



# Impact of Covid 19 on Hindi Print Media: A Case Study of Himachal Pradesh (2019-2020)

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## Abstract

With the emergence of coronavirus in December 2019, a new frightening chapter began in the world as the virus shook the world. India was no exception to this, no region of India remained untouched by this virus, it affected all the 8 union territories and 28 states of India. As a safety measure, the lockdown was imposed by the government and all this development not only brought a change in the lifestyle of the common people but also had an effect on the socio-economic condition of every citizen. Its impact was evident in various sectors such as political, religious, educational, health, psychological, etc. As a result of the economic instability, market-induced volatility has further widened the inequality gap. sharp rise in unemployment, cost cutting, stress on supply chains, collapse of tourism and hospitality industry, reduced consumer activity along with market, plunge in fuel consumption led to decrease in government income. All these impacts were experienced by Hindi Print Media of Himachal Pradesh. This paper mainly deals with the three leading Hindi newspapers of Himachal Pradesh namely Amar Ujala, Punjab Kesari and Dainik Jagran and analyzed their market share before lockdown and post lockdown i.e., print order during the pandemic. The paper is based on secondary data. It's an attempt towards highlighting the changing outlook of Hindi Print Media under the impact of COVID 19 with special reference to the Himachal Pradesh.

**KEYWORDS-** COVID, Hindi Print media, Lockdown.

## Introduction

Hindi media refers to the media that communicates in Hindi language and its dialects across the Hindi belt of India (northern and central India) and, elsewhere such as Hindi-speaking Indian diaspora across the world. The first Hindi-language newspaper published in India, Udant Martand (The Rising Sun), started on 30 May 1826. This day is celebrated as "Hindi Journalism Day" or Hindi Patrakarita Diwas, as it marked the beginning of journalism in Hindi language newspapers. India is a multi-lingual nation and in large part of the country Hindi print media has a dominant presence, the Hindi belt comprises the states which are predominantly Hindi-speaking such as Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and the union territories of Delhi and Chandigarh.

Currently India publishes more than 1,000 Hindi dailies that have a total circulation of about 80 million copies. English, the second language in terms of number of daily newspapers, has about 250 dailies with a circulation of about 40 million copies. Prominent Hindi newspapers include Dainik Jagran, Dainik Bhaskar, Amar Ujala, Navbharat Times, Hindustan Dainik and Rajasthan Patrika.

## Study Area:

Himachal Pradesh is a northern Indian state in the Himalayas. It's home to scenic mountain towns and resorts such as Dalhousie. Host to the Dalai Lama, Himachal Pradesh has a strong Tibetan presence. This is reflected in its Buddhist temples and monasteries, as well as its vibrant Tibetan New Year celebrations. The region is also well known for its trekking, climbing

and skiing areas. It's a hilly state with an area of 55,673 km<sup>2</sup>. Population of the region is 68.6 lakhs (2012). it is not a very densely populated area and the density of the population here is 123 as per census 2011. There are 12 district, 74 Subdivision and 179 Tehsils in the state. The latitudinal expansion of the states is 30°22'40" to 33°12'40" and Longitudinal is 75°45'55" to 79° 04'. Height of the terrain from the mean sea level is 350 meters to 6975 meters.

