

# Media framing of development-induced displacement

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The project of nation building in the post-independent India led to establishment of massive industries, construction of large dams and mining for minerals and fuels. These were found necessary for modernizing India and taking it on the path of economic progress and prosperity. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the first prime minister of India was so euphoric about the benefits of industries and big dams that he called them “temples of modern India.” The ecological consequences and the displacement of millions of people the building of these temples would cause were of no serious concern for the politicians, bureaucrats and industrial interests. If large-scale, capital intensive development projects uprooted millions of people, that was deemed a necessary evil (Cernea, 1995). In fact many of the planners believed displacement would be in the interest of the displaced persons as that would lead them to social and economic change.

The people living in the areas chosen for building development projects were asked to leave their homes and move elsewhere for the greater common good ( Roy, 1999). Speaking at a public meeting in the submergence zone of the Pong Dam in 1961 Morarji Desai, the then finance minister of India said *"We will request you to move from your houses after the dam comes up. If you move it will be good. Otherwise we shall release the waters and drown you all"* (ac cited in Roy, 1999) The then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru told villagers who were to be displaced by the Hirakud Dam in 1948 *"If you are to suffer, you should suffer in the interest of the country."* (as cited in Roy, 1999). These assertions were a broad indication of the attitude of the government towards the people displaced by development projects in many parts of India. Although development projects like hydroelectric and Irrigation projects, mines, thermal and nuclear power plants, industrial complexes have displaced more than 50 million people in the last six decades it has remained a non-issue for governments, politicians and policy makers in India (Dutta, 2007). The conservative official estimates of displaced persons have always been lower than the claims of activists and the project affected people. A great majority of these people have not been rehabilitated. Their incomes and livelihoods have not been restored which

has led to impoverishment (Ray, 2000). There have been no serious attempts to measure the magnitude of economic, social, environmental and cultural problems caused by development induced displacement. For millions of people development has meant loss of their homes, livelihoods, health and even their lives (Cernea, 1995).

As many as 21.6 million people have been displaced by large dams alone (Paranjpye, 1988). Displacement has led to impoverishment risks such as landlessness, joblessness, homelessness, marginalization, food insecurity, increased morbidity and mortality, loss of access to common property and social disarticulation (Pande & Rout, 2004) as displaced people are often forced to move to economically, socially and culturally different settings (Dutta, 2007). A significant number of the displaced people are the tribals<sup>1</sup> and the economically marginalized rural people, who have depended upon the natural resource base for their livelihood (Government of India, 1993).

The most devastating consequence of development-induced displacement for the tribal people has been the dispossession of land, along with the loss of their traditional occupation. Most tribals have been deprived of compensation and rehabilitation benefits as they do not possess any legal documents to prove their ownership right on their land although they have been living there for centuries.

There has not been a single instance of satisfactory compensation and rehabilitation of the displaced persons anywhere in India (Lokesh, 2010). Disparities and arbitrariness in valuing their land and other immovable assets for calculating compensation and long delay in payment of compensation and rehabilitation have impoverished them. Corrupt practices by officials involved in the payment of cash compensation and rehabilitation assistance make their situation worse. There are also instances of siphoning away of major chunk of the compensation and exploitation by land owners, money lenders, bank officials and lawyers (Centre for Science and Environment, 1985; Thukral, 1989; Reddy, 1993 and Pandey, 1998).

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<sup>1</sup> As many as 40 percent of the people displaced by development projects in India are tribal people. Dalits and backward classes constitute 20 percent each of the displaced people (Mishra, 2011:316).

After Independence when India initiated development projects in different parts of the country, no specific policy was ever formulated either by the central or the state governments to address the issue of displacement. Resettlement and rehabilitation of the displaced people have been based on ad hoc plans, resolutions and orders, passed for specific states or even projects. Different State governments and ministries of central government followed different policies on resettlement and rehabilitation in the absence of a national resettlement and rehabilitation (R&R) policy.

The struggle against development-induced displacement in India began with the struggle against the Mulshi Dam, a hydro-electric project located at about 20 kms south-west of Poona in 1921. The project, promoted by Tatas<sup>2</sup>, had been commissioned in 1920 to supply power to the rising industrial city of Bombay. A total of 11000 persons were to be displaced from their paddy fields. With the support of the freedom fighters the local inhabitants decided to resist eviction. A petition was sent to the government with signatures of 1300 persons to be displaced. On April 16, 1921 about 1200 men, women and children staged a protest march and stopped work on the dam site. The agitation against unjust compensation and displacement, supported by Congressmen, went on for two and a half years. The government and the Tatas were criticized for extinguishing wick lamps in thousands of rural homes to light up the latrines of Bombay (Bhuskote, 1968). The moneylenders succeeded in persuading the villagers to accept land acquisition and monetary compensation. Although a reasonable compensation was given much of it went into the hands of moneylenders to whom the peasants were indebted. The displacement left the peasants moneyless, landless and homeless.

