

## Local newspaper, Global reach: A case Study of “Khabar Lahariya”

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### Abstract:

*The research paper is based on the study of Khabar Lahariya, eight pages weekly newspaper brought out by a group of marginalized women from Chitrakoot district of Uttar Pradesh, India. This hyper local publication is in a mixed dialect of Hindi and Bundeli published in its own unique style covering local to global news. The newspaper significantly covers the local development issues. Since the newspaper has its own website, the hyper local issues have a chance at gaining global audiences. Through this method they create the GLOCAL concept of communication.*

*The research paper depicts the role of hyper local newspaper in the growth and development of the rural area of Chitrakoot region of Uttar Pradesh (India). Although a large Indian population lives in the villages and has limited access to print and digital media, efforts are being made to create a GLOCAL communication climate. The local, regional, economical and developmental issues which are unique to the region don't find place and significance in main stream newspapers. Hence the local women decided to bring out their own newspaper.*

*The paper is based on the principle of democratic participant media theory. Development issues raised with the help of Khabar Lahariya are more appropriate for inclusive development.*

*Rogers M Everett (1974) this article describes what communication is doing and what it could do, in achieving developmental goals. The mass media plays a major role in creating a*

*climate for modernization among villagers. Jeffery (2000) ‘people discovered ways to think about themselves and to participate a generation before’. In ‘waves in the hinterland’ Naqui(2007) highlighted how the eight women stated khabar lahariya, with the help of this newspaper they fought against inequality and injustice in their local society. ‘khabar lahariya is small but vital step towards the democratic transition. It is showing the way to bridge the gap between literacy and readership, between village and democracy. .Neyazi Ahmd Taberez (2010) has stressed that the process of localization has greatly helped Indian language newspapers. Localization has definitely hitherto marginalized group to participate in the public sphere.*

*Researcher has adopted the case base study method for analysis of the impact and co-ordination between receiver and sender of message. To gain a deeper insight into the newspaper, its publishers and readers the researcher will use the survey, interview and focused group discussion method, thereby completing the Case Study of Khabar Lehariya.*

*The study will throw light on the motivations of the rural women to start and run a newspaper and publish it online. The study will also be able to highlight the problems being faced by the residents of a small village and the efforts made by the newspaper.*

**Key words:** Khabar Lahariya, Glocal, Bundeli, rural newspaper and Hyper Local.

## **Introduction**

The main objective of media is considered as information, education, awareness and entertainment. “Media, the concrete form of this expression has grown in power over a period of time. The fundamental objective of media is to serve the people with news, views, comments and information on matters of public interest in a fair, accurate, unbiased and decent manner and language. The media today does not remain satisfied as the fourth estate. It has assumed the foremost importance in acting as a communication link between the society and the government. Such is the influence of media that it can make or

unmake any individual, institution or any thought. The media’s impact on the society in today’s scenario is very pervasive and extremely powerful. With so much power and strength, the media cannot lose sight of its privileges, duties and obligations” (Ray, 2010).

In the context of the present scenario in India, the mainstream media is more focused on the urban India, whereas in the rural area the role of mainstream media is very little in terms of information flow. In the present era of globalization where the whole world has become a global village, there is a question on whether the small rural newspapers are working with the zeal and sensitivity towards the local issues or not? The reach of newspapers in India is more in urban areas as compared to rural areas.

The mainstream media is under the constant pressure of profits and economic growth, whereas the small rural newspaper work with the objective of justice, development and democracy. For example newspaper like *Khabar Laharia* is working for securing justice to all; whereas the mainstream newspapers are working for economic gains. Today half of the population of the country does not have access to newspapers. By incorporating regional elements in its news, newspapers can be made available to the maximum people.

India is an agrarian society with around 65% people dependent on agriculture and the irony is that agriculture does not find any coverage in the mainstream media.

The Hoot did a quantitative analysis of the coverage of Indian states among five English News dailies- Times of India, The Indian Express, Hindustan Times, The Hindu, and The Economic Times. Delhi editions of these papers were taken. The period covered was April- May, 2012. News coverage was tracked for 50 issues, in 28 states.

A two-month scan of states coverage in 5 Newspapers shows that The Hindu does a better job than the others. INDIRA AKOIJAM finds that in some Newspapers some states

were not covered at all. The figure shows top five issues raised by the above mentioned five newspapers.

