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The role of media in Indo-Pak relations and its implications for India's security

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Abstract

In the era of globalization and inter-dependence, the world is facing multi-facet threats wherein nations are at the stake of the responder. The rising traditional and non-traditional threats are not only affecting the security perspective but the rising role of media or social houses of information are also an addition in building opinions and ideology. The role of media reflects the well-defined differences of its people and thoughts by supporting and serving two types of media trench and audience: the English language media and the non-English language media, including various newspapers, magazines, and television channels, thereby upholding the difference in expression and aspects of its multi-cultural population. Therefore, media remain an important component. Mass media often plays a key role in today's conflict. Their role can take two different forms. Either the media takes an active part in the conflict and has responsibility for expanded violence, or stays independent and out of the conflict. Pakistan and India have been opponents to each other since their independence. Besides having shared borders, both the countries have several things common to share; like religion, culture, language, and holy places in either country. Media plays an important role in conveying information, forming opinions, and setting trends. It even affects social behaviour. The media's role in influencing national and international public opinion through coverage of worldwide events has very great in size in today's ever more connected world. Media is greatly promoting trade, business, and cultural activities across the globe. Similarly, it can also help to calm relations between Pakistan and India. This paper will focus on how can media bring melodiousness and calm the relations between Pakistan and India by highlighting commonalities among both countries. Media can be an enemy or can befriend both the nation's security and its implications for India's security.

Keywords: Role of media into Indo-Pak relations, Indian media's views, Pakistan media's views and international media's views and its impact on India's security

Introduction

Media includes every broadcasting and narrowcasting media such as newspapers, magazines, tv, radio, billboards, direct mail, telephone, fax, and internet. Media is a powerful tool for any nation to know about all the facts and also spread awareness among its people. Media plays a significant role in keeping everyone updated about the various events around the world. Today, we can check out the latest news and current affairs anywhere anytime with just a few clicks of a mouse or by simply switching on the radio or television, apart from glancing at the newspaper every morning! ^[1] Media is the plural form for medium and involves the collective communication sources or mediums including television, radio, newspapers, internet, social media sites, and various relevant sites and blogs. The main purpose of media is to disseminate information and knowledge. The word 'media' is derived from the word medium, signifying mode, or carrier. Media is intended to reach and address a large target group or audience. In today's world, media becomes as essential as our daily needs. Media is the sword arm of democracy. As the fourth pillar of democracy along with the judiciary, executive, and legislature, the media of today is a powerful role to act against the injustice, oppression, misdeeds, and partiality of our society ^[2].

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¹ Sehba. (2016, October 6). Meaning and Importance of Media. Retrieved from <http://www.importantindia.com>

² Jayasree roy. (2015, February 13). Role of media in our society. Retrieved from <http://www.globalethicsnetwork.org>

Media coverage on national issues

The Partition of India in 1947 created two large countries independent from Britain: Pakistan as two wings in the East and West separated by India in the middle. Soon after Independence, a great number of conflicts emerged between India and Pakistan. Kashmir dispute is the biggest preparation of argument between the two countries. Being the largely Muslim-dominated area it should have been included in Pakistan but India got its control against the will of the people. The problem is still unresolved even after 70 years. The two countries fought several wars including the war of 1965 and 1971, and the Kargil conflict in 1999.

As a result of the 1971 war, the eastern part of Pakistan was separated. It was all because of the Indian intervention and conspiracies against Pakistan. In the war, the Pakistani army fell to India, forcing the independence of East Pakistan, which separated and became Bangladesh. Since the 1971 war, Pakistan and India have made only slow progress towards the normalization of relations. In July 1972, Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and Pakistani President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto met in India. They signed the Simla Agreement, by which India would return all Pakistani personnel (over 90,000) and captured territory in the west, and the two countries would “settle their differences by peaceful means through bilateral negotiations.” India and Pakistan have a very peculiar relationship, which oscillates between peace hiatuses and discord continuity. This particular relationship is, by far, the most crucial in the entire compass of India's foreign relations.