Gadgil and Guha (1995) have drawn parallels between the Mulshi Satyagraha and ongoing protests against development projects. A positive consequence of this agitation was that the Tata group did not proceed with the other hydroelectric projects they had intended for the Sahyadri were shelved.

There were strong protests when the foundation stone was laid for the Hirakud Dam in Orissa in 1946. Large gatherings were prohibited. Over 30000 people including women took part

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<sup>2</sup> One of the biggest industrial houses in India

in the protest march violating prohibitory orders. But the agitation fizzled out with the involvement of political parties. There was very little opposition to the massive river valley projects of the 1950s (Gadgil & Guha, 1995). Although the Bhakra-Nangal dam in Punjab, the Tungabhadra project on the Andhra Pradesh-Karnataka border and Rihand dam in Uttar Pradesh displaced tens of thousands of people there were no massive protests. The Indian villagers were willing to sacrifice for nation building projects (Hart, 1956). However, over the years, the Indian villager developed a marked unwillingness to make way for 'nation-building' projects. The communities displaced by the projects have not been rehabilitated and the compensation they received has been inadequate. The promise of land for land has not been fulfilled. Dharmadhikary (2005) has documented tales of people who have not been rehabilitated even fifty years after the Bhakra-Nangal dam consumed their homes. The term 'displacement' has been substituted by 'resettlement' despite the fact that there has not been even a single case of any satisfactory resettlement anywhere in the country. Although large-scale projects had displaced millions of people rehabilitation was never a part of development planning. No national policy for rehabilitation and resettlement was formulated until 2007.

There have been several cases of the same people being displaced two-three times even as they were settling down. Displacement has led to breaking up of communities with people forced to move to different places cutting them off from their social and cultural roots. They had to rebuild their lives all over again in places unfamiliar to them. With no common property resources and immediately cultivable land the displaced people have been struggling to meet their basic needs. In independent India there were no organized and sustained protests against displacement until the 1980s. Since dam building was equated with nation building opposing it was almost seen as an anti-national act. With rapid growth of industries, expansion of mining and building of infrastructure projects the problem of displacement has become the subject of national debate.

In the years following independence the mass media were called upon to work toward fostering national development which at that time was conceived predominantly in economic terms. The media were to persuade people to achieve, maintain, and strengthen development goals (Melkote, 1991). The media considered the consequences of development irrelevant as the project of nation building had to get primacy over everything else (Narula, 2004). The mass

media oriented towards promoting development would not consider displacement a serious issue (Loksha, 2010). However, significant changes have taken place in the way the concept of development is understood and the way in which media function today. In such a context it is important to examine how the media have reported and framed issues related to development-induced displacement.

Media coverage of displacement began with the very first struggle against the construction of a hydroelectric power plant near Mulshi in Maharashtra (Gadgil & Guha, 1995). The Times of India, on May 02, 1921, attempted a balanced coverage of the issue by presenting the arguments of the protesters and also the promoters of the project. However the emphasis in coverage was about the economic benefit the dam would bring about. After independence the kind of balance in press coverage seen in the 1920s faded. The villages to be displaced by the development projects were expected to make sacrifices in the larger national interest (Loksha, 2010).

The mass media play an important role in shaping the public perception of problems associated with displacement (Gadgil & Guha, 1995). Studies have revealed that while the media have generally shown their concern towards environmental degradation they have ignored the human consequences of displacement (Patvardhan, 1999). Since the process of news production involves the mechanism of how mass media select and organize the reality (Gitlin, 1980; Tuchman, 1978), the concept of frame is important in investigating how media report displacement issues. Although mainstream media generally report on improper rehabilitation and resettlement of the displaced persons they tend to support the view that dam building and industrialization that displace people are inevitable consequences of economic growth (Roy, 1999).

Akhileshwari (1989), Guha (1992) Gadgil and Guha (1995), Krishna (1996), Chapman et al. (1997), Hegde (1999), D'Monte (2005) have found that the media paid inadequate attention to the consequences of development projects. An analysis of how the issue of development-induced displacement is reported in the media and what frames are being used is vital in the context of economic policies aimed at achieving higher growth.

## **Media framing**

One of the ways in which media shape public opinion is by framing events and issues in particular ways. Framing involves presenting and defining an issue. A frame is a central organizing idea that gives a sense of relevant events, suggesting what is at issue' (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989). It helps media audience make sense of what is going on. The notion of framing helps examination of media content and the relationship between media and public opinion. Several factors such as news organizations (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996), continuous interaction between journalists and elites (Gans, 1979; Tuchman, 1978) and social movements (Cooper, 2002; Snow & Benford, 1992) influence the structural qualities of news frames. Frames in the news that are manifest in the text may affect learning, interpretation, and evaluation of issues and events. Media frames may alter individual's attitudes and play a vital role in collective decision making and action. Framing essentially involves selection and salience. Although frames do not determine what people think they make certain aspects of a problem look more salient than others.

