

COVERAGE OF LOC CEASEFIRE VIOLATIONS IN INDIAN MEDIA – AN ANALYSIS OF ‘THE TIMES OF INDIA AND THE HINDU’

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Abstract: Despite different agreements between India and Pakistan, the media of two countries have been found spreading venom against other country. That has at times deterred the talks between two. The provocative coverage, propagandas, demonizing opposite countries runs all time. However if media plays the role like informing, educating and mobilizing people against the war or the conflict, both the countries can come together to find solutions to prolonging disputes like Kashmir issue, Siachen etcetera. That can benefit people of both countries economically; culturally, educationally so on and so forth. The study has been carried to analyse the war journalism frame given to border ceasefire violations between India and Pakistan by India's top two English daily Newspapers. And it was found that the news frame towards coverage of India-Pakistan ceasefire violations was tilted towards war journalism, which need be shunned by the Media.

Keywords: India, Pakistan, ceasefire, violations, journalism, media.

Introduction: In this age of digitalization people see world from the viewpoint of media, people get influenced significantly by what sort of content mass media presents to them about outside the world (McCombs, 2003). Media plays a key role in a conflict, it can make a conflict worse or it can help in reducing conflicts (Rasak, 2012), by choosing the traditional way of journalism (war journalism) or by reporting within the ambit of peace journalism. Media has the capacity to influence people and create a public agenda (McCombs, 2003). Media and mass communications multiplies every form of development and helps spreading the requisite information more quickly and more widely among the people (Schramm, 1964).

Conflict between India and Pakistan over Kashmir: The roots of the Kashmir conflict lies in the days of partition between India and Pakistan. Indian subcontinent got independence from Britain in August 1947. During that subcontinent was divided into two independent nations, a Hindu majority state India, and a Muslim majority state Pakistan. In 1947 Jammu and Kashmir was one of among 562 princely states in British Indian Empire. Majority of the princely states signed instrument of accession to Indian Union before 15th of August 1947. At the moment of transfer of powers from British to India three princely states with Indian catchment potential held out by this day. Junagadh in Kathiawar in Western India whose ruler wished to join Pakistan, Hyderabad in Deccan (south India) where a Muslim ruler with Hindu majority population wished to remain independent from India and Pakistan, And Jammu and Kashmir ruled by a Hindu Maharaja with Muslim Majority. At the end Junagadh was added to Indian union when New Delhi held a plebiscite in Junagadh which Pakistan never accepted, Hyderabad was occupied by India using armed forces. And Jammu and Kashmir became vic-

tim of dispute military, politically and diplomatically which still continues (Lamb, 1991).

On 22 October 1947 highly armed tribesmen on motor vehicles from north western Pakistan launched a full scale invasion on towards the capital of the Kashmir (Srinagar) to occupy it (Schofield, 2010). India helped the state of Jammu and Kashmir to repel out the tribesmen, on the conditions of accession to Indian union. Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir Maharaja Hari Singh signed the instrument of accession and India simultaneously helped the state to repel out the tribesmen (Deewan, 2011). As invaders were driven out by Indian army and the areas being freed from tribesmen, Pakistan mobilised its army to fight Indian Army in the early days of December. After that India formally complained to United Nations Security Council against Pakistan though India also brought the Kashmir dispute to United Nations (Mir, 2014). Since then, the territory has been the sparked three India-Pakistan wars first in 1947-8, the second in 1965 and In 1999, both the countries fought a brief but bitter conflict in which Pakistani forces infiltrated Indian-controlled territory in the Kargil area (BBC, 2012) Pakistan claims the state on the basis of its Muslim majority population, while India bases its claim with the legal status of the instrument of accession, which was signed by Maharaja of Kashmir in 1947. When India claimed Kashmiri accession to Indian union was impeccable, it denied the accession of Pakistan over Junagarh. India sent troops to Junagarh similarly Pakistan sent troops to Kashmir. The difference was India's Military capability which Pakistan lacked to intervene in Junagarh, While India was able to send troops to Srinagar (Aiyar, 2008).

