



SCHOLARLY PUBLICATIONS
School of Mass Communication
KIIT Deemed to be University

Journal Name: Journalism

IF: 2.7

Title: Pandemic politics and public sphere: A critical discourse analysis of COVID-19 in letters to the editor of leading Odia newspapers

Author: Nayak D.P.; Dash B.B.; Abhyudaya S.

Details: Volume 26, Issue 6, Pages 1329 – 1344, June 2025

Abstract: This paper analyzed the letters to the editor of four leading Odia dailies by applying critical discourse analysis to understand how this section contributes as the public sphere and discusses politics around the second wave of COVID-19. The period considered for study was during the peak of the COVID-19 second wave in India – from April to September 2021, which witnessed many deaths and devastation. During the period the maximum number of letters were written around COVID-19. Upon analyzing the letters, it was concluded that the letters covered five major concerns of the pandemic – the political state within the country and the politics around the vaccine, the availability of the vaccines, the condition of senior citizens and children, the struggle to strike a balance between life and livelihood, and the ongoing crisis in the education sector due to the pandemic. As a public forum for debate, the newspaper readers resorted to the letters to the editor section where they effectively communicated their experiences and problems related to the pandemic. The letters shed light on the real issues on the ground. During COVID-19 the general public craved a forum to share their opinion and express their issues and problems. The letters to the editor section proved to be an effective public forum in this regard. Though the study was conducted in Odisha, a coastal state of India, its findings have a greater implication for the vernacular dailies in the Global South.

URL: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/14648849241252257>

