



Green Journalism and Global Environment: A Statistical Analysis on Impact of News Coverage in Environmental Issues



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Abstract

The study aims to determine, that, media coverage is important to influence people for environmental awareness and taking action in the cases of environmental protection. Primary data analysis has done for graphical representation of data. Research shows that, a large number of respondents agreed that, media coverage can generate awareness to environmental issues and disaster management. So, from the statistical analysis, we can say that green journalism and environmental Journalists, as well as mass media are playing a vital role to protect the environment. Media has uncommon occasions to gain the societies and policy makers the value of biodiversity in giving financial and ecological services and thereby promote its conservation, sustainable use and impartial sharing of benefits.

Keywords

*environment;
protection;
global environment;
green journalism;
mass media;*

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1 Introduction

Biodiversity is complex and not the easiest of concepts to define. The word was only coined in the 1980's and it is still widely misunderstood and misused. The media often reports on the plight of rare charismatic species such as tigers, or on threats to tropical forests and coral reefs. But biodiversity means more than just wildlife or wild places. It encompasses the full variety of genes, species and ecosystems on the planet. The media has long reported on the state of the natural world through a lens of doom and gloom, inspired in part by the messages from nongovernmental organizations and researchers. Research shows that this disaster narrative soon becomes a turnoff. This is especially true when reporting focuses on distant species or considers biodiversity on a global scale. Such approaches can give the impression that problems are elsewhere, when in fact biodiversity loss is a local issue the world over ([Ying et al., 2002](#); [Zuccato et al., 2000](#)).

Meaning of environment

Meaning of the terms environment is very wide in the sense that it takes into account of all those factors which directly or indirectly have bearing upon the natural surroundings of human beings. The Encyclopedia Britanica defines Environment, as 'the entire range of external influence acting on an organism, both the physical and biological i.e. other organism, forces of nature surrounding on individual ([Bavadam, 2010](#); [Clapp & Dauvergne, 2011](#); [Wyss, 2018](#)).

Human environment

The tremendous advancement of industrialization resulting into the economic development has continuously degraded the human development. Discharge effluents into the atmosphere, oil spills and the dumping of refuse are the major sources of the pollution of human environment. Further, industrialization, urbanization, over population and poverty also affects the human environment. Problems arising from the pollution of human environment were not realized earlier and therefore attention was not paid to make rules and regulations in this regard. The United Nations in the first two decades has also been painfully slow in dealing the topic of environment ([Kurtz et al., 2001](#); [McKinley et al., 2017](#)).

Environmental protection as parts of human rights

The Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights provides right to work, right to enjoyment of just and favorable conditions of work in particular, a decent living for himself and their families, right to safe and healthy working conditions, right to everyone to an adequate standard of living realized earlier. The importance of safe and adequate human environment was stressed in the Stockholm Conference of 1972 when the Declaration adopted in the Conference proclaimed that both aspects of man's environment, the natural and the manmade, are essential to his well being and to the enjoyment of basic human right even the right to life itself. Earth Summit at Rio De Janeiro has also recognized that all human beings are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature ([Barber et al., 2005](#); [Fahy, 2002](#)).

No doubt, there is growing awareness about safe environment; there is no consensus at the international level to treat the right to environment as a fundamental right. However, efforts have been made in some national jurisdiction to recognize such a right. Deforestation, soil and water degradation and desertification are reaching in an alarming proportion and are seriously endangering the living conditions. Changes in the atmosphere such as those in the Ozone Layer and acid-rain pollution of the seas and inland waters constitute grave threats to the human environment. There is a close relationship between human rights and

environment. Safe and adequate environment is one of the means by which human rights can be protected and promoted (Wyss, 2018).

Green journalism is the collection verification production distribution and exhibition of information regarding current events, trends, issues and people that are associated with the human and non human world with which humans interact on regular basis. To be an environmental journalist, one must have an understanding of scientific language and practice, knowledge of historical environmental events, the ability to keep abreast of environmental policy decisions and the work of environmental organizations, a general understanding of current environmental concerns, and the ability to communicate all of that information to the public in such a way that it can be easily understood, despite its complexity. Green journalists are expected to be advocates for changes to improve the quality of the planet. They should educate people about the serious state of the environment and use the power of the news media to bring about changes to improve the quality of the air, water, wildlife and natural resources.