Certain aspects of a perceived reality are selected and made more salient in news stories in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and treatment recommendation for the item described (Entman, 1993). Frames "enable journalists to process large amounts of information quickly and routinely: to recognize it as information, to assign it cognitive categories, and to package it for efficient relay to their audiences"(Getlin, 1980: 7). Although frames are produced in the context of complex organizations, they are created by media professionals. Values regarding what constitutes news and access to sources enable journalists to routinely construct and frame events (Kosicki & Pan, 1993). Frame analysis goes beyond agenda setting and considers not only what the news producers talk about but *how* problems are selected, emphasized, and defined. It is not only important to examine here what is included but also what is excluded (Entman, 2007).

A news frame must have identifiable conceptual and linguistic characteristics, should be commonly observed in journalistic practice, must be reliably distinguished from other frames and must have representational validity (Cappella & Jamieson, 1997:47; 89). Frames in the news can be examined and identified by the presence or absence of certain keywords, stock phrases,

stereotyped images, sources of information and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgments (Entman, 1993). Framing devices condense information and offer a 'media package' of an issue. These devices include metaphors, exemplars, catch-phrases, depictions, and visual images as framing devices. Headlines, subheads, photos, photo captions, leads, source selection, quotes selection, pull quotes, logos statistics and charts and concluding statements and paragraphs are the devices used for identifying and measuring news frames.

Frames function as interpretative schema to make sense of and discuss an issue. Journalists use frames to condense complex events into interesting and appealing news reports, and policy-makers use frames to define policy options and reach decisions (Scheufele, 1999). Frames help journalists simplify complex issues by focusing attention on certain considerations and arguments. They present a certain dimension of a complex topic by excluding an alternative frame (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989).

Iyengar (1991) noted that news has either episodic frame or thematic frame. Episodic framing is event-oriented coverage of breaking news stories while thematic framing is coverage that provides background and perspective on public issues. Even when the details of an event are not disputed the event can be framed in a number of different ways.

Although claims makers and their opponents routinely compete to promote their favoured frames to journalists as well as to potential supporters, news workers forge their own frames. Gamson and Wolfsfeld (1993) depict the interaction between the movements and the media as a subtle 'contest over meaning' in which activists attempt to 'sell' (Guha, 2010) their preferred images, argument and story lines to journalists and editors who, more often than not, prefer to maintain and reproduce the dominant mainstream frames and cultural codes.

Studies suggest that sources exercise substantial control over news frames (Dunwoody & Griffin, 1993; Gandy, 1989; Einsiedel, 1988; Greenberg et al., 1989; Wang, 1988; Hansen, 1991; Nohrstedt, 1991; Anderson, 1993, Einsiedel & Coughlan, 1993, Gooch, 1996) and that credibility is a crucial factor governing source-media relations. The sources that gain access to media influence the themes that emerge in the media treatment of an issue. Empirically, the

central role of ‘claims-making activity’<sup>3</sup> in shaping media frames has been examined in media coverage of environmental issues and conflicts (Burgess and Harrison, 1993; Hansen, 1991; Mazur and Lee, 1993; Schoenfeld et al. 1979).

Framing research is very scarce in India. There have been studies that have analysed coverage and framing of environmental issues but coverage and framing of displacement issues has not been the focus of researchers’ attention. This paper attempts to find answers to the following questions. What has been the coverage given to displacement news in major English daily newspapers from 1982 to 2012? What are the frames the newspapers use in covering news of development-induced displacement? Have those frames changed over time? What is the representation of claims-makers in the displacement news and their association with framing?

## **Method**

For the purpose of this study quantitative and qualitative content analysis of four English daily newspapers was carried out. The English newspapers have had considerable influence on the policy makers, planners, bureaucracy and leaders of social movements (Geffrey, 2000). In a country of many languages, the English newspapers with circulation across states reach readers belonging to various linguistic groups. The English press has played the agenda setting role with regard to political, economic and social policy making in India (Chapman et al., 1997). Issues receive national attention only when they become news in the major English newspapers which are relatively more assertive and independent than Indian language newspapers<sup>4</sup>. Howenstine (1987) has suggested that the newspapers read by the influential members of the society set the agenda for all newspapers and magazines nation-wide.

The Hindu, the Indian Express, The Times of India and the Deccan Herald were selected for the purpose of this study. The four newspapers represent the English press in India. While the

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<sup>3</sup> Claims making activities include all those strategies that help sources find themselves quoted in media.