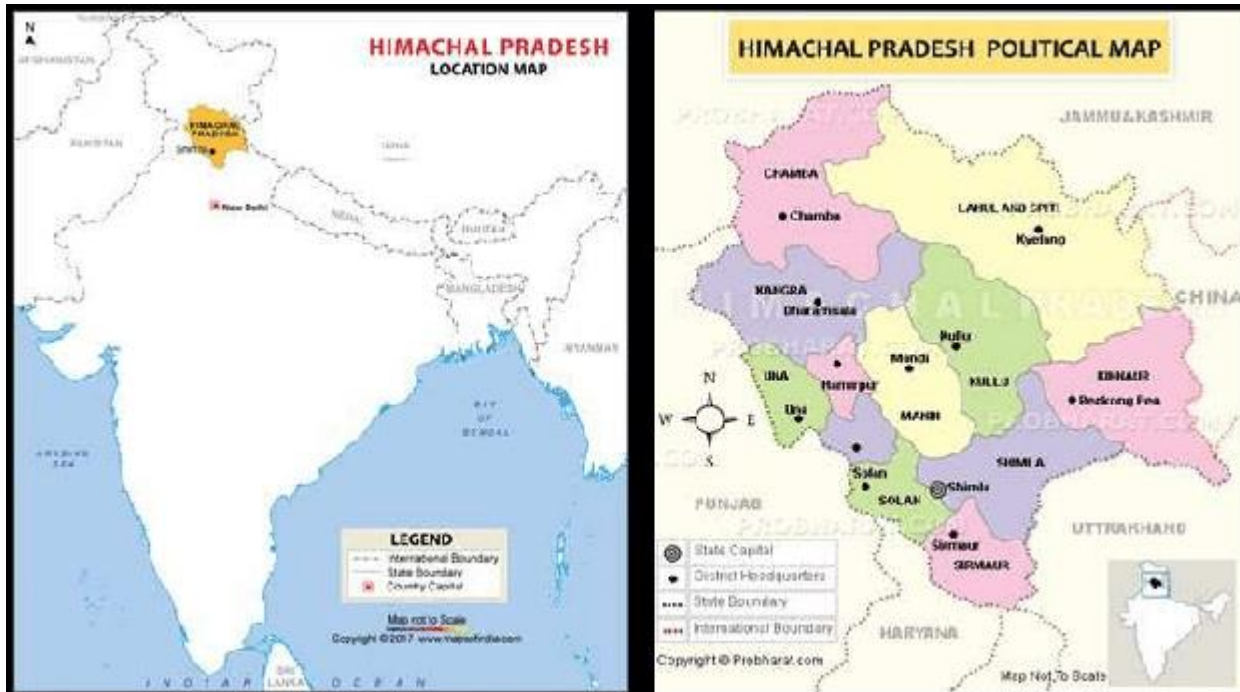


Figure 1: Himachal Pradesh Location Map (left) & Political Map (right) Source: (Embassy of India, Tokyo, 2017) and (Probharat, 2018)

From time immemorial, different races, communities and people from various places of the country had come and settled in this state. Thus, the Population of Himachal is culturally rich and diverse. Most of the households among the Population of Himachal earn their livelihood through agriculture, But the lands are owned by the upper classes in the society. There is a strong caste and class division prevalent in the society. Rajputs are in majority in the entire population. Brahmins and Ghirats are also occupying the important positions in the society. The people of the state of Himachal Pradesh are multilingual and

converse in several languages. The official state language of Himachal Pradesh is Hindi and the present paper is a study of the impact of COVID 19 on the three leading Hindi Newspapers of Himachal Pradesh.

### Number of newspapers in Himachal Pradesh

Hindi Daily Newspaper	268
English Daily Newspaper	77
Himachal Daily Newspaper	5

Table 1: Number of newspapers in Himachal Pradesh

### Printing Press in Himachal Pradesh

In Chandigarh, Amar Ujala printing press publication started from 20 July 1999. Dainik Jagran 16 May 2016, Punjab Kesari in 2005. Earlier Kangra and Chamba had newspaper supply from Jhalandhar but as timing is a major factor in newspaper world so printing press in Dharamshala was set up and its publication for Amar Ujala started from 8 Dec 2005, Dainik Jagran in 2005 and Punjab Kesari in 2004 covering supply of newspaper in State of Himachal Pradesh.

### Problem To Be Investigated:

The present paper is an attempt to highlight the impact of Covid 19 on the supply of Hindi print media with special reference to three Hindi newspapers in Himachal Pradesh namely Amar Ujala, Dainik Jagran and Punjab Kesari. The state of Himachal Pradesh has 12 districts but present paper shows the data related to 11 districts only, as no supply of the three papers in the district of Lahaul & Spiti because of geographical reasons as being in remote area and adverse climatic condition. Himachal terrain is so vast and varied that the supply of newspaper is catered from Chandigarh printing press covering districts of Shimla, Solan, Sinaur, Kinnaur and rest seven districts are covered from Dharamshala printing press.

## Methodology

For this paper secondary data has been used from health department of Himachal Pradesh regarding data related to Covid Cases. Details about the number of copies of three newspapers sold during the period have been collected from their respective head offices. For statistical analysis some statistical methods like Average, Analysis of Variance (Anova), Correlation between newspaper supply and covid cases has been used.