Objectives of the study

- a) To discuss the communication strategies and media coverage to influence people forenvironmental awareness and taking action in the cases of environmental protection.
- b) To show that Media coverage is important for making political decisions with regard to environmental issues.

Literature review

The social construction of environment and sustainability remains very much a function of media treatment of these issues. The rise and fall of in prominence of sustainability or environmental issues may not in fact correlate to their severity on the ground as pointed out by Hansen (1993), but is more often determined by the role played by mass media in the social construction of such issues within public discourse. A research by Archibald (1996), on how environmental reporters on daily newspapers construct news of the environment, made an exploratory analysis on daily newspaper reporters who cover the environmental beat, in order to learn how they operate and how they make certain crucial decisions. Long interviews were conducted with twenty environmental reporters from daily newspapers throughout the United States. They said environmental topics generally took more time to do than other news stories. Problems these reporters faced included not enough time or space to understand, cover and write about these multi-level, subtle and often uncertain issues, and dealing with editors who have little interest in the environment and non traditional news stories.

Later on Hansen Concurrs with the view that the rise of environmental issues follows the up and down cycle while agreeing with the Hargreaves assertion that mass media remains the major source of information about environmental issues and plays a critical role in determining public attitudes relating to the environment. A study by Adel (2013), on "Mainstreammedia's environmental coverage: The sound of silence"examined the report released by Pew Research Centre's Project for Excellence in Journalism to review a range of national and local news organizations across platforms from January 2011 to May 2012. The study showed that Among 30 national news organizations in the United States, environmental coverage represented just 1.2 percent of headlines. Meanwhile, entertainment and crime coverage continued to dominate the media space. For some news organizations, entertainment and crime garnered 20 to 60 times more coverage, respectively, than did the environment (Brüggemann & Engesser, 2017; Kim & Kim, 2017).

2 Materials and Methods

*Historical perspective on protection of environmental rights all over the world
Stockholm conference on human environment (1972)*

The United Nations Conference on the Human Environment was held at Stockholm (Sweden) from June 5 to 16, 1972. The Conference was the first major effort to solve the global problem of protection and

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improvement of the human environment by international conference on universal level. The main aim of the Conference was to encourage and provide guidelines for action by Governments and international organizations to protect and improve the human environment. Important resolutions and recommendations of the Conference are as follows:

1) Declaration on human environment

The Conference adopted the Declaration on Human Environment which was divided in two parts besides the Preamble. While the first part 'Proclaims' seven truths about man in relation to his environment, the second part laid down twenty-six 'Principles'. Some of the important principles are as follows:

- a) Principle 1 states that the man has the fundamental right to adequate conditions of life, in an environment of equality that permits a life of dignity and well-being, and bears a responsibility to protect and improve the environment for present and future generations.
- b) Principle 2 states that the natural resources of the earth including the air, water, land, flora and fauna and especially representative sample of natural ecosystems, must be safeguard for the benefit of present and future generations through careful planning and management as appropriate.
- c) Principle 7 stipulates that States shall take all possible steps to prevent pollution of the seas by substances that are liable to create hazards to human health, to harm living resources and marine life, to damage amenities or to interfere with other legitimate uses of the seas.
- d) Principle 21 states that the States have the sovereign right to exploit their own environmental policies, and the responsibility to ensure that activities within their jurisdiction or control do not cause damage to the environment of other States or of areas beyond the limits of national jurisdiction.
- e) Principle 22 states that the States shall co-operate to develop further the International Law regarding liability and compensation for the victims of pollution and other environmental damages caused by activities within the jurisdiction or control of such States to areas beyond their jurisdiction.

Principle laid down in the Conference is of immense importance. Although they are not binding on the States, they were expressed in form of a Code and intended to govern and influence further action and programmes. It was a powerful force in increasing awareness among governments and the public understanding of the fragility of the human environment.