This communication process was highly formal, institutional, slow, and usually protected with confidentiality. But now, international communication has assumed a new avatar, impacting conflict negotiation between States. With instant communication around the world, the diplomat's role has become intertwined with the media influence on public opinion. Social media, the new kid on the block, is a rage with youngsters in India and Pakistan, who find it convenient to transcend geographical barriers and social differences to spread their ideas with accelerated effect. It overcomes almost all the shortcomings the broadcast media suffers from.

Cinema and TV Serials Commercial cinema has been an effective weapon in fighting not only deep-seated prejudices between India and Pakistan but also has enthused the people to bring about a radical transformation of society. It discards some of the clichés that have succeeded in obscuring the realities of our one-time affection. It also is one of the most effective underpinnings of soft power, which stems not only from its cultural influence but also more importantly from the audiences' effective investment in the images of identity that it produces. Audiences in both countries watch Bollywood movies.

Conflict is not the only interaction between India and Pakistan. We are just like neighbours who might quarrel but always feel proud of the shared similarities we enjoy. Both nations are passionate about Cricket. Our ingenuity and affinity for art are displayed on our trucks, which is the popular form of indigenous art for both countries. Our marketplaces are a reflection of our colourful lives.

The media have played a role in shaping foreign policy. The Lahore Declaration in 1999, against the backdrop of the Pokhran II and Chagai-I and II, was an example of how the media was used to shape public sentiment. In both countries, the media went euphoric at this “show of strength”. Outside pressure from America was stronger on India which was

held to have initiated the regional nuclearisation process. Pakistan too was censored. Some commentators have seen in this the genesis of the Lahore summit. Both Governments, which were valorized by their respective media for having gone nuclear, though it would be useful for both governments to deflect external criticism by demonstrating that they were committed to peace and good relations^[3].

Foreign Secretary-level talks between India and Pakistan have rekindled hope that the dialogue process would soon be taken up to a higher level. However, popular support from the people of both countries is required for the high-level talks to show results and normalize the relationship. Here media, especially Pakistan's vernacular press, can play a crucial role. In the past, a section of Pakistan's Urdu media had initiated a campaign to malign India and construct a negative image about it. Keeping this fact in mind, both the Foreign Secretaries in their joint statement have stressed the need for “cessation of hostile propaganda against each other.”

The Nawa-e-Waqt Urdu daily in its editorial has initiated a sustained campaign against the restoration of the dialogue process and for using military means to resolve the issues of Kashmir and water disputes with India. It terms India as Azli Dushman or “day-one enemy”.

This kind of thinking which Nawa-e-Waqt is trying to instil in Pakistani minds will certainly not help in normalizing ties, especially when both countries are discussing various nuclear and conventional confidence-building measures (CBMs) and ways to strengthen arrangements “to build trust and confidence and promote peace and security.”

The Daily Times, in its editorial, opines that “the Indo-Pak nuclear equation is far more dangerous than that of the Cold War. There is a very little reaction and/or verification time to ensure mistakes are not made. However, the influence of this kind of thinking in Pakistan upon the anti-India propaganda unleashed by some of the Urdu dailies is doubtful. The readership of Pakistani English dailies is limited as compared to the Urdu dailies. The stance of Jang Urdu Daily, which a year back launched the Aman Ki Asha campaign to generate a desire for peace, has been disappointing. The daily says in its editorial that India has “made the Kashmir issue a mockery. Whenever it wants, it refuses to hold talks and starts repeating that Kashmir is its integral part.

While some Pakistani Urdu dailies continue to focus on the Kashmir issue in the Indo-Pak talks, some saner voices in Pakistan believe that “Kashmir would no longer be a hurdle” in the normalization of relations between the two neighbours. There is a growing realization in Pakistan that the confrontational approach towards India has led to economic backwardness in the country.