### Average Number of COVID Cases in Himachal Pradesh (Month Wise)

MONTH	CASES
FEBRUARY	0
MARCH	0
APRIL	3.64
MAY	26.45
JUNE	56.36
JULY	146.27
AUGUST	322.55
SEPTEMBER	791.91
OCTOBER	623.00
NOVEMBER	1615.55
DECEMBER	1326.64

Table 2: Average Number of Covid-19 Cases in Himachal Pradesh (Month wise)

Since the beginning of 2020 every state of India saw an increasing trend in the number of Covid Cases of which Himachal Pradesh has been no exception. Table 2 along with the figure 2 makes it clear that despite of lockdowns declared by the government the cases had multiplied.

Number of Covid cases increased significantly during Feb'20 to Dec'20. In February and March there were no cases but by December the number of covid cases increased to average of 1326.64 cases across 11 districts of Himachal Pradesh.

Average Number of Covid-19 Cases in Himachal Pradesh- Month wise (Feb '20- Dec '20)

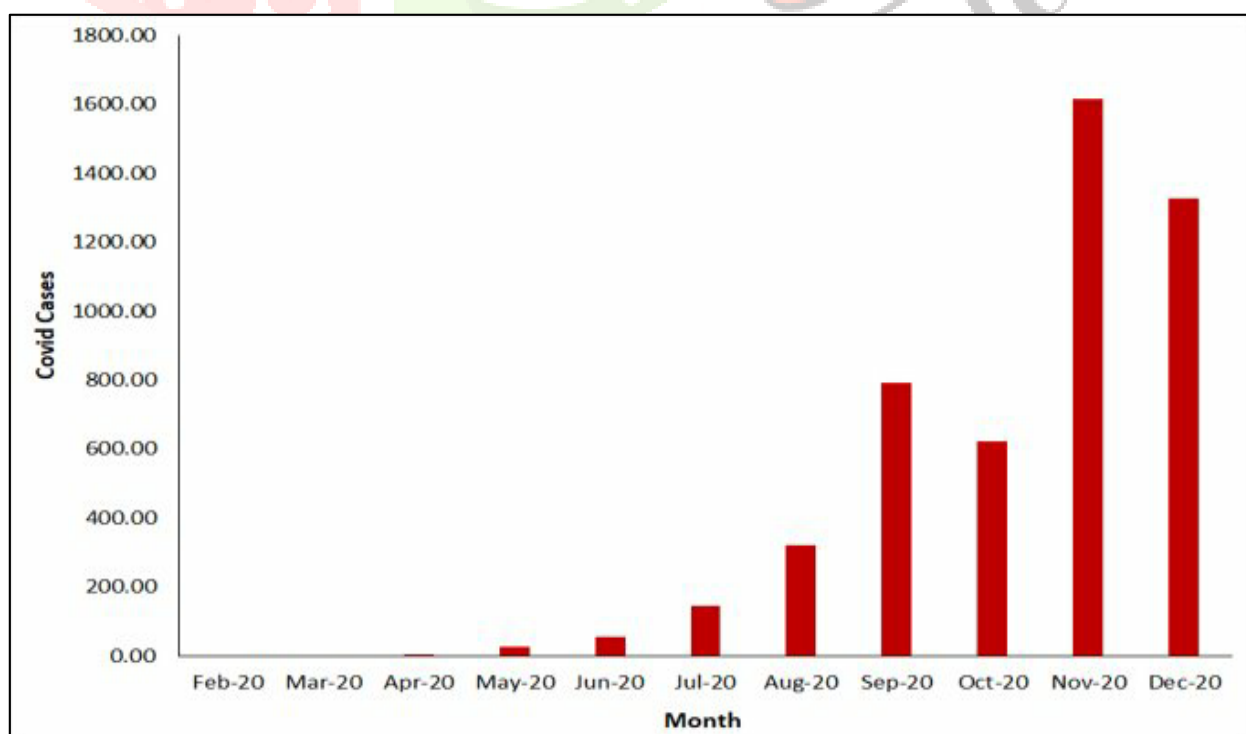


Figure 2

The figure 2 shows that although there has been increase in number of covid cases from April to September but drop in cases was noticed in the month of October and then with leap in figures in the month of November. The downfall in cases and the rise in Covid Cases has been cause of socio-cultural reasons.

