

# Coverage of Terrorism Issues in Minorities' Press of Pakistan

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## Abstract

The 9/11 incident changed the world's situation when US declared the war against terrorism; this incident united the western forces to fight against the terrorism at global level. Pakistan being the neighborhood to the centre point of the Terrorists was involved in this war against terrorism by the United States. Earlier the media as a whole protested against the involvement of Pakistan in the war. The Minorities' Press also criticized and protested Pakistan's involvement in the war on terror but with the passage of time media started favoring the state policy as the major cities of the country were targeted by the terrorists. The present study is focused on the role of the Minorities' Press in Pakistan in covering the terrorism issue from September 2001 to December 2006. The Minorities' Press includes the newspapers and magazines of Christians, Ahmedi's (Qadianis), Hindu religion, Parsi religion and Bhai's religion. The theoretical framework refers to the Agenda Setting Theory as the study intends to gauge the 'Media Agenda' of the minorities in Pakistan. The content analysis method was used to analyze the contents of the editorials and articles of the selected Minorities' Press. The findings showed that overall the Minorities' Press supported the government's policy on war against terrorism and the Christian press was seen more active in this regard as compared to the rest of the newspapers and magazines of the minorities.

**Keywords:** minorities' press, terrorism, newspapers, magazines, war on terror

## 1. Introduction

Media has got prime importance today in all the disciplines of life. Media is now considered as the most influential tool in all the societies, all the issues are openly covered now in the media at national and international level. Every country has more reliance on media to disseminate the voices of the people and the government as well. In Pakistan media has showed great progress during the last decade, both print and electronic media has much developed and now a large number of newspapers and magazines are published and number of Television channels and Radio Stations are working within the country. Among these newspapers, magazines, Television Channels and Radio Stations a number of Minorities' based newspapers, magazines, Television Channels and Radio Stations are working in the country. These minorities' based media organizations are freely covering the issues according to their own interests and likings. No governmental or State pressure is observed for the minority media so, minorities' media is also enjoying the freedom of press in Pakistan.

The present study is focused on the coverage of the terrorism issue in Pakistan in the Minorities' Press as this issue was the hot topic for the whole media in Pakistan after 9/11 incidents, all the media organizations in Pakistan has greatly focused on this issue according to their own interests but here the researcher intends to examine that how the minorities' media in Pakistan covered the terrorism issue as this was the highly discussed issue in the whole media of the country during the selected time period and especially after the 9/11 incidents in United States of America.

This study includes editorials and articles of the Minorities' Press of Pakistan from September 2001 to December 2006. Out of the thirteen newspapers & magazines selected six of them represent the Christians, four represent the Ahmedi's (Qadianis), one each from Hindu, Parsi & Bhai's faith.

The selected newspapers and magazines of minorities are Daily Aftab, Weekly Christian Voice, Fortnightly Catholic Naqeeb, Monthly Shahdab, Monthly Kalam-e-Haq, Quarterly Al-Mushir, Daily Al-Fazal, Monthly Khalid, Monthly Ansaar ullah, Monthly Misbah, Monthly Prem Sagar, Weekly Parsi Sansar n loke sevak and Monthly Nafaha from September 2001 to December 2006.

### 1.1 Hypotheses:

1. Minorities' Press support the government stance on war against terrorism.
2. Articles are more favorable towards the government stance on war on terror as compared to the editorials.
3. The frequency of editorials and articles that support the government stance on war on terror is more than the editorials and articles that oppose.
4. The Minorities' Press has well addressed the terrorism issue during the selected time period.
5. While addressing the terrorism issue the spirit of nationalist approach exist.

The study is important because earlier a lot of literature is present on the media coverage of terrorism issue but the study on the coverage of the issue in the Minorities' Press is rarely present. So, the study is unique in this sense that it is covering the terrorism issue in the Minorities' Press in particular.

## 2. Literature Review

The art of conveying the message by using mass media such as Print (newspaper and magazine), Electronic (television and radio) and New Media (internet and mobile phone) is Journalism and the people like journalists and technical persons related to media are the chief source in mass media society.

