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## Research Paper

## Media Narratives on AI For Sustainable Development in Organizations: An Analysis of Major Indian English Dailies

Anil Kumar <sup>1\*</sup>, Prof. Manoj Dayal <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ph.D. Research Scholar, Department of Mass Communication,  
Guru Jambheshwar University of Science and Technology, Hisar, Haryana, India

<sup>2</sup> Professor, Dean, Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences  
Chairperson, Dept. of Mass Communication  
Guru Jambheshwar University of Science & Technology, Hisar, Haryana, India

Corresponding Author: \*Anil Kumar

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### ABSTRACT

This study examines how major Indian English-language newspapers frame the role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in advancing sustainable development within organizational contexts. Through qualitative content analysis of five leading dailies (*The Times of India*, *The Hindu*, *The Indian Express*, *Hindustan Times*, and *The Economic Times*) from 2019 to 2024, the research identifies dominant narratives, thematic trends, and discursive patterns in media coverage of AI for sustainability. Findings reveal that while environmental applications of AI (climate modeling, waste management, renewable energy) receive significant attention, business efficiency narratives dominate, particularly in economically oriented publications like *The Economic Times*. Ethical concerns, including job displacement, data privacy, and regulatory gaps, emerge as critical counter-narratives, most prominently in *The Hindu*. The analysis also highlights the growing discourse around AI-driven corporate social responsibility (CSR) and public-private partnerships, though these are often subordinated to profit-centric frameworks. The study underscores the media's role in shaping organizational and public perceptions of AI's sustainability potential, revealing a tension between techno-optimist narratives and critical scrutiny of socio-ethical risks. While AI is broadly depicted as an enabler of sustainable development, the coverage tends to prioritize economic gains over systemic ecological or social equity considerations.

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**KEYWORDS:** Artificial Intelligence (AI), Sustainable Development, Media Narratives, Organizational Sustainability, Indian English Dailies, Discourse Analysis

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has emerged as a transformative force in global development, with significant implications for sustainability in organizational contexts. As businesses and governments increasingly integrate AI to address the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), media narratives play a crucial role in shaping public perception, policy discourse, and corporate strategies. In India, where rapid technological adoption coexists with pressing sustainability challenges, English-language newspapers serve as key platforms for framing AI's role in sustainable development. This study examines how major Indian English dailies construct narratives around AI's potential to advance (or hinder) sustainability in organizational settings, contributing to a nuanced understanding of media influence on technological and environmental discourse.

**Media, AI, and Sustainable Development:** The Nexus. The interplay between media narratives, AI, and sustainability has garnered increasing scholarly attention. Ahmed *et al.* (2024) highlight disparities in Indian media's coverage of SDGs, noting that while digital platforms employ innovative storytelling, traditional outlets often provide superficial reporting due to limited journalistic expertise. Similarly, Keller *et al.* (2020) analyze climate change coverage in *The Hindu* and *Times of India*, finding that political and societal angles dominate, with limited emphasis on scientific depth. These studies underscore the media's selective framing of sustainability issues, raising questions about how AI, a complex, rapidly evolving technology, is portrayed in sustainable development.

AI's dual potential as both an enabler and disruptor of sustainability is well-documented. Goralski and Tan (2020) demonstrate AI's transformative applications in smart agriculture and water management but caution against risks like job displacement and inequality. Guenduez and Mettler (2023) identify dominant policy narratives around AI, emphasizing ethical governance and economic opportunity, while Olawuyi and Enuwah (2024) note Nigerian media's predominantly optimistic framing of AI, despite acknowledging privacy and employment concerns. Such findings suggest that media narratives often reflect broader societal and policy biases, oscillating between techno-optimism and cautionary tales.

### The Role of Narratives in Shaping AI Discourse

Narratives serve as cognitive frameworks that influence public and organizational decision-making (Helgeson *et al.*, 2022). Debnath *et al.* (2020) advocate for hybrid methods like topic modeling and grounded theory to decode latent socio-cultural factors in energy policy narratives, an approach relevant to AI-sustainability discourse. Meanwhile, Suter *et al.* (2024) analyze quantum technology narratives, revealing gaps in media coverage of societal implications, a trend that may extend to AI reporting. In India, Parveen (2016) finds that environmental coverage in *The Times of India* prioritizes wildlife and disasters over systemic sustainability issues, suggesting a potential neglect of AI's long-term ecological impacts.

## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Ahmed *et al.* (2024) investigate the role of Indian media in promoting Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), revealing disparities between traditional and digital platforms in coverage depth and engagement strategies, while identifying challenges such as journalistic expertise gaps and urban-rural divides.

Guenduez and Mettler (2023) employ structural topic modeling and the Narrative Policy Framework to analyze AI policies across 33 nations, uncovering dominant narratives and isomorphic rhetorical patterns that reflect varying governmental roles and priorities. Helgeson *et al.* (2022) propose a Digital Observatory of Narratives of Sustainability (DONS) to systematically analyze digital narratives (DNs) related to the SDGs, emphasizing their utility in understanding societal attitudes and informing policy through computational methods. Goralski and Tan (2020) explore AI's dual impact on sustainable development, demonstrating its potential through case studies while cautioning against risks like job displacement, advocating for balanced adoption and ethical management education. Debnath *et al.* (2020) introduce a novel topic modeling-grounded theory (TM-GT) framework for energy policy research, illustrating its efficacy in uncovering socio-cultural factors in energy poverty through a Mumbai case study. Suter *et al.* (2024) examine quantum technology narratives across media, business, and policy domains, identifying key themes and noting the absence of extreme utopian or dystopian framings compared to AI discourse. Parveen (2016) assesses environmental coverage in *The Times of India*, finding disproportionate attention to wildlife and disasters over sustainable development, highlighting the media's uneven engagement with critical issues. Goel and Sharma (2024) analyze linguistic representations of ESG issues in Indian advertisements, revealing language-based differences in framing SDGs between English and Hindi media. Olawuyi and Enuwah (2024) explore Nigerian media's predominantly positive framing of AI, emphasizing economic benefits while acknowledging risks like job displacement. Kaufman, Floyd, and Lenartz (2022) critique space colonization under NASA's Artemis program, advocating for sustainable and ethical extraterrestrial resource management to avoid replicating Earth's colonial exploitation. Čirković (2023) refutes arguments against space settlement based on social exclusion, asserting that competence-based exclusion is inherent in ambitious projects. Sonni (2025) reviews AI's impact on journalism, highlighting efficiency gains alongside ethical risks like algorithmic bias, calling for balanced integration. Ala-Kortesmaa, Laapotti, and Mikkola (2021) analyze narrative identity construction in a Finnish health tech startup, revealing disparities between external and internal storytelling coherence. Virtajoki (2022) critiques the limits of conceivability in futures studies, identifying structural biases that constrain imaginative foresight. Kuai (2025) examines Chinese journalists' pragmatic yet cautious engagement with AI, noting tensions between state-aligned reporting and professional ethics. Keller *et al.* (2020) analyze Indian climate change coverage, finding increased attention post-2007 but limited scientific depth. Kamboh, Ittefaq,

and Jamil (2024) investigate Pakistani editorial agenda-building on SDGs, revealing the influence of political and advocate-journalist narratives. Floyd *et al.* (2022) defend their earlier work on epistemic humility in energy transitions, clarifying their stance on renewable energy feasibility. Hermann (2023) critiques science fiction's anthropomorphized AI portrayals for distorting public understanding of real-world risks. Szocik (2023) warns against space colonization exacerbating social inequalities, advocating for inclusive frameworks. Lei Xie (2015) compares U.S. and Chinese climate change coverage, revealing politicized skepticism in U.S. media versus state-aligned narratives in China. Krüger *et al.* (2022) critique energy transition injustices, advocating for postcolonial, democratized approaches. Collectively, these studies underscore the interplay between media, technology, and policy in shaping sustainability discourse, while advocating for more inclusive, ethical, and empirically grounded approaches to global challenges.

### 3. OBJECTIVE

1. To analyze the dominant media narratives surrounding Artificial Intelligence (AI) and sustainable development in major Indian English-language newspapers.
2. To examine how different publications frame AI's role in organizational sustainability, including environmental, economic, and social dimensions.
3. To identify recurring themes, stakeholder perspectives, and discursive patterns in AI-sustainability coverage.
4. To assess the balance between techno-optimist narratives (e.g., efficiency, innovation) and critical perspectives (e.g., ethics, equity) across media outlets.

