



## COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF EDITORIALS PUBLISHED IN TOP-THREE ENGLISH DAILIES DURING LOCKDOWN

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### ABSTRACT

Editorial of any newspaper is considered to be the expression and opinion of a newspaper on the ongoing issues of any country or state. The purpose of editorial is to inform, aware, criticise, persuade and reflect the readers in the entertaining, informing or alarming manner. In the present context the world is experiencing a global outbreak in the form of corona virus. Since its declaration of Pandemic covid-19 has been the word spread as fire. It is the most searched word on internet and is the most trending word on different social media platforms. In its press conference WHO director even declared the COVID-19 as pandemic and infodemic. Pertaining to the current issues it will be interesting to explore, that in the current scenario how top three English dailies are covering different issues. The current study aims to explore the opinions framed and discussed amidst the first week of lockdown in India. The study also aims to identify the nature and tone of editorial published. Most importantly the study will also discuss and analyse the views of view makers.

**Keywords:** Editorial, Newspaper, The Times of India, The Hindustan Times, The Hindu, content analysis, covid-19, Lockdown, Economy, health, India

### I. INTRODUCTION

Since its introduction, Mass media became a prime source of mass communication fulfilling the ICE needs of user viz. Information, communication and Entertainment. Various media channels play key role in framing and reflecting opinions and ideologies on different issues. From the past Newspapers have been the most economical and reached out source of mass information. Newspapers are also termed as old or conventional media. The first newspaper of India was launched in the year 1780 by James Augustus Hickey popularly known as Hickey's Gazette. From 1780 to 2020 we have crossed more than two centuries and in all these years there has been uprising growth of newspaper industry in India. Currently there are 1, 18,239 registered publications with Registrar of Newspapers for India (RNI) as on March 31, 2018. Over the two centuries the newspaper industry has evolved better. The infusion of internet and digital media technology was initially considered as a threat by some media Pundits. All these prophecies of Newspapers farewell came to halt when IRS data was released in the q1 2019. It highlighted that newspaper readership has grown from 407 million in 2017 to 425 million in 2019. The current growth rate of Vernacular press is 5.7 percent whereas the English Newspapers witnessed 10 percent growth rate.

All these up surging numbers of readership of newspapers symbolises the growth rate of Newspaper industry in India. On the other hand, other

developed economies countries like U.S, U.K, Germany, and Australia have witnessed a declined in the newspaper circulation and readership.

In India in comparison to other mass media, newspapers have the wide reader and circulation base. Newspapers dailies are published in different editions and carry news, interviews, opinions and analysis on different subjects like health, sports, politics, science, business etc. The present study is focused only on Editorial Article of the editorial section of the newspaper. Editorials are regarded as the most opinion genre of newspaper. They are often written by the senior Editors, Bureaucrats, political leaders, academicians and leaders of different sections.

In the words of Frank Moraes, First Indian editor of The Times of India **“Editorial plays major role of a critique in a democracy when the ruling government is strong and opposition is weak. Editorials then become the principal representative of opposition”**

### **What is an Editorial?**

An Editorial is a leading opinion in the form of article which reflects and represents the viewpoint of newspaper on different issues. Editorials are mostly written in the middle division of the newspaper titled as Comment, The viewpoint, Editorial, Opinion, Edit Page etc. They are considered to be an expression given by an individual or an institute which is considered relevant for the people at large. Opinions and views expressed in editorials frame the mindset of readers. Content of an Editorial differ from newspaper to newspaper. Basic editorial structure is divided in three parts: Introduction, Body and conclusion. Common features of an Editorial:

1. Editorials are critical in nature; they by default tend to represent both the sides of the story and are not very applauding or appreciating in nature.
2. Editorials are persuasive as they persuade the readers by setting up an agenda to ponder upon.
3. Editorial arguments are generally supported by facts and figures.
4. Editorial talk about current issues timely and not just the persons.
5. Editorial comprises of positive tone in the form of constructive criticism.
6. Editorials are clear and reflect the viewpoint of the newspaper on the current issue.

### **Types of editorials**

The nature of Editorials can be classified in to eight broad categories:

1. Appreciative: As the name suggests they are applauding in nature and admire organisations for their work. However they are not common in nature.