<sup>4</sup> Jeffrey (2000,) has observed *that the large English language newspapers are better able to resist pressure than small Indian language newspapers because resistance depended on two capacities. First, large wealthy newspapers could hire lawyers to bring cases, pay for guards to secure buildings and provide quick, safe communications for people and stories. Second, English language newspapers had fast access to the network of national and international outrage that could be activated if the newspaper or its people were attacked* (p. 193-4).

Indian Express, The Hindu and The Times of India have greater presence at the national level, the Deccan Herald is a regional newspaper with a strong presence in the state of Karnataka. All the four newspapers have multiple editions.

For sample selection the universe was all units of the four dailies published during the years 1982, 1992, 2002 and 2012. A representative sample was drawn for each paper for each year to make generalisations possible for the entire year. Although previous studies have suggested that a sample of 12 issues per year would produce valid results<sup>5</sup> it was decided to take a larger sample since the appearance of displacement news was less frequent. Samples of 14, 21, 28, 35, 42 and 48 were tested to find out whether there would be variation in the results. It was found that variation did not occur beyond a sample of 28 issues. Therefore, a sample size of twenty-eight issues per year for each newspaper was chosen. Four constructed weeks (Budd et al., 1967) constituted the sample for each year<sup>6</sup>. To select the required weeks each sample year was divided into four sub-periods: (i) January—March, (ii) April—June (iii) July—September, (iv) October—December.

Seven days of the week were randomly selected from each sub-period to construct a week. A Monday, a Tuesday, a Wednesday, a Thursday, a Friday, a Saturday and a Sunday were selected randomly from all Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. This stratified sampling technique assured that appropriate weight was given to news falling within each sub period and each day of the week. If a particular issue of the selected date was not found in any of the four newspapers another issue of the same day was randomly selected for all the newspapers. The same procedure was adopted if there was a holiday for any of the newspapers. A total of 448 issues of the four newspapers formed the sample (28 issues x

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<sup>5</sup> A small systematically selected sample of the relevant content is considered sufficient to produce valid results (Berelson, 1952). Though Stempel (1952) had said that an increase of the sample size beyond twelve issues did not produce marked differences in results it was decided to take twenty-one issues as the frequency of appearance of environmental news was very low. It must be noted that his experimental category of subject matter was large (averaging 207.4 column inches daily). Furthermore it can be argued that Stempel's selected category (photographs) appears more regularly than most. Ahmed (1996) had also argued that a sample of larger than twelve issues would not produce significantly different results. But, he too analysed the content (foreign news) that appears regularly in any newspaper.

<sup>6</sup> A constructed week procedure is more efficient than pure random or consecutive day sampling because constructed week sampling assumes cyclic variations of content for different days of the week be represented (Riffe et al., 1993).

4 dailies x 4 years = 448). Only the contents appearing in the main sections of the sampled issues were analysed.

Development-induced displacement as a content category refers to news about forcing people out of their homes or communities for purpose of economic development. It includes displacement caused by large dams, mines, military bases, industrial establishments, power projects, highways and ports. Displacement due to natural disasters, ethnic or regional conflicts has been excluded. *Frame* was operationalized as the assertions presented in the headlines and lead paragraphs. Claims-makers are the sources quoted in the news stories.

One of the questions encountered in a content analysis is what should be the base of analysis. One could take either the amount of space measured in terms of column centimetres or the frequency count of items. Stevenson and Cole (1982) and Ahmed (1992) have shown that whether one takes space or frequency count of items the results would be the same. The present study also found a significant positive relationship between item space and number of items when Spearman rank-order correlation was run for the categories taken for analysis). In order to make the presentation of results simpler the frequency count of items was taken as the base of analysis.

Two coders coded the issues independently using hard copy of the sampled issues. The researcher trained them in coding the items into different categories. Each coder was given a set of guidelines containing the definitions and explanations of the different categories included in the coding sheet. To find out inter-coder reliability 28 issues of each newspaper were selected for coding. After the first coder coded the issues of each newspaper, the second coder did the coding of the same issues. To compute the coefficient of reliability Holsti's (1968) formula was used. The coefficient of reliability in respect of the other episodic and thematic farming was 0.83, for dimensional frames categories it was 0.87 and for claims-maker categories it was .86. All news stories were read from the headline to the last paragraph to identify the news sources used.

### **Coverage of displacement news**

The content analysis reveals that news about development-induced displacement accounted for only a small percentage of total content carried by the newspapers. The coverage which was

a mere .26 percent in 1982 went up to .54 percent in 1992 which suggests that the newspapers' interest in stories increased in a decade's time (Table 1). The period between 1982 and 1992 is marked by the growth of environmental movements throughout the country. Not only that the number of environmental groups grew in number but several of them expanded their activities beyond their stated objectives (Sarin, 2013). That was also the period when displaced persons organized themselves to demand better rehabilitation and resettlement measures. Several organizations fighting against displacement formed alliances in order to bring pressure on the both the central and state governments to shelve extremely harmful projects and to deal with persons to be displaced more humanly.

