

Coverage of Pak-India Relations in the Elite Press of Pakistan (June 2013-August 2013)

*Zahid Yousaf (PhD)¹ Farish Ullah² Ehtisham Ali³

1. Assistant Professor/Head Centre for Media & Communication Studies, University of Gujrat, Pakistan
*zahid.yousaf@uog.edu.pk
2. Professor/Director Social Sciences, University of Gujrat, Pakistan
3. Associate Lecturer, Centre for Media & Communication Studies, University of Gujrat, Pakistan

Abstract

The present study is focused to determine the coverage of the Pak-India relations in the national press of Pakistan, for this study four newspapers two English (Daily Times and The Nation) and two Urdu (Daily Jang and Nawa i Waqt) are selected to analyse the relations between the two countries. The agenda setting theory is used in this study and the media agenda is tried to determine. The content method is used to study the contents of the editorials of the selected newspapers from June 2013 to August 2013. The study shows that both the English and Urdu newspapers has shown the negative behaviour mostly followed by neutral behaviour whereas very less positive coverage is given for all the selected categories/issues that are Cross Border insurgency, Kashmir issue, Terrorism issue and Water crisis except the Trade, Sports and Showbiz that is given very less negative coverage.

Keywords: national press, Pakistan, India, cross border insurgency, Kashmir, terrorism, water, sports, trade, showbiz

1. Introduction

British India was divided into two separate countries Pakistan and India in 1947 as a part of the decolonization process, in 1971 one wing of Pakistan that was the eastern wing separated from Pakistan and became Bangladesh. Unfortunately both the countries despite being neighbours could never become good friends and always found engaged in conflicts with each other since independence (Kumar, 2012). Pakistan and India both are also sharing common geographic location and the religious demographics as well but the diplomatic relations between both the countries are affected due to the territorial and military conflicts (Arif, 2001). After the independence of Pakistan and India both the countries instead of peace and making progress that was expected by the people of both the countries, the years later brought warfare, fear and frustration (Khan, 2000). Soon after independence Kashmir conflict raised that also became base of the enmity between both Pakistan and India, the state of Jammu and Kashmir is actually a landlocked territory that lies in the north western part of the Indian subcontinent. Kashmir became a disputed territory soon after the partition, the Kashmiri people were mostly Muslims and were actually having their affiliations with Pakistan but the ruler of the Kashmir was a Hindu so he refused to opt for Pakistan (Hussain, 2009). Both the countries were engaged each other in very serious conflicts in 1947, 1965, 1971 and in 1999 when the forces of both the countries were engaged fighting against each other (Kumar, 2012). The relations between Pakistan and India remained more critical during 1999 to 2002 as high level of tensions were there between both the countries particularly due to the Kargil crisis in 1999 and attacks on Indian parliament in 2001 (Kumar, 2012). The better relations between both the countries were observed in mid-2000s but in 2007 due to attack on Samjhota Express that was a friendship train running between Pakistan and India and the Mumbai attacks in 2008 made the circumstances worse again (Bokhari, 2009). In 66 years history of both the countries the major issue between Pakistan and India are the Kashmir issue, water issue and Siachen issue. Despite the issue the major events that created problems between both the countries particularly in the present century are the attacks on Indian parliament, Samjhota Express blasts, Mumbai attacks. India blamed Pakistan for all the events and in 2013 cross border insurgency in recent months has made the conditions more sensitive. As the general elections were held in May 2013 in Pakistan and as result of the elections Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) came into power, the Prime Minister Mian Nawaz Sharif were very positive in making the better relationship between the two countries as he gave various statements that he want better relations with India particularly in trade with India. After he took the oath as Prime Minister the Indian attacks inside the Pakistani territory were increased and civilians were targeted by the Indian forces and some military personals were also died as result of these attacks. This violation by the Indian forces is also a question mark for the Pakistani leadership that was very positive towards the better relations with India.