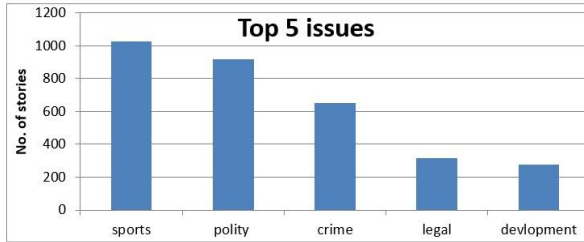


Diagram 1: Top 5 issues raised by the 5 important newspapers

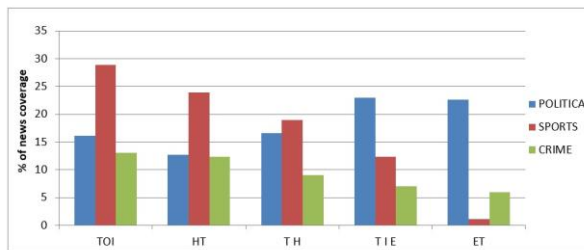


Diagram 2: Comparative coverage of stories in the 5 important newspapers

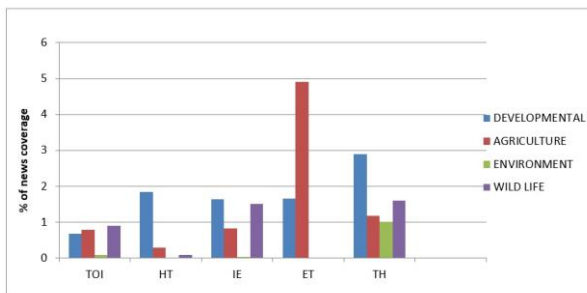


Diagram 3: Comparative coverage of stories in the 5 important newspapers

The above give two figures show the comparative coverage of different kinds of stories in the above mentioned five newspapers.

“India being the largest democracy in the world, it becomes very important that the citizens have access to information for proper functioning of its institutions. In the past, the print media shouldered the responsibility of disseminating information and news regarding the happenings within and outside the country” (Press in India 2009-10, 54th Annual Report, RNI). Local newspapers are the pillars of democracy in this country as they cater to the needs of the majority of the Indian population and particularly those who live in the rural areas.

Local newspapers are brought out by people with small means. They carry local news and cover problems concerning the local public. Many of them are also working on specialized subjects like science and technology, health, family planning, religion, etc. The Local newspapers generally speak the local language of the people and are read and understood by them and thus are capable of influencing or building up public opinion at the grass root level. They serve as a bridge between the people living at distant places in the interiors of the country on the one hand and the local administration, state, government and the central government on the other

“The democratic form of society demands its members to participate actively and intelligently in the affairs of their community, whether local or national. Democratic society, therefore, needs a clear and truthful account of events; of their background and their causes; a forum for discussion and informed criticism; and a means whereby individuals and groups can express a point of view or advocate a cause. The responsibility for fulfilling these needs unavoidably rests in large measure upon the press” (Royal commission on the press, 1947-49).

Local newspapers serving their intimate involvement in the local scenario play a more direct role in the process of democratizing communication and motivating socio-economic transformation than newspapers published at trade area. When

it is further realized that it is these newspapers, which matter most in ensuring accountability to the voters of the people’s representatives from the *panchayat* level, the parliament and the bureaucracy at the grass root level, the important role they play in ensuring vibrant and effective democratic government cannot be over emphasized.

### **Khabar Lahariya: Local to Global**

*Khabar Lahariya* is the only rural weekly newspaper of India published in a mixed language of Hindi and Bundeli. It was started in the year 2002 by a group of rural women in the Chitrakoot district of Uttar Pradesh(India). Initially it was supported by an organization called “*Nirantar*”. However, since July, 2013 it is now publishing under the banner of “Women Trust”. Covering the local need and its sensitivity, this newspaper is a new initiative in the field of rural journalism, which is being run by marginalized women of backward and downtrodden communities of the society. It is also the only newspaper of India, which is published by women. They also do the distribution work apart from proof reading, editing and reporting for the newspaper.

**Print to online**



Picture 1: *Khabar Lahariya: Paper Edition and Internet Edition*

*Khabar Lahariya* is an eight (8) page newspaper, first page of which is titled as “*Taza Khabar*” (Current News). First page includes news related to development activities of the surrounding area such as issues of road, drinking water, electricity, education, health etc. Second page titled “*Ganvan Se*” (From Villages) includes news of villages mostly related to administrative lapses such as irregularities in government schemes. Third page titled “*Kasban Se*” (From Towns) represents news of towns related to works of administrative machinery and corresponding developmental issues. Fourth page titled “*Mahila Mudda*” (Women Issues) covers news of women harassment and related matters. Fifth page titled “*Kshetriya*” (Regional) includes news covering the district and the state. Sixth page titled “*Desh-Videsh*” (National-International) covers weekly news of important national and international events. Seventh page has “*Manoranjan*” (Entertainment) news. Eighth and the last page is the editorial page titled as “*Sabhin Ki Batein*” (Everyone’s Issues) which includes two editorials on development issues and also a section on letter to editor titled as “*Hamar Dak*”.

