

## **Covering the Contesting Nations: Pakistan-India Relations in British and American Press**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study has been conducted to explore and explicate the coverage of Pakistan-India relations in four of the mainstream British and American Press: The Daily Telegraph, The Guardian, The New York Times and The Washington Post. The topical coverage includes most of the charged issues and conflicts in the region —China Pakistan Economic Corridor, Kashmir issue, Line of Control Violation, Nuclear Program, Religious Issues, Terrorism and Water Issue. The study encompasses representation of Pakistan-India relation, also its integral dimensions, from January 2013 to December 2018. In this study a cluster of qualitative and quantitative content analysis techniques has been used. The triangulation has facilitated to develop a balanced critique by engaging with both the frequency and ferocity of the reportage. The theoretical framework is premised on the postulates culled from the agenda setting and framing theories. All the targeted and identified categories have been systematically tabulated and discussed. The results showed that the American Press covered more stories regarding Pakistan-India relations as compared to the British Press. Moreover, the American Press coverage has been favorable, whereas the British Press has more unfavorable and neutral coverage of Pakistan India relations. Thus, having explicated the schema of the Anglo-American reportage of the South Asian conflicts, the study contributes to understanding of the international reception of the regional affairs.

**Key Words:**        **Media Framing, Agenda Setting, Pakistan-India Relations, The Daily Telegraph & the Guardian Newspaper.**

### **Introduction**

Pakistan and India appeared on the world map in 1947 after winning freedom from the British colonial clutch. Since inception of the post-independence era, Pakistan and India have been nourishing varying contentions, ranging from the political confrontations to the religious rifts. These contentions, in turn, hinder the bilateral relation between these states. Boundary disputes, asset distribution, water disputes and most importantly Kashmir issue hinder the normalization of relations among

both countries (Paul, 2005). Pakistan and India share geographic vicinities and the demographics, but the strategic relationships between both the nations are affected due to the territorial and armed disputes (Arif, 2013). After the freedom of Pakistan and India, both the nations, instead of peace and making progress that was demanded by the people of both the nations, the years later brought war, despair, and disappointment (Khan, 2020). This Indian sovereignty rejected in Pakistani diplomatic culture (Ganguly & Kraig, 2005). Both the countries have fought four full-fledged wars including one undeclared war i.e kargil war (Dixit, 2003).

After the independence and partition, the divide was based on Two Nation Theory; Pakistan lived under permanent security threats from India. Kashmir became the main conflict and bone of contention between Pakistan and India since the independence. Pakistan claimed Kashmir on Indian partition plan because according to that plan Muslim majority areas to become part of Pakistan (Š. Ganguly, 2002). The United Nation intervention after the Kashmir war in (1947-1948) it was decided that the issue would be solved according to the aspiration of the Kashmir people through referendum and the people would be given freedom to make decision regarding their future. India used delaying methods and, ultimately, denied to conduct elections claiming Kashmir as its integral part the *Atootang* ideology (Dabla, 2011). These strategic moves of both the countries have always been in the limelight and found very attentive reportage on national and international level.

Media trigger and regulate the popular reception and, thus, manages the up-beat news items. Its role in portraying international relations and affairs always remains an area of interest for the international communication scholars and academics (Gilboa, 2005). People rely massively on mass media to remain informed of international events, their causes, and aftermaths. There is a positive correlation between the degree of salience the media gives to an issue, and the level of attention received by the public and policymakers (Soroka, 2002). Various studies conducted in the field of communication and international relations have observed that exposure to news coverage raises awareness and knowledge, which can significantly influence public perception towards other nations (Albritton & Manheim, 1983; Perry, 1985). So, media is one of the powerful consciousness manufacturing tools in the contemporary times.

This research attempts to scrutinize the coverage and analyze the treatment given by the international media, British and American, to the concerns linked with Pakistan and India. Stereotyping and Othering the defining features of the reportage, that is, the people of one country made an image of other countries within the camera of media and interest of the students of communication science and international affairs (Saleem, 2007). According to Soderlund, Nelson, and Briggs (2003), mass media influence the public perception of the events happening across the globe. The fact, as we experience, is not only explained by our personal experience, but also by our reading, seeing and hearing through different mass communication channels. Media is the latest source of knowledge for international

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events, therefore, make us interested thoughts and make judgments about what is happening, which is responsible, and what the expected outcome will be (Soderlund et al., 2003, p. 155). Since the independence of Pakistan, the relationship between India and Pakistan has been based on unchecked animosity. Pakistan got its interior as well as external sources for getting protection from outside. However, policymakers have always been explaining that the intention was not to frighten India but to let India understand that Pakistan was another major player in the region for not being easily overcome. Pakistan's policy has completely been changed by post-independence opposing conditions and India's aversion and efforts to be powerful in the South Asian region (Younesian, Askari, Saadatinia, & Yildirim, 2012).