The current study is focused to find out that how the Pakistani media has covered the Pak-India relations from June 2013 to August 2013. The time period is important to study as the government in Pakistan is changed in June 2013 and the new Prime Minister of Pakistan Mian Nawaz sharif showed positive attitude to make the better relations with India, increasing the trade between both countries and to address the major issues between both India and Pakistan, India also welcomed the Pakistani gestures for bringing peace and harmony between the

two states. At the same time Indian aggressiveness and attacks across the border (Line of Control) that results the killings of the civilians and the army personals were also took place. So, by this study the coverage of the Pak-India relations by the major English and Urdu newspapers is focused that how the editorials of the Pakistani newspapers have covered the Pak-India relations during the selected time period. It is tried to find out that how the major issues between both the countries are addressed by the Pakistani press.

2. Literature Review

Various studies have been conducted by a number of researchers and scholars on the Pak-India relations. Nazir (2005) says that Pakistan India relations have been tensed since very long despite the efforts for the normalization of the relations between both the countries. Ahmed (2004) was of the view that Pakistan and India are living in the globalization age that is adorned with MNCs and communication sophistications so there is the need of cooperation at both regional and international forums especially SAARC that is the organization of regional cooperation. According to Manzoor (2002) the press of Pakistan is very much concerned with the international issues particularly Urdu press that is more concerned than the English press. He further argues that Pakistani press is more free even to criticise the government but patriotism is also there in the Pakistani press. In the study it was determined to find out the attitude of the Pakistani press towards the government's stance that whether it has favoured the government in conflict situation with India.

As well as the trade between both the countries is concerned Ahmed (2004) is concerned that the consumer goods of Pakistan and India are cheaper and quality is better than the goods from the other countries. So, the trade between both the countries is better not only in the interest of both countries but also in the interest of the region as well.

According to Sabir & Rasul (2011) Pakistani elite English press is helpful in the framing of the public opinion regarding the Pakistan's view point on the Kashmir issue and also that Pakistan is interested in peaceful resolution of the conflicts between Pakistan and India particularly the Kashmir issue. He is of the view that the issue should be resolved according to the resolutions of the United Nations and the wishes of the Kashmiri people.

According to Choudhary(1975) Pakistan and India both has analyzed the problem of the Pakistanis and their concerns in its relations that how different factors have affected Pakistan's foreign policy towards India, further he also mentioned that this is most tragic that being neighbours India and Pakistan both consider each other as enemies despite the sharing of a common border, the relations between both the countries is basically charged with the elements such as prejudice' bigotry' religious and nationalistic hostility etc since independence.

Hayat (2001) says that the press of Pakistan and India were infect showing the one sided picture of the issues that is Pakistan favours its government whereas India favours Indian government. The study shows that the media play a very important role in reflecting the government's foreign policy and the media's support is a catalyst in this regard. Mian Nawaz Sahrif's government was criticised by the News on Kargil issue when he went to Washington without proper discussion in the country. Khan (2000) says that the press instead of settling the situation and creating peace and harmony between Pakistan and India worsened the situation. He says that the press can play an important role and it can be vocal to convince the policy makers of their respective countries in addressing the issues. He concluded that the press instead of making the situation better made the conditions worse to bring the neighbours closer to each other. Herman cited in Gul (1998) is of the view that in the situation of conflict between the two countries the press is the source that articulate the government view point and the elite class as well.

According to Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI) Haq (2010) says that people from different walks of life in Pakistan including the journalists, columnists, religious leaders and policymakers have very well articulated their concerns through different forums over the water dispute between Pakistan and India in terms of a very long traditional rivalry against India over the years.

According to Kumar (2012) Pakistan and India could not resolve any issue in the past, he says that Kashmir can become a bridge in resolving the conflicts and reduce the tensions between both the countries and can bring peace. He is of the view that by eliminating the conflicts between both India and Pakistan greater opportunities for trade and development in both the countries may be witnessed.

3. Theoretical Framework

For the study in hand Agenda Setting theory is used, here the theory describes that media sets the agenda on any particular issue. Agenda setting is the notion that the news media by the display of the news, determines the issues that the public actually thinks are important and talks about (Tankard et. al, 1992).

In this study the media agenda is intended to determine in the four national newspapers of Pakistan, the editorial contents of two English and two Urdu newspapers are analysed to find out the coverage of the Pak-India

relations and to check that how Pakistani media sets the agenda regarding the terms between both countries.