### Average Number of COVID Cases in Himachal Pradesh (District Wise)

DISTRICT	CASES
BILASPUR	259.27
CHAMBA	259.91
HAMIRPUR	258.09
KANGRA	703.55
KULLU	395.82
MANDI	876.27
SHIMLA-CITY	916.45
SHIMLA-KINNAUR	119.64
SIRMAUR	289.09
SOLAN	584.82
UNA	249.45

Table 3 Average number of covid cases in Himachal Pradesh (District wise)

In the table 2 the cases have been discussed month wise on the other side in table 3, district wise average number of cases are depicted to give a clear view on the scenario of Covid in the 11 districts of Himachal Pradesh.

*Covid cases from Feb '20 to Dec '20. There are certain districts like Kangra, Mandi and Shimla City where average number of cases were significantly high as compared to other districts*

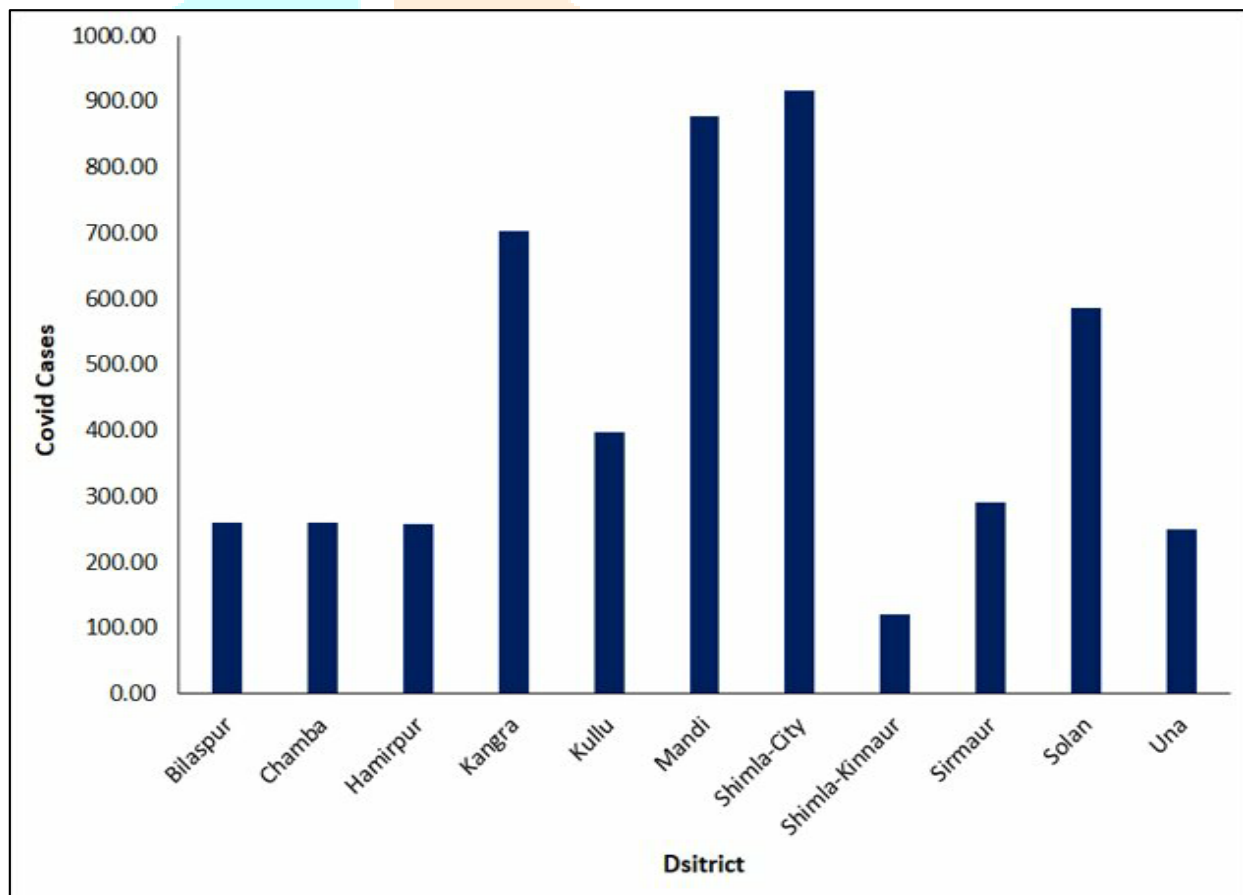


Figure 3

Figure 3. shows a clear picture that the average number of Covid Cases have been maximum in Shimla City being the tourist spot followed by Mandi, Kangra and Solan.

