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Is news all about politics?

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Abstract

News covers information on all aspects of society that are worthy of publication, following a strict observance of the media's social responsibility. However, in recent times, these general-interest newspapers have become narrow-spectrum in their interest. This study seeks to ascertain the level of coverage of different issues in general-interest newspapers and compare it with political news; the reason for the possible slant and the impact on the audience and society in Nigeria. The research employs the explanatory mixed method, using content analysis of two newspapers- *Guardian* and *Daily Sun*, interviews of experts and surveys of readers. The findings show that out of 2862 news articles 644 were related to politics. The survey methods affirmed the restive situation in the country as one of the major reasons for high coverage, adding that the increasing reports on politics have crippled the awareness to the needs of other aspects of the society but has sensitized the Nigerian society to the occurrences in leadership positions.

Key words: *News, Politics, Nigeria*

Introduction

"At the beginning, mass media (newspaper) was society's primary instrument of mass communication and till today it is the log book of human affairs more than any other means of communication." (Hynds as cited in Daramola, 2003, p.120). Bako (2000, p.54) as cited in Omenugha and Oji (2008) further explains this, "the average

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Nigerian regards whatever emanates from the press as the 'gospel' truth, which he swallows hook, line and sinker. For any reader, it would be difficult to convince him not to believe what they read in the papers. Not even when an apology is made for an incorrect publication could such a reader be convinced..." This shows the place of the mass media (especially the newspaper) in Nigeria. In such a developing country with a renascent democracy, the press is believed to be the voice of society, the watchdog of the government and the bridge between the government and the governed. Brown and Udomisor (2015) added that the press plays the key role of midwife in the facilitation of communication in the society. This role is pivotal to the sustainability of society as it facilitates economic, cultural, social and political growth, through information dissemination, education, entertainment and mobilization.

Even the Nigerian 1999 Constitution reiterates this responsibility when it states in section 22 that "the press, radio, television and other agencies of the mass media shall at all times be free to uphold the fundamental objectives contained in this chapter and uphold the responsibility and accountability of the government to the people" (Okoro&Okolie 2004, p.59). As a result, Ndolo (2006) asserts that it is the job of all the news media to tell people what is going on in their community- locally, nationally or globally. According to Ebo (1998, p.14), in respect to this responsibility, the mass media should serve as a forum for the exchange of ideas, comments, even criticism (in features, health, politics, science and technology, crime, arts and culture, women affairs etc.), as well as, give a balanced viewpoint of the constituent groups in society.

Then, why has there been a steady rise in the reportage and assessment of the political aspect of the country to the detriment of other aspects of the society? A glance at the TV during news hour or the headlines on the newspapers screams one theme: politics. Addressing this issue, Golding and Elliot (1979) as cited in Oso (1991) remarks that the origin of the press in Nigeria is enmeshed as an organ of political agitation. And so, this legacy has continued to influence the practices and outlook of the Nigerian press. They were not wrong.

So, is news only news about politics? With the reports on politics swallowing up a lot of 'eye-time', what is the frequency of political news reportage as compared to other sector's coverage? What are the reasons for the imbalance of reports? What are the influences of these overt political scoops on the audience and society? This research is an attempt to understand the dynamics involved in framing news as only news about politics.

This study employs two research designs- content analysis and survey. Content analysis is limited to the manifest content of the two Nigerian newspapers- *The Guardian*, common amongst the elites, and *Daily Sun*, common amongst the masses. The survey, though covering Nigeria, is limited to the South-East region of Nigeria where responses from newspaper readers and news analysts are collated.

News and society

It is impossible for most people today to imagine a morning without the radio or television news, magazines or newspapers. The day begins for most people with the news- the reporters' voice is the voice

they hear every morning and possibly the last one they hear before retiring to bed at night (Agbese, 2007). News has become part of our daily public and private lives. Its powers lie in the public's dependence on it. It has singularly succeeded in making itself indispensable to modern societies. Its power, its reach and its influence are immense. Melvin Mencher puts it beautifully:

The public has come to depend on the reporter. Without him to report the news, much of the world would be ignorant of events in and around them. It may sound common but think for a moment why people queue up in the morning to buy newspapers (or magazines). They all want to know what is happening or likely to happen in their immediate environment, their countries and other part of the world. They trust the reporter to tell them truthfully. They depend on him. Without him, their world would not be the same fire, flood, accident.

All societies need the reporter not usually for what he is but for what he does. Information is power. News is information; therefore, news is power. Former Nigerian President, AlhajiShehuShagari, decided to stop reading Nigerian newspapers and magazines in order to "enjoy the peace of mind" that he had "longed for all his life".Shagari was overthrown in a military coup only four months after his second four-year term as president. The military detained him for a long stretch. In confinement, he watched the press gloat over his fall from power and blamed him for everything that went wrong in the country. He did not find this funny, hence his decision to put a comfortable distance between himself and Nigerian

newspapers and magazines (Agbese, 2007).

A far cry from the days of the town-crier and the village gossip, news today is illimitable and is rather global in its dissemination, in its bid to satisfy a teeming public hunger for information. It has become an integral part of the morning rituals in modern society.

Categories of news

Every news story is built on reality and reporters today reduce the complex world to a limited number of categories to simplify surveillance of the facts that go into news stories. According to Fenton (1954), "one important set of category is the somewhat natural division of geographic territories." This means that news is covered based on activities or situations that are local, regional, national or international. Hence, division of labor in news organizations came as a result of different subject matters and degrees of interest emanating from the various segments of population in these different categories. This entails that news stories are usually divided based on different grounds. Fenton made his news division based on geographical territories- local, regional, national and international news stories. Ernest Hemingway (1976, p.212-216) states his distinction judging from the event and how it is reported. He listed the concept of hard news: "emphasizes fresh happenings as they occur;" soft news: focuses on situations, people or events that have "human interest."

However, Shoemaker (1996) expanded Hemingway's division and placed a lid on the cover when she subdivided hard news into: politics, economics, crime, war and disasters, certain aspects of law, science and technology while she explained soft news as "sometimes referred to in a derogatory fashion as infotainment and Arts and

entertainment, sports, lifestyles, sporting matches, art exhibits, and so on.”

Okunna (1999) divided news (medium) along general-interest and special-interest lines. In this study, all the newspapers are general-interest. General-interest, according to her, refers to a wide variety of reading materials that are intended for a majority of the public. These include entertainment, opinion, news (various kinds), interpretation etc. Following this backdrop, it is an anomaly to see the so-called general interest papers projecting predominantly one aspect of news (politics). This study would be used to find the reason(s) behind the increase of political news reports in Nigeria (to the detriment of other aspects).

But first, what is political news? Political news is the publication bordering on political information passed on to whom it may concern by those assigned or who assume such responsibility, usually between the government and the citizenry. As Almond (quoted by Wiseman, 1966) notes, it may be, “manifest or latent, specific or diffuse, particularistic or generalistic, affectively neutral or affective. But all that it seeks to achieve is political support which leads to stability and growth of the political system.” Indeed, it could be said that political communication is for development, albeit political. Following this, it is dared to believe that political development is a desideratum for human development. However, this doesn’t make other sectors unimportant. Nwabueze (2011) saw this coming when he specifically explained the significance of reporting other sectors of society. This shows a rather responsible press.

Social responsibility of the Nigerian press

One of the duties of the press to the public is “be responsible for the presentation and clarification of the goals and values of the society. The press whether it wishes to do so or not can clarify the ideas of society as it reports the failing and achievements of everyday” (Ukonu, 2007). The press should engage in reporting all forces that promote and militate against the goals of society. They shouldn’t be one-sided for profitability. No doubt the newspaper is a business that must make profit to subsist. Still, it has a social mission it must carry out. Essentially, it must educate, entertain, advocate, and mobilize on all aspects of the society. Yet, how would these things be attainable in the Nigerian society, with media organizations, especially the newspaper, housing a tilting majority of their coverage to political news?

Power of the Press

The power of the press cannot be overemphasized. In Nigeria, it has championed the nationalist movements of the 1940s; it was the voice that compelled soldiers to stand their ground during the Nigeria-Biafra war of the 1960s; it saw to the toppling of governments such as Shehu Shagari’s during the 1980s; it brought military regimes to its knees during the 1980s and 1990s which brought about the murder and incarceration of good journalists like Dele Giwa, NdukaIrabor, Ken T SaroWiwa, Tunde Thompson etc. The Nigerian government saw this power and during that period brought different measures to gag the press such as military decrees that restricts press freedom, clamping down of press stations, undue imprisonment of pressmen,

retroactive laws enacted to victimize pressmen, monopoly of the electronic media etc.

The powers of the press have resonated from just mere information to agenda-setting and then opinion-molding. Cohen (1963) understood these powers when he said "the press is significantly more than a purveyor of information and opinion..." (p.13). Most of the decisions people take are from the commentaries of the press men especially in a slow, education-budding society as Nigeria where the vast majority is ignorant and somewhat clueless. The press is not just seen as a purveyor of information but also a carrier of decision.

Batta, Ashong & Bashir (2013) while quoting a BBC report (2008) on media reporting of climate change and its influence on the audience acknowledged this power of the press when they said "people in Nigeria mainly acquire information on climate change from the media and schools. However, there is a knowledge deficit in the media, making audience education ineffective." This conclusion draws a picture of the media as a final source of information in the Nigerian society and decision-making. Therefore, in case of lack of adequate knowledge from the media, there is an obvious deficit in the people's full comprehension of climate change and the environment is paying dearly for it. However, what happens when there is over-reportage of a sector of the society? Imagine its influence on the audience and ripple effect on the society to the detriment of other sectors of the society.

Olayiwola (1991) and Oso (2012) listed certain factors that might have influenced this increased rate of political reportage. According

to them, the Nigerian mass media system has developed within the dynamics of the country's political economy. "Almost all the existing newspapers are now part of some business conglomerates." These conglomerates are either directly or indirectly affiliated to a party, for example, Orji UzorKalu of *Sun Newspapers* is a PDP member, Bola Ahmed Tinubu of *The Nation* is in APC, Gbenga Daniel of *Compass* is in PDP, James Ibori for *Daily Independent* is for PDP, Jimoh Ibrahim for *The National Mirror* and *Newswatch* is also for PDP etc.

Apart from outright ownership, there is the presence of knowledge-gap in Nigeria where those that have access to the media (the elites, usually politicians) are the ones that indirectly set the agenda in the media. In the words of an official, "in Nigeria, the news is highly privileged and a highly contested space by both the political and corporate elite for its propaganda and publicity value." Another reason, according to Blumler and Guretvich (1995, p.66), is "the degree of political affinity and socio-cultural proximity that is obtained by the media personnel and the political elite." Oso (2012, p.7) explained this when he said, "Many state governments maintain media consultants made up of prominent journalists who meet regularly to advise them on their publicity and public communication activities. Such individuals act as a form of informal channel of influence flow to media organizations." Yet another reason is the parlous economic situation of many media organizations. Many of them cannot adequately take care of the welfare of their workers in terms of payment of salary; training etc. and this has whittled down professionalism among journalists. It has made them less responsible to consider equal representation of all aspects of society as some of

them have taken to reporting 'the most juicy beat- politics. The influence of the advertisers have also caused news to be tilted to the most productive beat, one that can draw a certain kind of elite audience. With all these factors pushing news to tilt in one direction, what impact and long-term implication would it have on the audience and society? This research would seek to provide answers. Conversely, the findings of Brown and Udomisor (2015) on their study of political news reportage in Nigeria's *Vanguard* and *Guardian* newspapers found a low rate of political news coverage in the newspapers especially in comparison to other sector coverage but it was observed that the period of study was not randomly selected and so, bias could abound as well as error (Ohaja, 2003). These results could prove unreliable because an incident may have occurred that necessitated an unusually high coverage of a subject matter and a blackout of others. To further trump Brown *et al's* findings, Fadairo and Aminu's study on the coverage of corruption news by major newspapers in Nigeria in 2014 recorded 57.2% of the total news stories to be bordering on political news stories while agriculture was at the bottom rung of the ladder.

Theoretical framework

Gate-keeping theory

According to Wogu (2008), all mass media have a large number of gate-keepers. They perform a variety of functions and play several roles. They can delete or modify a message. In a print organization, for example, these people include the reporter who gathers the information and writes a news story; the editor who edits the story to make sure it is in the right 'shape;' the typesetter; the proof reader

and finally, the printer who produces copies of the magazine. All these people are called media gatekeepers and it is only what passes through their 'gates' that can reach the audience as the message or the magazine's content. Other gatekeepers, according to Hiebert et al (1989:453) cited in Folarin (2002), are government, content source, advertisers, individual consumers and consumers joined together in pressure groups.

Quoting Ekeli, general manager of the Delta State Printing and Newspapers Publishing Corporation during a lecture, he added that gate-keeping can also be termed self-censorship. The gatekeeper is often bound by certain actions that dictate his output (news). These include, timing, ownership pattern, perceived needs and preferences of the audience, management policy, editor's perception of reality, views held by editor's colleagues, influence of advertisers, appraisal of offerings by the competition, availability of photographs or film footage, legal considerations, professional ethics, ideological perspectives and political orientation amongst others.

This theory explains the stretching powers of the press. This shows that audience-members get information based on the discretion of the media gatekeepers. Remember that gatekeeping is not restricted to accepting and rejecting of information but it also involves shaping, display and timing, repeating the message for emphasis and so on (Folarin, *Ibid*). The media holds such tremendous power but as Oso (2012) pointed out, various reasons bend their hands to report more political news above other aspects of the society which should not be so. With such powers indiscriminately employed in Nigeria, the focus is to know the extent of the damage this wrong

use of power has caused in the society.

Agenda-setting theory

Lippmann (1922), as quoted in Okunna (2002), stated that the media help to “put pictures in our heads.” This explains the power of mass media to set the agenda and raise issues of public importance. This function is closely related to public opinion generation, since it is often the mass media that raise issues upon which public opinion is expressed. McCombs and Shaw (1972) as cited in Wogu (2008) wrote that members of the “audience not only learn about public issues through the media, they also learn how much importance to attach to an issue or topic from the emphasis the mass media place upon it.” According to Cohen (1963:13), “the press... may not be successful much of the time in telling you what to think but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about.” Undoubtedly, the world appears different to different people depending, not only on their personal interests, but also on the map that is drawn for them by the writers, editors and publishers of the papers they read.

The elements involved in agenda-setting include (Folarin, 2002:75):

- The quality or frequency of reporting;

- Prominence given to the reports- through headline display, pictures and layout in newspapers, magazines, film, graphics or timing on radio and television;

- The degree of conflict generated in the reports and

- Cumulative media-specific effects over time.