Action plan of human environments

Principles set out in the Declaration were intended to realize with the practical measures. Proposals on these measures found their echo in the Action Plan. Recommendations under 'Action Plan' were made for the international action wherein emphasis was given on the development of environment relationship. The Action Plan was divided into three parts:

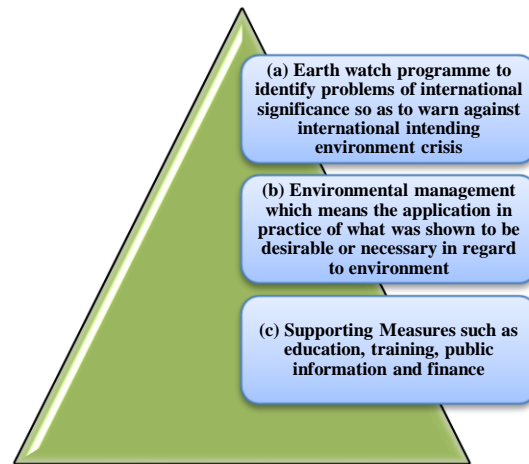


Figure 1. Action Plan was divided into three parts

Rio declaration on environment and development

The Rio Declaration was adopted in the Conference with the goal of establishing a new and equitable global partnership through the creation of new levels of co-operation among States, key sectors of societies and people. The Declaration recognized the integral and interdependent nature of the Earth, our home and proclaimed twenty seven principles. Some of the principles are as follows:



Principle 1 – Human being are at the center of concerns for sustainable development. They are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature.

Principle-2 – States have, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of International Law, the sovereign right to exploit their own resources pursuant to their own environmental and developmental policies, and the responsibility to ensure their activities within their jurisdiction or control not to cause damage to the environment of other states or of areas beyond the limit of national jurisdiction.

Principle-3 – The right to development must be fulfilled so as to equitably meet developmental and environmental needs of present and future generations.

Principle-4 In order to achieve sustainable development, environmental protection shall constitute an integral part of the development process and cannot be considered in isolation from it.

Figure 2. Principles declaration on environment and development

Global environment and green journalism initiative

The Global Environmental Journalism Initiative is a project started in 2008 by four Australian and five European universities that are leaders in journalism education in their countries. It involves:

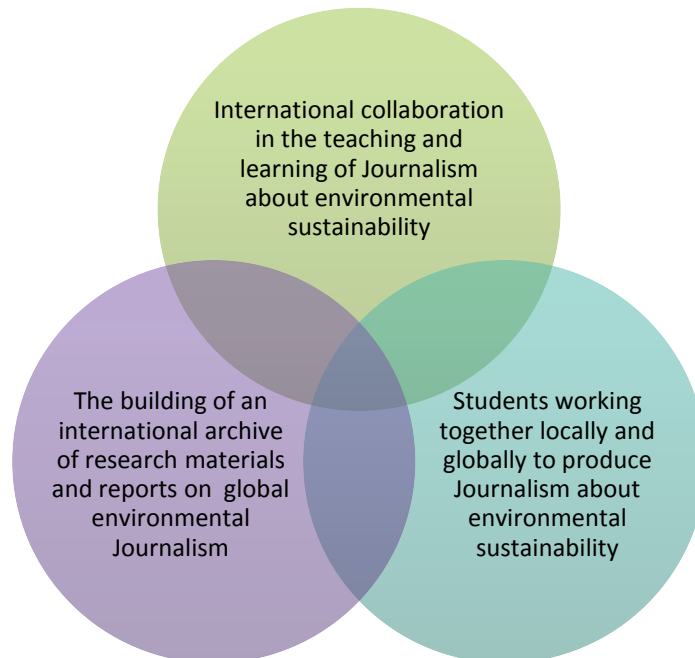


Figure 3. Global environmental journalism initiative

Background of environmental journalism

While the practice of nature writing has a rich history that dates back at least as far as the exploration narratives of Christopher Columbus, and follows tradition up through prominent nature writers like Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau in the late 19th century, John Burroughs and John Muir in the early 20th century, and Aldo Leopold in the 1940s, the field of environmental journalism did not begin to take shape until the 1960s and 1970s. The growth of environmental journalism as a profession roughly parallels that of the environmental movement, which became a mainstream cultural movement with the publication of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* in 1962 and was further legitimized by the passage of the Wilderness Act in 1964. Grassroots environmental organizations made a booming appearance on the political scene in the 1960s and 1970s, raising public awareness of what many considered to be the "environmental crisis," and working to influence environmental policy decisions. The mass media has followed and generated public interest on environmental issues ever since.

The field of environmental journalism was further legitimized by the creation of the Society of Environmental Journalists in 1990, whose mission "is to advance public understanding of environmental issues by improving the quality, accuracy, and visibility of environmental reporting." Today, academic programmes are offered at a number of institutions to train budding Journalists in the rigors, complexity and sheer breadth of environmental journalism.