Kashmir Issue and Operation Black Tornado

Kashmir is the flashpoint between Indo-Pak conflicts. The issue was started after the birth of India and Pakistan when Maharaja Hari Sing annexed its state with India and passed the desire of Muslims. They wanted to accede with Pakistan but Maharaja Hari Sing signed an agreement with India. In response, India offered military aid to Maharaja Hari Sing. Kashmir dispute between them has become an intractable one. They fought two wars on the Kashmir issue in 1947,

³ Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency. (2016). *Role of Media in India Pakistan Relations*.

1965, and the Kargil conflict in 1999, but unable to resolve it. The Indians and Pakistanis claimed that Kashmir is their territory. Pakistan and India tried many times to come closer to each other but every time some kind of hindrances would occur between peace processes. Mumbai attacks were the event that created a gap between India and Pakistan Peace Bridge.

Pakistan has asked for the continuation of dialogue to restart the peace process but India refused. According to Wade, a Pakistani official claimed that 5366 civilians have been killed and 13000 seriously injured in a terrorist incident in Pakistan. Pakistan had clear evidence of the connection of India in terrorist activities in Pakistan, though furnish or funds and artillery to the militant groups^[4].

The media's role in influencing national and international public opinion through round the clock coverage of worldwide events has grown immensely in today's ever more connected world. This phenomenon has led the media practitioners to play an even greater role in influencing high-level international decision making. It can also help to curb social evils prevailing in society. Media is greatly promoting trade, business and cultural activities across the globe. Similarly, it can also help harmonize relations between Pakistan and India. South Asian Free Media Association and Jang Group of Pakistan and Times of India are the media organizations working for the promotion of understanding between India and Pakistan to maintain durable peace and tranquillity in South Asia. Nothing stops Pakistani people from meeting Indian people like the national frontier, and nothing destroys the national frontier like free trade, people to people contact and easing of tensions. Role of Media in Resumption of Peace Talks between Pakistan and India between both the countries.

The recent marriage of top athletes of India and Pakistan in the positive perspective and jubilation expressed at the public at large in this regard in both electronic and print media can also press the two sides for the promotion of peace. Furthermore, common people should be made aware through the massive and positive use that terrorist groups operating in Pakistan and India are taking advantage of the Indo-Pak rivalry and causing more and more complications and problems in the relations of the two countries^[5].

On November 26, 2008, terrorists mounted multiple attacks on Mumbai, resulting in arguably the worst terrorist incident in the history of India. According to the analysis of B. Raman, a former head of the Counterterrorism Division of the Research & Analysis Wing (R&AW) in India, the Mumbai terror attack was "the first mass-casualty terrorism against innocent civilians, using handheld weapons" in India (Indian Ministry of External Affairs 2009). His analysis implies that the use of hand-held weapons in the Mumbai terror incident enabled the attackers to convey their political agenda through the mainstream media. He argues that, given the preference of traditional anti-Indian terrorists for "timed or remotely controlled improvised explosive devices (IEDs)," the exploitation of hand-held weapons against civilians is indicative of a tactical shift in terrorist strategy - IEDs tend to rain indiscriminate blows on target areas in a short period such that it is not effective enough to send their messages about whom they intend to kill for what political

⁴ Hussain I. (2015). News Framing on Indo-Pak Conflicts in the News (Pakistan) and Times of India: War and Peace Journalism Perspective.

⁵ Muhammad Akram. (2010). Role of media in resumption of peace talks between Pakistan and India.

agenda.

Mumbai terror in terms of the interpreter dynamics of (1) communication media including TV and Web, (2) attackers' frequent monitoring of live media and Web and collection of situation information and, (3) use of the collected situation information for opportunistic decision making in terrorist action.

Role of Media on India-Pakistan relations

Media can be sometimes positive and sometimes negative towards a situation. Media is playing an important role in Indo-Pak relations. As the whole world knows about them that both nations never share their boundary. So here is media playing a clever role to make them happy or sometimes make them confuse about the war-like situation.



However, both have also made efforts for dialogue and Confidence Building Measures (CBMs). Although there were some developments in trade, contentious issues such as Kashmir, Siachen and water etc. still not solved by both nations nor international organizations working on it in every war between India and Pakistan no country helped India besides Israel, it is the only nation who helped India with the latest technology against Pakistan^[6].