Table 1: Development news in newspapers

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total News items</b>	<b>Displacement news items</b>	<b>Percentage of displacement news</b>
<b>1982</b>	8910	23	0.26
<b>1992</b>	9133	49	0.54
<b>2002</b>	9102	71	0.78
<b>2012</b>	10112	84	0.83
<b>Total</b>	37257	227	0.61

Between 1992 and 2002 there was again a significant increase in the coverage of the displacement issues in newspapers. Many non-governmental organizations came together to form National Alliance for People's Movement (NAPM) that has conducted several campaigns across the country against displacement and for just compensation and rehabilitation. The NAPM has more than 225 organizations associated with now ([www.napm-india.org](http://www.napm-india.org)). The 1990s witnessed frequent agitations in the Narmada valley as dams across the river submerged large tribal areas (Parasuraman, 1997). Several rallies and agitations were held during the period with writers, environmentalists and artistes joining hands with the people facing displacement. The protests in the valley attracted thousands of participants from all over India. These protests attracted the attention of national and international media. Lokesh (2010) has argued that protests in the Narmada valley and campaigns against mining and land acquisition for industries in other areas led to greater media attention.

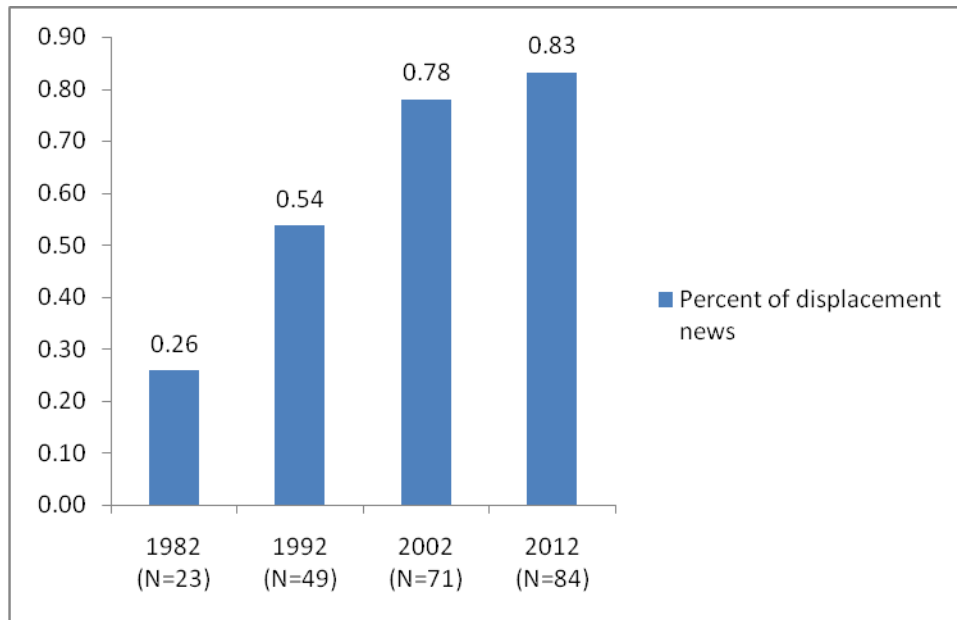
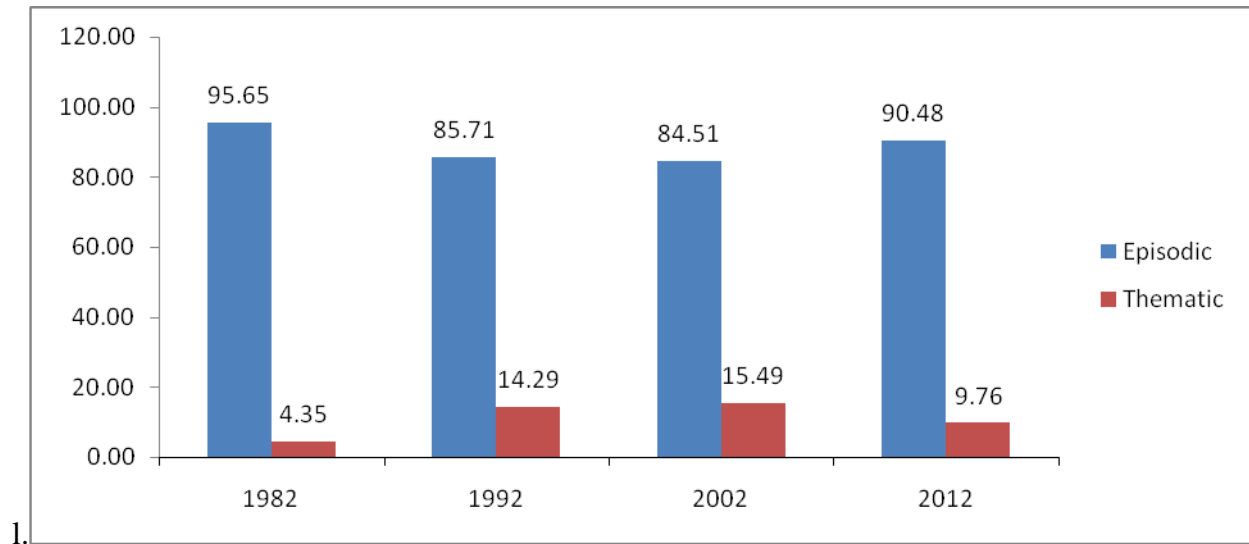