### 4. METHODOLOGY

The methodology for this study employs a qualitative content analysis approach to examine media narratives on AI for sustainable development in major Indian English dailies. A purposive sampling strategy is used to select articles from five leading newspapers (*The Times of India*, *The Hindu*, *The Indian Express*, *Hindustan Times*, and *The Economic Times*) published between 2019 and 2024. Using keyword searches such as "AI and sustainability," "AI in organizational development," and "AI for sustainable business," relevant articles are identified and analyzed through thematic coding to uncover dominant narratives, framing techniques, and discursive patterns. The analysis focuses on recurring themes, stakeholder perspectives, and the portrayal of AI's role in advancing sustainable development goals (SDGs) within organizational contexts. To ensure reliability, inter-coder agreement is assessed, and emerging themes are validated through iterative review. The study also incorporates critical discourse analysis (CDA) to explore power dynamics and ideological influences shaping media representations, providing insights into how Indian English dailies construct public understanding of AI's potential for sustainability in organizational settings.

### 5. FINDINGS

The analysis of media narratives on AI for sustainable development in major Indian English dailies revealed distinct thematic trends, stakeholder representations, and framing patterns.

**Table 1:** Frequency of AI-Sustainability Themes in Indian English Dailies (2019-2024)

Theme	The Times of India	The Hindu	The Indian Express	Hindustan Times	The Economic Times	Total
AI for Environmental Sustainability	32	28	25	20	35	140
AI in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)	18	22	15	12	30	97
Ethical & Regulatory Concerns	25	30	22	18	20	115
AI-Driven Business Efficiency	40	25	30	22	45	162
Public-Private AI Partnerships	15	20	18	10	28	91

### Explanation of Findings

#### 1. AI for Environmental Sustainability (140 mentions)

- I. The most prominent theme, particularly in *The Economic Times* (35 mentions), highlights AI applications in climate modeling, waste management, and renewable energy optimization.
- II. *The Hindu* and *The Times of India* emphasized government and NGO-led AI initiatives for sustainability.

#### 2. AI in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) (97 mentions)

- I. *The Economic Times* led coverage (30 mentions), framing AI as a tool for ethical business practices.
- II. Articles discussed AI-driven philanthropy, employee welfare, and sustainable supply chains.

#### 3. Ethical & Regulatory Concerns (115 mentions)

- I. *The Hindu* (30 mentions) critically examined biases, job displacement, and data privacy risks in AI-driven sustainability projects.
- II. Debates on policy gaps and corporate accountability were recurrent.

#### 4. AI-Driven Business Efficiency (162 mentions)

- I. The most frequently covered theme, with *The Economic Times* (45 mentions) and *The Times of India* (40 mentions) focusing on cost reduction and operational sustainability.
- II. Narratives often linked AI to profit-driven sustainability rather than purely ecological benefits.

## 5. Public-Private AI Partnerships (91 mentions)

- I. Coverage was highest in *The Economic Times* (28 mentions), showcasing collaborations between tech firms, governments, and NGOs.
- II. Stories emphasized innovation hubs and funding for AI sustainability projects.

The data reveals that while Indian English dailies extensively cover AI's role in sustainable development, the framing varies—business-oriented newspapers (*The Economic Times*) emphasize efficiency and partnerships, while others (*The Hindu*) critically assess ethical implications. Environmental sustainability remains a key narrative, but regulatory and CSR-related discussions are growing.

## 6. CONCLUSION

This study examined how major Indian English dailies frame the role of artificial intelligence (AI) in sustainable development within organizational contexts. The findings reveal a multifaceted media narrative, balancing optimism about AI's transformative potential with critical discussions on ethical and regulatory challenges. Business-oriented publications like *The Economic Times* and *The Times of India* predominantly highlight AI-driven efficiency and public-private partnerships, reinforcing a techno-optimist perspective that aligns AI with economic growth and corporate sustainability. In contrast, *The Hindu* offers a more cautious narrative, emphasizing ethical concerns, accountability, and the need for robust governance frameworks.

Environmental sustainability emerges as a dominant theme, with AI being portrayed as a key enabler of climate action, waste management, and renewable energy optimization. However, the media's focus on business efficiency often overshadows deeper socio-ecological considerations, suggesting a commercialized view of sustainability. Meanwhile, discussions on AI in corporate social responsibility (CSR) reflect a growing recognition of ethical business practices, though coverage remains secondary to profit-centric narratives.

The study underscores the media's influential role in shaping public and organizational perceptions of AI for sustainable development. While Indian English dailies provide a platform for diverse perspectives, the predominance of efficiency-driven narratives risks marginalizing critical debates on equity, accessibility, and long-term societal impacts. Future research could explore regional media representations and audience reception to assess how these narratives influence policy and corporate strategies. Ultimately, fostering a more balanced discourse—one that harmonizes innovation with ethical responsibility—will be crucial in steering AI toward truly sustainable organizational practices.

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