Geography is a major role in Pak-India relations and added to the conflict. The territorial disputes with India over Kashmir, Siachen, Sir Creek and water issues have created security concerns for Pakistan since its establishment. India, given its larger geographical size, has more resources and access to water that can be utilised at any time against Pakistan. The most recent example is Indian aggression on the 18th September 2016 Uri attack, India cancelled its participation in the 19th SAARC summit to be held in November in Islamabad, Pakistan. Pakistan also claimed that India has been perpetrating and financing terrorism in Pakistan. Pakistan captures Indian national Kulbhushan

⁶ Aymen Ijaz. (2017). Pakistan-India Relations under Prime Minister Modi's Government (2014-16). *Journal of Current Affairs*, 2 (1), 1-94. Retrieved from <http://www.ipripak.org>

Yadav for espionage and accused India of violating international laws by interfering inside Pakistan. After the Uri attack, the Indian Motion Picture Producers Association (IMPPA) decided to ban all Pakistani actors, actresses and technicians working in India till the situation gets normal. Indian TV entertainment channel, Zindagi announced the discontinuation of showcasing Pakistani TV shows on the channel. Like India, Pakistan also bans all Indian television and radio programming in Pakistan.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) also tell the International Cricket Council (ICC) to not group Indian and Pakistan cricket teams together in international tournaments, keeping in mind border tensions between the two countries. The geopolitical position of Pakistan is a huge hindrance in India's potential to reach out to European nations and central Asian nations and thus has a proportional influence on India's power aspirations.

India's foreign policy under Modi is to focus on building the capabilities of its Armed Forces by using advanced technology, maximising its indigenous defence production and purchasing high-quality defence equipment and weapons. For the edge-cutting technology, India has signed many joint ventures with the US, Russia and Israel. India also feels that the development of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and even the 21st Century Maritime Silk Route harm its economic and purposeful interests in South Asia as it would strengthen Sino-Pak relations and also improve Pakistan's geostrategic and economic position. Pakistan and India, the two largest nations of South Asia are always in a war-like situation from the day of their separation. Few wars have been fought between the two countries. But still, they want to solve their problem peacefully and their efforts have been made for good bilateral relations. Both countries spend a huge budget on defence which could be otherwise utilized for the better life of their people. Pakistani media has played a great role in establishing bilateral relations between the two countries [7].

In the South Asia region both nations are connected with several political, geographic, cultural, and economic associations like SAARC, SCO, Common-Wealth of Nations, G24, G77, FAO, ECO, IAEA, NAM, UN, UNESCO, UNHCR, WTO, WHO, IMF etc. On the other hand, diplomatic relations between the two states are distinct by various military conflicts and territorial disputes. Historically, approximately the whole geographic area of the two countries came under the direct control of Britain in the late 18th century and remained its part for almost 150 years. The common population of this region were either Hindu or Muslim. The Muslim League, headed by Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, proposed the Two-Nation Theory in the early 20th century. According to the theory, Muslims and others shared little in common, and British India divided into two separate countries, one for the Muslims and the other for the Hindu majority. The trend of peace and war journalism is a worldwide phenomenon and no one can deny its importance regarding peace and conflicts. The news media is an important source of information about current events and can play a vital role in influencing public opinion. Ross pointed out that media can play a critical role in international dealings and conflicts because citizens are heavily dependent on media to provide

timely, trustworthy information of remote events. This dependency on news arises because citizens do not any other source of information or the capability to attain first-hand information about remote events and conflicts; they have to rely on media coverage. Since its independence in 1947, India has been facing the problem of terrorism in different parts of the country. India has faced terrorist movements in Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir, bordering Pakistan and northeast and also in certain states like Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa.