*Khabar Lahariya* has become a weekly newspaper since 2009. Presently it publishes six (6) editions from two states namely Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. *Khabar Lahariya* has also developed its website in 2013 and hence provided global platform to its local news. It is now therefore developing a global concept. *Khabar Lahariya*, the only newspaper run by women, has also received first prize for its website from an international media agency *Deutsche Welle*.

Increasing role of *Khabar Lahariya* in favor of democracy, development and justice has provided mass acceptance to the newspaper. It is playing a meaningful role in the rural areas of Bundelkhand by raising the issues of justice for marginalized people. In fact, grassroots media in India can also replicate the model of public control as happened in Venezuela where private media has been rejected by a

consolidated public effort and a community media network has been established. Though same model cannot be exactly implemented in a vast and diverse country like India, however, the same can be implemented as micro projects to promote development and issue based journalism. In this context, *Khabar Lahariya* has emerged as an example of “subaltern media” in India.

### **Significance of the Study**

Due to lack of studies on rural newspaper in Indians context, the problems faced by and the potential of rural newspapers cannot be understood. This research will highlight the importance of Local rural newspapers for the development of rural areas. Lastly this will help in inclusive growth and also in attaining the true democracy which according to Gandhi jee cannot be attained unless the tears in the eyes of the last man standing in the last row cannot be wiped off.

### **Rationale of the study**

Despite of the fact, 70 percent of Indian population lives in villages, the mainstream Indian media is urban centric. For the development of democracy inclusive growth is required. For inclusive growth it is necessary that the coverage of news from rural India finds more space in the media which can be achieved only through rural newspapers as these newspapers raise issues pertaining local problems and sentiments. The sections of the society who are actually in dire needs of knowledge, information and development (rural masses) do not get the desired information as the mainstream media is urban centric. For these reasons it becomes important to study the relevance of rural newspapers like *Khabar Lahariya* in the present scenario as newspaper are considered to be associated



with the rural development and hence their role in the inclusive growth of the democracy can be studied.

## **Theoretical Perspective**

### **1. Free Press Theory:**

The main objective of free a press is to inform the people in any country and also to ensure that the government carries out its duty of public welfare without irregularities. This theory emphasizes that for better governance, the information must be disseminated to the maximum number of people. In Indian context where 70% people live in villages, this objective can only be achieved through Local newspaper because mainstream media is urban centric. Rural Journalism and grassroots journalism has put democracy back in people's hands. *Khabar Lahariya* is doing this job in six rural areas of two states where it increases the information level of rural readers.

### **2. Social Responsibility Theory:**

According to this theory it is believed that the main role of the media should be to encourage the developmental work. Any change in the society can be brought about only through information and in Indian context it can be done through the Local rural newspapers because most of the undeveloped and underdeveloped area is the rural area. *Khabar Lahariya* connects development with the local issues and problems and hence fulfills its social responsibility of journalism.

### **3. Democratic Participant Media Theory:**

This theory strongly opposes the commercialization of modern media and its top-down non-participant character. The need for access and right to communicate is stressed. Bureaucratic control of media is decried. Local newspapers provided a platform for the common man to put forward his or her opinion and views. Now millions of Indians are taking up issues through local newspapers and fighting for their rights. In rural

areas newspapers like *Khabar Lahariya* have set an example that how social participation helps in solving the regional problems and taking up developmental work. With the help of local newspapers, regional developmental issues can be raised by increasing the democratic participation through motivation. Editors and reporters of *Khabar Lahariya* belong to the same community which is needed to be connected to development through news pieces. Hence, *Khabar Lahariya* has now become a voice for millions of people because of its role for their development.

#### **4. Agenda Setting Theory:**

Media sets agenda for people. The maximum need of development in India is in the rural areas but the lack of developmental issue in mainstream media has reduced the role of media in setting an agenda concerning the development this can be achieved through local newspapers which by raising the regional developmental issues can set the agenda concerning the development. In Uttar Pradesh ‘Gaon Connection’ a weekly newspaper has been successful in setting the agenda for the rural agriculture development likewise local rural newspapers can set developmental agenda in rural India and an inclusive growth can be achieve. Khabar Lahariya puts forward the agenda of development to the government and administration.