Figure 1: Coverage of development-induced displacement

Although there was an increase in the coverage of displacement issues between 2002 and 2012 it was only marginal. Displacement caused by special economic zones, mining and power projects continued to be debated in 2012 but such debates were hardly reflected in the media.

### **Episodic framing**

The news coverage was strongly biased towards an *episodic* frame. Displacement was depicted as an issue limited to events with broader interpretation or context (the *thematic* frame) lacking. Iyengar (1991) has argued that norms and standards within news organizations and news production reinforce episodic framing. This practice ‘simplifies complex issues and presents them as mere events. The reports in newspapers looked topical, disorganized and isolated rather than general and contextual.



*Figure 2: Episodic and thematic framing of displacement news*

Throughout the four time periods episodic framing dominated coverage of displacement issues (88%). Rather than processes, trends over time and contexts isolated events formed the base of news stories. There was a marginal increase in the percentage of stories with thematic frames during 1992 and 2002 but a decline was noticed again in 2012. Developments with regard to displacement were reduced to a series of disconnected random events ignoring the lopsided policies that have contributed to the problem. Protests by groups in different places were reported as isolated events. New stories highlighted tribulations, misfortunes, and victories of individuals while political and economic structures received hardly any attention. The fragmentation norm isolated news stories from their origins and contexts, which made it difficult to see the wider view ( Boykoff, 2006).

Coverage of displacement news, like other types of reporting, was often characterized by conflict between individuals or between institutions and individuals. It was often reduced to a conflict of authorities and even personalities quoted in the media. Unable to explain the scientific and political complexities associated with the problem of displacement and similarly unable to investigate the intercorrelations between issues the problem of displacement became a personality conflict. The entire struggle in the Narmada Valley against displacement was presented as a war between Medha Patkar, the leader of the Narmada Bachav Andolan (Save

Narmada Movement) and the chief minister of Gujarat state. The issue of Narmada project was reported in bits and pieces focusing mostly on conflict and events. When the protests took place the protesters themselves became the issue rather than the cause they were fighting for.

Comprehensive coverage that presents displacement issues from different angles was lacking. Iyengar (1991) has shown that if the issues are more episodically reported the readers are less likely to hold government and other organizations responsible for causing a problem. He has argued that episodic framing of news diverts attention from social responsibility and leads people to hold individuals responsible for their own predicament and shields leaders from responsibility. More thematic and contextual coverage is needed to move people towards collective action because episodic framing tends to treat readers as consumers rather than approaching them as citizens. Studies have shown that episodic and thematic framing can have very different effects on how people view a given problem. Event orientation allows news sources to control the establishment of story frames and it absolves journalists from attending to the bigger picture. Given the competition among the news media the news is packaged and conveyed, journalists frequently exploit the personality, sensationalism, drama, and conflict of stories, thereby downplaying the larger social, economic, or political picture (Bennett, 1996; Sparrow, 1999).

### **Economic framing**

The economic frame dominated the newspaper coverage of displacement between 1982 and 2012 . As many as 64 percent of the displacement news stories primarily presented information and opinions about economic dimensions of displacement. Cost-benefit analysis frequently found space in displacement news. The coverage of social, cultural and other aspects of displacement have declined over the years. Most of the news items were about the economics of compensation, the cost of rehabilitation and resettlement. Disputes between the oustees and the authorities with regard to fixing of the price for land and other assets frequently appeared in the news stories.

Only a small percentage (13.22) of displacement stories focused on the social dimension of the problem. Displacement tears apart existing social fabric as communities get fragmented and patterns of social organisation get dismantled. Life sustaining informal networks of

reciprocal help, local voluntary associations and self-organised mutual services are disrupted. Such consequences were hardly reported. As shown in Figure 2 the percentage of news with social frame declined over the decades.