As well as terrorism in this part of the world where Pakistan is lying is concerned, Scheuer (2005) was of the view that US support to the Muslim dictators and police states was damaging for the Muslims and this US support to the Islamic states was also criticized by AL Qaida, the terror symbol organization for the west and anti Taliban states.

The United Nation's Security Council's resolutions define terrorism as "criminal act "causing the deaths of people or the badly injured persons, taking hostages for provoking terror in general public or the government or any international organization to fulfill the demands of the terror creating groups or abstain from any act (UN, 2001).

Terrorism refers to the killings of the innocent people by some self interested groups. Charles (2002) says that terrorism refers to the blanket use of the violence against the common citizens for attaining the publicity. Taliban in the Tribal areas of Pakistan and in the neighborhood (Afghanistan) are example of gaining this kind of publicity.

Ass well as the relationship between terrorism and media is concerned Hoffman (2006) states that terrorism is just like a theater and the terrorist attacks are planned to attract the attention of the media as it was earlier noted in 1970s by Brain Jenkins as well.

In the past decade Al Qaeda emerged as a symbol of terror for the west in particular and in general for rest of the world Gerges (2005) states that the use of the media is so important for AL Qaeda that many people attached with the organization said that Osama Bin Ladin was obsessed with the media at international level. Moreover Osama was not the only extremist who rely on media at such a high level Aiman Al Zawahari, Al Qaeda's leader after Osama also believed to have said that "besides the battlefield on ground more than half of the battle is fought in the battlefield of the media" (ibid.) which shows the reliance of the terrorist organizations on the media for success. The relationship between the media and terrorism is bit clear now and it provides the base for the present study that how media covers the terrorism related issues and also that how terrorist organizations rely on media for their success.

Hanitzch (2004) argues that the journalists are more likely to cover terror and violence related activities and they mostly report such issues. Richter (1999) points out that the journalists claim to give priority to cover the miseries and sufferings of the common men (civilians) instead of covering the military operations. As well as the biasness of the media for the coverage of terrorism and violence is concerned Kellner (1992) is of the view concluding his study that the neutral reporting is not done by the news organizations during Gulf War as the War was not covered fairly by the main broadcasters ABC, CBS and CNN etc. and it was influenced by the national ideology and the governmental concerns by their governments.

Wolfsfield (1999) observed that in Middle East media gave more coverage to extremists and militants and less coverage was seen in the favor of peace and stability of the region, this behavior of media leaves a negative image on its end.

Concerning the media coverage regarding terrorism the present study is focusing on the coverage of the terrorism issue in the Minorities' Press of Pakistan that how the Minorities' Press in Pakistan cover the terrorism issue. The study is important because earlier a lot of literature is present on the media coverage of terrorism issue but the study on the coverage of the issue in the Minorities' Press is rarely present. So, the study is unique in this sense that it is covering the terrorism issue in the Minorities' Press in particular.

## 3. Theoretical Framework

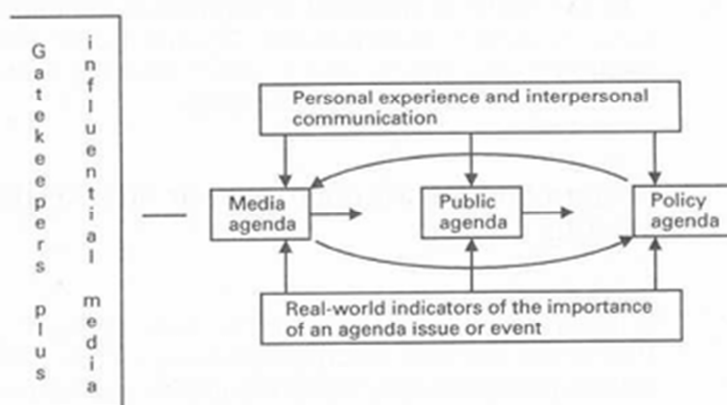
In the present treatise the theoretical framework Theory of Agenda Setting was used.