### **Statement of the problems**

In the wake of War on Terror and international turn towards securitization of policies, Pakistan has hogged the limelight for its active role and significant contribution to the struggle for eradicating terror from the world in general and especially from the region. Resultantly, all the affairs concerning the country have been acknowledged and acclaimed as of the prime importance by the people across the globe-the fact that has brought the major moot points between India and Pakistan to the international focus. Especially, the issues relating to Kashmir and terrorism have found appropriate attention worldwide. It has been realized universally that these disputes would bring devastation to the world. The relationship between different countries can be accessed for the media of particular states. The role of media in determining the relationship between Pakistan and India is a case in hand. Since the relationship between the two states has remained critical throughout their history, therefore media reporting and projection of the bilateral relationship is part of an exciting discourse. Pak-Indian instable relations have been thereat for the entire world as both south Asian neighbors since partition in August 1947 did not manage to have peaceful relations with each other. This study aims to investigate comparatively how American and British press present stories regarding Pakistan India relations.

### **Significance of print media**

Significance of the print media is an obvious and undeniable phenomenon. Press is one of the most original and earliest forms of mass media to satisfy human communication needs. The print media is the earliest and original form of media to cater the needs of human communication. The press is the most credible and popular source of information of mass media. Media reflect the true picture of the society. Media has the power to influence the audience choices. Press is important and one of the oldest and considered the most trusted source comparing to electronic media.

## **Significance of the newspapers**

The delimitation of the study is based on systematic and rational choices. The reason on which these two countries newspaper (British and American) have been selected is that these newspaper are well reputed and having huge circulation in their respective countries. These newspapers have been playing a major role to educate and provide in depth news and analysis on international audience. These newspapers are benchmark and globally considered as the images of the events that are given coverage.

## **Theoretical framework**

Theoretically, the argument of the study is premised upon the substantial ideas and postulates propounded by the theorists of Framing Theory and Agenda Setting. McCombs & Shaw's theorization of the idea of framing is regulating the analysis. The concept of Agenda setting has also been engaged that aims at "changing attitude and minds of the people regarding certain issues and the happenings within society" (Severin & Tankard, 1991). Thus, locating the primary data and discussions in these conceptual schemas, the study attempts to taxonomize and categorize the content.

## **Research questions**

- What are the salient features of the American press reportage of Indo-Pak relations?
- How does the British press present stories on bilateral relations between Pakistan and India?
- In what ways are the stories regarding Pakistan and India given space in mainstream American and British press?
- To what extent do the American and British press conform or vary, seen comparatively, in their coverage of Indo-Pak relations?

## **Hypotheses**

H1: it's more likely that The New York Times gives greater coverage to Pakistan Indian relation than Washington Post.

H2: It's more likely that The Daily Telegraph gives more coverage to Indo-Pakistan relations than The Guardian.

H3: It is more likely that the American press coverage of Indo-Pakistan relations is greater than that of British press.

## **Research methodology**

The methodological approach formed for the study is an eclectic one and involves triangulation of the qualitative and quantitative methods. Content analysis of four

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British and American press (The Daily Telegraph, The Guardian, The New York Times and The Washington Post) from January 2013 to December 2018 been selected. Quantitative approach has been used to analyze the coverage and qualitative to analyze the topical direction in term of favorable or unfavorable or neutral opinions on of Pakistan-India relations issues is given below: (1) China Pakistan Economic Corridor, Kashmir, Line of Control, Nuclear Program, Religious Issue, Terrorism and Water issue.

### **The ambit of the study**

The ambit of the study is coverage of Pakistan-India relations in the British and American Press from January 2013 to December 2018.

### **Sample frame**

The sample frame is the coverage of the four newspapers (The Daily Telegraph, The Guardian, The New York Times and The Washington Post) on the issues of China Pakistan Economic Corridor, Kashmir, Line of Control Violation, Nuclear Program, Religious Issue, Terrorism and Water Issue regarding Pakistan-India relations during January, 2013 to December, 2018.

### **Sample size**

The coverage having same dates of both the newspapers on the issues under discussion of Pakistan-India relations are drawn as the sample size of the research.

### **Unit of analysis**

The unit of analysis in this research is the coverage of Pakistan India relation in the two British the daily telegraph and the guardian and two American newspapers The New York Times and Washington post.