Convention on biological diversity

The Convention was adopted on May 22, 1992 in Nairobi after nearly four year of deliberations under the aegis of UNEP concerns the conversation and sustainable use of all Earth's species and ecosystems. The Convention under Article 2 states that biological diversity means the variability among living organisms from

all sources including, inter alia, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part; this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems.

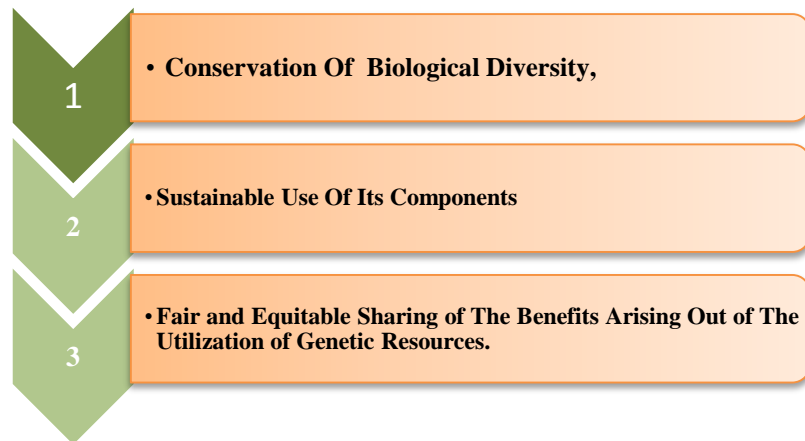


Figure 4. The objectives of the adoption of the convention

Responsibilities of green journalism

More recently, the media began to provide a positive parallel to the disaster narrative, one that highlights the economic and social benefits of preserving the natural world. These positive stories focus on things such as conservation successes or on 'green gold' – new ways for businesses to turn a profit with products or services derived from nature. This form of reporting is more empowering. It directs people to products that are better for biodiversity (and people) and demonstrates the market values of ecosystems. Saving the environment is not just an issue anymore. It is a survival truth. Individuals, organizations and governments need to come together and join hands to protect what is left of our planet so that the future is not wiped out before it's time for a curtain call. Experts say that proper handling of waste materials, such as reusing or disposing of them properly, should constitute an important part of our efforts to preserve energy and protect the environment. Countries worldwide should use less coal and more reusable power like hydro or solar power.

Human rights to safe environment

The Articles 3 and 25 can form the basis of a safe and healthy environment. The rights were reiterated in the 1992 Stock hold Declaration at the UN Conference on Environment. The resolution of 6 March 1990 adopted at 52nd Meeting of the Commission of Human rights of UN Economic and Social Councils. Over the last two decades, the concept of a human right to safe a clean environment has emerged as one of the basic rights in a number of states. Article 12 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights recognize the rights of everyone to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, and agree to take steps to activate the full realization of this right, including the improvement of all aspects of environmental and industrial hygiene.

a) Forest Principles

Forests Principles formally known as the "Statement of Principles on the Management, Conservation and Sustainable Development of all types of Forests" was the first global consensus on forests. Forests are lungs of the planet, inhale pollution carbon from the air and exhaling life giving Oxygen. Forests covers protect soils, stabilize local climates and provide irreplaceable homes for the widely rich and diverse flora and fauna of the world. The devastating losses of forests directly affect the world's biological diversity, causing mass extinction of huge numbers of plant and animals species. Forests principles, which is not a legally binding instrument laid down the principles of combating deforestation, enhance forest rehabilitation, afforestation and reforestation.

3 Results and Discussions

Table 1
Questionnaire

QUESTIONNAIRE

On Save the Environment Movement

Name:

Age:

Occupation:

Phone no:

Mail id :

1. Do you think, save the environment is your right and responsibility?
 - Yes
 - No
 2. Do you know that if you save the environment, you will save your next generation?
 - Yes
 - No
 3. Do you agree that news coverage through media provide us all information relating to environment?
 - Yes
 - No
 4. Do you agree that information relating to natural disaster and remedial actions provided by media?
 - Yes
 - No
 5. Do you think that save the environment to save the earth; is the burning issue in today's media Coverage?
 - Yes
 - No
-