### Agenda Setting Theory

Agenda setting theory is the idea that the news media by their display of news, come to determine the issue the public thinks about and talks about. This means that mass media attention to an issue causing that issue to be elevated in importance to the public.

Cohen (1963) states "It may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about" (cited in Tankard 1992).

### Conceptual Model:



### Agenda-Setting Model

Source: McQuail & Windahl (1993)

One effect that is powerful, according to communication researchers Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw is agenda setting. People learn what to think and talk about from the messages they receive. The media, in effect, largely structure our world of concern and largely dictate our interests. The media are powerful instruments of guidance, they help determine very things we think about and some times the things we do. They argue that people tend to think more about the ideas presented the media than about ideas not in the media.

McCombs and Shaw argue that the agenda setting of the media makes them highly influential in shaping public perception of the world. This ability to affect cognitive change among individuals is one of the most important aspects of the power of mass communication (Watson 1998).

Agenda-setting is believed to occur because the press must be selective in reporting the news. News outlets act as 'gatekeepers' of information and make choices about what to report and what not. What the public know and care at any given time is mostly a product of media-gate keeping.

The Agenda-setting function is a three part-process.

1. Media-Agenda: Issues discussed in the media.
2. Public-Agenda: Issues discussed and personally relevant to the public.
3. Policy-Agenda: Issues that policy maker consider important.

**The study in hand intends to gauge the 'Media Agenda' of the minorities in Pakistan. It intends to look into the priorities and frequency of the coverage of selected issues by the said Minorities' Press.**

According to Dominick (2002) one influence of mass media that has turned up in many studies of mass communication is called agenda setting effect. (An agenda is a list of things to be considered or acted upon) when we say that the media have an impact on agenda setting, we mean that they have ability to choose or emphasize certain topics, there by causing the public to perceive these issues as important (P.543).

Agee, Ault, Emery defines (1988) the ability of media to select and call to the public's attention both ideas and events. The media tell us what is and what is not important. The media "do not tell people what to think" but "what to think about? The media concentrations on events because they are important, or do media concentration make them important (Cited in Devito, 1994:478 also cited in Naveed, 2003).

In this study the researcher intends to examine in the light of major postulates agenda setting that which issues are given more coverage? How media covered religious, political, social, economic, terrorism and interfaith dialogue issues of Pakistan? What remained the media priority and frequency while covering these issues?

### 4. Methodology

The present study is focused on examining the attitudes of the major religious minorities of Pakistan, on **Terrorism issue**. The objective of the study is to explore how Terrorism issue is addressed along with its treatment in the Minorities' Press of Pakistan.

Research methods:

The research technique employed in this study is '*content analysis*'... a method that uses a set of procedures to make valid inferences from the text (Weber, 1990). It (content analysis) permits and objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of a communication (Berlson, 1952: cited in Gul, 1998).

Kerlinger (1986) has defined it as; "Content analysis is a method of studying and analyzing communication in a systematic, objective, and quantitative manner for the purpose of measuring variables"(Cited in Wimmer, 1994: 163-164).

This method is popular with mass media researchers as it provides an efficient way to investigate the content of the media such as news, editorials, articles, advertisements etc in print media.

#### 4.1 Universe of the study

To 'define the universe' is to specify the boundaries of the body of content to be considered, which requires an appropriate operational definition of the relevant population. Basically, two dimensions are used to determine the appropriate universe for a content analysis: 'the topic area' and 'the time period'. (Cited in Wimmer, 1994:168)

To specify the topic area and the time period, the researcher provides the basic requirement of content analysis: a concise statement that spells out the parameters of the investigation.

"This study considers the editorial and article contents of Minorities' Press in Pakistan, Daily Aftab, Weekly Christian Voice, Fortnightly Catholic Naqeeb, Monthly Shahdab, Monthly Kalam-e-Haq, Quarterly Al-Mushir, Daily Al-Fazal, Monthly Khalid, Monthly Ansaar ullah, Monthly Misbah, Monthly Prem Sagar, Weekly Parsi Sansar n loke sevak and Monthly Nafahat from September 2001to December 2006".