#### **Review of Literature**

Eapen, K.E. (1967) in his research paper titled ‘Daily newspapers in India: their status and problem’ stresses that the Hindi newspapers have a potential audience larger than the population of US but face many problems like newsprint, illiteracy, poverty and Babel in India. Rogers M Everett (1974) Communication in development, this article describes what communication is doing and what it could do, in achieving developmental goals. The mass media plays a major role in

creating a climate for modernization among villagers, but are less important in diffusing technological innovations although their potential for doing so is high. Jeffery (2000) ‘India’s newspapers revolution’ which began in the seventies, created conditions for a new and expand ‘democratic public’. The newspapers industry expanded dramatically at a rate faster than the country’s population, mainstream newspapers started several local editions. New papers emerged in small towns and districts. Jeffery goes on to explore the role played by this expansion of print and newspapers in creating certain type of ‘public sphere’ or ‘public space’. In a modification of *Habermas’s* conception of the era of mass media, where mass media are not effortlessly manipulated, Jeffery proposes a new ‘public space’ one in which, masses are not effortlessly manipulated and the effects of mass media are unpredictable. As a consequence of India’s newspapers revolution, ‘people discovered ways to think about themselves and to participate a generation before. Bhatt (2000) highlights the newspapers boom in India in “Indian press since 1955” that there has been a remarkable growth of the press in India. Small newspapers with about 57 % of total circulation are the main news and views provider to the majority of Indian populations, particularly in the rural areas. Future of print media: a report (2001) highlighted that the small newspapers serve as a bridge between the people living at distant place in the interior of the country on the one hand and the local administration, state government and the central government on the other. The growth of the small newspapers in the country has been slow and low as compared to the growth of big newspapers Natrajan (2002) writes in ‘History of Indian journalism’ that the fundamental objective of journalism is to serve the people with news, views and information on matters of public interest. Information can be extremely instrumental in development. News is very powerful and shapes the society and can bring about any important change. Ray G N (2005) in his speech published under title ‘Problems and prospects of small

newspapers’ stressed that the majority of Indian population today lives in rural areas, the need for flow of information to and from the rural area is even greater. The large and more well-known papers are mostly from large cities and towns, not fully aware of the needs and problems of the rural or small town public or of the local taste. The small newspapers enjoy the potential to bridge this gap. *Sharma* (2006) in his book argues that small newspapers are the pillars of democracy in this country as they accommodate the needs of the majority of the Indian population and particularly those who live in the rural areas. In ‘waves in the hinterland, the journey of a newspaper’ *Naqui* (2007) highlighted how the women of *Bundelkhnad* started hand written newspaper “*Mahila Dakiya*”. After the success of this newspaper they start *Khabar Lahariya* with the help of this newspaper they fought against inequality and injustice in their local society. “khabar lahariya is small but vital step towards the democratic transition. It is showing the way to bridge the gap between literacy and readership, between village and democracy. It takes news, information, knowledge beyond barriers of literacy and affordability”. *Joshi* (2007) stressed on the responsibility of media is not only providing news and entertainment but also development of analytical awareness among the masses. Media should focus on its developmental role in the third world countries. *Chamadia* (2009) emphasizes that media is not fulfilling social responsibility as it is mainly focusing on revenue generation. Main role of media in any democracy should be to act as a catalyst in development. *Rao and Vasanti* (2009) have highlighted the changing perspectives of media due to globalization. Their study emphasis on how developmental news in the media is declining.. *Chatterji*(2012) in an article ‘rural women take to journalism, redefine lives’ apprise that ‘Navodayam,’ a community magazine that has realized the dreams of hundreds of women of Chittoor district in Andhra Pradesh is run, edited, published and distributed by women, for

women and to women. It's been quite a remarkable initiative that has benefited the marginalized and oppressed communities of Andhra Pradesh.

### **Objectives of the Study**

1. Does *Khabar Lahariya* cover local issues?
2. Does *Khabar Lahariya* cover developmental issues?
3. What type of developmental issues are raised by *Khabar Lahariya*?
4. Does *Khabar Lahariya* reveal administrative lapses?
5. Whether local language has any role in *KhabarLahariya*'s popularity?
6. Whether *Khabar Lahariya* interacts with its readers?

### **Research Methodology**

This Research Paper has adopted Case Study Research Methodology in which various different techniques are used such as interview, focus group discussion and survey.

1. Focus group discussion –journalists of Khabar Lahariya
2. Interview – editor and Managing Director (Publisher) of Khabar Lahariya
3. Survey – Readers of Khabar Lahariya

Survey is conducted in Chitrakoot district. Three (3) villages namely Bargad, Mau and Lalta Road are selected through ‘*Fishbowl Method*’ out of 300 villages of five blocks of the district namely Karwi, Pahari, Mau, Ramnagar and Manikpur. There are approximately 40,000 readers (including listeners) of *Khabar Lahariya* in Chitrakoot district, which has the population of 10, 34,436. Therefore, 200 readers-listeners have been surveyed on the basis ratio of 200:1.