## Monthly Supply of Newspaper

MONTH	AMAR UJALA	PUNJAB KESARI	JAINIK JAGARAN
Feb-20	9444.45	9862.73	4647.73
Mar-20	7285.64	7775.36	3579.18
Apr-20	3328.09	2684.00	761.27
May-20	4313.27	4311.09	1737.27
Jun-20	5315.00	4932.82	2644.55
Jul-20	5734.27	5773.09	2749.27
Aug-20	5962.64	6187.18	2831.18
Sep-20	6280.45	6499.45	2998.09
Oct-20	6525.82	6644.73	3019.82
Nov-20	6595.18	6643.45	3020.55
Dec-20	6517.27	6622.09	2974.18

Table 4: Monthly supply of the newspaper

Table 4 shows average monthly supply of leading newspaper Amar Ujala, Punjab Kesari and Dainik Jagran. Although average supply of these three newspapers differs significantly but pattern of supply in different month had been almost same. Between Feb'20 to Apr'20 supply of these newspapers dropped significantly there after it increased but till Dec'20 it did not reached up to the mark what it had been in Feb'20. Hence, certainly there was significant drop in the supply of newspaper due to Covid 19.

Monthly supply of newspaper

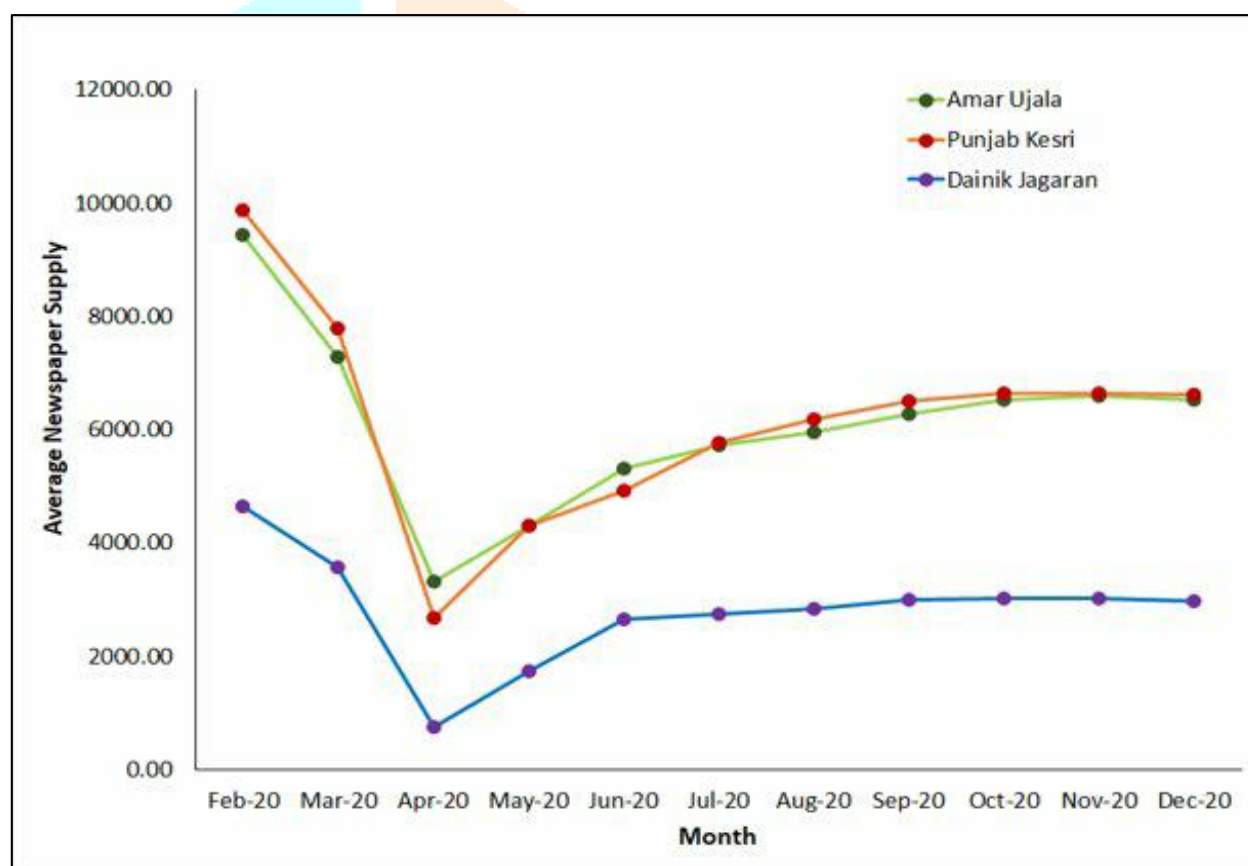


Figure 4

