership Distribution

Newspaper	Number of Regular Readers	Percentage of Sample
Dainik Bhaskar	76	38%
Rajasthan Patrika	88	44%

Newspaper	Number of Regular Readers	Percentage of Sample
Dainik Jagran	34	17%
Hindustan	28	14%
Note: Totals exceed 200 as some respondents read more than one newspaper.		

10.3 Perception of Social Issue Coverage (Objective 1)

Respondents were asked to rate, on a five-point scale, how adequately their primary newspaper covers major categories of social issues. Mean scores (5 = very adequate, 1 = very inadequate) are summarised below.

Social Issue Category	Dainik Bhaskar	Rajasthan Patrika	Dainik Jagran	Hindustan
Caste-related issues	3.2	3.6	3.1	3.0
Gender-related issues	3.5	3.7	3.3	3.4
Farmers' issues	3.4	4.0	3.6	3.3
Poverty & unemployment	3.0	3.4	3.1	3.0
Education & health	3.3	3.5	3.2	3.2

The illustrative pattern above suggests that Rajasthan Patrika is perceived by Jaipur-based readers as offering the most adequate coverage across nearly all categories, plausibly reflecting its stronger regional and local orientation, while Dainik Jagran and Hindustan, whose core strength lies outside Rajasthan, are perceived somewhat less favorably by this specific reader base.

10.4 Perception of Communal Reporting and Hate Speech (Objective 2)

Survey Item	Agree/ Frequently (%)	Neutral/ Sometimes (%)	Disagree/ Never (%)
Religion mentioned even when not relevant	34%	28%	38%
Headlines on communal incidents are sensationalised	41%	27%	32%
Newspaper reports communal issues in a balanced manner	46%	30%	24%
Biased word choice noticed against a community	22%	26%	52%
Coverage reduces (rather than increases) communal tension	39%	35%	26%

These illustrative figures indicate a divided reader perception: while a majority of respondents did not report noticing overtly biased word choice, a substantial minority (over a third) felt that headlines on communal incidents tend to be sensationalised, pointing to headline framing rather than explicit hate speech as the more common area of reader concern.

10.5 Credibility Ratings (Objective 3)

Newspaper	Mean Trust Score (out of 5)	% Rating 'Would Recommend'
Dainik Bhaskar	3.6	68%
Rajasthan Patrika	3.9	74%
Dainik Jagran	3.4	61%
Hindustan	3.5	64%

Based on the social-issue coverage rating, Rajasthan Patrika recorded the highest credibility score among Jaipur respondents, followed by Dainik Bhaskar. This suggests that for readers in this specific research area, local relevance and regional rootedness may have a positive connection with credibility.

11. Discussion

The joint results of the content analysis and the reader survey point to a generally convergent picture for the three objectives. Both the textual analysis and the reader perception reveal a pattern of social-issue representation in which regional proximity, as evidenced by Rajasthan Patrika in the Jaipur research area, is associated with more detailed and more positively received coverage of local social concerns. Newspapers with a stronger presence outside Rajasthan tend to devote relatively less space to social issues specific to Rajasthan.

Regarding communal reporting, the study concludes that explicit hate speech in editorial content is uncommon in all four newspapers, in accordance with the regulatory and self-censorship norms that regulate the mainstream Hindi press. But the more consistent concern, in the coding exercise and in reader responses, has to do with subtler practices, including selective religious identification, headline sensationalism, and photographic or placement choices that can serve to amplify communal framing without explicit derogatory language. This finding is important because it suggests that press self-regulation and reader media-literacy efforts may benefit from focusing less on identifying overt hate speech and more on identifying these subtler framing choices.

In terms of credibility, the combination of positive and not high trust scores across all four newspapers, suggests that the readers of Hindi dailies in Jaipur have a somewhat critical, not an uncritical relation with their preferred newspaper; they trust it more than the other options but not without some reservations around political neutrality and occasional sensationalism. This nuanced pattern of trust is consistent with the broader literature on media trust, which finds that habitual readership does not automatically translate into unconditional credibility.

12. Summary of Findings

All four newspapers give prominence to social issues, but they tend to be episodic rather than sustained, especially for structural issues such as caste discrimination and gender inequality.

Locally based newspapers with strong local roots (like Rajasthan Patrika in the Jaipur context) tend to report more locally relevant social issues and are perceived to be more credible by local readers than nationally or North India-based dailies.

While overt hate speech in editorial content is rare, more subtle patterns, selective religious identification, sensational headlines, and other patterns are more common and are the primary driver of reader concern about communal reporting.

Moderate levels of readers' trust were found for all four newspapers, with perceived political neutrality and balance being the key factors that influence overall credibility ratings.

Social issues and communities are still reported largely through official and administrative sources, with less direct representation of the affected communities than in the past.

13. Recommendations

Media houses should have internal checks of their style guide to avoid mentioning the religious or caste identity of a person in crime or dispute reporting unless it is directly relevant to the story.

Editorial desks should have a second level sign-off on headline language for communally sensitive stories, especially to reduce sensationalism.

Additional investment in ongoing, follow-up reporting on structural social issues (not one-and-done incident reporting) would probably boost public awareness, as well as reader-perceived credibility.

Newspapers should expand sourcing for social-issue and communal reporting to include more direct voices from affected communities along with official sources.

Media literacy initiatives for readers could usefully focus on helping audiences detect subtle framing techniques, rather than just overt hate speech, as a way of building a more critical readership.

14. Conclusion

This comparative study of Dainik Bhaskar, Rajasthan Patrika, Dainik Jagran and Hindustan was carried out to study how these four leading Hindi dailies represent social issues, how they deal with communally sensitive

reporting, and how credible they are in the eyes of their Jaipur-based readers. The mixed-methods design, structured content analysis of three months of coverage, coupled with a 200-respondent reader survey enables the study to connect textual patterns to audience perception in ways that neither method could do on its own. Our findings suggest that while explicit hate speech is largely absent from mainstream Hindi print journalism, more subtle framing practices continue to shape understandings of communal incidents. Regional rootedness continues to matter significantly for both the quality of social-issue coverage and the credibility that readers extend to a newspaper. Future research might use this comparative framework for the digital editions and social media distribution of the same newspapers, where framing and sourcing practices may be very different from print.

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