4. Methodology

The employed methodology for the current study is content analysis that is a specific research approach used frequently in media studies. According to Yousaf (2012) content analysis is said to be a documentary method that basically aims at both the qualitative and quantitative analysis of the contents. Walizer and Wienir (1978) define content analysis as a systematic procedure that is devised to examine the content of the recorded information. For this study the triangulation method is used that is both the qualitative and quantitative techniques are used. The universe of the study is comprised of the two English newspapers The News and Daily Times and two Urdu newspapers Daily Jang and Nawa i Waqt from June 2013 to August 2013. The unit of analysis is the thing that is actually counted; the unit of analysis selected for this study are the Editorials of the selected newspapers from June 2013 to August 2013.

4.1 Categories and Directions

Categories are made for the current study the following categories are made to find the relation between Pakistan and India during the selected time period.

- A. Cross border insurgency
- B. Kashmir issue
- C. Terrorism issue
- D. Water crisis
- E. Trade, Sports and Showbiz

The editorials regarding the above mentioned categories are treated to check the following directions.

- Positive/Supportive/ Favourable (+)
- Negative/Critical/ Unfavourable (-)
- Neutral (0)

4.2 Conceptualization and Operationalization

Conceptualization is a process of taking concept or construct and refining it by giving it a conceptual and theoretical definition. Conceptual definition is a definition in the abstract and theoretical terms (Newman, 1977). Operationalization is a process of converting concepts into their empirical measurements or of qualifying variables for the purpose of measuring their occurrence, strength and frequency. It is employed when concepts are vague, unclear of the abstract (Sarandakos, 1998).

Categories	Conceptualization	Operationalization
Cross Border insurgency	Indian and Pakistani forces attacks on border between both the countries i.e. opening of fire on civilians as well near the border	Editorials related to the Pak-India border unrest
Kashmir issue	Dispute between Pakistan and India that is the base for India Pakistan conflict since 1948	Editorials related to Indo- Pak relations and Kashmir issue
Terrorism issue	Terrorist activities in both Pakistan and India, blaming each other for terrorism involvement in the rival country	Editorials related to the terrorist activities in both Pakistan and India
Water crisis	Pak-India water crisis and water dispute between both the countries i.e. India's construction of dams and opening of its surplus water into Pakistan that becomes a reason for floods in Pakistan	Editorials on Pak-India water crisis
Sports and Showbiz	Sports include the cricket, hockey and other games played between both Pakistan and India. Showbiz involves the public entertainment in the form of Films, Dramas and Music etc.	Editorials related to the sports and showbiz industry

4.3 Hypotheses

Following hypotheses are formulated for the current study.

- All the selected newspapers (English and Urdu) have covered all the selected categories during selected time period.
- English newspapers give less coverage to Pak-India relations than Urdu newspapers.
- Cross Border insurgency is given more coverage in both English and Urdu newspapers during selected time period.
- Water crisis is given less coverage in both English and Urdu newspapers during selected time period.
- Trade between India and Pakistan has been given positive coverage by both English and Urdu

newspapers.

5. Data Analysis and Interpretation

The following categories are to be analysed for the study in hand where

“A” represents “Cross border insurgency”

“B” represents “Kashmir issue”

“C” represents “Terrorism issue”

“D” represents “Water crisis” and

“E” represents “Trade, Sports and Showbiz”

		Categories															
		A			B			C			D			E			
		+	-	0	+	-	0	+	-	0	+	-	0	+	-	0	Total
Newspapers	Nawa i Waqt	0	5	3	1	1	0	0	2	1	0	2	1	1	0	3	20
	Jang	0	6	3	0	0	1	0	3	2	0	1	2	2	1	2	23
	Daily Times	0	4	2	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	2	0	1	15
	The Nation	0	6	1	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	2	1	2	0	2	18
Total	Direction wise	0	21	9	1	4	2	0	6	6	0	6	5	7	1	8	76
	Category wise	30			7			12			11			16			76
	Grand	76															

The table shows that from June 1, 2013 to August 31, 2013 the total number of editorial published on Pak-India relations are 76. The editorials published in Urdu newspaper Nawa i Waqt are 20 out of which there are 8 editorials are in category “A” i.e. Cross border insurgency no editorial is in positive direction, 5 are in negative whereas 3 are in neutral direction in this category, in category “B” i.e. Kashmir issue there are 2 editorials where 1 each is in negative and neutral directions, in category “C” i.e. Terrorism issue there are 3 editorials out of which 2 are in negative and 1 in positive directions, in category “D” i.e. Water crisis there are 3 editorials where 2 are in negative and 1 in positive directions and in category “E” that is regarding trade, sports and showbiz there are total 3 editorials that are in neutral direction.