## Findings

### Survey of Readers and its Findings

#### Findings

Survey was done on the basis of questions framed under three categories. In the first category, questions were asked related to demography e.g. age, education, livelihood and income pattern of the readers. Second category of questions brings out media consumption among the readers whereas the third category of questions is related to the study of *Khabar Lahariya*. Findings of this questionnaire-based study survey are illustrated in the following paragraphs.

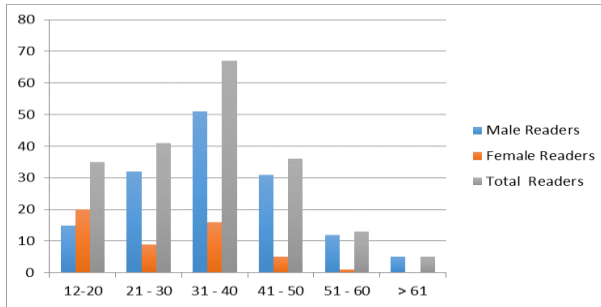
### Study of Demographic Indicators

#### Age Survey

Age pattern of surveyed readers indicates that most of the readers belong to the productive age group of 21 to 50 as generally during this stage of life common people would be more interested in knowing and getting benefit of the developmental activities happening in their area. It also reveals a higher number of women readers in the age group of 12 to 40, which further indicates women problems and matters related to their aspirations during this age span.

Age Interval of Readers	Male Readers	Female Readers	Total Readers
12 – 20	15	20	35
21 – 30	32	09	41
31 – 40	51	16	67
41 – 50	31	05	36
51 – 60	12	01	13
> 61	05	00	05
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>200</b>

**Table 1: Age pattern of readers of *Khabar Laharia***



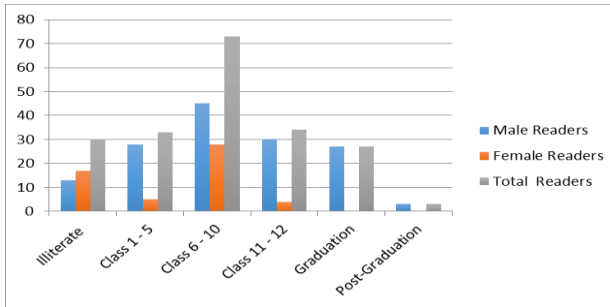
**Diagram 4: Age pattern of readers of Khabar Laharia**

### Educational Qualification Survey

Education pattern of surveyed readers indicates that most of the readers have primary education (class 6 to 10) and thus have the capability of reading and hence getting informed about the relevant issues pertaining to their life and society. However, there are a significant number of highly educated readers also indicating *Khabar Lahariya* as the representative of serious and relevant journalism.

<b>Educational Qualification</b>	<b>Male Readers</b>	<b>Female Readers</b>	<b>Total Readers</b>
Illiterate	13	17	30
Class 1 - 5	28	05	33
Class 6 - 10	45	28	73
Class 11 - 12	30	04	34
Graduation	27	00	27
Post-Graduation	03	00	03
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>200</b>

**Table 2: Educational qualification of readers of Khabar Laharia**



**Diagram 5: Educational qualification of readers of Khabar Laharia**

### Livelihood Survey

Livelihood survey among the readers indicates that most number (78) of readers is engaged in primary activities such as agriculture, labor and workmanship. However, there is also a good number (64) of readers who are small shopkeepers which indicates that small businessmen also want to have information about government schemes and issues related to the development process happening in their region.

Livelihood Activity	Readers
Agriculture	24
Labor	22
Workmanship	32
Shopkeepers	64
Students	29
Housewives	14
Government Service	09
Others	04
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>200</b>

**Table 3: Livelihood pattern of readers of Khabar Laharia**



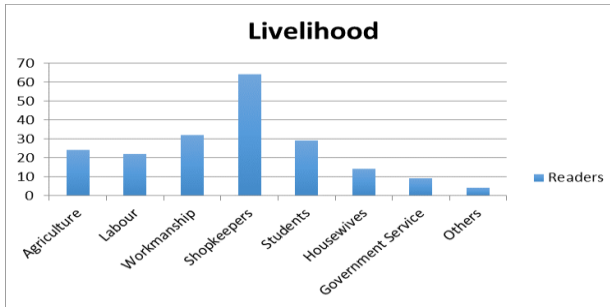


Diagram 6: Livelihood pattern of readers of *Khabar Laharia*

### Income Survey

Annual Income(INR)	Readers
0 – 10,000	32
10,000 – 20,000	40
20,000 – 40,000	31
40,000 – 60,000	17
60,000 – 80,000	14
80,000 – 1,00,000	06
1,00,000 – 2,00,000	44
2,00,000 – 4,00,000	16
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>200</b>