2. Critical: These editorials constructively criticise the works, action, policies and decisions made in a democracy and also mention the possible solutions. The main purpose is to aware the readers about the larger issues.
3. Interpretative: These editorials reflect newspaper take on different societal issues and it also highlights the possible solutions to be taken by the concerned authorities.
4. Persuasive: These editorials aim to generate a positive frame of mind among readers and persuade them to think in the desired direction.
5. Campaign Editorials: They are generally written by opinion leaders from different fields which highlights the support towards ongoing programmes.
6. Advocacy Editorials: These editorials are focused on advocating any particular social issue and they seek support and contribution towards common cause.
7. Academic Editorials: They are written by academicians and represent the facts and figures associated towards the current cause or issue.
8. Satirical: This is the most common editorial practice of The Times of India. The article is written with a comic tone which eases the heaviness of the issue.

The present study is aimed to examine the Editorial articles published in top three English newspapers as per MRUC q32019 data. The newspapers selected are From March 24, 2020 to March 31, 2020. In India, lockdown was announced by the Honourable Prime Minister of India on March 24, 2020 to suppress the impact of corona virus in India. Corona virus is a highly infectious virus which has been declared as a pandemic by WHO on March 11, 2020.

This time period is selected as to analyse the viewpoint of the leading English newspapers after the lockdown was announced. How they have represented and treated different issues in the editorials?

### **Research Objectives:**

1. To identify the issues covered in Editorial of top three English Dailies.
2. To identify the nature of Editorial published
3. To explore the tone of Editorial Published.
3. To identify Visual and graphical presentation used.
4. To analyse the Headlines of Editorials.
5. To identify the most dominant topic covered.

## **II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Editorial is considered to be the most intellectual piece of any newspaper. We have selected four reviews for the present study which have conducted content analysis on different issues of Editorials.

Azees Abdul (2012) conducted a study on content analysis of editorials of Mathrubhumi; the study discussed the relevance of editorials in framing public opinion on different issues. The issues can range from local to international depending upon the edition of newspaper selected. The researcher studied three month editorials and categorised the issues and their frequency to analyse the results. The study identified the major subject areas covered in the newspaper were politics, Sociology, Economics, Defence, public Administration with the majority focusing on social science or societal issues.

Tanker (1999) conducted a content analysis on the Economic and Political weekly for a year January 1 to December 31, 1999. The study analysed the trend of the editorials published in the leading political publication. Editorials published during the time period were associated with social causes indirectly and directly linked to the political and economy of the country.

Luenburg (2002) conducted a content analysis on the Dutch newspaper's editorial articles. 2345 news articles were studied. The study reflected that a different ideology is presented in context to the ongoing situations to persuade the reader. The motivation of article is driven by the personal motivation of the organisation.

Afzal. N and Harun. M (2015) conducted a study on Discourse analysis of leading editorials on portrayal of Uprising in Libya and Syria. Two mainstream newspapers the news International of Pakistan and Arab news of Saudi Arabia were selected two identify representation of the uprising in different cultural settings. The qualitative data analysis was conducted which revealed that editorials are most rigorous source in shaping any critical opinion and understanding of the issue and it highly impacts the public opinion.

This review has helped the author in selecting the research methodology and gaining insight of the present topic. The present study will analyse the editorial article of top 3 English newspapers only and will help to understand the importance and relevance of editorials in the present time.

### **III. METHODOLOGY**

In the present study content analysis method is selected on the basis of review of literature. In the study both quantitative and qualitative aspects will be analysed. Editorial Article will be unit of Analysis in which the Text, tone and visuals will be analysed. It will be helpful in understanding the social significance and representation of editorial article.

#### **Sample of the Study**

Sample of the study is selected on the basis of Indian readership survey data collected by MRUC of quarter 3 of 2019. Top three English Dailies are selected viz. The Times of India, Hindustan times and The Hindu. Editorial articles published during these eight days in the newspapers will be analysed.

### Time frame of the study

Selected time frame for the present study is March 24, 2020 to March 31<sup>ST</sup> 2020. The lockdown was announced in India on March 24, 2020 hence this time is selected and also March 31<sup>st</sup> is the end of financial year. Hence it will be intriguing to know what were the major issues covered in the Editorial Articles during the first week of lockdown.

### Analysis Parameters

The Editorial article is analysed on the basis of text, tone and visual presentation. Text is broadly classified into Issue covered, word count, keyword density, Author. Tone is calculated on the basis of classification of nature of editorial and a sentiment analysis was conducted online to identify the positive, negative or neutral output of the editorial article. Visual Presentation includes the use of Graphic or picture presentation along with the article.