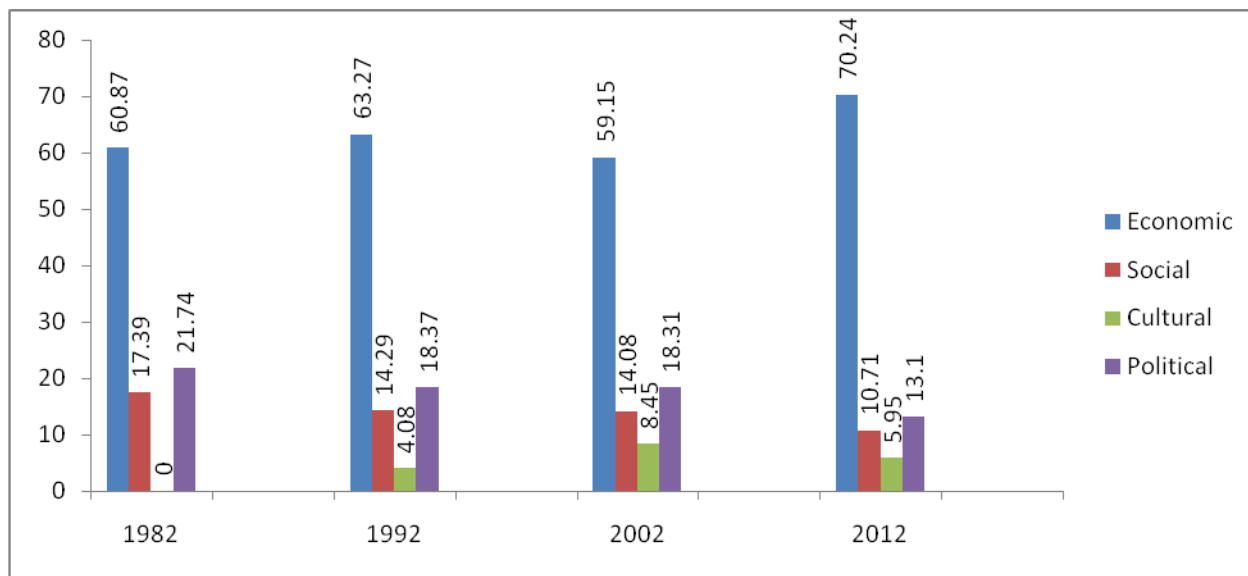


Figure 3: Frames of displacement dimensions.

The impact of displacement on cultural life of the people was rarely covered. The coerced abandonment of symbolic markers such as ancestral shrines and graves or of spatial contexts such as mountains and rivers considered holy or sacred trials, cuts-off some of the physical and psychological linkages with the past and snaps the roots of the peoples' cultural identity (Dutta, 2007). The loss of these cannot be compensated monetarily. Such impacts rarely became subjects of news coverage. In the year 1982 there was not even a single story about the cultural loss suffered by the oustees. Throughout the period from 1992 to 2012 only a negligible percentage of stories had cultural frame.

There were very few news items that analysed the issue of displacement in terms of violation of human rights. The fact that the persons to be displaced were never consulted hardly found space in news reports. The mandatory public hearings were reported but never analysed from the perspective of the persons to be displaced.

### Claims-makers and frames

A majority of the claims-makers who gained access to media were officials who included bureaucrats, experts working for government agencies and policy makers. Accounting for more than fifty percent of the quoted sources (Figure 4) officials have remained the major source of information in the last three decades although there was a slight decline in their presence in the news between 1992 and 2002. It is interesting to note that non-governmental organizations and project affected persons have increased their presence as news sources over the years. The percentage of industry sources used in displacement news has decreased through the decades. Lokesh (2010) has argued that with officials themselves speaking for the industries the industry sources have started withdrawing from the claims-making acts. One of the factors that may have contributed to the infrequent use of the non-governmental organizations and project affected persons is that there are only a handful of groups that have organizational structures needed to effectively explain their issues to the media. Without a national presence it is hard for them to get space in the national media to explain their point of view.