As Kunczick (1988) points out appropriate procedures for examining agenda-setting involves comparisons between media content over a certain period and the subjects that most people in the

society are discussing. The greater the consonance, the more the agenda-setting hypothesis is confirmed. This further belabors the media effects in the Nigerian society and dares to deduce a directly proportional relationship between increase in political reports from the media and increase in political discussions among the populace.

Research methodology

The triangulation method was applied in this study with the content analysis and survey research method. This was done to increase the validity/reliability of the study. Content analysis was chosen in order to examine the frequency, magnitude and prominence given to different news aspects of the society, particularly political news. The survey method includes the questionnaire, which was used to extract information on the feelings and opinions of respondents to unearth the impact of this political news coverage on them, and the interview which was used to determine the reason behind the political news reportage and its influence on society.

The population of study for the content analysis covered all the news articles in two newspapers published in Nigeria- *Guardian* and *Daily Sun* for the year 2014. The different newspapers represent the different segments of the society. While *The Guardian* is targeted to the elites, *Daily Sun* is for the masses. The population of study for the survey comprised of all adults living in Enugu State and the interview covered media experts in the field and academia.

For the content analysis, systematic random sampling (see Ohaja, 2003) was used to pick 12 issues for the first six months of 2014 (two publications per month). Therefore, 24 issues were studied for the

two newspapers, in all 182 days in the first six months of 2014. This was divided by 12 (number of issues under study). Days were used in calculation because the newspapers are dailies, so one daily newspaper after every 15 days was selected:

Day 1 (January 2), 15 (January 17), 30 (February 1), 45 (February 16), 60 (March 3), 75 (March 18), 90 (April 2), 105 (April 17), 120 (May 2), 135 (May 17), 150 (June 1) and 165 (June 16).

This was done to eliminate bias in the study. The selection was used for the two newspapers.

In the survey, purposive sampling technique was used to collect data from 15 news analysts for the interview and the Australian calculator by the National Statistical Service (NSS), was used to automatically generate the sample size for the copies of the questionnaire to literate newspaper readers. The variables supplied include, confidence level: 95%; proportion confidence interval: 0.05; population size: 3,267,837; confidence interval: 0.049; the sample size is therefore given as 76.

The code sheet for content analysis divided the content into newspaper, genre, magnitude and frequency. The categories are as follows:

A. Media

1. *Guardian*
2. *The Sun*

B. Genre

1. Column
2. Letters to the editor
3. News extra

- 4. Special reports
- 5. News reports
- 6. Editorial

C. Space or length of stories

- 1. 1-20 inches
- 2. 20-40 inches
- 3. 41 inches- 1 page
- 4. Placement: upper half or lower half

A total of 76 questionnaires were administered by hand to the selected sample. Also, the aided interview was used to elicit more precise responses to the questions.

Data presentation and analysis

Analysis from the code sheet

Table 1: Newspaper-wise news messages (excluding advertorials and picture news)

Weeks	<i>Guardian</i>	<i>Daily Sun</i>	Total
Day 1 (January 2)	109	110	219
Day 15 (January 17)	128	121	249
Day 30 (February 1)	110	75	185
Day 45 (February 16)	131	105	236
Day 60 (March 3)	134	126	260
Day 75 (March 18)	129	130	259
Day 90 (April 2)	106	129	235
Day 105 (April 18)	93	115	208

Day 120 (May 2)	132	129	261
Day 135 (May 17)	112	154	266
Day 150 (June 1)	126	101	227
Day 165 (June 17)	134	123	257
Grand Total	1444	1418	2862

Table 1 shows the number of news stories contained in the two newspapers for the dates chosen for study. It turns out that *Guardian* had 1444 news stories excluding advertorials and photo news while *Daily Sun* had 1418.

Table 2: Frequency of Issues covered in the newspapers

(A) Media		Politics	Science & technology	Foreign	Arts & life	Business and economy	Sport	Education	Health	Agriculture	Total
<i>Guardian</i>	Frequency	310	145	134	132	195	234	91	121	82	1444
	%	21.5	10.0	9.3	9.1	13.5	16.2	6.3	8.4	5.7	100
<i>Daily Sun</i>	Frequency	334	52	104	237	188	211	98	101	93	1418
	%	23.6	3.7	7.3	16.7	13.3	14.9	6.9	7.1	6.6	100

Table 2 above shows that *Guardian* published 310 news messages (21.5 percent) on politics while the remaining 1134 (78.5 percent) was distributed amongst eight other issues, within the period studied. *Daily Sun* had 334 (23.6 percent) news stories covering politics while the outstanding 76.4 percent was spread across the other eight sectors.

Table 3: Story type on politics

(B) Type	<i>Guardian</i>	<i>Daily Sun</i>	Total	Percentage
Column	30	42	72	11.2
Letters to the editor	59	63	122	18.9
Cartoons/line drawings	32	12	44	6.8
Special report	6	10	16	2.5
News report	170	192	362	56.2
Editorial	13	15	28	4.3
Grand total	310	334	644	100

Table 3 shows that 56.2 percent of these reports on politics were news reports (hard news) and 18.9 percent were letters to the editor.

Table 4: Space or length of stories on politics

(C) length	<i>Guardian</i>	<i>Daily Sun</i>	Total	Percentage
1-20 inches	67	75	142	22.0
21-41 inches	108	131	239	37.1
41-one page	93	89	182	28.3
Above one page	42	39	81	12.6
Sum total	310	334	644	100

Table 4 shows that 19 (7.5 percent) of the stories occupied 1-20 inches space while 53 (20.9 percent) other stories were in 21-40 inches space, seventy-five (29.6 percent) were between 41-1 page while 106 stories (41.9 percent) was above one page.

Interview data

Frequency of political news reports: Out of the fifteen persons

interviewed, 60 percent stated that political news reports dominate most of the news reports covered in the newspapers but 40 percent maintained that political news coverage is moderate as it should be. They stated that most newspaper readers are opinion leaders. Hence, they share information during discussions with mostly non-readers who are usually not exposed (or choose not to be exposed) to any mass medium.

Reasons for the possible increase in political news coverage in newspapers: 26.7 percent suggested better political communication geared towards development as a reason especially between the government and the governed; 33.3 percent argued media ownership and the newspaper history in Nigeria as influencing factors; 13.3 percent claimed that the brunt rested on the interest of the gatekeepers especially the advertisers; 66.7 percent opined that politics is a “money-making” beat especially in this era of brown-envelopes and news commercialization which is further encouraged by the poor state of living of journalists. Such that even human-interest stories are linked to political issues to “touch it up a bit”; however, 86.7 percent reiterated that the restive situation in the area of politics in the country is one major reason for the focus on political beat.

Extracts from the copies of the questionnaire:

Table 5: Level of exposure to news details on various sectors from the newspapers

Aspects of society	Very much	Not much	Not at all	Not answered	Total
Education	12	53	7	3	75
Entertainment	32	26	10	7	75

					respondents
Economy	29	39	4	3	75
Health	18	49	0	8	respondents
Politics	58	12	0	5	75
Sports	43	29	3	0	respondents
					75
					respondents

Table 5 shows that respondents receive more information on politics from newspapers than any other aspect: 58 respondents affirmed this by ticking ‘very much’ when asked how much information on political news they get from news magazines.

Level of influence of news coverage on the populace: Trending sector of society most discussed: 43 percent (politics), 28 percent (sports), 27 percent (fashion/music), 3 percent (business) and 1 percent (health)

Reasons why politics is most discussed: 44 percent stumble upon the discussion amongst friends, 47 percent said it is topical (thanks to the agenda-setting function of the press), 6 percent discuss it because others are discussing it and 3 percent did not answer the question. However, in administering the questionnaire, one of the copies of questionnaires was unaccounted for. Hence, 75 questionnaires data was collected.

Discussion of findings

RQ 1: What is the frequency of political news reportage as compared to other sectors coverage?

The data in Table two shows the frequency of the coverage of political news as well as other aspects of the society. It revealed that out of 2862 news messages published, the newspapers had 644 political news messages as against the 197 for science and technology, 238 for

foreign news, 369 for arts & life, 383 for business & economy, 445 for sports, 189 for education, 222 for health and 175 for agriculture. Considering these statistics, it is safe to say that the coverage of news reports is quite unbalanced, with coverage on politics taking twice that of any other sector.

Also, details from the interview show 60 percent of interviewees concurring that reports on political news is high as against the 40 percent saying it is moderate. From the questionnaire, the ratio of those that affirmed a high rate of political news reports as against those that gave a negative was 3:2;

The findings support the argument of Haque cited in Udomisor (2002) that the news media devote a substantial part of their time and resources to covering politics. It likewise, correlates with that of Ghorpade (1986) who postulated that the press plays an influential role in a country's political milieu, which is, according to him, why readership of newspapers is known to grow higher during election years and that by emphasizing certain issues over others, the press plays an agenda-setting role among the educated elite in the society. Also, Fadairo, Fadairo&Aminu (2014), in a bid to emphasize the coverage of corruption news was able to mention that political news is the most reported of any sector in the newspapers.

RQ 2: What are the reasons for the imbalance of reports?

The responses from the news analysts suggested possible reasons for this imbalance of coverage. The most common reason given is the present state of Nigeria as regards her political arena and how every part of the society is tied to it. As former News Editor for *Record* newspaper, Mr. Andrew Ngene (in a personal interview conducted

on February 14, 2012) explicitly puts it, “if there is stability in the political atmosphere (of the country) there would be stability in other areas and report of them would come naturally.” Other reasons include, the need to improve political communication between the government and the governed for development as well as to keep the government accountable; media ownership and the newspaper history in Nigeria as influencing factors. This is in tandem with Golding & Elliot (1979) as cited in Oso (1991) that 'Nigerian journalism was ... created by anti-colonial protest, baptized in the waters of politics, and matured in party politics'. Oso (2012) again added that the Nigerian mass media system has developed within the dynamics of the country's political economy and almost all newspaper owners are affiliated to one party or the other, hence, the affinity to political reports.

The interest of the gatekeepers especially the advertisers is another factor. Okunna, (1999) explains that advertisers and government subventions are major means of revenue for newspapers in Nigeria. Therefore, in order to keep the money coming, editors could publish stories that they feel would sell or those that would favor the advertiser or government in question.

The poor welfare of the journalist which has made them opt for a supposed “profitable” political beat and even in situations where the stories are of human interest or business, attempts are usually made to tilt it to a political angle so that it can be relevant to their pocket. This is in line with Oso (2012) when he mentioned that most journalists don't even have enough to survive on; hence, the veering off into the 'juicy' political beat.

The restive situation in the country as a result of issues like the centenary celebrations, national conference and oppositions that came with them, the Nigerians' demonstration for the abducted Chibok girls, scandals and corrupt practices amongst politicians, the Boko Haram menace, the upcoming general elections of 2015, the mass decamping of political party members et cetera. These have been coming up and coverage of them has overshadowed other areas.

RQ 3: What are the influences of these overt political scoops on the audience and society?

Bad perception of politics in Nigeria: data from the questionnaire shows that 90.7 percent had negative perceptions about politics in Nigeria, 8 percent said Nigerian politics is progressive while 1.3 percent were undecided. This was borne out of the predominant coverage of political news in bad light. This exposure has corrupted the average Nigerian's mind concerning politics. To him, politics is a 'dirty game' of manipulation and embezzlement of public funds. This negative mindset has caused extensive damages to the system. This re-emphasizes not just agenda-building but opinion-molding powers of the press;

Ignorance of activities in other sectors of society: Information in Table three shows 122 letters to the editor based on politics out of 236 letters. This is 51.7 percent of the total number of letters to the editor. It shows that the readers have little interest in other areas;

Full-blown awareness of the political arena: The continual reports on politics have aroused certain political awareness in Nigerians. This is shown from the prevalence of politics in discussions. This has led to a somewhat ardent citizenry. This was

manifested in the just-concluded 2015 elections where Nigeria recorded a high voters' turn-out in the elections. One news expert revealed that the society is on the brink of a revolution, thanks to the constant prodding of the press on the political beat. The case of the BBOG (Bring Back Our Girls) campaign received a worldwide recognition because of the devoted attitude of the media to the reports.

Decay in various sectors of society: Newspapers, through their agenda-setting function, have managed to shift society's attention to just politics. Every other person is discussing politics and maybe sports but as they muse, child labor has increased from 4 million children in 1994 to 11 million children in 2007; the number is predicted to double by 2015 (ILO, 2007), farmers are not fully benefitting from the Agricultural scheme under President Goodluck Jonathan, which includes access to fertilizer, seedlings, incentives etc., human rights are being abused by the military in North-East, Nigeria, people are dying in hospitals because of the moribund facilities available, the education sector is dying fast with universities churning out unemployable youths every year. The decline is huge and cancerous.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, the following conclusion can be drawn, that newspapers report political news at least twice as much as they do the coverage of other sectors. There is a need for better political education, the restive state of the country, the sorry standard of living of journalists and media ownership are some of the factors that are causing this increase in political news reports.

There is a prevalence of unethical practices by journalists and in newspaper houses thanks to news commercialization and the brown envelope syndrome. Omenugha and Oji (2008, p.17-18) captured it clearly when they said, "Publishers in Nigeria, rather than pay attractive wages to the journalists, refer to their identity cards as a meal ticket. In other words, the journalists are encouraged to make money on their own in whatever manner they deem fit..." This is in line with Oso (2012) of the poor standard of living of journalists that have pushed them to follow the beat that gets them paid.

Newspapers are vital channels of communication and opinion-molding in Nigeria, therefore, what they report is usually taken as final and is used to make life decisions (Ekwo, 1996). Society is ignorant of growth in other aspects of the nation because the newspapers have failed to capitalize on them. Citizens are more politically conscious as a result of constant exposure to political news (in newspapers, gatherings and discussion amongst friends).

Newspapers lack proper investigative background of news details, abounds in grammatical errors and information inaccuracies although they are viable platforms for exchange of ideas and expression of dissatisfaction with the system of government which is in line with their social responsibility. News is widely misinterpreted for politics only because the supposed general-interest newspapers are not 'generally-interested' in discussing societal issues.

Suggestions for further research

Future research can be on media ownership in Nigeria. How government dictates society's outcome (opinions, reactions) through ownership of the media? Furthermore on the reasons for the decay in

Nigerian journalism, and who is to blame?

First, the press should strive towards near equal representation of all aspects of the society in the media especially newspapers. It would help the audience to be equally informed in news concerning all segments of the society. They should engage in serious developmental journalism: they should report government's efforts alongside their faults especially in political news coverage. In addition, there should be mass sensitization on the need for investigative journalism. Also, educational qualifications as stated by NUJ should be taken seriously (see Ukonu, 2007) before a journalist is accepted to work on the job (most unethical practices and errors are found from unqualified journalists that are on the job for just their stomachs). In addition, independent committees should be set-up to man the post in case of unethical and corrupt practices of the press-public examples should be made of defaulters to deter other.