#### 4.2 Sample of the study

"A sample is a subset of the population or universes that is taken to be representative of the entire population" (ibid: 64).

A process of drawing representative elements from the larger population or universe is called sampling. Obvious advantage of sampling is especially savings in time and money. (Cited in Khel, 2000:48).

Considering the nature, time period and importance of the topic, researcher decided to include the entire universe (Daily Aftab, Weekly Christian Voice, Fortnightly Catholic Naqeeb, Monthly Shahdab, Monthly Kalam-e-Haq, Quarterly Al-Mushir, Daily Al-Fazal, Monthly Khalid, Monthly Ansaar ullah, Monthly Misbah, Monthly Prem Sagar, Weekly Parsi Sansar n loke sevak and Monthly Nafahat )as a sample for this dissertation. This will make the researcher to draw the more meaningful inferences.

#### 4.3 Unit of analysis

"The unit of analysis is the thing that is actually counted. It is the smallest element of a content analysis, but it is one of the most important. In written content, the unit of analysis might be a single word or symbol, a theme (a single assertion about one subject), or an entire article or story" (Cited in Wimmer, 1994:170).

The unit of analysis and unit of coding in this study is editorials and articles regarding the Terrorism issue, published in selected newspapers and magazines of minorities (Daily Aftab, Weekly Christian Voice, Fortnightly Catholic Naqeeb, Monthly Shahdab, Monthly Kalam-e-Haq, Quarterly Al-Mushir, Daily Al-Fazal, Monthly Khalid, Monthly Ansaar ullah, Monthly Misbah, Monthly Prem Sagar, Weekly Parsi Sansar n loke sevak and Monthly Nafahat) from September 2001to December 2006.

#### 4.4 Issue Under Discussion

The **Terrorism issue** is discussed in the study.

#### 4.5 Operationalization

Terrorism issues include 9/11 incident, post 9/11, Talibanization and all kind of terrorism.

#### 4.6 Direction of the contents

N=Total number of articles,

n=Total number of articles on Terrorism issues

**Positive (+)** =If an item is against the terrorism, it will be considered positive.

**Negative (-)** =If an item is in favor of terrorism, it will be considered as negative.

**Neutral (o)** =If an item discusses the causes of terrorism and give suggestions to eliminate the terrorism, it will be considered as neutral.

#### 4.7 Conceptualization

**Minorities' means:** non-Muslims citizens in Pakistan i.e. Christians, Hindus, Ahmadis, Parsis, Bhai. And Sikh

**Press means:** newspapers and magazines which belong to non-Muslim communities in Pakistan.

**Terrorism includes:** 9/11 incident, post 9/11, Talibanization and all kind of terrorism in Pakistan

#### 4.8 Limitations of the study

It is very hard for a researcher to conduct an ideal study. Every research has always certain limitations. In this research there are also some limitations, which are as:

- Content analysis is frequently time-consuming, therefore, the researcher has chosen only eighty seven months (September 2001 to December 2006) for the study.
- The findings of this content analysis are limited to the framework of the categories and definitions used in this analysis.

### 5. Data Analysis

Table (a) Comparative coverage of all Editorials of all the magazines and newspapers on Terrorism issue from September 2001 to December 2006

Newspapers/Magazines	Frequency (Percentage)	Chi-Square	df.	P-Value
Aftaab	189 (9)	6.125	4	0.190
Christian Voice	11 (3)			
Catholic Naqeeb	0 (0)			
Shadab	8 (9)			
Kalam e Haq	2 (3)			
Al-Mushir	5 (8)			
Khalid	0 (0)			
Ansar ullah	0 (0)			
Monthly Misbah	0 (0)			
Prem Sagar	0 (0)			
Parsi Sansar n loke sevak	0 (0)			

#### Table Analysis

Table (a) indicates that total 3570 editorials were published and on Terrorism issue 215(6%) editorials were published. Aftaab gave maximum coverage on the Terrorism issue 189(9%) editorials. Whereas Christian Voice published 11(3%), Shadaab published 8(9%), Kalam e Haq published 2(3%) and Al-Mushir 5(8%) editorials on Terrorism issue. However the issue was unattended by the Catholic Naqeeb, Khalid, Ansaar ullah, Monthly Misbah, Prem Sagar and Parsi Sansar n loke sevak.