## IV. ANALYSIS

Total of 29 editorial articles were analysed for eight days from March 24, 2020 to March 31, 2020. The Times of India and The Hindu carry a different layout for Sunday edition which consists of different in-house columns. Hence no editorial was calculated for that day i.e. March 29, 2020.

### 4.1 Text Analysis

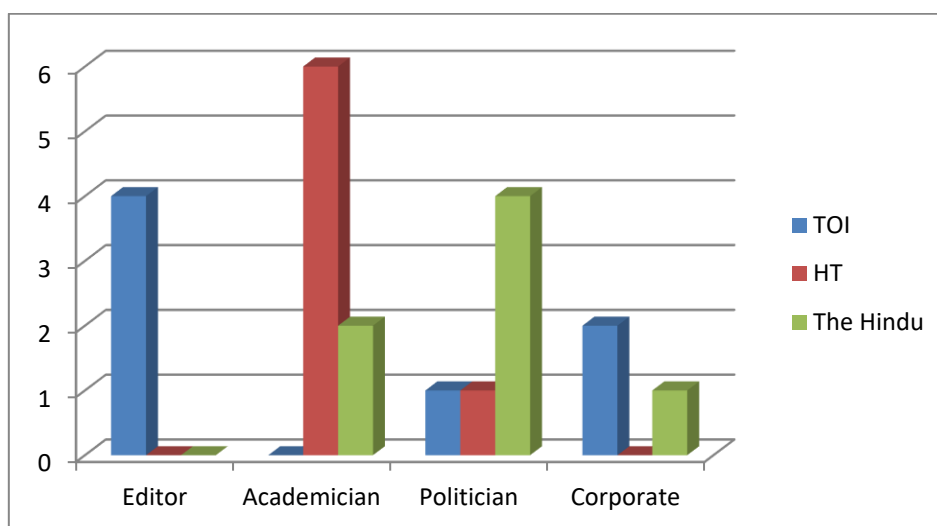
Total Number of words in Editorial Article

Dates	TOI	HT	The Hindu
24-03-2020	984	1084	1638
25-03-2020	917	923	1503
26-03-2020	887	914	1487
27-03-2020	945	952	1477
28-03-2020	887	913	1471
29-03-2020	0	987	0
30-03-2020	896	910	1765
31-03-2020	892	995	1677
TOTAL	<b>6408</b>	<b>7678</b>	<b>11018</b>
Grand total	<b><u>25104</u></b>		

Percentage	26%	31%	44%
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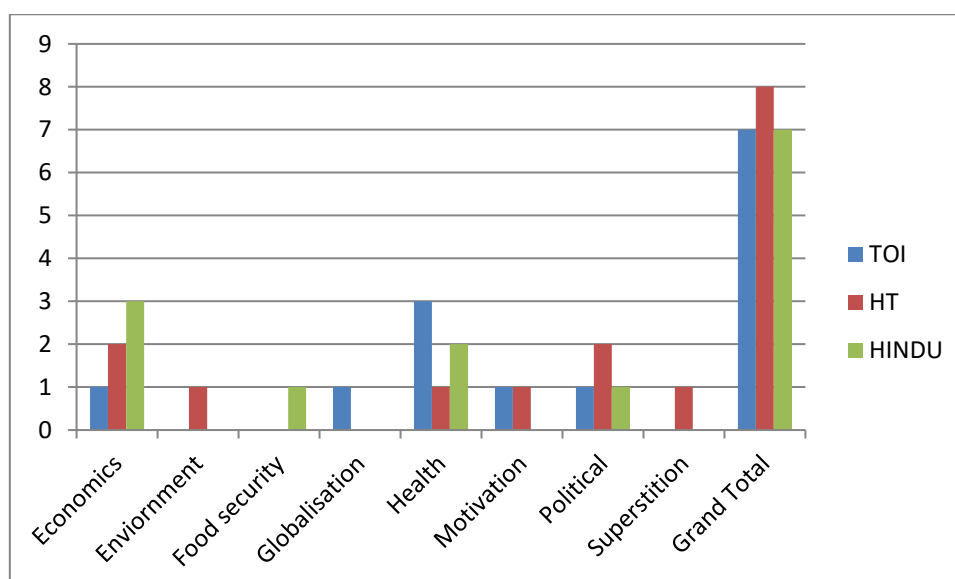
The Hindu published most lengthy and information based factual article with in-depth coverage to the issues whereas the times of India and Hindustan Times gives an average of 900 words each for their editorial article. Total percentage of The Hindu is more as compared to the Hindustan times and the times of India.