Table 4: Annual Income of readers of *Khabar Laharia*

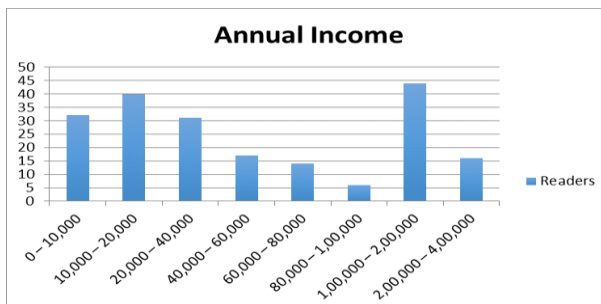


Diagram 7: Annual Income of readers of *Khabar Laharia*

Income survey of readers rightly pointed out that the reach of newspaper is deep down to the lowest strata of socio-economic groups. Most of the readers (120) are earning less than Rs.5, 000 per month which places them in the lowest earning group of the society. However, there is also a healthy number (60) of

readers which is in the annual income category of Rs.1, 00,000 to Rs.4, 00,000 which reflects the newspaper reach to the inspirational lower middle class of the society.

### **Study of Media Consumption**

Survey has been conducted to gather idea about level of media consumption in the region and also the impact and importance of *Khabar Lahariya* in the said region. A simple questionnaire about the media consumption revealed following data:

Sr. No.	Query based trend	Readers	Remarks
1	Reading <i>Khabar Lahariya</i>	170	-
2	Listening <i>Khabar Lahariya</i>	30	-
3	Having Radio	62	-
4	Listening Radio	96	61 on Radio, 35 on Mobile
5	Having TV	99	-
6	Watching TV	103	-
7	Know about Computer	39	-
8	Having Computer	14	-
9	Used Internet	38	email=0, social media=2, govt. work=9, misc.=27

**Table 6: Media consumption and *Khabar Laharia***

Reach of *Khabar Lahariya* in this region is more than any other mode of media. In other words, *Khabar Lahariya* is spreading information to such remote areas where other modes of media do not have any access. Maximum flow of information is the indicator of Free Press Theory and information itself is the most important thing in the development process. Without proper information development process cannot be considered as complete. As per Free Press Theory, more information is provided to people, which further boost the pace of development. However, mainstream media is not interested in those communities, which have more requirements of information and development. In this context, *Khabar Lahariya*

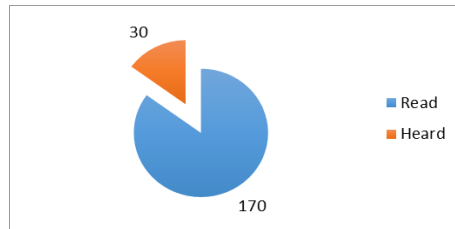
appears to be working under the Social Responsibility Theory for the development of its communities. This community newspaper is trying to push information within the reach of poorest people in their own language.

### **Study of Khabar Lahariya**

Specific survey about the content and issues of *Khabar Lahariya* reveals its significant impact on the information and media presence in the region. The survey also indicates it’s widely spread popularity and also underlines the relevance of local newspaper in a developing society.

#### **Question 10:** Information about *Khabar Lahariya*?

Seen = 200  
Read = 170  
Heard = 30  
Saw Website = 0

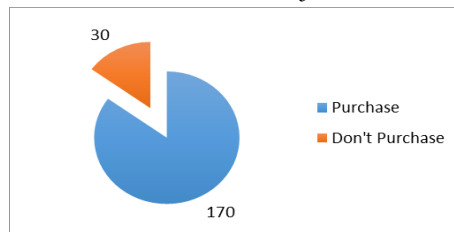


**Diagram 8: Information about *Khabar Laharia***

Most of the local people have at least seen or read the newspaper indicating widespread publicity and impact in the region.

#### **Question 11:** Do you purchase *Khabar Lahariya*?

170 said that they purchase.



**Diagram 9: Purchase of *KhabarLaharia***

Quite significant number of readers is actually purchasing the newspaper. It shows their interest in the news and also about the importance of the content.

Question 12: Do you borrow *Khabar Lahariya* to read?

23 said they borrow it for reading.

Those who cannot even afford to purchase the newspaper actually borrow from somebody known to read it. It reflects their genuine interest in the newspaper.

Question 13: Which page you like in *Khabar Lahariya*?