Chi-square test was applied to find out the equal distribution of Terrorism Issue among the various newspapers/magazines. The results showed was not significant differences ( $\chi^2 = 6.125$ ,  $df = 4$ ,  $p = 0.190$ ) among the distribution of Terrorism issue by various newspapers/magazines.

Table (b)

Total topical direction of all Editorials in all newspapers and magazines on Terrorism issue from September 2001 to December 2006

	N=3570	n	%	Positive (+)	%	Negative (-)	%	Neutral (o)	%
Terrorism		215	6	123	57	13	6	79	37

Table Analysis

Table (b) indicates that in minorities' press, editorials on terrorism were 215(6%), in which 123(57%) were positive, 13(6%) were negative and 79(37%) were neutral.

Table (c)

Analysis of Variance

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	471.590(a)	2	235.795	.568	.571
Intercept	1185.256	1	1185.256	2.857	.100
Type	.000	0	.	.	.
Type_Treat	471.590	2	235.795	.568	.571
Error	14936.154	36	414.893		
Total	16593.000	39			
Corrected Total	15407.744	38			

a R Squared = .031 (Adjusted R Squared = -.023)

Table (c) showed that the newspapers/magazines significantly treat (deal) discussed differently three types of Terrorism issues ( $P < 0.001$ ). Similarly significant differences were not observed among the types of treatments i.e. positive, negative or neutral ( $P > 0.05$ ). This meant that despite of the newspapers/magazine; positive editorials, negative editorials and neutral editorials were published equally on average.

Table (d)

Comparative coverage of all articles of the magazines and newspapers on Terrorism issue from September 2001 to December 2006

Newspapers/Magazines	Frequency (Percentage)	Chi-Square	df.	P-Value
Aftaab	81 (3)	8.824	6	0.184
Christian Voice	31 (3)			
Catholic Naqeeb	14 (6)			
Shadab	7 (6)			
Kalam e Haq	6 (1)			
Al-Mushir	14 (8)			
Daily Al-Fazal	0 (0)			
Khalid	0 (0)			

Ansaar ullah	0 (0)			
Monthly Misbah	0 (0)			
Prem Sagar	0 (0)			
Parsi Sansar n loke sevak	33 (6)			
Monthly Nafahat	0 (0)			

#### Table Analysis

Table (d) indicates that total 20980 articles were published and on Terrorism issue 186(1%) articles were published. Al-Mushir gave maximum coverage to Terrorism issue i.e. 14(8%) articles. Whereas Aftaab published 81(3%), Christian Voice published 31(3%), Catholic Naqeeb published 14(6%), Shadaab published 7(6%), Kalam e Haq published 6(1%) and Parsi Sansaar n loke sevak published 33(6%) articles on issue. However Terrorism issue was unattended by the magazines and newspapers Daily Al-Fazal, Khalid, Ansaar ullah, Monthly Misbah, Prem Sagar and Monthly Nafahat.

Chi-square test was applied to find out the equal distribution of Terrorism Issue among the various newspapers/magazines. The results showed was not significant differences ( $\chi^2 = 8.824$ ,  $df = 6$ ,  $p = 0.184$ ) among the distribution of Terrorism issue by various newspapers/magazines.

#### Table (e)

Total topical direction of the articles in all the magazines and newspapers on Terrorism issue from September 2001 to December 2006

	n	%	Positive (+)	%	Negative (-)	%	Neutral (o)	%
N=20980								
Terrorism	186	1	146	78	19	10	21	11

#### Table Analysis

Table (e) indicates that in minorities' press, articles on terrorism were 189(1%), in which 146 (78%) were positive, 19 (10%) were negative and 21(11%) were neutral.