#### 4.2 Author of Article



In the collected data the editorial article submitted can be broadly classified in four categories viz. In-house editorial, Academician, Politician and Corporate. In times of India most of the articles are submitted by in-house Senior Editors like Sagarika Ghose, Bachi Kakaria etc which reflects the truest opinion of the newspaper. In case of Hindustan times most of the articles are contributed by senior research fellows and academicians of different universities and research institutes, whereas in the Hindu the contribution is mix of corporate, politician and Academician.

#### 4.3 Issues Covered



The above table represent the issues covered in the three dailies after the Lockdown. On an Average all there were three common issues which were covered differently on different days by the newspapers. The prominent issues were Economy, Health and Politics. Both national and International aspects were discussed in the common issues.

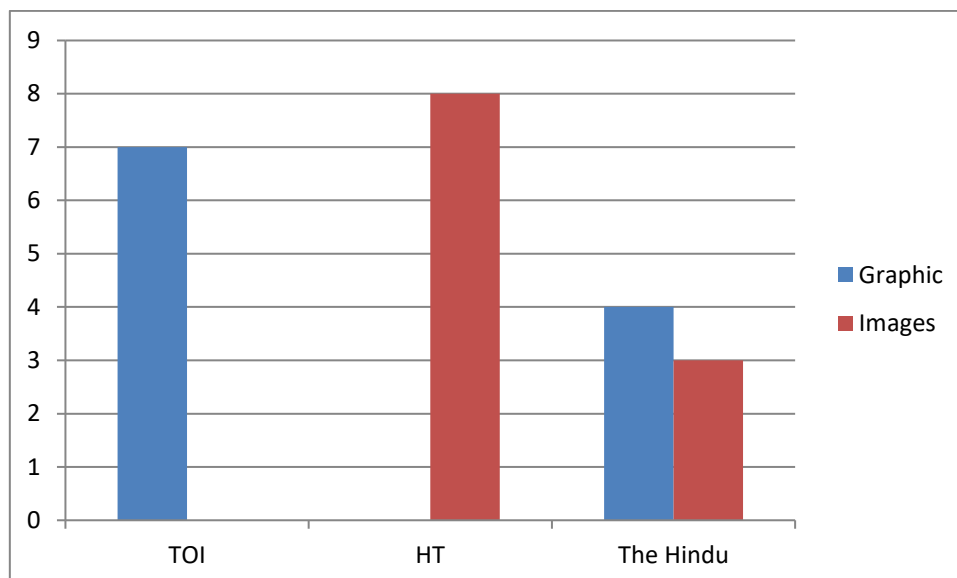
#### 4.4 Keyword Density

Dates	The Times of India	The Hindustan times	The Hindu
Mar24	china, world, people impact, covid-19	slums, population, covid-19, average	Covid-19, India, health, economy
Mar25	politicians, parliament, corona virus, covid-19, people	economic activity, health care, income transfer, supply demand	covid-19, health, covid-19 response, china, Italy, health care
Mar 26	medical council of India, MCI, Doctors, medical, battle	covid-19, state government, lockdown, food need, India	economic impact, financial market, external demand, corona virus, expenditure, India
Mar 27	HIV, aids, covid-19, control	pollution, covid-19, crisis, climate change, work from home	Lockdown, government, Kerala, government, budget management, covid-19 pandemic
Mar 28	corona virus, social, class, India,	covid-19, India, China, Democracy, Janta curfew	social security, lockdown, ration, Public Distribution system,
Mar 29	-----	crisis, political, covid-19, health, Indian state, pandemic, Indian politics	-----
Mar 30	corona virus, spitting, public, India, social	science, scientific, virus, public	global politics, leadership,
Mar 31	countries, India, work from home, lockdown, economy	Lockdown. India, People, infected, corona virus	covid-19,

The keyword density was calculated on the basis of frequency of repetition of the words in the Editorial. The keywords used by The Times of India were Corona virus, covid-19, India, Lockdown, Medical. The average keyword used in the Hindustan Times were covid-19, Health, Corona Virus, Political,, State, government etc. The prominent keywords of the Hindu were covid-19, pandemic, economy, politics, government, lockdown, Health, India. Covid-19, corona virus, health, economy and politics were the common keywords.