Mumbai terror attack as the major incident

The 2008 Mumbai attacks were a series of coordinated terrorist attacks across Mumbai, India's financial capital and its largest city. At least 160 people were killed and at least 308 were injured in the attacks. Eight attacks occurred in South Mumbai: at Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus, the Oberoi Trident, the Taj Mahal Palace and Tower, Leopold Cafe, Cama Hospital, the Orthodox Jewish-owned Nariman House, the Metro Cinema and a lane behind the Times of India building behind St. Xavier's College, an explosion at the Mazagaon docks in Mumbai's port area and a taxi blast at Vile Parle. Media coverage highlighted the use of new media and Internet social networking tools, including 'Twitter' and 'Flickr', in spreading information about the attacks, observing that Internet coverage was often ahead of more traditional media sources. Besides the immediate impact on the victims and their families, the attacks caused widespread anger among the Indian public and condemnation throughout the world.

International reporting on India-Pakistan relations

A new and significant dimension of this old pattern is India's growing closeness to the US and Pakistan's estrangement from the latter. Meanwhile, India has also incorporated the Baloch separatist leaders and Afghanistan in its orbit to increase pressure on Pakistan. Truth is the first casualty of war: following the Uri attack, we may never know conclusively whether the attackers came from the LOC or Indian-Occupied Kashmir. Moreover, it is questionable whether the attack was India's false flag operation to divert international attention, ahead of the United Nations General Assembly session; from being a perpetrator of state violence to a victim of terrorism; or whether the attackers came from one of the Kashmiri militant groups. The truth will be lost in the war of allegations and counter-allegations between India and Pakistan. However, what is certain is that New Delhi's bid to hide its state oppression against the Kashmiris under the accusations of cross-border terrorism will not change the ground reality. In the last two months, the killings of Muzaffar Wani and 84 other Kashmiris by the Indian forces to suppress the anti-India protests have provoked the Kashmir movement. Similarly, Pakistan's reluctance to act against terrorist networks of all hues and colours indiscriminately will not help in its efforts to force India to open negotiations on the subject of Kashmir.

Media and its implications for India's security concerns-

Apart from the relevance and acceptance of the Indian media as an entity in the maintenance of governance in the country in the current security environment, India's media continues to remain unique because of the culturally diverse nature of the country. On the one hand, India is politically and technologically advanced, upholding its strength in the

⁷ Dr. Saqib Riaz, & Saadia Anwar Pasha. (2010). INDO-PAK Relations and Pakistani Media.

economy, democracy, and culture, and on the other hand, the majority of India remains a developing country with strong religious and conservative patriarchal systems isolated from the ideologies and advancements of modern and technological life. In the contemporary strategic environment, media and the Government have a very strong and symbiotic relationship, which is believed to be evolving as even political actors have started working in the environment set or prescribed by the media for undertaking their duties. Thus, not only are the perceptions of the public set by the media in this modern world, but also that of the authorities and leaders, which in turn help them to set up policies in tune with the demands of the people. In August 1999, Pakistan Navy's Naval Air Arm Breguet Atlantique patrol plane was shot down by the Indian Air force for violating Indian air space as it was flying close to the Indian border off the Rann of Kutch in Gujarat.

The issue flared tensions between the two countries as the Kargil War had just ended, and there was a destabilisation of ongoing peace negotiations between India and Pakistan. Though claims were rebuked by the Pakistani authorities as to the part of a training mission, questions were raised as to why the plane was flying so close to the international border between the two nations. Pakistan even took the issue to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for resolution, as it condemned the shooting down of its plane by the Indian Air force. However, the Indian media's support for its country and the timely information that is provided to the domestic and international audience, helped not only the Indian public but also the foreign media grasp the ground situation, which in turn, influenced the judgment of the ICJ. Similarly, but in different circumstances, the Indian media was also used by the Government as a tool to rightly inform and replace misinformation that could have hampered India's relations with its neighbouring countries mainly Pakistan. The editors and journalists of media organisations in India were called upon by military and Government officials where they were shown the details of the plane and were requested to convince the national audience that the radar picked up the signal of an Indian plane and that they help diminish any claims of outside intervention. The Mumbai incident is also a prime example, which proved a great need for responsible media. The idea behind the terrorists attack in Mumbai was mainly to create fear in the minds of the people as well as to topple the name of India in the foreign minds affecting the booming economy and tourism of the country. Media in the name of giving full coverage freely advertised the needs of terrorists and sowed fear in the minds of people, satisfying the terrorist's need, which will encourage them to further take some terrorist activities. Most of the stories given by the newspapers are negative stories that sensationalized the issue and created fear among people and made them feel insecure. Apart from this the full coverage of the actions and plans taken by the security forces covered fully by electronic media, helped the terrorist to navigate the mission accordingly.