*Taza Khabar* = 107

*Gavan Se* = 44

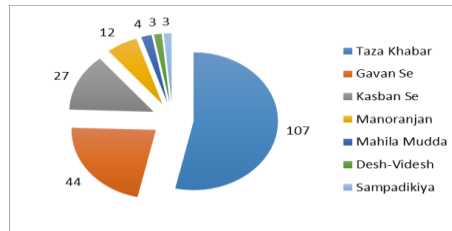
*Kasban Se* = 27

*Manoranjan* = 12

*Mahila Mudda* = 04

*Desh-Videsh* = 03

*Sampadikiya* = 03



**Diagram 10: Page popularity in *KhabarLaharia***

Though readers of *Khabar Lahariya* like every page of the newspaper but they are more interested in *Taza Khabar* in which issues relevant to their community are raised. This page includes such news items or issues, which have more impact on readers.

Question 14: Which issues *Khabar Lahariya* arises?

Local = 200

Regional = 0

State = 0

National = 0

International = 0

It indicates that *Khabar Lahariya* gives importance to the news of its community. It is broadening and strengthening the issues of public matters. This type of effort in small region like this, which is lagging behind because of lack of information, can

bring these areas into the mainstream development. This will promote inclusive growth.

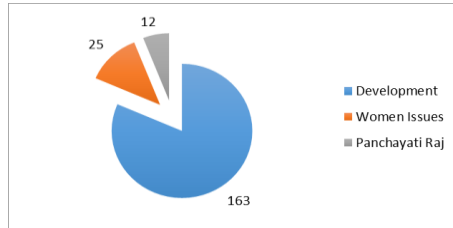
**Question 15:** What type of issues raised by *Khabar Lahariya*?

National-Int. = 0

Development = 163

Women Issues = 25

*Panchayati Raj* = 12



**Diagram 11:** News coverage by *Khabar Laharia*

*Khabar Lahariya* provides flow of information which is required for the development of rural areas. Following the Development Communication Theory, the newspaper tries to fasten the development process. It focuses on the irregularities in government schemes as well as on developmental issues like road, drinking water, electricity, education etc. Consequently, local issues and problems get connected with the development process. Hence, it fulfills the social responsibility of journalism while promoting development as its agenda via news items. Moreover, it also raises issues of women harassment with great prominence.

**Question 16:** What type of changes *Khabar Lahariya* can do?

More rural news should be incorporated and also the frequency of newspaper. It should become the voice to the problems of rural areas. Promoting smooth implementation of government schemes need highlighting of related issues in the newspaper.

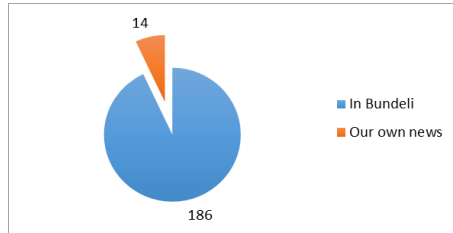
**Question 17:** What *Khabar Lahariya* should do to maximize its reach?

Its distribution should reach to the remote villages. It can be supplied to the maximum number of people through public communication and campaigning.

**Question 18:** Best thing about *Khabar Lahariya*?

In *Bundeli* = 186

Our own news = 14



**Diagram 11:** Most likable thing in *Khabar Laharia*

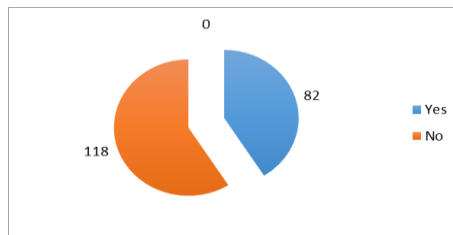
Own news in own language is the unique selling point of *Khabar Lahariya*. This newspaper in *Bundeli* language is very popular in the region which otherwise doesn't have the higher education level. Managing Director of the *Nirantar* Trust believes that *Khabar Lahariya* has provided a platform to such people who were interested in literacy and hence in becoming empowered. Therefore, a newspaper in *Bundeli* language gets more popularity as the local people treat it as their own language to which they feel emotionally associated.

**Question 19:** Have you ever contributed in *Khabar Lahariya*?

(Yes = 82)

Written Letters = 0

Provided Info = 82



**Diagram 12:** Readers' contribution in *Khabar Laharia*

It indicates that *Khabar Lahariya* established communication with its readers. The reader also provides information about problems in the surrounding. This is an example of Democratic Communication Theory in which the reader (receiver) and the reporter (sender) collectively work for the betterment of their society through the newspaper (message). However, people do not send letters to editors in spite of 'letter to editor' being a regular feature of the newspaper. Since the reporter also comes

from the same society in which the readers and their problems exist, therefore there is already a better communication established. This is also an example of Democratic Participation Theory.

Question 20: Does *Khabar Lahariya* reveal administrative lapses?