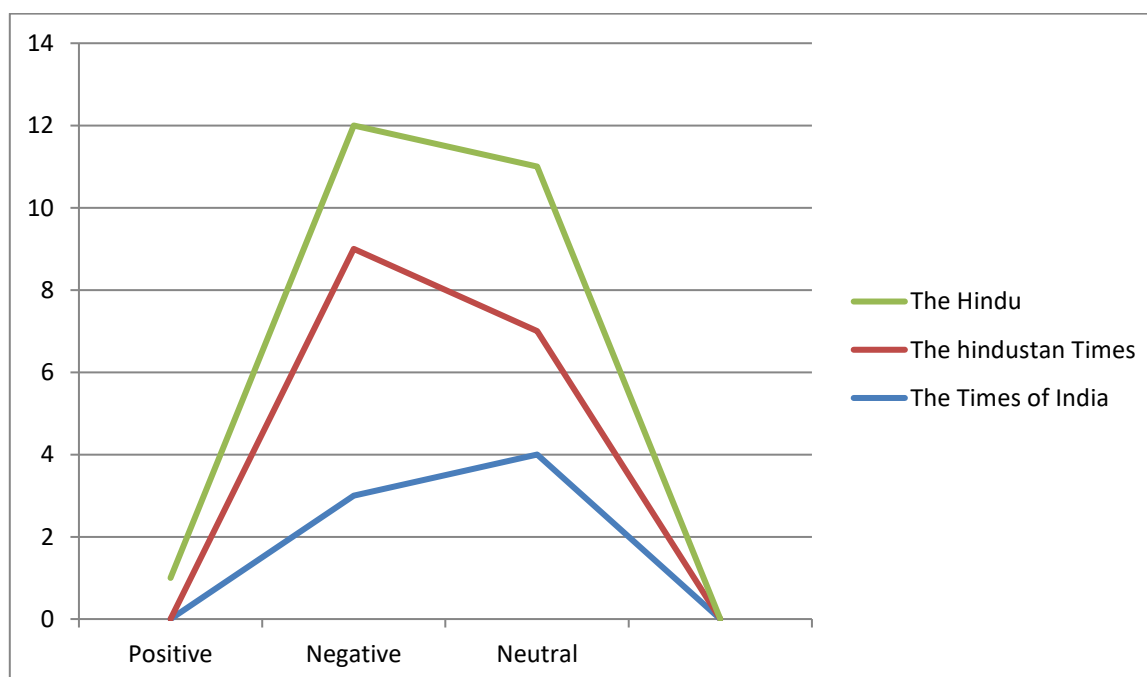
## V. TONE ANALYSIS

### 5.1 Tone of the Editorial



Most of the articles are written in constructive positive tone. The analysis was conducted online through sentiment analysis in which textual tone was automatically calculated. The Hindu is the only newspaper which 3 out of seven times present neutral opinion and represent the facts. The editorials published in Hindustan Times are highly positive which may be due to interference of newspaper management. Among the three the Hindu represents most balance tone of editorial write-up.