Also, government should understand that the press cannot report if they don't function. Therefore, they should shift focus partly from politics to other aspects of society. Minsters and ministries of these other sectors should be charged to take responsibility or be kicked out. The national assembly should get active in carrying out their oversight functions and anti-corruption agencies alike.

The audience is just as responsible- they should be wary of dependence on one media source. This is because if one fails to deliver a message either by commission or omission, read it up in another medium. This way, you miss out on very little and are made aware of every aspect of society. Before this, the audience should cultivate the habit of avid reading. They should pick interest in other

sectors of society and demand information on them. The journalist should take this cue and shout from the rooftops so that the attention of the government is drawn to that area and action is put in place.

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Mass media, the rights of the disabled people of Bangladesh: A critical overview

Dr. Mustak Ahmed

Abstract:

The article explores how mass media can play a role in bringing awareness about the rights of disabled people in Bangladesh. In the light of models for studying mass media representation of rights of the disabled and related policies, the study attempts to unfold the interrelationship between mass media, society and persons with disabilities. It proposes a participatory conceptual model for the rights and policies of disabled people in Bangladesh.

Key Words: *Mass Media, Disability, Representation, Rights, Policy, Development*

Introduction:

In Bangladesh, there is an urgent need to raise awareness in society of the rights of disabled people in order to facilitate policy activities aimed towards integration of people with disabilities into society. The trend towards the isolation of disabled members of society still strongly dominates in Bangladesh. Health care practices violate the human rights of the disabled despite the fact that persons with disabilities in Bangladesh have all civic, political, economic and social rights. As almost 10% of the total population is disabled and this segment of population has very limited opportunity and access to participate in mainstream development process. The nation would not be able to achieve desired development goals without including the disabled population in the process.

Over the past 30 years, a substantial amount of research has been conducted to determine the effect of the mass media on the public's belief systems all over the world. These studies have concluded that the media's power to influence public perception and the degree to which people are exposed to media representations combine to make the mass media one of the most significant influences in developed and developing societies.

There have been fewer studies on public perceptions of disabled people and the effect these may have on government and mass media policies. But sufficient evidence exists to indicate that if the public considers people with disabilities to be violent or unable to care for themselves, government policies and resulting legislation will look more toward containment and control than toward recovery and community living. If public perception of the physically challenged is based on negative and false images perpetuated by the media, there is a danger that government responses will also be based on these false perceptions, rather than on the true needs and issues of people suffering from such illness (Cutcliffe and Hannigan, 2001).

Media portrayal is also viewed as an important element in forming and influencing community attitudes towards disability issues. The media can also affect public belief in relation to health information. It does seem likely that people make up their minds on health care by using their own experiences and the experiences of friends and relatives in the light of other information, from the media and their prior political and social views. There is a common perception that media's depiction of disability is overwhelmingly negative and inaccurate.

Disability is a complex phenomenon. It is not just a health problem. Disability reflects the interaction between features of a person's body and features of the society in which he or she lives. According to World Health Organization (WHO), disability is an umbrella term, covering impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions. Impairment is a problem in body function or structure; an activity limitation is a difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task or action; while a participation restriction is a problem experienced by an individual in involvement in life situations.

Rights of Disabled People: Bangladeshi Perspective

Bangladesh has a population density of 867 people per square kilometer and a total population of 125 million people spread over 144,000 square kilometers. It has one of the highest densities of population in the world, with 80% of people living in rural areas. It has a Human Development Index ranking of 146 out of 174 countries, Gender Empowerment Ranking of 67 out of 70 countries and Human Poverty Index ranking of 70 out of 85 developing countries. The per capita income is US\$ 350, life expectancy is 58.6 years, infant mortality is 79 per 1000 live births and adult literacy is 51.1% for males and 28.6% for females. It is a fertile country prone to frequent floods that cause economic damage and loss of human life. Muslims constitute 86% of the population with all people sharing the same Bengali culture and language. About half of the population is below 15 years of age due to a 2.1% growth in population. It has an unequal distribution of wealth with 10% of the population holding 60% of

land. The country has a high rate of corruption, frequent political upheavals and is highly dependent on external debt (37% of the GNP).

The prevalence of disability is believed to be high for reasons relating to overpopulation, extreme poverty, illiteracy, lack of awareness, and above all, lack of medical care and services. Although disability is a major social and economic phenomenon in Bangladesh, there is very little reliable data available on this issue, especially in the absence of a comprehensive national survey on persons with disabilities. The Government of Bangladesh (GOB) surveys in 1982, 1986 and 1998 estimated a national prevalence rate of disability at 0.64%, 0.5% and 1.60% respectively. Action Aid-Bangladesh and Social Assistance and Rehabilitation for the Physically Vulnerable (SARPV) put the disabled population at 8.8% of the total population. Bangladesh ProtibandiKalayanSamiti records 7.8%. Most of the estimates generally appear to be underrated, sometimes excessively. The WHO's global estimate predicts approximately 10% of all people have a disability of one kind or another. This is also considered true in Bangladesh with some sources quoting a higher disability rate in rural Bangladesh (VHSS, 2000).

The number of people with disabilities in Bangladesh is high enough to merit special attention. Based on an assessment of the available figures and estimates by WHO and World Bank for developing countries, an overall disability prevalence of about 10% of the population remains a valid working estimate. The prevalence of disabilities in children below 18 years can be estimated to 6% and for the age group above 18 years the prevalence to about 14% or

corresponding to 3.4 million children with disabilities and 10.2 million adults with disabilities (VHSS, 2000).

In recent years, there have been some improvements and positive trends as a result of the efforts at both government and non-government levels; however the overall situation of Persons with Disabilities is still far from satisfactory. In fact, they are still granted the lowest priority in service provision in Bangladesh. The following article explains the current situation of each issue associated with handicaps, impairment and disability in Bangladesh. Throughout history, persons with disabilities have usually been considered 'fearful and superstitious beings'. The direct result of these beliefs has been their 'neglect'. This neglect bars persons with disabilities from normal economic, social and political activities in their families, communities, essential services and education, etc. There are no systemic interventions to raise awareness of persons with disabilities at the community level.

Though many persons with disabilities are able to live and lead productive lives, they are neglected by society as a whole. Many people in the Bangladesh view persons with disabilities as a curse and a cause of embarrassment to the family. They are unsympathetic to the situation of persons with disabilities. Women with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to social discrimination and neglect. According to the little available data, about 70% of the disabled population has special needs for medical rehabilitation and social integration. In Bangladesh, the health care service delivery system does not include medical rehabilitation for persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities in need depend largely on traditional

healers. A minimal level of medical rehabilitation is available through NGOs, which are concentrated in urban areas.

Persons with disabilities are usually excluded from existing governmental and non-governmental development programs. Despite national policies that protect the rights of persons with disabilities (for example, a 10% job quota for persons with disabilities), in reality they face unfair competition or neglect. According to available estimates, the actual number of employed persons with disabilities may be less than 1% (VHSS, 2000). With the exception of a few initiatives by some organizations, there are very few job opportunities for persons with disabilities. Service facilities for rehabilitation therapy and medical care assistance for persons with disabilities are inadequate. Extra care and cost are required as the types and severities of disability are diverse, but many persons with disabilities and their families cannot afford such services.

The WHO figure of 10% prevalence is quoted in most reports on disability in Bangladesh. Surveys by different agencies however, yield figures from 0.5% to 14% due to differences in definition of disability used in methodology. Major causes of disability are communicable diseases and malnutrition. Unsafe birth practices and nutritional deficiencies also contribute to the incidence of disability. Accidents and old age related disabilities are now on the rise. People with speech and hearing problems constitute the major proportion of disabled people in the country, followed by physical disabilities. The Bangladesh Constitution states that 'no citizens shall, on grounds only of religion, race, caste, or place of birth be subjected to any disability, liability, restriction or condition with regard to access to

any place of public entertainment, or resort, or admission, or to any educational institution'. In 1995 the first National Policy for the Disabled was approved by the government. The policy mainstreamed disability into the country's development agenda. An action plan to operate this policy was approved in 1996. In 2001, comprehensive disability legislation entitled 'The Bangladesh Persons with Disability Welfare Act' was adopted by parliament. This document includes revised definitions of various disabilities, the formation, roles and responsibilities of legislative bodies at national and district levels, as well as the coordination between them. The Act lists ten specific priority areas: 1. Disability prevention, 2. Identification, 3. Curative treatment, 4. Education, 5. Health care, 6. Rehabilitation and employment, 7. Transport and communication, 8. Culture, 9. Social security, and 10. Self-help organizations.

Mass Media, Society and Persons with Disabilities

In a democratic society, equal opportunity to participate in all facets of that society should be a goal of government, private and public institutions, as well as the goal of the majority rule and one of the duties of the majority is to recognize the rights of those who are not in the majority. A smaller more diverse minority still struggles for recognition of their problems and acceptance in society all over the world. The group, known variously as disabled, handicapped, physically challenged or handicappers (all are persons with disabilities) includes those with visual handicaps (including the blind and partially sighted), hearing disabilities (deaf and partially hearing) and mobility characteristics. As a result of their economic, physical, architectural and attitudinal barriers, inclusion of these individuals

has lagged behind that of minorities.

Mass media influences the visibility of minorities and can have an impact on the broad social recognition of the problems of the groups. The problems of acceptance, equal opportunity, access and employment for persons with disabilities in the 1980s are no less pressing than the situation was in the 1960s (Stroman, 1982). These individuals remained ignored or at least misunderstood, partly because of the lack of accurate portrayal in the media (Liebert, 1975; Hespenheide, 1988). Much has been written about how the public views individuals with disabilities. The social psychology and rehabilitation literature are rich with such studies. However, the mass communication studies have virtually ignored this issue.

Models of Disability Studies: Medical, Social, Pathology and Civil Perspectives

Researchers in the field of special education have developed a theoretical paradigm, which springs from two approaches to individuals with handicaps. Gliedman and Roth (1980) outlined three theoretical models of ways society views people with disabilities. One model, based on medical criteria, emphasizes an individual's physical functioning and may be the most common conception. Another perspective, the social pathology viewpoint, is the basis for many government assistance programs and emphasizes the perceived inability of persons with disabilities to support them economically in society. The third model rejects the assumptions of the first two— that person with limitations cannot function physically, mentally or economically. This minority/civil rights perspective view the person with a handicap as a member of a group, which is oppressed by the

physical or attitudinal barriers of a society, which is prejudiced in favor of the needs of the non-disabled majority.

Probably the most prevalent concept society has of those with disabilities is the medical model. This stems from what Parson has called the 'sick role' as a form of deviant behavior (Parsons, 1951). Parsons noted that this role entails the individual's exemption from normal social obligations and from responsibility for his or her condition.

The medical model views disability as an aberration from the 'healthy' norm. The focus is on prescription and treatment of the individual, who is expected to give up autonomy to a health professional and to a medical support network. This model puts the focus of the problem on the individual's disability as a sickness that must either be cured or contained. No blame is put on any aspect of society. The consequences of this mode of thinking for the individual with a disability can be passivity, limited gains to individual physical recovery or maintenance, and severe limits on, if not outright suspension of, social activities.

The second model is based on the assumptions present in the medical outlook. Whereas, in the medical model the disability is thought of as a disease and the individual becomes the patient under the care of medical expert; in the social pathology model, the role of the individual with handicap is that of a stigmatized individual or deviant who is considered out of step with the rest of society. Again, the individual is labeled as inferior, this time as a disadvantaged client who must look to society for economic support. Unlike the medical model, blame for the disabling aspect of the individual is

apportioned between the person with handicap, who cannot perform many types of jobs and activities in society and the social environment itself, whose free market economy is unable to accommodate the individual's employment and other needs.

The ramifications of this model, however, are only slightly different from those of the medical model. Specifically, Bogdan and Biklen (1977) noted that a cornerstone of the support system for persons with disabilities is that the service provided is a gift or privilege, not a right. Such support 'demeans its recipients by supporting the prejudice that the handicapped are inferior people' (p.23). They also postulated that the other major source of social services to the handicapped, governmental agencies, tend, in the interest of bureaucratic efficiency, to hold, label, and further stigmatize those individuals with various disabilities.

Both the medical and social pathology attitudes result in what Bogdan and Biklen (1977) refer to as 'handicapism', which is promotion of differential or unequal treatment of individuals because of physical, mental or behavioral differences. They add that at the societal level, these individuals are portrayed stereotypically by the media, are held back by physical as well as attitudinal barriers and are encouraged to be docile in order to receive support services from the government. The third model, the minority/civil rights perspective, is explicitly politically-based. It puts the blame for disabling aspects of a handicap not on the individual who cannot walk, see or hear, but on the inability of society to adjust to the specific needs of these individuals.

The idea of persons with disabilities as a minority group was

advanced by Tenny (1953) when he proposed focusing on 'the limitations imposed by society upon handicapped individuals and groups.' Bowe (1978) noted that disabled have suffered more, economically, than other minority groups, with the highest rates of unemployment, poverty and welfare dependency in the world. They have also been segregated from the rest of society in housing, education, transportation and public accommodation. Gliedman and Roth (1980) assert the able-bodied people blame these economic and social problems on the physical limitations of disabled persons, not on social oppression.

A consequence of the minority or civil rights model is that those with disabilities expect and demand that society view them as equals and respect their opinions and input in all areas of society. The ultimate goal is to achieve a physical and societal environment useable by and accommodating to all. The goals of the minority/civil rights model are similar to the focus of minority group theory. Both concentrate on the need of society in general to accommodate members of different groups. The medical and social pathology models, like deviance theory, focus on the differences between individuals and society. The traditional definition of the deviant as being a flawed individual coincides with medical model. The social pathology model also concentrates on the individual's differentness and seeks to solve problems caused by this differentness by funneling resources (charity, government aid etc.) to allow persons with disabilities to survive in an arena separate from (and most likely unequal to) the rest of society.

Critical Framework for Studying Media Representations of Persons

with Disabilities

While Mass Communication researchers have studied media representations of minorities, little research has been done on media treatment of persons with disabilities. So to develop theoretical framework of this research, deviance theories and the minority group theory, three models of disability and some models for studying media representations of persons with disabilities are discussed.

In a democratic society, equal opportunity to participate in all facets of that society should be a goal of the government, private and public institutions. In the majority rule, one of the duties of the majority is to recognize the rights of those who are not in the majority. Mass media influence the visibility of minorities and can have some impact on the broad social recognition of the problems of those groups. There were some modern models of media representations of persons with disabilities developed by J. S. Clogston and Beth Haller. Clogston (1991) developed Supercrip model, Cultural Pluralism model, and Haller developed a Legal model and a consumer model of media representations of persons with disabilities.