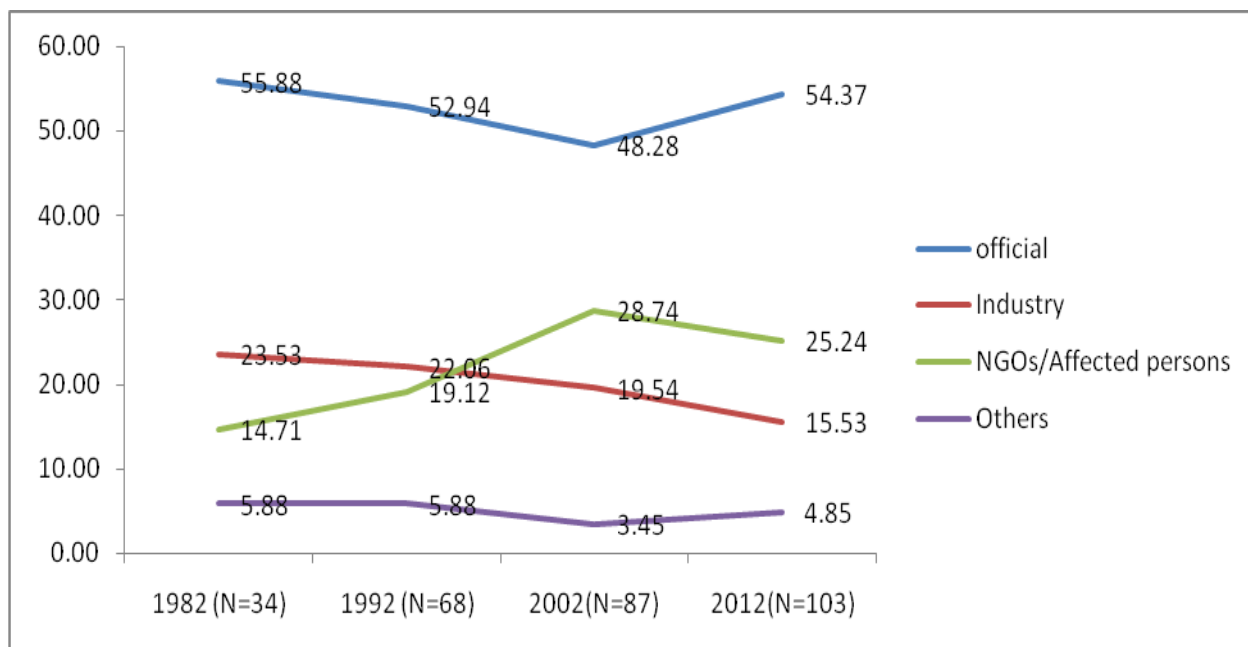


Figure 4: Sources of displacement news

There were very few stories that had environmental groups as single sources. While officials and scientists were quoted as single sources environmental groups were quoted along with official sources and industry sources. If the environmental groups are to attract favourable media coverage they must be viewed as legitimate and authoritative sources. Hansen (1991) argues, “The low profile of pressure groups

as primary definers in actual media coverage indicates that, while they may play a key role as claims-makers, drawing the attention of the media to particular problems, it is to the fora of ‘public authorities’ that journalists turn for validation of such claims. The claims of the pressure groups are presented along with the sources that have obvious credentials and well-established credibility (Goodell, 1986).

Soley (1992) has argued that powerful ‘accredited’ sources, such as government departments, enjoy privileged access to the media. They command greater access to the media by virtue of their claims to expert knowledge, their powerful position in society, or their representative status. Thus, the powerful sources become over-accessed by the media (Hall et al., 1978). While information given by officials is usually published without reactions from the environmentalists, the statements of the activists are seldom carried without the reactions of the officials. That the credibility of non-official sources was doubted is evident in the way they were quoted. While officials ‘said’, ‘explained’, ‘clarified’ and ‘asserted’ environmental groups ‘claimed’, ‘argued’, ‘alleged’, ‘charged’ and ‘contented’ were often used whenever environmental groups were quoted. These terms raise doubts in the minds of the readers about the reliability of the statements. It is clear that official sources largely influence the frames of stories on displacement issues. A majority of the stories with episodic frames and economic frames had officials as ‘primary definers’ of displacement news. Official sources seemed to serve as legitimizing agents for the newspapers. The nature of the reporting of displacement issues largely favored those considered legitimate and ignored voices that were in variance with them. Lack of diverse sources is an indication of newspapers’ event-orientation with regard to the development-induced displacement.

## **Conclusion**

Displacement news accounts for a very small percentage of total news in the four English language newspapers. Although there was a significant increase in the coverage of displacement news between 1982 and 2002, the increase between 2002 and 2012 was only marginal. Episodic

framing dominated coverage of displacement issue. Developments with regard to displacement were reduced to a series of disconnected random events. The reports in newspapers were topical, disorganized and isolated rather than general and contextual. It was often reduced to a conflict of personalities quoted in the media. Thematic coverage that would present displacement issues in broader context was lacking. That a comprehensive coverage was lacking was evident in the domination of economic frame in the displacement news. The social dimension of development-induced displacement was lacking. Fragmentation of communities and dismantling of patterns of social organisation hardly became news in the newspapers. Denial of basic rights and political marginalisation of the displaced persons hardly made it to the newspapers as news. A majority of the displacement news stories had official sources as primary definers of news. There was very low representation of the non-governmental organisations and project affected persons as sources in the news. Official sources dominated episodic and economic framing of development-induced displacement in newspapers.

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