### 5.2 Tone of The headline

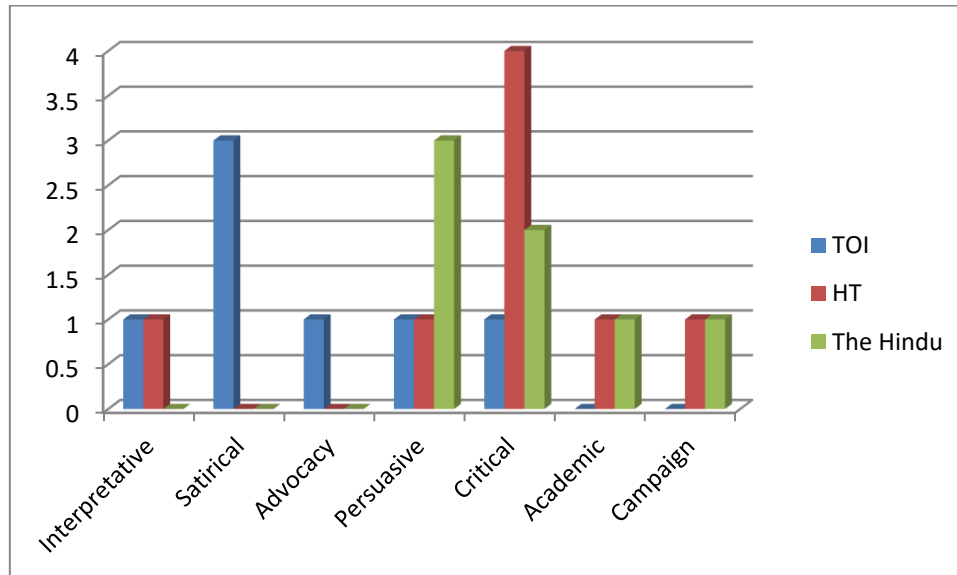


Headlines used in all the three newspapers are written in Neutral and a negative tone only. Only once In the Hindu one outcome of headline came



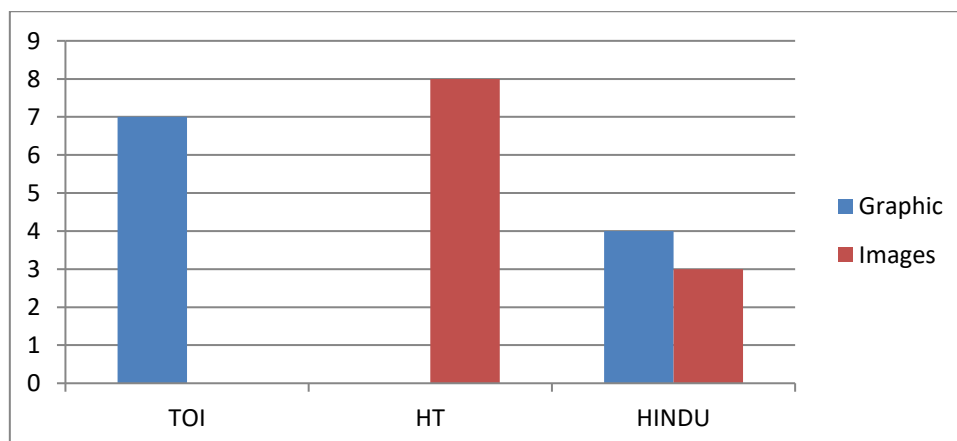
positive. The automated sentiment analysis was carried out for the same as well. The headlines were concrete and concise in nature. All the newspapers have followed neutral pattern dominantly.

### 5.3 Nature of editorial



All the three articles predominantly used critical classification of editorial. The Hindu being neutral in tone also included persuasive approach and academic approach in its editorials. The times of India is the only newspaper amongst three which used the satirical tone in the editorial write-up. Hindustan Times editorials were highly positive in nature and mildly critical which reflects lack of opinion or non disclosure of newspaper's opinions on the ongoing situations.

## VI. VISUAL ANALYSIS



The times of India Solely used graphical caricatures and visuals to represent the text of the story. Similarly in the Hindustan Times only jpeg images were used. Out of eight days data 3-4 were file photo i.e. they were inserted from the already existing ht database. The Hindu has partially used both graphic and image visuals to support the stories. In the visuals most of the shutter stock or Getty images were used.

## VII. CONCLUSION:

The objective of the study was to examine and analyse and compare the editorials of top three leading English dailies of India after lockdown. The lockdown announced on March 24, 2020 has brought the world to stand still. During such times the role of newspapers becomes more important in representing and building the public opinion. The study of selected editorials reflected that covid-19 has been the most dominant issue in all the three newspapers. Different newspapers have highlighted their concerns and suggestions for the ongoing lockdown situation in the country. Broadly the four areas which were highlighted in the week were impact of lockdown on economy and its different sections of society, the political upheaval and also the fact based research suggesting and discussing the growing health concern due to corona outbreak. The most common used keywords were corona virus, covid-19, India, health, Economy, Politics. On the basis of findings among the selected three newspapers the Hindu is considered to be most balance representative editorial which is using a balanced approach, tone and classification to reach out to its readers. The issues treated in Hindustan Times looks callous in nature and most of the write-ups are done by unfamiliar authors. It is primarily very important for a reputed newspaper to specify its own say in the editorial. The times of India playfully and smartly used satirical tone in its editorials which adds breath of fresh air. Although the issues covered are dealt in lighter tone. The study also revealed that the editorials of The Hindu seemed very in depth and serious and project the issues in the neutral tone.

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