In the Supercrip model, the person with a disability is portrayed as deviant because of 'superhuman' feats or as 'special' because they live regular lives 'in spite of' disability. This role reinforces the idea that disabled people are deviant, that the person's accomplishments are amazing for someone who is less than complete. In the cultural Pluralism model, person with disabilities are seen as multifaceted persons and their disabilities do not receive undue attention. They are portrayed as non-disabled people would be

(Clogston, 1990). In the business model, the people with disabilities and their issues are presented as costly to society and business, especially. Making society accessible for people with disabilities is not really worth the cost and overburdens businesses. It is not good value for society or business. Accessibility is not profitable (Haller, 1995). Another is the Legal model (Haller, 1995). It is illegal to treat persons with disabilities in certain ways. They have legal rights and may need to sue to guarantee those rights. Various national and international laws were presented as illegal to halt discrimination (Haller, 1995). Haller developed another model for studying media representation of people with disabilities. It is called the consumer model. In consumer model, people with disabilities are shown to represent an untapped consumer group. Making society accessible could be profitable to businesses and society in general. If disabled people have access to jobs, they will have more disposable income. If disabled people have jobs, they will no longer need government assistance, (Haller, 1995). These models have been used in both quantitative and qualitative studies of media representations of person with disabilities.

Prospective Models for Studying Mass Media and Rights of Disabled People

Discussing above models, it is clear to us that the study of media representations of persons with disabilities is an area, thus far, largely untouched by mass communication researchers. Still the theoretical perspectives reviewed above provide the basis for theoretically grounded inquiries into media representations of persons with disabilities. These theories: normative deviance, labeling and stigma,

the medical and social pathology models of disability, minority group theory and minority/civil rights model of disability; will now be briefly summarized for applications to mass media studies.

Normative deviance theory holds that persons with non-behavioral characteristics (e.g. a physical or mental disability) which violate social norms will be stigmatized by society. Mass media researchers might then ask if representations of handicapped individual in news and entertainment fare are consistent with this perspective. For example, does news coverage focus on the triumphs of an individual who overcomes an explicitly emphasized disability to perform some feat while implying that those with disabilities who do not perform such feats are less than fully human? Do newspapers portray persons with disabilities as unable to function in ways not related to their disability? The above studies based on normative deviance and stigma theory would predict that if predominant social attitudes determine media portrayals, individuals with disabilities would be portrayed in ways tied to their disability, or would be covered primarily as human-interest feature subjects.

Labeling theorists hold that an individual is stigmatized when he or she is called deviant. In this instance, researchers could view mass media representation of persons with disabilities as an independent variable (the labeler) or as a dependent variable (reflecting society's designation of a person with a disability as a deviant). For example, does the news refer to persons with disabilities using terms that emphasize their difference from normal members of society? Do visual portrayals in news, television entertainment and advertising

do the same? Do advertisers avoid portrayal of persons with disabilities because of the negative and deviant ramifications of their 'sicknesses'? The medical model would predict that these individuals would appear most often in some variation of sick role in both news coverage and entertainment programming, and would be invisible in advertisements.

The social pathology model of disability, also drawn from deviance concepts, views the disabled individual as a disadvantaged client, dependent on society for economic support. In the social pathology model, people with disabilities are presented as disadvantaged and must look to the state or to society for economic support, which is considered a gift, not right (Clogston, 1990). Researchers could look at whether news coverage of persons with disabilities focuses on government welfare or private charity programs to help them. Do telethons and fundraising programs portray these individuals as objects of pity, who need help from monetary donations? Do disabled characters reflect this role of the recipient of help, or of the economically needy individual who is in that state because of his or her disability? The social pathology model would predict that disabled individuals would be portrayed as economically disadvantaged and in need of help and would be more likely to appear in the news as the subject of political debates over social welfare programs.

Minority group theory holds that persons with handicaps are identifiable, have less political power, receive differential pejorative treatment and have group awareness. Researchers could ask if this

identifiable group receives pejorative treatment from the media by being excluded from news stories, entertainment programs and advertising, or by portrayal in stereotypical (possibly reflecting the medical or social pathology models) ways. Does news coverage of persons with disabilities concentrate on the differential power of these individuals as well as their political demands for societal changes that would allow them to take part in everyday life? Minority group theory would predict that news coverage and portrayals of these individuals would reflect these political aspects of disability.

The minority or civil rights model of disability, a further specification of minority group theory, holds that persons with handicaps are held back primarily by society's unwillingness to open up physically and attitudinally to this minority group. Clogston (1990) noted that in minority/Civil rights model, people with disabilities are seen as members of the disability community, which has legitimate political grievances. They have civil rights that they may fight for, just like other groups. Accessibility to society is a civil right. Media researchers might ask whether news coverage focuses on debates over social changes called for by disability rights activists.

Proposed Model for Studying Rights of Disabled People of Bangladesh in Mass Media

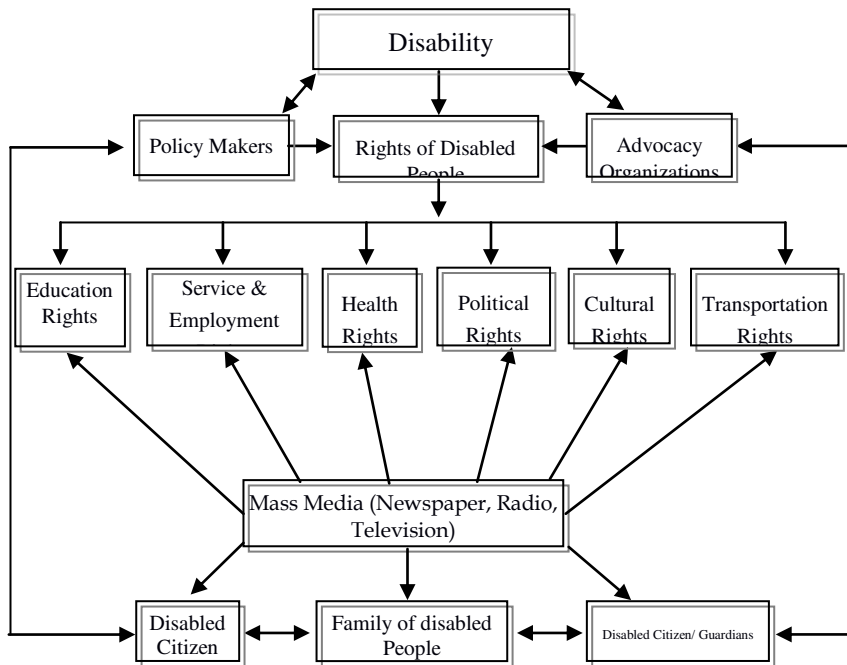


Figure: The participatory conceptual model of portraying rights and policies of disabled people of media in Bangladesh.

The figure shows that the position of mass media is the central point. In addition, the top of the figure shows disability. According to the figure, policy makers and advocacy organizations take ideas about rights (education, service, employment, health, political) of disability and formulate policies. Mass Media will reflect the rights and disseminate information about disabled people, the family of disabled people and their parents.

Conclusion

Mass media has been widely recognized as an important factor that facilitates both negative and positive attitude towards people with disabilities problems, there is no published evidence that mass media representations, rights, policies and society's attitude towards people with disabilities and illnesses have been studied or discussed in Bangladesh so far. In Bangladesh, there is an urgent need to raise awareness in society of the rights of disabled people in order to facilitate policy activities aimed towards integration of people with disabilities into society. The trend towards the isolation of disabled members of society still strongly dominates in Bangladesh. The nation would not be able to achieve desired development goal without including the disabled population in the process.

Persons with disabilities in Bangladesh are socially isolated in specialized hospitals and social care homes that usually are established far away from community. Moreover, 'because of the shortage in health care funding, care hospitals and social care houses for people with disabilities, often provide inappropriate care and substandard living conditions' (Leimana, 2000). Others spend the majority of their time at their homes because of the lack of community-based services. As a result, disabled people in Bangladesh who constitute around 10% of the whole population are excluded from society; they represent an 'invisible population'- a population whose rights are not widely recognized and respected. Moreover, even if some limited actions towards inclusion of people with mental disabilities into society (mainly supported by the Mental

Disability Advocacy Program) do exist, public in Bangladesh is rather uninformed about them. Bangladesh still has an opportunity to use mass media to strengthen public awareness of the rights of people with disabilities and prepare a general public atmosphere for community based health care policies. Such a proactive approach would allow reducing the probability of occurrence of a situation where mass media feeds a negative attitude and consequently supports or even facilitates more controlling disability policies.

However, instead of simple quantitative saturation of mass media of Bangladesh with information on disability issues, carefully targeted, prepared, and tested actions are needed for two main reasons. Firstly, actions should be carefully targeted in order to use effectively the extremely limited resources of interest groups. Secondly, the strategy and content of representation of mental disability issues should be tested before being implemented in order to achieve the expected positive outcomes. Even more important, activities should be tested in order to avoid negative unintended consequences.

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A comparative study of traditional and social media consumption patterns among youth

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Abstract

This research study examines the consumption trends of media by the youth of Lahore. It investigates how both traditional and social media are being used by the youth and how much time they give to each media. A survey method was employed to collect information from 250 respondents who were active users of media. The study concluded that both social and traditional media are consumed by the youth, however, social media is most popular among the youth and various reasons are accounted for its popularity.

Keywords: *Youth, traditional media, social media, consumption patterns*

Introduction

This study explores consumption patterns of media among youth of Lahore, Pakistan. Media has performed a significant role in converting the world into a global village. It has vital importance and cannot be alienated from our life. It has an ability to influence our society by reaching a large number of audiences with powerful messages. Youth is considered to be a significant part of any society and it consumes the media of its choice. The power, consumption and technical advancement of media can be viewed as the most distinctive aspect of our era. Be it the conventional media (TV,

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newspapers, radio) or social media (facebook, twitter), both play an important part in our lives. Media is a major source of information and enjoyment, consumed by the people. Throughout the past years, media has made progress appreciably. With the advancement in media, people are constantly looking for modern and easier ways of communication to gain more knowledge about the world around them. Previously, people used traditional media to get information, but with the passage of time the youth specifically uses various types of digital media or social media as a source of communication.

The rapid increase of the social media usage by youth has led to a decrease in the popularity and usage of other media sources. Struggling media sources include television, radio, newspaper and magazines. Due to the popularity and availability of everything on the social media, the average time of young people online has also increased. It is also obvious that young people are still watching television, listening to radio and reading publications but this usage is quite less as compared to the past. Youth has played a fundamental role in the growth of social media. At present a wide variety of social media tools are in use by the youth such as blogging tools, media sharing tools, social networking sites, wiki, and forums.

Literature Review

Callejo (2013) explores the type of media mostly preferred by adults and youth in Spain. The overall media utilization among youngsters is 12.8 % per day and television is found to be the most utilized medium. Among the population, 60.6 % are found to be the average consumers of media and the remaining 39.4 % were the consumers of

other mediums. In the light of the above findings, it can be concluded that with regard to the consumption of media youth is not a consistent group but factors such as age, sex, qualification and other social aspects of young generation are very important in the selection and utilization of diverse media.

Saleem (2013) in her study found the impact of social networking websites (SNWs) on youth's real life contacts. The study finds out whether extreme usage of SNWs disengages the youth with their real life close relations due to an increased interaction with online friends. The findings revealed that a strong correlation exists between the usage of social media sites and solitude. Similarly, it is found that the heavy users of social media live more isolated lives.

Chadha and Chabbra (2012) in their study analyze the close competition between TV and internet in order to catch the attention of consumers especially the youth. The results revealed that the most preferred medium among the Haryana youth is "traditional media" due to its affordability and expensive rates of internet service. They further explained that with the expansion and growth in ICTs the preferences of young people are varying. The youth does not want to use only one particular media instead want to use a variety of mediums gradually with each passing day.

Ibold and Adams (2012) discuss in their article the different functions of various media types and compare old with new media. They favor the new media (social media) due to its variety of popular features and utility in the lives of individuals and suggest that soon this fast moving media will beat traditional media like television,

radio, magazines etc. They further add that social media provides people lots of things to interact and share with; however; the social media is facing the challenges of authenticity, reliability and objectivity. Knight (2012) explores media preferences of youth in one of the leading universities of Canada and concludes that both traditional and social media are consumed by the youth on the basis of their gratifications and choices. Wok, Idid and Misman (2012), examine the popularity of social media and how it is used for information-sharing activities by the young people of Malaysia. They also suggest that social media is popular among the youth particularly for sharing information. The study explores which social media sites are popular among the youth, for what purpose the youth consumes social media sites and the categories of information sharing activities available on social media sites. Survey findings of the 17-30 years old youth of the country indicate that the young generation uses social media 5-7 times a week to share information including personal information. Results also reveal that youth uses social media more for sharing negative information as compared to positive information.

According to Nielsen (2009) despite the emergence of social media networks, young children use “television” as a part of old media. In fact this trend is at an increase and has been for the last five years as the time utilized by teenagers on television increased by 6%. They do use internet but the ratio of using internet is higher among adults as compared to teenagers. Instead they prefer to watch television advertising (TV ads) than virtual online videos. This trend of viewing virtual videos is higher among adults with 25 to 34 age

groups. Roberts and Foehr's (2008) study focuses on the most consumed media among individuals. They observe that the use of any media and its experiences differ with sex, age, community and social and psychological factors. They suggest that the young generation is more aware about media messages due to the emergence of digitalized new media however it is not substituting traditional media such as the radio, TV, newspapers etcetera rather both mediums are being utilized side by side.

Ferle, Edwards and Lee (2000), in their article examine the utilization of conventional media and the internet by teenagers. They view teenagers as the cyber generation because they are being groomed in a universally connected globe and spend approximately 65% of their time online. Their research includes how teenagers use each media and how medium options differ by actions and desires.

Tapscott (1998) maintains that digital media is determining the psyche of the youth. Since television is not an interactive medium and delivers messages in one way passively as compared to internet, young consumers tend to use internet and social media, owing to its two-way quick communication. Youth has different dynamics and vary from each other on the basis of classes, ethnicities, faith and societal perceptions; therefore they can select contents on the internet as per their choices.

The above literature review establishes that whether it is conventional media or social media, both have their own significance and functions. Despite the fact that new media is popular across the globe, due to its peculiar features, traditional media continues to have its own benefits which cannot be undermined.