In Urdu newspaper daily Jang there are total 23 editorials published during the selected time period, there are 9 editorials in category “A” where no editorial is in positive direction whereas 6 are in negative and 3 in neutral directions, in category “B” there is only one editorial that is in neutral direction, in category “C” there are 5 editorials out of which no editorial is in positive where as 3 are in negative and 2 in neutral directions respectively, in category “D” there are 3 editorials where 1 is in negative and 2 are in neutral directions and in category “E” there are 5 editorials in which 2 are in positive, 1 in negative and 2 are in neutral directions respectively.

In English newspaper Daily Times there are total 15 editorials published during selected time period. In category “A” there are 6 editorials out of which no editorial is in positive, 4 are in negative and 2 are in neutral directions; in category “B” there are only 2 editorials 1 each in negative and neutral directions; in category “C” there are only two editorials that too in neutral direction; in category “D” there are 3 editorials 1 in negative and 2 in neutral directions and in category “E” there are 4 editorials 2 are in positive, 0 in negative and 2 in neutral direction.

In English newspaper The Nation there are total 18 editorials published during the selected time period. In category “A” there are 7 editorial in which 6 are in negative and 1 is in positive direction; in category “B” there are only two editorials that are in negative direction; in category “C” there are only 2 editorials that are in neutral direction; in category “D” there are 3 editorials in which 2 are in negative and 1 is in neutral direction and in category “E” there are 4 editorials in which 2 are in positive, no one in negative and 2 in neutral directions.

The overall results show that there are total 76 editorials from June 1, 2013 to August 31, 2013. In category “A” there are total 30 editorials, no editorial is in positive directions in all the selected newspapers, 21 editorials are in negative direction and 9 editorials are in neutral direction; in category “B” there are 7 editorials out of which 1 is in positive, 4 in negative and 2 are in neutral directions respectively; in category “C” there are 12 editorials out of which no editorial is in positive whereas 6 each in negative and neutral directions; in category “D” there are 11 editorials where no editorial is in positive, 6 are in negative and 5 are in neutral directions and in category “E”

there are 16 editorials in which 7 are in positive, 1 is in negative and 8 are in neutral direction.

6. Discussion

The study “Coverage of the Pak- India Relations in the National Press of Pakistan (May 2013 to August 2013)” was focused to determine the coverage of the relations between Pakistan and India in the national press of Pakistan, for this study four newspapers two English newspapers that are Daily Times and The Nation were taken and two Urdu newspapers Daily Jang and Nawa i Waqt were selected to analyse the relations between the two countries. The agenda setting theory was used and the media agenda was tried determined. The content analysis method was used to study the contents of the editorials of the selected newspapers from June 2013 to August 2013. The study showed that both the English and Urdu newspapers of Pakistan had shown the negative behaviour mostly in all the selected categories that were selected for the study followed by neutral behaviour whereas very less positive coverage was given for all the selected issues that are Cross Border insurgency, Kashmir issue, Terrorism issue and Water crisis. In all these categories very less positive coverage was given as due to Pak-India conflicts and rivalry between both the states, Pakistani press also showed patriotism in portraying the issues and showed mostly negative behaviour in the major conflicts between Pakistan and India. The positive coverage is only given to the category related to the Trade, Sports and Showbiz where a little bit positive behaviour was observed by the media from Indian side towards Pakistan. The overall study shows that Pakistani media has covered all the issues keeping the Indian response in front regarding the selected issues. On the basis of the findings of the study we can analyse that Pakistani media has shown maturity while addressing the issues and also showed patriotism while covering the Pak-India relations.

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