Sample size: 200

Age Group: 18 TO 40years

Table 2
Respos Questionnaire

Question no	Yes	No
1	190	10
2	192	08
3	125	75
4	158	42
5	167	33

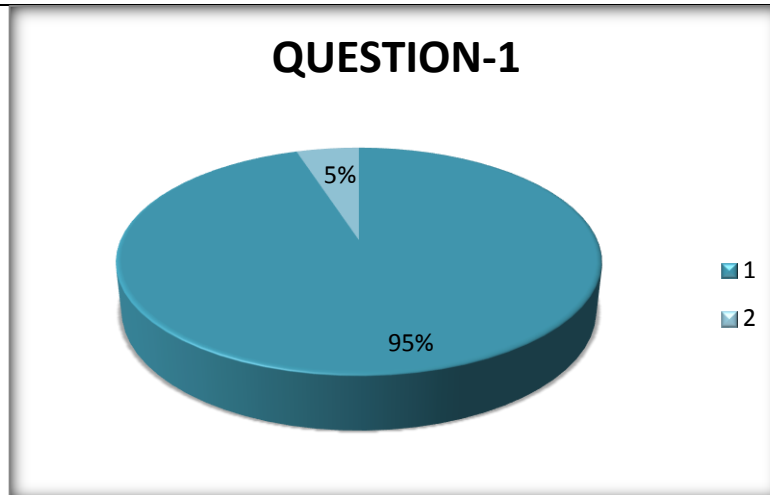


Figure 5. Diagram of question number 1

According to question no 1, 190 respondents said that save the environment is our right and also our responsibility. And 10 respondents said no to that statement. It means 95 percent respondents said yes to that question and 5 percent respondents said no to the same.

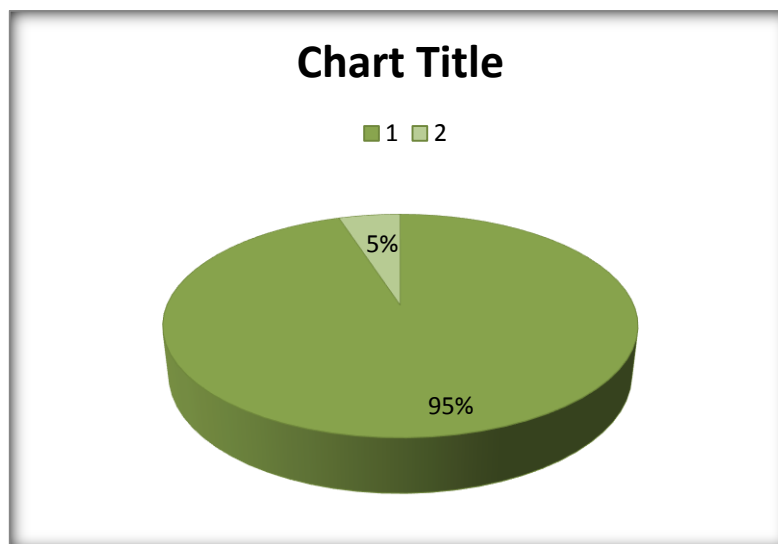


Figure 6. Chart of question number 2

According to question number 2, 192 respondents have agreed with the statement that if you save the environment, you will save your next generation. And 8 respondents said no to that. It means, 95 percent people said yes and 5 percent people said no to the same.

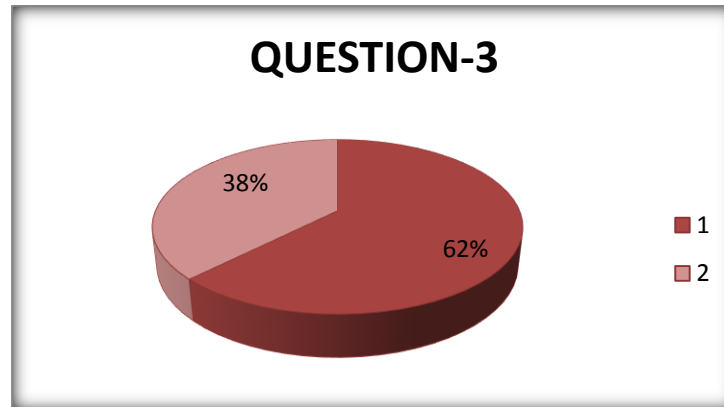


Figure 7. Diagram of question number 3

According to question number 3, 125 respondents have agreed that news coverage through media provide us all information relating to environment. And 75 respondents said no to that. It means, 62 percent people said yes and 38 percent people said no to the same.