It indicates that the newspaper exposes the irregularities and lapses in government schemes and administrative functioning. The newspaper further exposes the problems of road, electricity, drinking water, health, school, drainage etc. This newspaper further monitors the implementation of government schemes in rural areas and informs the administration about irregularities. This ensures the accountability of administration. Thus, *Khabar Lahariya* establishes an example of Development Communication Theory.

### The Team



Picture 2: The Editor and journalists of Khabar Lahariya

### ***Interview of Publisher and Editor of Khabar Lahariya: A Brief Summary***

#### Editor

Earlier the NGOs *Nirantar* and *Mahila Samakhya* were publishing a handwritten paper, which closed down in the year

1999 because of financial reasons. Therefore, demand for a newspaper came from local people in their own language, which led to the birth of *Khabar Lahariya* in 2002. Selection of news items in this newspaper is done by an editorial team which selects relevant issues related to problems of common people. Generally reporters do the field visit for collection of news items; however, sometimes people also give some lead to the reporters. *Khabar Lahariya* has been tried to be intimidated by means of filing judicial cases, threats and violence but nothing has affected the newspaper. There are various other challenges for the newspaper. Fund management is the biggest challenge. There is some problem of technical efficiency as the reporters are not professional and therefore news writing and camera work suffer a lot. However, empowering a 40 member’s team is not an easy task. In spite of all that, *Khabar Lahariya* has become identity and voice of local people. It gives space to the news of such deprived, exploited and downtrodden people who are not given space elsewhere. Now the newspaper has bigger base because of its website and it has also contributed in increasing the number of readers.

#### Managing Director (Publisher)

There was hardly any reading material available in the backward remote areas of Chitrakoot. Therefore, the idea behind this newspaper was to provide some voice to the downtrodden and exploited people to boost their development aspirations. Another goal was to bring women in the field of journalism. *Khabar Lahariya* is the only newspaper in India in which women do all the works right from collecting the news to the distribution of newspaper.

Sir Dorabji Tata Trust does funding of this newspaper. Though Rs.20, 000 is collected from sale of 10,000 copies but it doesn’t contribute much in the financing of *Khabar Lahariya*. This financing problem is the biggest challenge. Further, technical problems also exist such as lack of cameras and



computers. Lack of own permanent office building is also a critical problem.

The support team of Women Trust does policy making for the newspaper and decisions are taken after internal group discussion. Though presently there is no policy for job security but formulation of the same is under process. However, there is no facility like associated journalist.

### ***Focus Group Discussion of Reporters of Khabar Lahariya: A Brief Summary***

Reporters stated in the discussion that they were informed about *Khabar Lahariya* due to contacts with various women NGOs. Later they were selected as reporters. There are six (6) reporters and one (1) computer operator in Chitrakoot district. Their educational qualification ranges from 8<sup>th</sup> pass to plus two levels. Though they know about the website of *KhabarLahariya* but only 50% reporters have the idea of Internet.

News items are selected by collective decision on the basis of relevance, importance, problem and anything connected with irregularities in government schemes. However, it also depends on neutrality of the news. Final decision in this regard is taken by the editor. It reflects that *Khabar Lahariya* establishes the example of Development Communication Theory.

Developing the reporting efficiency of women in rural areas has been a challenging task. It has been also a social challenge for the lesser educated and socially marginalized women to taken initiative in publishing the newspaper. Initially there was hesitation in facing the administrative officers and going to police station. There were some also technical problems. They faced problem in writing reports and handling camera as they were not professionally trained reporters.

The women reporters do the field visit on their own but sometimes some leads come from local people also. Sometimes they have also been intimidated by threats and legal consequences but they are not affected by such things as they believe in the impartiality of their reporting.

Reporters of *Khabar Lahariya* consider it as a movement. It helps weaker sections of the society and also creates awareness in rural areas. It raises such issues, which are generally not covered by any other medium, as there is hardly any presence of media in remote areas. *Khabar Lahariya* is instrumental in developing women efficiency such as increasing the literacy level. Further, it makes administration aware about the issues of road, electricity, drinking water, education, health, women harassment and irregularity in government schemes. It also reveals deficiencies in the government schemes.

## **Conclusion**

*Khabar Lahariya* has become a synonym for journalism of public matters in the rural areas of Chitrakoot. In a scenario where mainstream media has not reached to these remote areas, an alternative medium like *Khabar Lahariya* is playing the role of subaltern media with its commitment on justice, development and democracy. Widespread acceptance of the newspaper in this region further indicates that it raises the livelihood problems of local people in their own language. In fact, by raising issues of local development, *Khabar Lahariya* tries to uplift the livelihood status of its readers.

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