Theoretical Framework

The present study is carried out in the light of the “Uses and Gratification Theory” developed by Blumler and Katz in 1974. The theory explains that consumers of media are active users and play a pivotal role in choosing and utilizing any media that best accomplishes their various wants or requirements. The theory believes that media users have alternating choices to satisfy their desires. Mainly there are three goals in developing uses and gratifications concept:

- To examine how individuals consume various types of media to fulfil their needs. “What do people do with media?”
- To explore the major causes as to why people make use of media.
- To determine the pros and cons of media utilization by persons.

According to the theorists there are four kinds of satisfactions:

- Information- people use media in order to know about the global affairs and community.
- Own personality- to check one’s own attitudes and behaviours.
- Incorporation and public communication- people utilize it to get familiar with one another.
- Recreation- people make use of media for entertainment, amusement or to just pass their time.

Katz, Gurevitch and Haas have defined five different categories of needs. These categories are as follows:

Rational desires: Community members use several forms of media for attaining awareness and information. Few of them have logical requirements to gain understanding e.g. educational contents on television, for obtaining education; information they get from news

and also open expression of opinion in discussion boards on social media.

Emotional desires: It incorporates all types of feelings, gratification, and other gestures and so they use a wide range of media to gratify their emotional wants.

Individual incorporative wants: It is a desire based on self-worth. People utilize different channels to assure their position, get integrity and become stable.

Societal Incorporative wants: It covers the desire to meet people especially close relations like family units, peers and dealings among the general public.

Anxiety free desires: Persons at times employ different media as tools of distraction as well as to alleviate anxiety.

The theory suggests that users of media make their own decision about which media to choose and which to leave. Accordingly they fulfill their variety of needs. The theoretical framework supports the considerations of the study and focuses on the selection of media by adolescents for the fulfillment of their various desires. In the past, traditional media was the only source of entertainment, information and news gathering but with the advancement of technology young people have a wide range of media available including social media that best satisfies their needs. They now consume different media depending on their needs, easy access and availability. Amongst the young generation, few use traditional media (TV, newspapers and magazines) for awareness while others use different social media sites, read blogs online or take part in discussion forums to get information about different things.

Since the utilization of media by the youth differs from each other similarly their desires also vary. Some people make use of media for diversion and for recreation whereas others utilize it for educational reasons or for social contact. Hence, it only depends on the individuals, which media they like to use to satisfy their needs.

Research Method

Quantitative method is applied as it is a more coherent and data-led approach which offers an evaluation of what people think from an arithmetical and statistical point of view. Quantitative research can assemble a great sum of statistics that can be simply structured and operated. It employs methods such as questionnaires, surveys and polls. In this particular study the researcher has selected a survey method to have a comparative analysis of both media. The population for this research study consists of male and female students of four educational institutes of Lahore. These include; Kinnaird College for Women, Lahore College for Women University, Punjab University and Forman Christian College. The institutes are selected for having a large number of academic youth. Convenience sampling is applied since the process requires no orderly system to select the number of cases (people).

A total of 250 cases, both male and female are drawn from four renowned academic institutions of Lahore with equal ratio i.e. 125 male and 125 female with age bracket of 19-24 years. A questionnaire is constructed for gathering data to evaluate traditional and social media consumption trends amongst the youth of Lahore. The questionnaire included 20 close ended questions and is designed in a

manner that is comprehensible by the respondents.

The collected data is processed through Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to make valid comparisons and evaluations.

Pre-testing and Reliability

Pre-testing is the prospect to see what questions work well, what questions sound odd, what questions can be removed and what needs to be included. The survey questions are pretested on a sample of 25 respondents to check the reliability of the instrument. The term reliability refers to the dependability and uniformity of a measure. The numerical approach to approximating consistency differs depending upon the rationale of the measure. Reliability of the items of questionnaires is tested by conducting the test of "Cronbach's alpha." This test is a measure of central consistency. It is considered to be a measure of scale dependability. The formula is not a mathematical experiment. It is a coefficient of uniformity. The constancy figures of the present study shows that the value of Cronbach's alpha is 0.651, which is around 0.7. The values 0.8 and 0.9 are considered excellent whereas the value of 0.5 is also acceptable. Hence, the instrument used for the study is reliable.

Findings

H₁: Traditional media and social media are equally consumed by the youth.

H₂: Traditional media and social media are not equally consumed by the youth.

The result of P-value(.000) shows that alternative hypothesis is

accepted at 5 % level of significance and void supposition is discarded. Therefore, an alternative hypothesis of significant association between traditional and social media (independent variable) and youth (dependent variable) is proved.

H₂: Social media is more popular than traditional media among the youth.

H₀: Social media is less popular than traditional media among the youth.

The result of P-value is significant (.000) that shows alternative hypothesis is accepted at 5% level of significance and other invalid assumption is refuted. Therefore, a working proposition of significant correlation between social media (independent variable) and youth (dependent variable) is proved.

Discussion and Analysis

This study aimed to find out the consumption patterns of media by the young generation. The present study found out the way young people interact with different forms of media and the time they like to spend across traditional and social media. Moreover, the research examined the medium which was given more preference by the youth and which was more popular among them.

According to the findings of the study youth interact with media for a number of reasons. For instance they consume various media depending on their needs e.g. for entertainment, for news and information, for communication, for relaxation and so on. But the results of the study show that youth mainly use traditional media for

entertainment and for gathering information. Social media is also used for direct access to information, pictures and video sharing sites, discussion forums and for communication with friends and family. Additionally the results of the study show that between conventional and new media, the widely used medium amongst youngsters is social media. A number of reasons are accountable for its popularity and usage such as easy access, fast updates; easy contact with friends and for entertainment purposes. According to the youth traditional media lack all these factors and that is why its use is declining amongst the youth. The findings of the research questions show much time youngsters spend on each medium, demonstrating that before the arrival of social media majority of the young people on average used to spend 1-2 hours or more than 4 hours on the traditional media like television, newspaper, magazines and radio. However, with the advent of social media greater part of the young generation now spends less than an hour on traditional media. Therefore, there is a drastic change and decline in the consumption of traditional media. The popularity of social media shows that majority of the youth spends 3-4 hours or more than 4 hours on social media. Moreover, the result regarding significance of both media for the adolescents reveals that new and old media both are important for young people and one cannot deny their significance. Traditional media is important because it's the oldest form of media and provides reliable information to its audience, which social media lacks. Whereas social media is vital for the youth because in this technologically complex era, where everything is getting advanced with each passing day they need a medium which helps them in their

academic activities and also in their routine life.

In this regard findings of the present study demonstrate that social media and traditional media are not equally consumed by the youth in today's era. The study also reveals that the time spent on various forms of traditional media have decreased from 4 hours to less than an hour. The use of social media dominates all other forms of media that are being used on a daily basis by the youth. Studies have supported the fact that there is a drastic decrease in the consumption of traditional media with the arrival of social media and on average there is an increase of 3-4 hours of time spent by youth online.

Social media is a two-way communication and provides one with the facility of getting in contact with anyone around the world. Social media also gives the youth a chance to know more about the world and its latest happenings. One main reason for social media being more popular among the youth than traditional media is its accessibility. Almost 62.4% youth of the present study, answered that social media is a more suitable and convenient media for them to use. 100% respondents of the present research believed that social media is more popular among the youth than traditional media.

Social media is used as a tool of learning as the findings show that almost 45% youth consumed the social media for educational purposes and for getting help in their assignments, projects, presentations etc. An interesting finding of the study is that despite the popularity of social media and decline in the use of traditional media youth still considered traditional media as the most reliable source of information and news gathering. The results of the study also show that 52% of the respondents prefer traditional media over

social media for gathering news and information and 62.4% of the respondents agreed that social media is not a trusted source of information in contrast to traditional media. Though the youth believes that social media has substituted the traditional media they also agree that television still maintains its position as the most utilized media by majority of the youth around the globe. The findings of the current study also uncovered that 88% of the respondents had television be the most widely used media among other forms of traditional media that they use and 89.2% of the respondents answered that television is still the most widely used media around the globe. However the use of media also varies with the demographics and psychographics like era, ethnicity, race, socio-economic status and psychological variables. For example in some parts of the world male majority outnumbers the female majority in the usage of social media. On the contrary females are heavy users of television programs and are listeners of different radio transmissions than the male users.

The popularity and usage of each medium exclusively depends on the young people and the needs that they want to gratify. As demonstrated by the 'uses and gratifications theory', people use media in order to satisfy their numerous wants. The young generation has a vast range of media available to them. The use of any form of media makes them heavy or moderate users of that media. Some young people use social media for information, education, and entertainment, while others use it for picture and video sharing sites, and discussion platforms. On the other hand a few use traditional media for news and information gathering or for

entertainment.

Conclusion

In this contemporary age media has power over our lives. Individuals make use of diverse media for their numerous goals depending on their satisfactions. Hence, the media utilization completely depends on individuals. The methodology used for gathering data is survey. The universe for the present study was Lahore and the population was the youth of Lahore with age group of 19-24 and four different universities of Lahore were selected to assemble the data. The sample for the study was 250 respondents that included 125 males and 125 females. The tool for collecting the data was a questionnaire and statistical software of SPSS was used for interpretation of results. The results reveal that H1 and H2 both are accepted and the null hypotheses were rejected. Hence social media and traditional media both are consumed by the young generation but social media is more popular amongst the youth than traditional media.

The Uses and Gratification theory also supports the present study because according to the theory audience play a significant function in choosing and using the medium that greatly fulfill their wants and requirements. So in the light of this theory, the given research analyzed that people use both traditional and social media depending on their desires.

A variety of media is being used by the youth now days. Some still use television, radio newspapers as part of traditional media while others completely rely on social media such as social networking sites, media sharing sites etc. However, the development

of social media has reduced the consumption of old media among the youth. It does not mean that at the present time traditional media is no more in use by the youngsters. Previous studies have focused on whether the fame and utilization of social media is replacing the traditional media and lessening its use among young generation. This study focused on media consumption habits of youth as it examined that the younger people still make use of traditional media along with the social media. However, the time spent on social media is relatively high in contrast to the traditional media.

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Media ethics: A study of prime time news bulletins of leading Pakistani news channels

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Abstract

This study examines the violation of media ethics through prime time news bulletins in leading Pakistani news channels. The objective of this study is to examine the role of prime time news bulletins in which they promote sensationalism in society, influence the people and set their perception on certain issues and to discuss whether they follow media ethics or not. The social responsibility theory is used, the methodology is a survey method and a questionnaire is used as a tool for data collection. The sample drawn for the study is a 100 which comprises of youth. The results of the study suggest that most of the people agree that news bulletins over-emphasize specific issues to create hype and promote sensationalism in society. Moreover the study justifies that prime time news bulletins of Pakistani channels promote sensationalism that leads towards the violation of media ethics.

Key Words: *News Channels, Subjective News Stories, Prime Time News Bulletin, Media Ethics*

Introduction

Media has a great influence on our daily life. It has become the only medium which provides information and awareness. People are spending most of their leisure time watching television and communicating via social media. The influence of media seems very powerful on the masses both at a personal level and on society as a whole. Mass media has influenced our communicating behavior and our perception of key issues. Media is considered as the “forth pillar of the state” alongside the parliament, executive and

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judiciary. This status gives a new dimension to the importance of media organizations.

Countless channels are available and people can find every type of channel ranging from news to entertainment, cooking to religion and fashion to music. News channels are considered a large industry, which create a new society with free flowing information. News media is becoming a major tool for getting stories and information broadcasted around the world. The media personnel; reporters, editors, photographers, camera men, anchor persons and producers play a major role in setting the tone and outlook of news stories which ultimately influence the public towards major issues and set their perceptions. The media plays a role in shaping public opinion and setting perceptions about issues and current affairs. Government officials, politicians, corporate organizations and other powerful groups collectively play a major role in influencing the media, encouraging the journalists to manipulate content according to their own interest. Therefore, media organizations are part of a dominating group propaganda and have become potentially harmful for the general public. Symbolism and emotion is added to the reporting of events, to increase the influence on people that the media has.

The public's expectation from the media organizations and journalists was that they follow an ethical code and make sure the accuracy, fairness, independence and neutrality of reporting is maintained responsibly. Accuracy in the respect of the truth, independent of any political or foreign influences, coupled with fairness and neutrality by telling all the aspect of the story without

unnecessary hype and sensitization.

The media boom and the competition between media organizations are creating ethical problems in society as well as leading towards the violation of media ethics. Media rating is greatly compromising the standard of reporting. Channels run to public information without checking facts, presents rumor and hateful and incomplete information. People become confused to find out what is true and what is untrue. They became bad news as leading news story and promote hype or create sensationalism in society. Their content selections have more violence stories as compared to other essential issues.

In Pakistani society, electronics news revolutionary boom come in media since 2000 and., media ethics are moral dilemma and media freedom is becoming a challenge. Everybody examine media ethics from in their own context and understanding. When we talk about the media ethics, it means; it is about how a journalist report a story, what should journalist and media organizations to do to disseminate the information publically. But in the umbrella of ethics many questions rise like what should be the language, tone and context, how it presented, how to maintain the standard and many other elements. News organizations and journalists should maintain their accountability and provide the both side of the story to public which help them to analyze the all aspect of the event. To build public interest, media must create structures that will provide self-regulation that is credible not just with the audience, but also within the media industry itself. Media organizations should learn that sensationalism, malicious lies and unethical reporting might give

short term competitive advantages but it will not build respect and trust. The only approach for media organizations and journalists to fighting with these threats is to reinforce the media ethics and code of conduct. A media person feels his responsibility and ensures it in what context he reports the story. Hence current research or study aims is to examine the role of prime time news bulletin of leading Pakistani news channels.

Objectives

1. To examine the role of prime time news bulletin in which they promote the sensationalism in society
2. To examine the role of prime time news bulletin in which they influence the people and set their perception on certain issues
3. To examine the role of prime time news bulletin is they follow the media ethics

Statement of the Problem

News Channels considered as the prime source to get information and they play major role to make the perception of public on political or social issues. In Pakistan, since 2000 a revolutionary boom is come in our news and entertainment industry. Many private news channels are working day and night to disseminate the information firstly and accurately. But unfortunately they are

doing business every news channel has its affiliation with some powerful group and gave most of the time to that political group in their news bulletins and ignoring the social and effective issues like water or energy crises, situation of *Thar* people's in Pakistan are very hot issues of the entire era but none of news channel report a single package on that issue in their prime time news bulletin. The way they presented news, languages, and tone and background music of the prime time news bulletin is sometime very horrible especially when crime or political news is broadcasted. Even news channels follow up the trend of broadcasting indecent Indian songs as the background music in various news stories. In short, news channels are presenting the bad taste of news in prime time news bulletin and violating the media ethics.

This study is going to be conducted under the title of “media ethics: a study of prime time news bulletin of the leading Pakistani news channels” and has been find out up to what extent news channels create hype, promote sensationalism and make sense of people about issues and violating the media ethics.