Figure 4, clearly shows that April month has seen the maximum impact of Covid on the supply of three newspapers namely Punjab Kesari, Amar Ujala and Dainik Jagran but none of the three Hindi leading newspapers of Himachal Pradesh could meet the supply as was in the month of February till the month of December 2020.

## Average Number of Leading Daily Supply in Himachal Pradesh– District Wise

Different newspapers have different level of dominance in different districts of Himachal. Supply of Punjab Kesari is more in Kangara, Hamirpur, Solan and Una as compared to other dailies, whereas Amar Ujala has more dominance in Shimla-City, Mandi. Supply of Dainik Jagran is less in comparison to other two dailies in all the districts of Himachal Pradesh.



DISTRICT	AMAR UJALA	PUNJAB KESRI	DAINIK JAGARAN
BILASPUR	3306.00	2655.27	1674.18
CHAMBA	3125.82	1621.91	910.27
HAMIRPUR	5047.27	7738.27	3327.27
KANGRA	13561.36	30035.36	11254.91
KULLU	4900.45	2120.73	1276.45
MANDI	9423.91	5382.91	4853.82
SHIMLA-CITY	10048.64	1767.73	1900.36
SHIMLA-KINNAUR	4512.00	934.55	2300.55
SIRMUR	5807.91	1399.09	585.36
SOLAN	5368.82	5480.00	1563.45
UNA	2199.91	8800.18	1316.45

Table 5: District wise average newspaper supply

The figure 5 throws light on the district wise average newspaper supply.