### **Data analysis and findings**

This research covers the data by combing both the qualitative and the quantitative approaches and offers findings. The quantitative results show the coverage of Pakistan-India relations in 'British and American Press'. The findings revealed that Kashmir and terrorism are the main issue and these are given most of the coverage in both American and British Press. The Tables and Figures are given below:

**British Newspaper**

**The British press present stories on bilateral relations between Pakistan and India**

Issue	The Daily Telegraph	The Guardian	Total
China Pakistan Economic Corridor	33	41	74
Kashmir	186	188	374
Line of Control Violation	83	37	120
Nuclear Program	32	18	50
Religious Issue	13	36	49
Terrorism	116	47	163
Water Issue	22	28	50
Total 7 Issue	485	395	880

According to Table 1, it is conspicuous that proportion of *The Daily Telegraph* regarding number of stories both is higher than *The Guardian*, with the *News* having 485 stories published and *The Daily Telegraph* published 395 and overall 880 stories were published. As far as the focus of the coverage is concerned, Kashmir issue has been considered the prime point of promotion. Reportage and representation of terrorism remains second only to Kashmir issue. Line of Control violence, another aspect of the insurgency in the region, has also gained attention. Moreover, the financial and political game changer, China Pakistan Economic Corridor, remains substantially represented issue in the corpus of the item studied for the research. The pattern and proportion of the representation shows that the issues of Kashmir and terrorism has been the focal points for the international consciousness as represented in the selected British newspapers. It also bespeaks that the global intelligentsia and consciousness is more concerned on the problems pertaining to threatening peace process in the world. Thus, political affairs appear to have the significance in this regard.

**American Newspaper**

**Table 1: The American press cover stories regarding Indo-Pak relations**

Issue	The New York Times	The Washington Post	Total
China Pakistan Economic Corridor	28	43	71
Kashmir	192	249	441
Line of Control Violation	79	29	108
Nuclear Program	25	15	40
Religious Issue	11	29	40
Terrorism	141	63	204
Water Issue	9	28	37
Total 7 Issue	485	456	941

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According to Table 1, it is clearly visible that proportion of *The New York times* regarding number of stories both is higher than *The Washington post*, with *the News* having 485 stories published overall 456 stories. The pattern and proportion of coverage, in the quantitative terms remains like that found in the British newspapers: Kashmir issue at the top followed by the problem of terrorism. Whereas, Violation of the Line of Control stand third in the representational row to be followed by China Pakistan Economic Corridor. Other problems and issues—water issue, religious issue, and the nuclear program — remain at the periphery of the reportage. The frequency and focus is reflective of the tendency of the American concerns regarding the issues that may trigger some lethal insurgency in the South Asian region and, in turn, bring devastation to the world. So, sense of insecurity and voice for maintenance of peace working visible behind the coverage.

**British and American press**

**Table 1: Comparison of ‘The New York Times and ‘The Washington Post’ in January, 2013 to December, 2018**

Issue	British Newspaper	American Newspaper	Total
China Pakistan Economic Corridor	74	71	145
Kashmir	374	441	815
Line of Control Violation	120	108	228
Nuclear Program	50	40	90
Religious Issue	49	40	89
Terrorism	163	204	367
Water Issue	50	37	87
Total 7 Issue	880	941	1821

The comparative tabulation portrays and presents the complete picture of the ratio and frequency of the coverage found in both the varieties from the international press, the British and the American, for scrutinizing the targeted variables. The total sum of the coverage is markedly significant. According to above mentioned table, the comparison and juxtaposition of British and American press the results showed that American press coverage of Pakistan is higher than that of British press. However, it would be reductive to exaggerate the difference because the British reportage falls short by small difference. In sum, the American press reaches the frequency of 941, whereas the British one maintains 880. Moreover, both of the coverage charts shows same kind of tendency towards the major issues, that is, problem of the Occupied Kashmir and the monster of terrorism working in the region. Therefore, both the perspectives share their focal point, albeit they differ in the frequency of the reportage of these focal points. So,

the tabulation exhibits partial similarity and partial dissimilarity present in the data studied to develop the argument of the study.

## **Juxtaposition**

### **Comparison of the British and the American Coverage and Reportage of the Key Issue**

Issue	British			American		
	Fav. %	Unfav. %	Neutral %	Fav. %	Unfav. %	Neutral %
China Pakistan Economic Corridor	17	33	25	42	17	13
	22.6%	44%	33.4%	58.3%	23.6%	18.1%
Kashmir Issue	64	175	136	261	112	63
	17%	46.6%	36.4%	59.8%	25.7%	14.5%
Line of Control Violation	22	73	25	64	20	23
	18.3%	60.8%	20.8%	59.8%	18.7%	21.5%
Nuclear Program	8	27	16	27	8	6
	15.7%	52.9%	31.4%	65.8%	19.5%	14.6%
Religious Issue	17	18	14	33	8	9
	34.7%	36.7%	28.5%	65.8%	16%	18%
Terrorism	19	93	46	105	61	31
	12.1%	43.6%	49.1%	53.2%	31%	15.8%
Water Issue	5	27	20	30	8	0
	9.6%	51.9%	38.4%	78.9%	21.1%	0.0%