Research Questions

1. Does the prime time news bulletin of Pakistani news channels promote sensationalism?

2. Does the prime time news bulletin of Pakistani news channels violate media ethics?

Hypothesis

H₁: Prime time news bulletins of Pakistani channels promote sensationalism that leads towards the violation of media ethics.

Literature Review

Literature review is considered to be the most important part of the research process as it allows learning from the previous researches. Therefore, the researcher reviewed all the relevant literature available on the internet or in the library from different books, newspapers, articles and previous researches. A logical and systematic literature review made this study comprehensive. Researcher added following studies as a literature review to support the own research study.

News Media and Ethical Concerns

Media ethics is basically the standard for journalism. Media ethics are those principles of ethics or code of conducts and the practices as followed by the professional journalists to cope up with the challenges. These ethics or codes of conducts are designed by both

the media organizations and the professional journalists (Saxena, 2012).

Media ethics provide the guideline and guideline but unfortunately now media are subject to rating system and regulation by dominant groups. Media responsibility means present the true and objective news story. Kumar (2012) examine that responsible media is as the slogan that refers to the general belief that mass media has to be responsible in the public interest. Information technology is also creating new threats and ethical problems for the media houses. It digitally changes the background of the various news stories. Audiences have been able to rely on the facts what they are seeing actually there.

Gordon and Kittross (1999) said that ethical concern for media is important because it is answerable to the masses. They supposed that a reporter should ethically subjective, the news story which he report is the reflection of his feelings. No objectivity exists in media, it is the myth; even our own opinion have feelings and interest. Cohen-Almagor (2001) outlined the boundaries of freedom of speech and freedom of press in the context of media ethics. He elaborate that the concept of media ethics is conceived to be an oxymoron. Modern media are exposed as of violating ethical

concerns. Competition, rating and revenue generation are now consider more important and became ethics as a secondary element.

News media is basically the news industry that disseminated the important stories among people. News talk shows are helpful in changing the political structure, political system and political development. They play significant role to aware and influence the public to participate in society (Ahmed, 2010). Both print and electronic news media are restructuring the society structure and making the people's perception. Abt (1996) stated that in the contemporary society news media create distinction in society. It manipulated the things and changed the people's preferences. Basically, it offered the world of blurred boundaries where people are running to fulfill their false desires.

News is the one person's idea shared by all the members of the society. A journalist should be sensitive while reporting a news story. A journalist is one who seeks truth and reports it. Good (2003) states that journalist should be fair and have courage to report bold facts and interpret information objectively. It should search for facts and truth. Journalists can maintain the accuracy by providing the sources in stories so public can easily review the reliability and neutrality and discriminate the story with others.

Journalism ethics becomes unethical when manipulation of news stories ponder and reality become distorted. He/ she should be considered the good taste or bad taste of news while reporting an event. Ingram, Henshall, and Browne (2008) differentiated between the bad or good taste of news. According to them bad taste of news media may mean that news content hurting or distressing the audience. A good taste of news means that news media avoid the stereotyping, unnecessary content and obey the standard accepted by the society and report the event accurately.

Happer and Philo (2013) examine the impact of media in construction of public beliefs, attitude and drawing a change in society. News media play a central role in informing the public about what happens in the world, particularly in those areas in which people have no access to the affected area or person and don't experience it lively.

Perebinosoff (2008) describe that ethical concerns have been around for a long time. News media is considering the only mark to get information instantly. It has advantage to break important news stories and keep people updated. The way, they presented breaking news stories have aggressive tone, indecent background sound, and not seem original. Journalism and news media is now become

business. If media is failed to generate revenue then advertisers are not happy. So in that scenario media ethics and code of conduct are neglected by the media organizations or professional journalists to make advertisers happy.

Mass media is not to just update or inform the people about latest happening but instead of it has to work as a watch dog for national as well as international interests and formulate the public opinion on different happenings. It engages the public into an ongoing dialogue with society, state and media. According to McQuail (2003) media under all circumstances are responsible and accountable to answer the question asking by the audiences. In today's society, news media is becoming the most powerful institute to hold the public opinion. Its key role is to provide the information and aware the people what is happening around them. People make their opinion after watching or reading the news content. Media changed the way of life and thinking style. Glasser (1999) states that press should play role to guide the public and improve their life. With the development public journalism is now being introduced in society. In the name of free expression of media, public journalism has political and power elite influence. They used it to disseminate their desires and agendas. Public Journalism used as a tool to

transfer filtered information by the elite and bringing people to discuss only those issues which concern them

News media seems as the hegemony of the powerful elite. They used the media as the agent to enforce the public interest and pull down the objectivity of media and impose their own ideology. Crook (2009) stated that press is becoming gradually more powerful and violent. Media become center and consider important among society; so government institutions and dominance groups using media and define the public interest according to their own purposes.

Journalists and media together should build harmony and unity to protect journalism. News organizations or journalists often claim that their own biases, interests and the pressure of powerful groups or advertisers do not affect their objectivity. They try their best to present the both side of news. Entman (1989) criticize the American journalistic and political process and described journalistic objectivity in a two way; first is depersonalization and second one is balance. Depersonalization means that a journalist should not express his own views, beliefs and feelings in the story or not even give any judgment about event. While a balance means that a journalist should cover all the aspect of story and give

importance to both side views without favoring one side.

People spent most of their leisure time in watching or reading media content and are gratifying their needs. Media houses and journalist should understand that people are watching, following or idealize them. Christian and Traber (1997) argue that mass communication field identifies the broader ethical approaches which make the world of mass media to make public news stories and responsible code of conduct. Boykoff and Boykoff (2004) focus on the norm of balance reporting and shows that elite press's loyalty to balance reporting actually leads him towards the biased coverage.

Although the reviewed literature highlights the different aspects related with the prime time news bulletin and news media ethics of Pakistani News channels. Objectivity in news is nothing and has no relationship with truth. With the advancement in technology and the digitalization of media made outdated the media laws and ethics and their regulation. Today, media organizations created reality of their interests and make the perception of public and influence them. Mass media are now becoming most powerful institute to hold and make it responsible and accountable.

Theoretical Framework

As a theoretical framework of this study, researcher selected the social responsibility theory. Social responsibility theory is the concept of the mid-20th century which replaces the libertarian theory. Social responsibility theory tells us how media/ press are supposed to operate. It is the theory of media ethics that guide the media organizations and practitioners they are obliged to work and perform their duties with responsibilities and to develop a standard in journalism and play role to make journalism better. The media should broadcast the news within the circle of ethical guidelines and in a responsible way. They are responsible to raise the voice of public and to disseminate the unbiased and objective news story. Siebert, Peterson, and Schramm (1956) stated some aspects of the social responsibility theory which are following:

- Media must show truth, accuracy, objectivity and balance
- Media should be free but self-regulated within the framework of law designed by the institutions.
- Media is a forum for public to raise their voices.
- Media organizations or journalists are accountable to his audience

- Media should meet the standards and follow the ethics or code of conducts

Under the umbrella of social responsibility theory, the purpose of this research is to determine the role of prime time news bulletin in the formation of public opinion, spreading the sensationalism and violating the media ethics.

Research Methodology

To address the research questions, survey method has been applied by the researcher to obtain the results or collect data that is quantitative in nature. Researcher selected questionnaire as a tool of data collection. Questionnaire is designed according to likert scale and based on close ended questions. Sample of the present study are young people who watched prime time news bulletin from age 18 to 30 from different universities of the Lahore, Pakistan on the basis of simple random sampling. The sample size for this study is 100.

Limitation of the Study

It is very difficult for a researcher to conduct an ideal or perfect research. So, every study has some limitations. In the present study there are some limitations which are as following:

- One of the limitations of this study is that, only it is based on the survey method.
- In this study researcher have focused only on the private leading news channels, not consider the state own news channel in this study.
- In this study, researcher main focused is on violation of the media ethics.

Findings & Interpretation

This section of study included descriptive analysis of respondent and tried to find out which channel people prefer to watch news bulletin and which segment they like most in news bulletin. Moreover, it also presented the results findings in form of percentage that are related to the new bulletin language, background music, news content and selection of news.

Table 1**On which Pakistani news channel you watch news?**

Option	Opinion	Percentage
Geo News	14	46.7%
ARY News	4	13.3%
Express News	2	6.7%
Dunya TV	8	26.7%
Samaa News	2	6.7%

Table 2

Which segment people like most in prime time news bulletin?

Sr. No	Questions	Options with percentage				
		Strongly Disagree	Dis- agree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	Aggressive tone is used in the prime time news bulletins by the leading Pakistani news channels	0%	10%	6.7%	50%	33.3%
2	The leading Pakistani news channels undermine the professionalism while striving for rating in the prime time news bulletins	0%	0%	6.7%	56.7%	36.7 %
3	Language used by the leading Pakistani news channels in their prime time news bulletin is overstressed	0%	3.3%	16.7%	73.3%	6.7%
4	Leading Pakistani news channels at times create fear in the public through their presentation of news in the prime time news bulletins	0%	10%	3.3.%	53.3%	33.3%
5	Hype is created by the leading Pakistani news	0%	0%	10%	40%	50%

	channels in their prime time news bulletins					
6	Leading Pakistani news channels gave more space to negative stories in the prime time news bulletins.	0%	13.3%	0%	53.3%	33.3%
7	Sensationalism is promoted by the leading Pakistani news channels in their prime time news bulletins	0%	3.3%	6.7%	63.3%	26.7%
8	Pakistani news channels over-exaggerate the specific issues in their prime time news bulletins	0%	3.3%	0%	70%	26.7%
9	Indecent songs and video clips are played in the prime time news bulletins by the leading news channels	3.3%	13.3%	13.3%	33.3%	36.7%
10	Prime time news bulletin neglecting the important issues of Pakistan and gave preference to player's wedding news and other local issues.	6.7%	13.3%	10%	30%	40%

Table 3
Participant responses on the violation of media ethics in news
bulletin

Option	Opinion	Percentage
Political/ National	21	70%
International	2	6.7%
Sports	1	3.3%
Entertainment	3	10%
Weather	2	6.7%
Special package	1	3.3%

Analysis & Discussion

This study examines the prime time news bulletin of leading Pakistani news channels in the context of media ethics. Total number of 100 respondents from the different universities of the Lahore was selected as the population and to fill the questionnaire. As illustrated through Table 1 points out that which of the following channel you watch most? When researcher enquired about the favorite news channel; it is observed that Geo News is the most popular news channel, 42% of the total people like to watch Geo news. Geo news is the most favorite and oldest media group in Pakistan. Dunya news enjoys 26.7% viewers. 13.3% of the selected population likes to watch ARY news. The lowest viewership is of

Express and Samaa news that is 6.7% among the selected population.

Table 2 points out that which segment of news bulletin people like most? According to collected data, 70% of the total respondents like political or national news in the prime time news bulletin which paly role to increase the political efficacy. 10% people like entertainment content, 6.7% people are interested in both international and weather forecasting news while rest 3.3% respondents liked sports and special package coverage by the news channel in their prime time news bulletin.

Table 3 comprises of many different statements which indicate that the prime time news bulletin pattern and their violation of media law or code of conducts. Statement 1 point out that leading Pakistani news channels use aggressive tone to present a news story. Results illustrated that 82% people are agreed, 10 % are disagree while rest of people show neutral judgment that news channels used aggressive tone to present a news story which is sanitized the viewers and unethical.

Statement2. Leading Pakistani news channels undermine the professionalism while striving for ratings in the prime time news bulletin. According to gathered data results indicate that 92% people are agreed and rests of 8% are showing neutral behavior that news channels are in the face of competition and are striving for rating and demoralized the professionalism.

Statement3. Language used by the leading Pakistani news channels in their prime time news bulletin is overstressed. Results indicate that 76% people are agreed, 4% respondents are disagree

that news channels used unethical language in their news bulletin. While gathered data shows that 20% respondents shows neutral behavior that language of news channel become aggressive day by day which stressed the people.

Statement4. Leading Pakistani news channels at times create fear in the public through their presentation of news in the prime time news bulletins indicate that 88% people are agreed from this statement, 8% respondents are disagree from that the prime time news bulletin create fear among people, while rest of people 4% show neutral behavior on the fear creation of the prime time news bulletins.

Statement5. Extra hype is created by the leading Pakistani news channels in their prime time news bulletin when researcher asked about the propagated and hyped nature of the prime time news bulletin analysis indicate that 88% people are agreed that news channels create hype and propagate the specific events while rest of respondent 12% shows neutral behavior nobody denied from this declaration.

Statement6. Leading Pakistani news channels give more space to the negative stories in the prime time news bulletin. When researcher asked about the news bulletin content that they broadcast negative stories, stories about rape, crime or terrorism from the respondent, results findings demonstrate that that 92% people are agreed from it and 8% respondents are disagree that news channels gave more coverage to the negative news stories.

Statement7. Sensationalism is promoted by the leading Pakistani news channels in their prime time news bulletin.

According to gathered data 88% respondents are agreed, 4% respondents are disagreeing that news channels promote sensationalism provoke the public interest and create bias in news stories.

Statement8.The leading Pakistani news channels over-exaggerate the specific issue in the prime time news bulletins. When researcher asked about it that news channels give importance or coverage to the specific events or issues in their news bulletins results indicate that 96% people are agreed from it and rest of 4% respondents are disagree that news channels gave coverage to the specific issues.

Statement9. Indecent songs and videos are played in the prime time news bulletins by the leading Pakistani news channels. According to collected data 62% people are agreed, 22% respondents are disagree, rest of 16% show neutral opinion about that the indecent Indian songs, movie clips, or dialogues are associated with the news content which is against the Pakistani media law and ethics.

Statement10. Prime time news bulletin neglecting the important issues of Pakistan and gave preference to player's wedding news and other local issues. When the researcher asked about that the news channels to get top rating are doing to neglect the national or important social issues and have focused on the celebrities personal life, results indicate that 78% people are agreed, 18% respondents are disagree that news bulletin lack the content and ignore the important issues to cover while rest of 4% respondents show neutral opinion.