District wise average newspaper supply

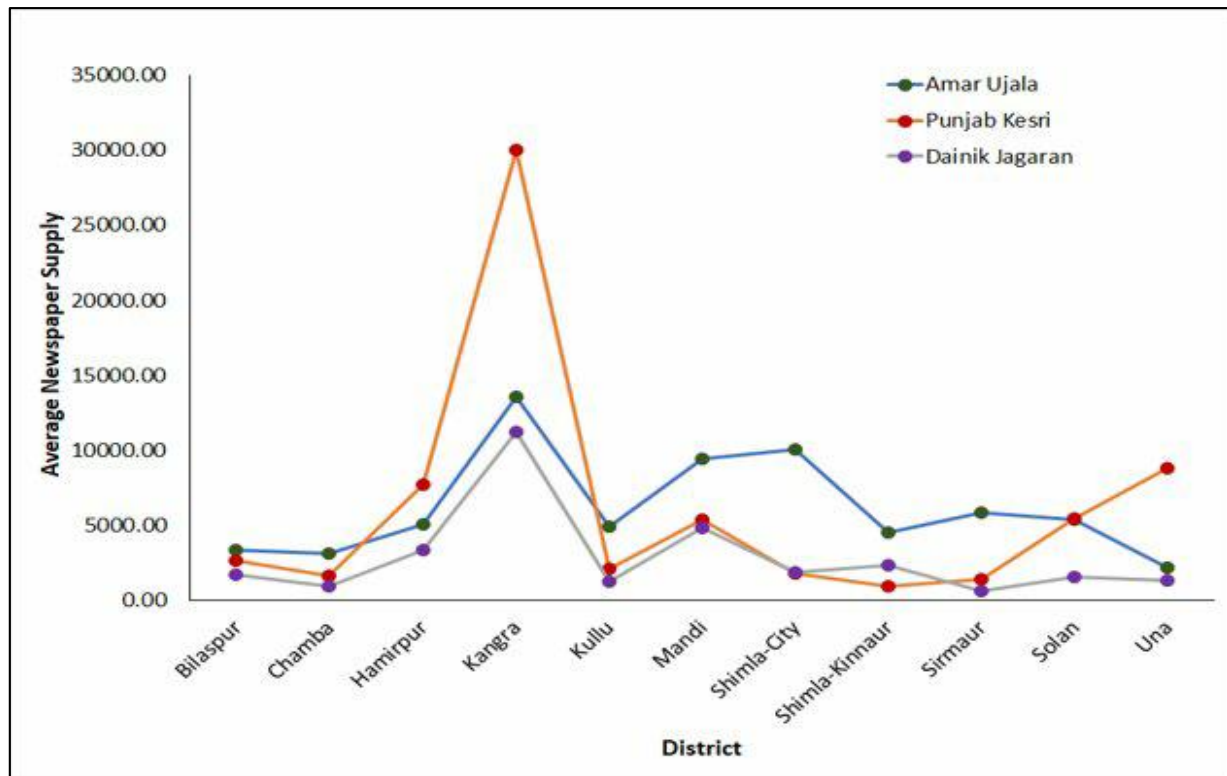


Figure 5

In figure 5, Kangra leads the 11 districts of Himachal Pradesh where newspaper supply is done with average supply of Punjab Kesari capturing the market followed by Hamirpur and Una. Amar Ujala took the lead in remaining 8 districts of Himachal Pradesh but in Solan District two newspapers Amar Ujala and Punjab Kesari shared the same position.

## Analysis of Variance - Test Result

Factor affecting newspaper supply were analyzed using ANOVA. Test results shows that there is highly significant difference in the supply of newspapers different months during COIVD. Supply of newspaper was decreased in April 20. There is highly significant difference in the newspaper supply district wise also. Supply in the district like Kangara was significantly high as compared to other districts. Also supply of different newspaper was also significantly different. Average supply of Amar Ujala and Punjab Kesari was significantly high as compared to Dainik Jagran. If interaction of these three factors viz. newspaper, month and district is analyzed, then it was found that monthly supply of newspapers in different districts was not significantly different.

SOURCE	SS	DF	MSS	F	RESULT
MONTH	705264889.87	10	70526488.99	3.776	***
NEWSPAPER	895973589.46	2	447986794.73	23.988	***
DISTRICT	7030875805.56	10	703087580.56	37.648	***
DISTRICT X MONTHS	419129871	100	4191298.71	0.224	NS
DISTRICT X NEWSPAPER	2997902985	20	149895149.26	8.026	***
MONTH X NEWSPAPER	49729488.48	20	2486474.42	0.133	NS
ERROR SS	3735107308.19	200	18675536.54		
TSS	12367221593.0	362	34163595.56		

Figure 6: ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE - TEST RESULT

Also, average supply of newspapers in different months as also not significantly different but supply of different newspapers in different districts was significantly different e.g., supply of Punjab Kesari as significantly high in Kangara, Hamirpur, Solan and Una as compared to other dailies, whereas Amar Ujala has more dominance in Shimla-City, Mandi etc.

### Correlation Between Newspaper Supply and COVID Cases (Month Wise)

NEWSPAPER	P	RESULT	P
AMAR UJALA	0.068	NS	0.842
PUNJAB KESARI	0.041	NS	0.905
DAINIK JAGRAN	0.059	NS	0.863

Table 6: Correlation between newspaper supply and covid cases (month wise):

When correlation between covid cases and supply of three different newspapers was tested separately for every newspaper then non-significant correlation as found which shows that supply of these three different newspapers remained unaffected by number of covid cases.

NEWSPAPER	P	RESULT	P
AMAR UJALA	0.800	**	0.005
PUNJAB KESARI	0.136	NS	0.694
DAINIK JAGRAN	0.218	NS	0.521

### Correlation Between Newspaper Supply and COVID Cases (District Wise)

Table 7: Correlation between newspaper supply and covid cases (district wise)

Correlation between newspaper supply and covid cases was calculated district wise also. Test results given above shows that correlation between newspaper supply and covid cases was positive but non-significant for Punjab Kesari and Dainik Jagran but it was highly significant and positive for Amar Ujala which means that with rise in Covid cases supply of Amar Ujala also increased significantly.