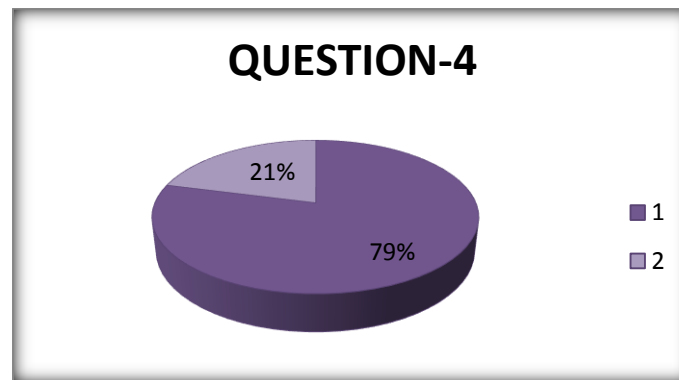


Figure 8. Diagram of question number 4

According to question number 4, 158 respondents have agreed that the audience got information relating to natural disaster and remedial actions, provided by media. And 42 respondents said no to that. It means 79percent people said yes and 21 percent people said no to the same.

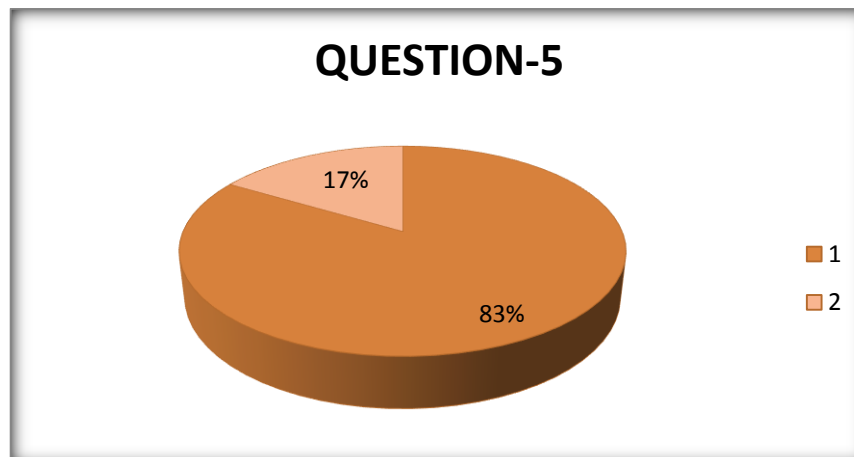


Figure 9. Diagram of question number 5

According to question number 5, 167 respondents have agreed that save the environment means to save the earth; is one of the burning issues in today's media Coverage. And 33 respondents said no to that. It means 83 percent people said yes and 17 percent people said no to the same.

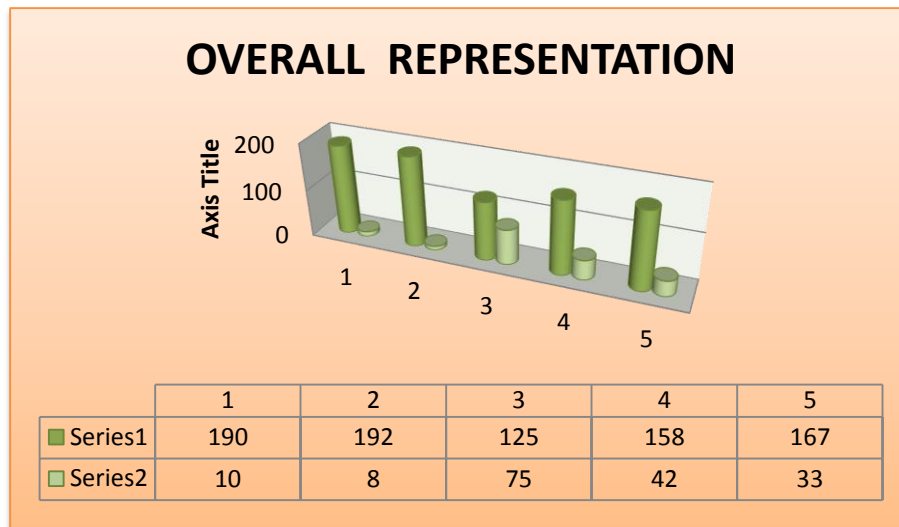


Figure 10. Overall representation

Overall result shows that, save the environment is the synonym of save the earth movement. If we protect our environment, we will survive for a long time. And as human being, our primary responsibility is to protect the wild life, forests, bio diversity and overall human environment. At large number of respondents agreed that, media coverage can generate awareness to environmental issues and disaster management. So, from the statistical analysis, we can say that green journalism, environmental Journalists as well as mass media is playing a vital role to protect the environment (Wakefield et al., 2010; Strömberg, 2001).