Conclusion

Media is become the center of our life. It influences behavior, attitude and makes perception of the viewers on different issues. People are depending on media to get latest update and keep themselves self- update. So, people are expected and demanding that the media organizations and journalists make sure the accuracy, fairness, neutrality and responsibility while reporting any event. This study is conducted on violation of media ethics by the prime time news bulletin. Researcher used social responsibility theory to support this study. Both the research questions do the prime time news bulletin of Pakistani news channels promote sensationalism? And does the prime time news bulletin of Pakistani news channels violate media ethics? For this study these questions have been proved under the quantitative approach and close ended questions were asked from the youth. Results indicate that majority of the respondents were agreed that prime time news bulletin is violating the media ethics. Government, politicians, corporate organizations and other powerful group collectively play role to influence the media, encourage the journalists to broadcast their interests and manipulate the content. In that context media organizations are become the part of dominate group's propaganda and become dangerous for audience. Competition between media organizations leads them towards the violating of media ethics. Media rating is surrendering the standard of media. Channels run to public information without checking facts. They became bad news as leading news story and promote hype or sensationalism in society. Their content selections have more violence stories as

compared to other essential issues. Presentation of news, language, tone and music is used and create indecencies and hype or promote sensationalism among society. They are neglecting the national, social and domestic issues and gave coverage to the specific issues of the elite class interest in their prime time. The coverage of player's wedding is more important for them as comparison to the considerable other important issues in Pakistan.

Only few respondents are of the result view that prime time news bulletin do not violate the media ethics and have objectivity.

Recommendations

This section present some recommendations for future improvement in the prime time news bulletin of leading Pakistani news channels. Media organizations and journalists to fighting with ethical threats are to reinforce the media ethics and code of conduct. A media person should feel his responsibility and ensures it in what context he reports the story. News organizations and journalists should maintain their accountability and provide the both side of the story to public which help them to analyze the all aspect of the event.

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The role of media and social activists: The new stars on board

Parvin Sultana

Abstract:

Stardom and celebrity status is intrinsically related to the kind of space media provides to the concerned individuals. The coverage of media has become a parameter of measuring stardom. But over time, stardom is no longer limited only to beautiful film stars and dashing male athletes. Intellect is the new glam quotient. Social activists taking up the cause of the downtrodden is getting a lot of space in media. Glamour has given way to asceticism and simplicity. However, while picking up stories, media has its own concern about which issue to highlight and which to override. This paper tries to understand the role of media in creating stars and promoting stardom of unconventional individuals by taking up coverage of two political movements of contemporary times. Media's treatment for these two social activists - Anna Hazare and Irom Sharmila Chanu have been different to such an extent that while one became headlines, the other continued to be a mere footnote in the media.

Keywords: Mass media, Anna Hazare, Stardom, Irom Sharmila, celebrity status.

Introduction

Stardom and celebrity status is intrinsically related to the kind of space media provides to the concerned individual. The coverage of media has become a parameter of measuring stardom. But over the time, stardom is no more limited only to beautiful film stars and dashing male athletes. Intellect is the new glam quotient however, while picking up stories, media has its own concern about which issue to highlight and which to override. Media has the potential to create stars and promoting stardom of unconventional individuals through agenda setting and framing. More and more social activists taking up the cause of the downtrodden is getting a lot of space in media. Media can glamorize asceticism and

simplicity. This study explains how media's treatment of two social activists—Anna Hazare and Irom Sharmila Chanu has been different to such an extent that while one became headlines, the other continued to be a mere footnote in media.

Stardom in India

In India, stardom and celebrity status have often been dominated by the Bollywood film industry. Regional cinema has also been able to throw stars with larger than life images. The stardom of film stars has been accentuated by the fact that they often cross over to take up a more public role through active participation in politics. While Indian films have tried to break barriers in order to reach out to newly emerging global markets—Diaspora is an apt example, there have been certain boundaries set within which Bollywood functions.

This becomes clearer when the star in question is a female one. For example, Mazumdar (2009) acknowledges the role of gossip in shaping a star's image. In the early times of Bollywood, information about stars was very professional in nature. But with the rise of Bollywood, there was a shifting demand in how the private lives of the stars were portrayed in the media which led to an interest about star gossip.

Changing notions of stardom and celebrity status

For a long time, stardom and celebrity status tended to be the sphere of Bollywood actors. Later, they had to give a wider berth to sportsmen of popular sports like Cricket. Recently, there has been a change in how stardom is thought of and who the new stars are. With the politicization

of middle class, a newer kind of stardom has come to the center stage. While stars have often crossed over to public domain, their engagement is always social in nature; be it a charitable functions or activities aimed at movie promotions. However at present, with private news channels coming into the fray for TRP rates, there is a glamour quotient added to political meetings and political rallies. The latest celebrity is the public intellectual and the social activist. Rallies and sit-ins (*dharnas*) giving expression to the political aspirations of middle class actually got a lot of attention from the civil society. This has been proven by the kind of coverage media gave to such activities.

The status of celebrity is no more the prerogative of a film star; rather the people's hero is now those who give voice to their demands. The use of spectacles by such new stars is similar to what film stars did. Political movements are also very performative in nature. It is very much about how the media picks such activities and portrays it. A classic example is the movement led by Anna Hazare. Stardom is no more bounded by a very mainstream idea of beauty and aesthetics, other elements have also come to play crucial role.

Stardom and Media

Stars can become legendary or unpopular owing entirely to the media. Portrayal of stars and celebrities by the media has undergone a change, keeping in pace with the changing socio-political conditions. The new star is no longer only a good looking, usually young film star or an athlete, but at times a social and political activist. The latest stars are uncanny. One can mention the glamorous campaign that the Prime Minister Narendra Modi carried out in his run up to the election. Apart

from his political agenda, he also came to be viewed by many as a style icon. His facial hair, hair style, his accessories became the talk of the town. He was portrayed as a tech savvy, well-dressed man, whose company women would appreciate. He was discussed as an eligible bachelor by film actresses hoping for some space in media.

Media and television news in particular can make someone a celebrity overnight. In some cases, it goes viral, multiplying the air time and column of news print at the rate of geometric progression. This creates an aura of super stardom. Few are able to decipher the phenomena for what it is a frenzy fed by mutual needs. Hunger for new icons in case of the media and the power that being seen on TV and remaining in news circulation bestows on the person concerned, leads to the constant churning out of such new stars. However, such celebrity status is often short-lived. Many politicians, film stars, activists had such short-lived fame. At one point in time, everything Lalu Prasad did became news. Whether it was his theatrics, showmanship or sheer buffoonery, viewers appeared to love him and news channels could never have had enough. This gave Lalu a national super stardom. But too soon the cameras and microphones moved to his arch rival Nitish Kumar.

2011 also saw the rise of uncanny superstars like Baba Ramdev. Ramdev, a yoga guru who always had a following, reinvented himself as a social crusader. His campaign and fast in Delhi's 'Ramlilamaidan' to bring back black money stashed in Swiss banks became a huge media event. The ill-considered police action added to the drama and made it a chart buster event. However, his image as a baba possessing extra-

ordinary powers took a beating because he tried to escape the ground (maiden) in a woman's attire. He was also unable to carry on the fast.

Anna—the new Avatar

The biggest star of 2011 was Anna Hazare. A Gandhian, who lives an ascetic life, took the nation by storm. He gave voice to the aspirations of middle class, who have been notoriously apolitical for long. He brought millions of people to protest, who were cribbing for a long time, but not doing anything about their complaints. Along with his persona and his mode of protest, that is: fasting, even his choice of the issue of corruption, contributed a lot to his stardom. Corruption has affected all levels of society. It is a broad issue which found resonance in almost everyone. Everybody and especially the middle class could relate to the victimhood caused by corruption. Anna was successful in making corruption the top issue for people, parliamentarians and media. Corruption became the number one issue for coverage and debate on TV channels. Lokpal became one of the most searched words on Google. Anna himself and his team never lost an opportunity to stress the support of media.

Anna, a dhoti clad Gandhian, ushered in new hopes in the political scenario. While political corruption seemed rampant, he spoke an unsullied apolitical language against corruption. Anna spoke the language of common people who could relate very easily to the issues he raised. While many found it very easy to associate with Anna's movement, it also enjoyed positive media coverage. His hunger strike found extensive coverage in every news media. This set the ball rolling and very soon everybody started talking about it. Anna Hazare became a

prominent name in day to day conversations. It was the news coverage that set Anna's fast as the agenda of discussion. Anna Hazare movement succeeded in taking in its fold both the classes; the elite as well as the common people. A non-violent movement shook the entire nation and the media's coverage actually increased its impact manifold.

Acknowledging the endorsement of media that this movement enjoyed, many were wary of such blanket support. One rarely came across a critical analysis of the Jan Lokpal Bill. Rather everybody joined in the frenzy. Veteran Journalist Shashi Kumar writing in Outlook points out in the current scenario where everything is market-driven, truth which should be at the heart of journalism might become vulnerable to the dictates of the market. This phenomenon was already visible in the fact that there is gradual dumbing down and tabloidization of news. To put it more crudely, there is a thin line dividing news channels from entertainment channels. Loud, dramatized delivery of news has become the order of the day. In case of the Anna Movement, those critical of Anna's style of brinkmanship, were given very less space in media. Even stories about acute deprivation did not find mention as prime time slots were booked for covering the movement. This was worsened by the fact that in terms of TRPs, news from rural and semi-urban areas suffers from a negative bias. It has also proven financially beneficial for news channels. As pointed by Esha News Service, it was a money spinner. Criticisms labeled against Hazare's Lokpal which had a high tendency of turning authoritarian also did not find much space in mainstream media. Criticisms were brushed under the carpet.

Irom – the other fasting Gandhian

Far from the glare of the media, another social crusader carried her fight against an issue which has impacted the lives of a large number of common people. On 2 November, 2000, Assam Rifles gunned down at close range 10 people at a bus stop in the village Malom near Imphal. Among the victims, who were killed in the incident, there were a 62-year-old woman and an 18-year-old boy. This incident is known as the Malom Massacre. The site of this incident became later “Ten Innocents Park”. The massacre outraged 28-year-old Irom Sharmila Chanu. And on 4th November, Irom started her indefinite fast against an inhuman law called Armed Forces Special Power Act (AFSPA). Thus, began the world’s longest hunger strike. She had been extremely vocal about the need to repeal the draconian act.

The state had not yet reached out to Irom. But the Hobbesian state could not let Irom die and become a martyr. So, she was arrested on charges of trying to commit suicide and force fed thrice a day with a rubber tube. She was kept in a ward of the Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital in Imphal. This law allows confinement for 364 days. So, just a day before a year of Sharmila’s imprisonment was over, she was released. However, she was released just for a day and rearrested again for the same crime. This has been going on for the last 14 years.

While, Irom continues her fast, her pleas and protest falls on deaf ears. It is sad that how her 13 yearlong protest for a genuine cause has failed to find enough space in media. Middle class Indians have also been lukewarm to her demands. It was only when Anna Hazare’s fast came to focus that she found some space in the fringes. The ‘Prisoner of

Conscience’ has failed to speak to the conscience of the state. While she found vocal support from many corners – be it Human Rights Activists, Nobel laureates, civil society organizations, it’s the state apparatus which continues to be oblivious to her demands.

Anna the Star – Irom the ‘Other’

While Anna took the center stage, Irom continued to languish in the fringes of the media. This biased attitude reinforced the negligence that people of the region have felt. The region is both physically and psychologically far from the mainland. The region and issues continue to be absent from the mind and heart of the rest of the nation. This absence is conspicuous in the national media as well. As a result, the people in the mainland are completely isolated from whatever happens in the region. Due to this conspicuous absence of the region from the mainstream discourse, people could hardly relate to the movement in the Northeast and Irom’s struggle never became the struggle of others.

Media usually remembers Irom Sharmila, on March every year, when she is ceremoniously released from judicial custody and then rearrested after 24 hours on charges of attempting suicide. Irom found mention in mainstream media when she was invited by Team Anna to join them in their fast. While responding, Irom requested them to reach out to concerned legislators to set her free and join their crusade. She further invited them to Manipur which in her words is the most corruption-affected region in the world. The invitation was, however, critiqued by many. As Manipur’s Sangai Express stated comparing the two social activists: “One is a former driver in the Indian Army, an anointed Gandhian, a man who has managed to grab the attention of the

country, send the political establishment into a huddle whenever he announces his intention to stop eating and he has been on a fast for the last seven days. The other is a poet, anointed Iron Lady by her fellow people and someone who has largely existed on the periphery of the country's consciousness and she has been on a fast since November, 2000 without creating so much of a flutter in the corridors of power. Anna Hazare is news, Sharmila is non entity".

Media unabashedly ignored Irom Sharmila's fast. It has been in the fringe of Indian media as well as social network. But such discrimination is not specific only to Irom. When baba Ramdev got similar attention from media, Swami Nigamananda who has been fasting for more than a 100 days to stop illegal mining in Jharkhand died. He too failed to get any attention for his cause from the media or the government.

Many in the state felt that such an invitation was an insult. Irom's aura has been generated not by any media coverage, nor by support or solidarity to her cause but by her sheer will and determination. The invitation has also been dismissed as a publicity stunt. The region and its concerns continue to be excluded from the nation's psyche. However, riding on the Anna wave, Irom has managed to garner support from netizens on her struggle. Many people used facebook and twitter to support Irom and her cause.

Sadly, the intense coverage on one fast has exposed media's apathy towards another one, a fast which talked about issues much more important than corruption. Irom seems to be on the wrong side of the digital divide. While social and private media rallied behind Anna and

his movement and took the government by surprise, their response to a similar movement of Sharmila, which questioned grave human rights violations was pretty lukewarm. Sharmila languished as a footnote in the media coverage. This, points to a grim reality about the divide the urban middle class and rural poor in terms of political leverage that they enjoy. Anna's movement by far was a more middle class, urban movement than a national movement. While, these issues found massive support, many equally important issues like caste discrimination, development induced displacement failed to ensure such mobilization. These issues, that dominantly affect the poor, are absent in the virtual world.

The similarity between Irom and Anna ends at the fact that both have chosen the same mode of protest, that is the Gandhian method of fast unto death for something they believe to be right. Irom started her movement against the draconian AFSPA in a quiet hilly state of Manipur. It hardly made the breaking news of a news channel. However, the local people found resonance in her sacrificial unique protest. They lovingly christened her 'Menghaobi' or the 'Fair One'. It reflected her conviction to stand up for what is right. Sharmila has also staged protests in Jantar Mantar in the national capital. But her movement failed to capture the imagination of people from mainland India. Those who rallied behind Anna could identify with being victims of corruption, but failed to stand by people suffering from the blatant abuse of democracy in the fairest state of Manipur.

Anna's movement was like a gala event for the media. The event found an extensive coverage in the media. His movement also enjoyed

wide scale endorsement by celebrities from different walks of life – film stars, sport stars etc. While the media's coverage ensured that the central government found itself cornered on the issue of anti-corruption, the same media failed to initiate a discourse on the ill effects of the draconian law AFSPA. The long heard complaints of state apathy of people with Mongoloid feature from a different cultural and racial stock seemed to be ringing true if Anna and Irom's movements are pitted against each other

The responses continue to be different all across the board. The government while giving in to Anna's demands turned a deaf ear to Irom's protests. Such an attitude of the government that left a section of its population to languish under an anti-democratic law, re-entrenched the core-periphery understanding of the Northeast. The government would never ignore a populist movement ahead crucial parliamentary elections. But the geo-political importance of north east or the lack of it pushed Irom's movement and demands to the back burner.