All the tabulated facts and figures conspicuously manifest the fact that in terms of frequency and intensity of the coverage, two of the issues remain in the forefront: Kashmir, terrorism. Both the British and American press has given more space to these issues in comparison with the other ones like Pak-China Economic Corridor, Water Crisis, and, religious matters. Another key feature of the reportage is that while the British press reports this issue with less frequency and in unfavorable or neutral terms, the American press pays more focus and chooses the favorable reportage for the issues, from the Pakistani perspective. There are certain possibilities that may help the scholars to explain the frequency of the reportage: 1) America, being the world leader in the contemporary times, is more awake to the issues and problems of the world, 2) international relation and regional studies is the forte of the American academia and press, 3) America has more interest in the politics of the region due to the presence of China that is the potential rival to the American regional supremacy, 4) British attempt to avoid Kashmir issue because of their role in creating the problem during the colonial era and at the time of partition, and 5) American financial penetration in the Indian markets. These are few of the inferences that contribute to locate the reason of the representational focus of the American vis-à-vis the South Asian region, especially, India and Pakistan. However, to categorical attach the reportage to the discussed reasons will



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be a grave kind of oversimplification and the matter is far more complex and problematic in nature.

**T-test Chart**

Press	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	T	Sig. (2-tailed)
American Press	941	145.00	158.858	64.854	-.364	.000
British Press	880	118.88	110.656	39.123		

The t-test statistical method used to analyze the significance between British and American press. The results showed that American press significantly covered Pakistan India relations more than British press.

**Conclusion**

Seven of the leading concerns and issues regarding Indo-Pak relations and rifts are guiding the argument of the study: 1) China Pakistan Economic Corridor, 2) Kashmir, 3) Line of Control Violation, 4) Nuclear Program, 5) Religious Issue, 6) Terrorism, and 7) Water Issue. By engaging with the theoretical tenet of framing presented by Bateson (1972) and the concept of Agenda setting conceptualized by McCombs & Shaw (1968), the concluding section offers the answers of the research questions in the light of the analysis accomplished by using mixed method, qualitative-cum-quantitative. The first research question is regarding the salient features of the American press reportage of Indo-Pak relations. It has become clear that the American press not only covers the key issues but also they represent it favorably. The second research question leads the study to see how British press present stories on bilateral relations between Pakistan and India. It has been brought to the surface that the British press is comparatively less focused on these issues. Moreover, they tend to represent the matters either neutrally or unfavorably. The third research question is about the scope and space provided to the targeted issues in the mainstream American and British press. As the data has been tabulated above, all the key issues have found substantial amount of coverage in the press of both the countries. The last question requires finding the extent to which the American and British press conform or vary, seen comparatively, in

their coverage of Indo-Pak relations. The analysis has shown that although both the versions cover all the targeted issues, the American press is more awake to them. The American press has shown higher frequency of the reportage and, also, it contains more favorable coverage. Overall, two of the leading issues, Kashmir and terrorism have been shown to have got more coverage among all the seven categories selected to be explored in the study. Thus, the above explicated and categorized data has facilitated the researcher to infer conclusion systematically and resolve the research questions guiding the study. The representation and coverage of all the seven major issues has been discussed thoroughly and explained systematically.

### **Suggestions for future studies**

Having analyzed the contents of stories of the British and the American Press, following suggestions are being submitted and newspapers should follow these suggestions to bring more fruition and significance in terms of creation of social awareness and policy-making. Government officials also must take notice of newspapers opinion, suggestions and formulate policies on the basis of ground reality and public opinion. In order to bring awareness about the prevailing situation in Pak-India relations the newspaper must reduce ground realities and apprise the readers about the opinion of Pak-India governments on the issues under discussion. Pakistan-India have strained relations over the last 73 years although peaceful India is significant for the peace and tranquility in Pakistan; however these newspapers can publish the opinion of public about Pak-India relations, and suggest government to bring some relaxation in its stance to bring the mutual relations between the two countries at par. Newspapers should publish logical analysis with rational approach rather than irrational and illogical comments. Newspapers should avoid the criticism for the sake of criticism; inform the readers in a positive way and present analysis in lucid and unambiguous way. Summarily, by incorporating the suggested guidelines to their reportage policies, the newspapers can play a significant role to bridge the damaging political gaps and accomplish a great social service to the population of the war-ridden region.

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