## Conclusion:

### Geographical Factors:

Geographical factors play a vital role in market sale of Hindi newspapers in Himachal Pradesh during lockdown as the educational institutions were closed and transport came to a standstill so the sale of newspaper especially cash sale point came to a halt. Due to closing of educational institutions the students didn't come out of their houses. They use to collect newspapers on their way back from institutions etc. Besides this during extreme cold seasons when the division experience extreme cold weather with snowfall in some of the districts from end of November to February the newspaper sale drops because of zero mobility. Covid-19 lockdown has added more to the decline in number of copies sold during lockdown and post lockdown stage. The variation in the topography plays a vital role in supply of the three newspapers. The undulating topography, steep slopes of the region have played a vital role in making this area deprived of good transport network system. This also has impact on the sale of newspapers. During lockdown and post lockdown no tourist inflow was there in the Himachal Pradesh which also had an impact on the sale of the three Hindi newspapers under study.

The reasons why the number of copies of the three Hindi News Paper reduced during COVID-19- lockdown that is from 24th March to 30th May have been:

- Undulating Terrain.
- Steep slopes.
- Extreme climatic conditions.
- Area lockdown.
- Halt in Intra state Transport Services.
- Cash sale point lockdown.
- Rumors that COVID 19 is transmitted by newspapers
- Crisis magnified when houses restricted entry of newspaper delivery boys fearing transmission of Covid 19.
- and lastly advertisement revenues hitting rock bottom since the crisis started.

Following suggestions were taken into practice during Lockdown to increase the sale of copies of the three newspapers in Himachal Pradesh:

- Newspaper's volume was reduced.
- Sanitizers and hand gloves were provided to the distribution channel for safe delivery of newspapers.
- Number of pages were reduced due to less advertisement.
- Redesigning of the presentation of news on the basis of priority was done.
- The promotion of e paper was encouraged to compensate the reduction in volume.
- Man Power rationalization was done.
- The salary of the employees was deferred and cut.
- Bureau offices were shut down.
- Development of work from home culture.
- Promotion of Virtual calling began.

Besides this from government side Information and Broadcasting Ministry allowed Print Media to function smoothly during the lockdown citing the utmost importance to ensure timely and authentic information dissemination. These suggestions were taken into practice and resulted in stopping the further decline of Hindi News Papers sale in Himachal Pradesh. During POST LOCKDOWN which was from 1st June, the impact of Covid 19 on the three leading Hindi newspapers of Himachal Pradesh was taken up for study again. During this phase many amendments were made regarding the sale of newspapers as mentioned above but still the impact of Covid 19 on the Hindi Print media could be seen. During Post lockdown regarding the impact of Covid 19 on the sale of the three leading newspapers of Hindi print media the conclusion derived are:

- Area unlockdown/Commercial unlockdown started in the eleven districts of Himachal Pradesh from 1st June 2020.
- Train Services started which helped in increase in number of sales of the three newspapers.
- Intra State Transport Services started again with which started tourist inflow. This added to cash sale point and added to the sale of newspapers.
- Cash Sale Point unlockdown started and free copies to vendors and readers were distributed with customer beneficiary schemes.
- Campaigns at all levels were started to educate readers that Covid 19 is not transmitted by newspapers.
- Houses allowed newspaper delivery boys for distribution of newspapers following the protocol related COVID 19 transmissions.
- Advertisement revenues are in the process of reviving since the crisis started but couldn't touch the pre lockdown numbers.



Post lockdown /during unlockdown following suggestions can help in adding to the trend in sale of newspapers and can help the three newspapers in achieving the numbers of prelockdown as discussed above in suggestions.

Thus, it is clear that all these measures taken from time to time can lead to better situation of the Hindi print media in Himachal Pradesh so that the market share can reach the Pre Covid 19 situation. In nut shell this research paper gives the spatial variation of the three Hindi leading newspapers of Himachal Pradesh during different phases of Covid 19 that is from pre lockdown, during lockdown to post lockdown and how the measures taken to overcome the moment of crisis helped in making the situation of Hindi Print Media better.

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