Conclusion

Media makes and unmakes stars. Based on TRP rates, the media chooses its latest sweethearts. But what such coverage does is that it tends to promote direct democracy and undermines the fundamental principle of liberal democracy, holding that governance isn't just about placating the most vocal sections of society. The media, which is supposed to be the watchdog of democracy, should not undermine democratic institutions. Why media finds it easier or profitable to project someone needs to be studied. Anna Hazare, a male from Maharashtra took up an issue like corruption which everybody supported. Ironically the middle class only

saw one kind of misuse of financial resources as corruption while overlooking issues like donation, bribery which they themselves at times indulge in. The vague, all-encompassing nature of the issue made it easier to rally behind it and target government which is the punching bag for all.

On the other hand, Irom, a woman from Manipur with visibly Mongoloid features whose 'Indianness' is often under doubt has spoken against a specific law, the AFSPA. Scrapping the law would put into scrutiny the state's activities under the garb of such a law. As a result, her nonviolent Gandhian act also seems to be so subversive that she has been jailed for so long. Even initiating a dialogue with her seemed as tantamount to questioning the *raison d'être* of the draconian law AFSPA and hence the state which passed it. Coming from the land of Meira Paibis or strong women social activists, Irom questions the patriarchal notions in her own ways. She raises a human rights issue rather than women's issue. By doing this, she problematizes the public morality which seeps in patriarchy. Putting aside her life of marriage, family and kids, Irom chose the life of a crusader. All this places Irom in a peculiar location, while Anna has never subverted the Indian value system. Hence while media made Anna a celebrity, they continue to be wary of Irom Sharmila. Unlike Anna, Irom continues to be an aberration. Anna wanted to re-entrench democracy while Irom questioned the Indian democracy which is hailed by all. As a result, while it is easier to portray Anna as the next Gandhi taking up the cause of all, Irom continues to be seen as someone removed geographically and psychologically from the minds of mainland Indians nursing the cause of human rights' violation

of few who rarely are the concern of Indians from regions other than the Northeast.

The Indian Army continues to epitomize nationalism and patriotism. Irom's movement targets the accesses of Indian Army behind the veil of impunity provided by AFSPA. This is another fact that ensured lesser support for Irom's movement. Be the average Indian or the news media, Indian Army continues to be the hero for many. This is proven by the largely romanticized coverage of Army doing relief work during natural disasters. Doing their duty, they are portrayed as larger than life heroes. Even emulating the most popular leader Gandhi was not enough. Anna could share the stage with RSS which was involved in Gandhi's murder. Many observers have pointed out that Anna's movement has a strong backing of right wing elements that were targeting the Congress government. As a result, the "India Against Corruption" movement always ran the risk of being hijacked by communal elements. Unlike Anna, Irom stayed away from such political permutations and combinations.

Government's responses to the two fasts have been diagonally opposite. Irom was slapped again and again with IPC 309 and force-fed under imprisonment. On the other hand, Anna's movement brought the Parliament to a standstill. The media accentuated the impact by fanning the angst that people felt towards a government already riling under multiple scams and corruption charges. While Anna fast forced the government to take cognizance of the need of a strong anti-graft bill, Irom have been arrested again and again for sustained fasting. However, one cannot dismiss the achievements of her movement. Although away

from the limelight, as a result of her consistent effort, the criticism of AFSPA became an integral part of the discourse on the act. Talks of having a more humane law in place of AFSPA are also a direct result of her protest. However, compared to Anna the attention that her movement could manage is minuscule. The neglect and apathy for the region continues and Irom's movement is often glossed over. The region continues to be a borderland which is essentially seen through the prism of National Security.

However, one cannot put the blame of disproportionate coverage only on media. It seems that coverage is proportionate to the importance given by the government to a particular issue. Anna's movement posed a direct challenge to the government authority and hence the government responded with utmost priority. But, the same cannot be said about the anti-AFSPA struggle. Government's response being lukewarm, media also did not prioritize the issue. The apathy and neglect is shared by the civil society and media, hence, there is a collective failure in holding government responsible for human rights violations in the region.

The AFSPA is not an ordinary act. It was specially constituted in 1958 for disturbed areas, where insurgency and militancy are widespread. It is operational in Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura, Manipur and Jammu and Kashmir. While, other states have been declared low intensity conflict areas, Manipur continues to simmer with multiple militant related problems.

Manipur has been a troubled area from the security perspective. Because of its troubled borders with neighboring states and internecine

tribal rivalries, it has been a theatre of conflicts. To rein in the militancy problem, AFSPA was implemented in the state. But this act, which gives excessive powers to the Army, has constrained the democratic rights of the citizens. They have often complained of being treated as subjects and captives rather than citizens. The army is least bothered about the systematic abuse of the democratic rights of the Manipuris. Rather, Army, behind the shield of this Act, is also indulged in atrocities against the citizens. The Act gives a military officer the right to use force on the basis of mere suspicion even if it causes death. It allows arrests without a warrant and searching of premises without a search warrant. Under the impunity of this Act, army officials have committed heinous crimes like rape, sexual harassment and murder. The rape and murder of Thangjam Manorama is a cruel reminder to this fact.

While, in the face of blatant abuse, the government has been forced to rethink the need of such a draconian act, the army has been strictly against the removal of the Act. The Army believes that maintenance of law and order in the region will be impossible without this act. The presence of such a law puts a question on the competence of democratically elected governments. Such army operations under the control of central government undermine the local governments. The continued use of such laws promotes the idea that the region's requirement is secondary to the issue of national security. The region continues to be treated as a land frontier.

Irom Sharmila's protests raise these pertinent issues. Her hunger strike puts the government in a tight fix. They don't want to respond to her. However, they cannot afford to let her die also as that would make her a martyr. Unlike Anna, who asks the right questions within the

acceptable parameters, Irom is way more subversive and questions the very existence of State. Anna is a manageable rebel, while Irom is a subversive rebel.

The government's dismissal of Irom's protests and absence of any initiatives at a dialogue shows its tilt towards status quo. In the light of the current situation, one cannot see an end to the draconian law despite widespread protests and demands from civil society organizations. This clearly indicates that civil liberty will always be sacrificed at the altar of national security. Similar has been the suppression of Naxalites and Maoists, who challenged the nation's state. While Anna did not challenge the state, he did challenge the government. However, the overwhelming support for Anna forced the government to act with some restraint.

While healthy protests are an effective way of keeping a government accountable in a democracy, protests come to be classified as legally and legitimately based on how media portrays it and how far it does not subvert the vested interests of the government of the day. While, corporate media epitomized Anna as the second Gandhi, it was not very kind to Irom who remained practically invisible. While, Anna and his supporters are seen as patriots and nationalists, the activists who bravely stood by Irom are often hounded as anti-national by right wing groups. This is the situation in the contemporary India that the ruling class determines what form of protest merits attention and what does not. While Irom's long fast inspires awe, the main issue of her protest fails to garner much needed support.

Certain trends are observed regarding media's coverage after a closer look at the two movements and the two personas. Anna Hazare's demands despite being ambiguous found a stronger support base and did not problematize nationalism. Rather, it demanded that the government has moved away from text book patriotism and should revert back to it. While on the other hand, Irom's demands put human rights over the questions of nation's security as perceived by the central government. Hence, despite having specific demand and being backed by multiple cases of human rights abuse, Sharmila's war continues to be something the nation and the media is uncomfortable to rally behind. This is just another chapter to the systemic exclusion of the region northeast and the issues related to it since ages. Media with its selective highlighting of issues, has failed to hold the state accountable for these mishaps in the region. Rather it is the TRPs that has been the deciding factor about who is the activist of the '*right hue*' meriting support and hence, the coverage.

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**Book Review**

Naomi Klein (2007). *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*. Penguin; Reprint edition (18 Sept. 2007) ISBN-13: 978-0713998993

Reviewed by Alina Ali Durrani¹

The Shock Doctrine, authored by Canadian Author and social activist Naomi Klein, discusses the rise of the neoliberal free market policies in developed countries as being a product of large scale privatization and trade liberalization prompted by a deliberate attempt at “Disaster Capitalism”. The book tells the tale of how America’s “free market” policies have found global domination by taking advantage of disaster-shocked people and countries.

Naomi Klein, the author, is an accomplished writer and is known for her political analysis. She is the author of multiple international bestsellers and also one of the most influential books about alter-globalization, *No Logo*. She features in various lists of top influential thinkers, such as the prospect magazine’s world thinkers 2014.

In *The Shock Doctrine*, Naomi Klein attempts at explaining the connection between man-made or natural disasters in various parts of the world and the rise in neo liberal free market ideologies following those disasters. She implies that powerful international companies can not only survive in disaster stricken areas but have actually learned to thrive, feeding off the poverty and desperation that follows catastrophe. Without pointing to any global conspiracy, she explains how a series of failed policies and injustices have created a world where the rich are facilitated and the poor are subjected to discrimination and further hardships. Throughout the book a similarity between electro-shock therapy as a way of mind alteration used by psychiatrists and shock therapy as a radical capitalist economic policy is established. Ranging from the objectives of the process to the process itself, stating the three steps by which both the processes are theoretically accomplished. Firstly the ‘destruction’ of the existing foundation, followed by targeted ‘reconstruction’ and finally imposing of the changes that take place. Many examples of such systematic overhaul of society are given and the author through this book has

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expressed her personal experiences and interactions with the affected societies.

The author traces the roots of “Disaster Capitalism” five decades prior to the attacks of September 11, 2001 which seemingly changed the world as we know it. According to Klein the intellectual origins of the present free market economic policies are rooted in the University of Chicago’s economic department under Milton Friedman, the Nobel Laureate is charged with producing a policy which worked to reengineer societies that are reeling from shock-“disaster capitalism”. During the course of the book the author draws innovative and astounding correlations amid economic policy, 'shock and awe' warfare and covert CIA-funded experiments in electroshock and sensory deprivation in the 1950s; research that helped write the torture manuals used today in Guantanamo Bay.

Part one begins with a chapter on psychiatric experiments conducted by the infamous psychiatrist Ewen Cameron in collaboration with the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency). These experiments were based on the premise of wiping clean to rebuild the human mind, according to the references suggested throughout the book these experiments are still in practice by the CIA as means of torture. Dr. Ewen Cameron worked on the concept of complete “de-patterning” of his patients through electric shock treatments and total sensory deprivations; he believed that once the mind was wiped clean it could be rewritten. His patients were subjected to extreme torture and constant idea inductions by repetitive play of sounds and videos. Needless to say the experiments failed miserably, the patients were left with incurable psychological trauma, only a few were able to resist the treatments and live to tell the tale.

Klein calls this the “shock therapy”; use of destruction to numb the senses and build something new, she in the same part juxtaposes this idea against the economic structures of Milton Friedman. Naomi Klein connects this process to the destruction of modern economic structures by way of shock therapy. She refers to him as the “other shock doctor” – and his battle for the hearts and minds of Latin American economists and economies.

The book goes on to discuss “The Chicago Boys” (from the university of Chicago) with their free market ideas and Milton Friedman handbooks ready to conquer the Latin Economies in the 1970’s what resulted was a bloody coup in Chile led by General Augusto Pinochet and years of suppression, mass imprisonments

under the garb of anti-Marxist regime. She quotes the Chilean economist Orlando Letelier on the "inner harmony" between the terror of the Pinochet regime and its free-market policies saying that Milton Friedman shares responsibility for the regimes crimes, rejecting the argument that he was only offering "technical" advice.

In part five of the book we are introduced to the "Disaster Capitalism Complex", as the name suggests it's a capitalist idea of fruition from disaster. Where companies find "exciting market opportunities" in areas of disaster, Klein draws analogies between areas of natural disaster such as New Orleans after Katrina and Sri Lanka after the disastrous tsunami. In each case, she claims, the predatory impulses of the disaster capitalism complex won out over sympathy for the victims, as developers took advantage of the evacuation of the poor from areas made temporarily uninhabitable and seized prime real estate. This resulted in the marginalization of the deprived while the wealthier profited further from the losses of those already at the bottom of the food chain.

Part six discusses the rise of private contractors, be it war or rebuilding post war. She discusses the use of "Shock and awe" in the 2003 invasion of Iraq and the subsequent occupation of Iraq, which Klein describes as the most comprehensive and full-scale implementation of the shock doctrine ever attempted. Iraq war saw the largest privatization of US military operations, the US government paid a staggering \$138 billion to private companies, one of these companies was Halliburton, and the CEO of Halliburton at the time is reported to have made nearly \$39 million during the Iraq war rehabilitation. Not surprisingly post Iraq war was one of the most lucrative year in the history of Halliburton. It is only one of the ten companies which received more than fifty percent of the billions pumped into Iraq war, what is also not a surprise is the lack of results in the region. At the same time laws were passed which handed over Iraq's vast oil reserves to the British Petroleum and Shell.

The final part of the book sheds light on the aftermath of the economic shock therapy; how the security apartheid of the present day has resulted in the success of small groups who move into communities which are cordoned off from the rest of the world while outside the public infrastructure falls apart. What's tragic is how it has become "normal" for the masses to be subjected to massive routine security checks at every airport, while the security industry flourishes

thriving on the insecurities of the people. Klein discusses the gated communities of Atlanta and how they have incorporated themselves legally to prevent the taxes of their residents to be spent on schools and hospitals in impoverished areas.

The book ends with a criticism of the international institutions such as IMF and the World Bank, which in the authors opinion encourage the "shock doctrine" and the global backlash against it. In Klein's opinion this backlash is evident in the South America and post 2006 war in Lebanon, where the governments are rolling back the policies of free market and the mentioning of community-minded advocates campaigning in China and South Africa.

The book comprehensively in a chronological order discusses the gradual indoctrination of the free market policies at the global level, from western free-market to the starkly different yet similar global south implementation of the same policies, one under democratic rule the other forced and backed by military regimes. The book is unique in its detail and fact oriented approach, although books in the genre seem to be complicated Klein's intellectual nonpolitical approach makes it a favorable read. Some might find evidence of a massive conspiracy behind the work, but the author in conclusion disavows any such notion, defending herself by rightly pointing out that failed policies and blatant capitalism add up and take its toll. She believes that for an economy to flourish the growth needs to be organic specific to its unique eco system and the same economic policies cannot be applied universally by force, there is a broader social fabric which is inherent to growth of civilizations.

While some may perceive this book as an oversimplified explanation for the current state of world economics, the fact that Naomi Klein's role is more of a journalist's, describing personal experiences and interactions, than an expert on the subject, must be considered.