#### Table (f)

Analysis of Variance

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	814.308(a)	2	407.154	2.720	.079
Intercept	887.077	1	887.077	5.926	.020
Type	.000	0	.	.	.
Type_Treat	814.308	2	407.154	2.720	.079
Error	5388.615	36	149.684		
Total	7090.000	39			
Corrected Total	6202.923	38			

a R Squared = .131 (Adjusted R Squared = .083)

Table (f) showed that the newspapers/magazines significantly treat differently three types of Terrorism issues ( $P < 0.001$ ). Similarly significant differences were not observed among the types of treatments i.e. positive, negative or neutral ( $P > 0.05$ ). This meant that despite of the newspapers/magazine; positive editorials, negative editorials and neutral editorials were published equally on average.

## 6. Discussion

The study shows that the Minorities' Press in Pakistan has showed keen interest in the coverage of the terrorism issue as the time period that was selected for this study was also favorable for this study.

The results show that total 3570 editorials were published and on Terrorism issue 215(6%) editorials were published. Aftaab gave maximum coverage on the Terrorism issue 189(9%) editorials. Whereas Christian Voice published 11(3%), Shadaab published 8(9%), Kalam e Haq published 2(3%) and Al-Mushir 5(8%) editorials on Terrorism issue. However the issue was unattended by the Catholic Naqeeb, Khalid, Ansaar ullah, Monthly Misbah, Prem Sagar and Parsi Sansar and loke sevak. The direction wise results show that in Minorities' Press, editorials on terrorism were 215(6%), in which 123(57%) were positive, 13(6%) were negative and 79(37%) were neutral.

The analysis shows that a greater number of the editorials supports the government stance on war against terrorism, especially the Christian newspapers and among the Christian newspapers Daily Aftaab has shown the highest level of interest on terrorism issue supporting the government stance on war against terrorism. The results also show that the Ahmedi (Qadianis), Hindu, Parsi and Bhai's religion newspapers and magazines have not given any coverage to the terrorism issue in the editorials.

Total 20980 articles were published and on Terrorism issue 186(1%) articles were published. Al-Mushir gave maximum coverage to Terrorism issue i.e. 14(8%) articles. Whereas Aftaab published 81(3%), Christian Voice published 31(3%), Catholic Naqeeb published 14(6%), Shadaab published 7(6%), Kalam e Haq published 6(1%) and Parsi Sansar n loke sevak published 33(6%) articles on issue. However Terrorism issue was unattended by the magazines and newspapers Daily Al-Fazal, Khalid, Ansaar ullah, Monthly Misbah, Prem Sagar and Monthly Nafahat. The direction wise results show that in Minorities' Press, articles on terrorism were 189(1%), in which 146 (78%) were positive, 19 (10%) were negative and 21(11%) were neutral.

Moreover the results shows that total 3570 editorials were published and on Terrorism issue whereas Total 20980 articles were published and on the issue, this shows that the articles coverage was greater in number than the editorials coverage on the terrorism issue.

Through this study we conclude that the Christian newspapers have given greater coverage to the terrorism issue in both the editorials and articles coverage as compared to the other minorities' newspapers and magazines. When we further analyze the coverage of the newspapers and magazines within the Christians press we come to know that Daily Aftaab has given the maximum number of editorials and articles coverage to the terrorism issue.

Just like editorials the analysis shows that a greater number of the articles also supports the government stance on war against terrorism, especially the Christian newspapers and among the Christian newspapers Daily Aftaab has shown the highest level of interest on terrorism issue supporting the government stance on war against terrorism in its articles coverage. The results also show that Parsi newspapers has given coverage to the articles regarding terrorism but the Ahmedi (Qadianis), Hindu and Bhai's religion newspapers and magazines have not given any coverage to the terrorism issue in the articles.

Both the editorials and articles has supported the government stance on war against terrorism in the Minorities' Press, especially the Christian press has strongly favored the stance of the Government of Pakistan in this regard so, the frequency of editorials and articles that support the government stance on war on terror is more than the editorials and articles that oppose and while addressing the terrorism issue in both the editorials and articles, the spirit of nationalist approach is observed.

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