The role of the media during war or crises is being understood not only to protect the developing activities in a particular area but to offer a comprehensive picture encompassing all policies of the State, helping the whole nation get engaged with the Government and the military in the economic, scientific, political and social aspects of policymaking. In the 21st century, the States need to deal with other States and a variety of supranational and Non-State actors. The media can bring the people close and

create harmony between two nations. The media of both countries can play an effective role by objectively presenting the news and not playing with and lighting the people's emotions. Pakistan and India should start educational ties and offer scholarships for the students of each country and should invite the scholars to come and visit each other and do researches on common interests. There should be cultural exchange programs between India and Pakistan. The artists should be allowed to freely work in each other's TV programs and films and there should be no ban on telecasting each other's programs in both countries. The Indian Cultural Center should be established within Pakistan and Pakistan's Cultural Center in India to bring the people together by understanding each other's customs, traditions and values. Pakistan should invite and take help from the filmmakers and singers of India to boost its film industry. There should be an inter-cultural dialogue between the activists, students, writers, scholars, historians to promote peace and harmony between the two nations. Trade shall certainly bring the two countries together but visa for a common man to visit one's families and meet a common man in the two countries should also be relaxed. Cricket should be used to create a congenial atmosphere between people of two nations and the leadership should show respect and tolerance towards the defeated side of the country to promote peace in the region.

Conclusion

Nothing stops Pakistani people from meeting Indian people like the national frontier, and nothing destroys the national frontier like free trade, people to people contact and easing of tensions between both the countries. The time has come when both the nations would have to set aside their differences for the sake of the prosperity and security of their people. No nation can think positive without having peace of mind. The media should also pay homage to common heroes of freedom like Bhagat Singh, as it is our joint legacy. Likewise, religious tourism can be promoted between Islamabad and New Delhi. Hindus also have their sacred temples in Pakistan. Urdu and Hindi – national languages of Pakistan and India, respectively, virtually sound similar, becoming understandable for people of the two countries; though there are written differently. This can help bridge the communication gap between the two nations. In this way, the media can prove the fact that Indo-Pak rivalry is considered artificial. A few decades ago, this statement would not stand true. But now, with the global and advanced nature of the media, this would seem plausible. Any terrorist event happening in any part of the world receives global attention within minutes of its occurrence taking the November 2008 Mumbai Attacks and the Kuwait Mosque Attack of 2015, we have aimed to draw a comparison on how International Media reacts to two different terrorist activities in two different parts of the World. Media plays a huge role in times of terrorist attacks. Terrorists use media to communicate with their followers, recruit new candidates and publicise their actions. It has been seen that the extensive presence of the media can hamper the situation. Many times they obstruct the authorities. As seen in the 26/11 attacks, it was because of the media that the attackers inside the Taj Hotel received the news of the main dome catching fire which was detrimental to the rescue operations of the government. Sometimes, the incorrect information provided by the media caused panic, which is harmful to those sitting at home and waiting for

news of their loved ones caught in the attack.

Bio Note

Urmila (Author) at present Urmila is pursuing her Ph.D. under the supervision of Dr. Jaskaran Waraich in the Department of defence and national security studies at Panjab University, Chandigarh. She completed her master degree in 2015 with first division from the same university. She has been awarded University Research Fellowship for her PhD and the area of her interest lies in the field of India-Israel strategic relations. She has attended as well as presented research papers in various National. She was awarded first prize for the best paper presentation in the “Seventh Chandigarh Social Science Congress-VII (CHASSCONG)” held at Panjab University, Chandigarh.

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