4 Conclusion

The Guardian batted on a report by UNEP, (MAY, 2016), that, Degradation of the world's natural resource by humans is fast dwindling the Earth's capacity to absorb the damage. It means, the rate of deterioration is hyping widely, the most comprehensive environmental study made by the UNEP. The study, which involved scientists, hundreds of scientific institutions and farther than 160 Governments brought together by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), concludes that without radical action the rung of healthiness that millions of people in the improved world count on will be unattainable to maintain or extend to poorer countries. Few steps are announced by media to protect the environment. These are:

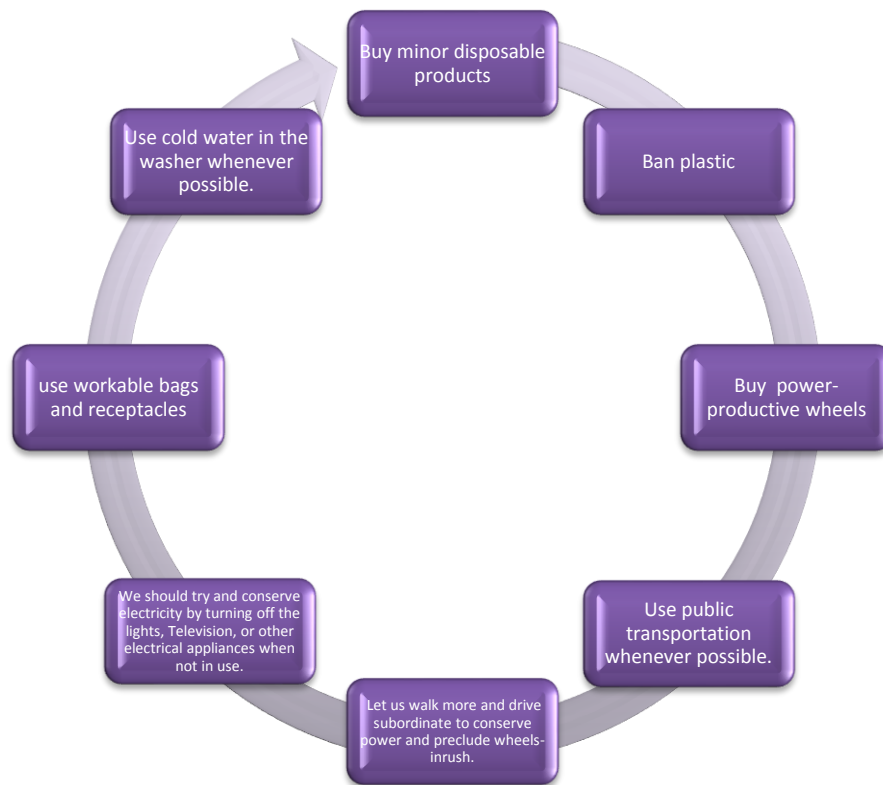


Figure 10. Few steps are announced by media to protect the environment

News, cinema, climate related features, pictures and documentaries illustrate the sheer beauty of the natural world, inspiring an entire generation of conservationists across the globe. To promote conservation of biodiversity and make environmental heed, organs can play a big place, as broadsheet and tabloid organs cover the issues on medium and wildlife. That way it'll help to reach farther followership. Mass media should make environmental heed. Print media as well as Visual media is now recognised as paramount mighty, engaging and emotive ways to sensitise followership towards the cause of environmental conservationism. Biodiversity is essential to mortal weal but is under peril the world over. Yet media content doesn't match the scale of the problem, not least, because the term life and bio diversity is itself lousily understood. Newsmen need to gear up to tell this story better by learning further about the issues and framing them in ways that make sense to their followership. Policy makers and researchers must also do farther to explain the moment of nature to people, using patter free language and instances, which help to make the issues real. Pivotal to successful communication will be a competence to show that people are part of bio diversity, reliant on its richness and deeply affected by its loss. This will grow in moment in the coming bits, as major international stories unfold and climate change takes hold (Thyagaraju, 2016; Archana et al., 2016).



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