Currently India administrates 43 per cent of the disputed region including Jammu, Kashmir valley, Ladakh and Siachen Glacier. Pakistan controls 37 per cent namely Azad Kashmir, north of Gilgit and Baltistan. While as China controls 20 per cent following

Sino-Indian war of 1962 which comprises of Shaksam valley, which China claims is part of Tibet. The six decade long dispute between India and Pakistan has coasted huge. Since 1989 Kashmir insurgency against Indian rule has claimed about 70000 people and 8000 disappeared. Since 1989, Kashmir has become the most densely militarized zone in the world (The Huffington Post, 2014). Pakistan claims Kashmir as “jugular vein” being a Muslim state and geographical proximity with it, while as India claims Kashmir as “integral part” to prove its secular identity (Pattanaik, 2004). India and Pakistan agreed a ceasefire agreement along the de facto border or line of control in November 2003 (BBC, 2003)

Importance of peace between India and Pakistan: India and Pakistan are not emerging countries which are trying to get the position in world affairs. Both the countries are nuclear armed, which has the capability to bring another holocaust in South Asia (Bose, 2011). But improvement in the relations between two countries can benefit both neighbours. India-Pakistan trade ties have great potential, in the words of Former Indian Prime minister Man Mohan Singh, “If there is cooperation between Pakistan and India and not conflict, vast opportunities will open up for trade, and travel and development that will create prosperity in both countries.” In 2008 trade between India and Pakistan reached 2 billion dollars which amounts one per cent of each country’s overall trade (Flamenbaum and Neville, 2011). India spends a large amount of money on military budget, in current 2015-2016 fiscal year the Indian military budget is 40 billion US dollars (Wall street Journal, 2015). Pakistan on the other hand spends much lesser than India. Its military budget for current 2015-2016 fiscal year is 7.7 billion US dollars (Dawn, 2015). Both the countries can spent this huge amount on infrastructure and other developments like poverty, Health, Education, Communication etc. India and Pakistan have the energy crises which is hampering their economic development. In July 2012 total blackout in northern India proved energy resources remain inadequate in the country which is important for its economic growth rate. In Pakistan shortage of electric deficits has affected the public life badly and energy crises have adversely affected its industrial output. Both India and Pakistan can work together in the field of energy as proposed Iran Pakistan India natural pipeline and Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India commonly known as TAPI fully depends on the peace and stability of Afghanistan which means India and Pakistan must concern about stable Afghanistan rather than compeering each other, so this these deals rely on the peace and stability between India and Pakistan (Salik, 2013).

The aim of this paper is to study the portrayal of the Indo-Pak relations in the Indian print media with

special reference to India- Pakistan ceasefire violations. The two national newspapers identified for the purpose of the study are The Times of India and The Hindu as they are the highest circulated newspapers of the country. The Times of India stands top while The Hindu ranks second in terms of circulation in India. The content of the news stories pertaining to the subject published in the selected newspapers from August 1 2015 to September 30 2015 were analysed following content analytic rules. Pertinent to mention here that the month of August witnessed 55 ceasefire violations of the 2003 border ceasefire agreement and over 245 violations till date (DNA, 2015)

Findings:

Usage of Language: Both the Dailies were fond of inflammatory language against Pakistan and Pakistan army. The words like, unprovoked shelling by Pakistan, Mortar Bombs, 85mm mortar, 128mm mortar, 82mm mortar, Heavy machine guns, Heavy shelling, launch of offensive, pounded etcetera were mostly used by both of the Newspapers.

Sources Attributed: The Times of India used blind sources in 5 news stories while as Indian Defence Ministry were attributed in 5 stories. Army sources were used 4 times and a civilian source were used only once. Meanwhile The Hindu thrice attributed defence ministry, twice military officials, twice blind, once police.

Contextual information: Both The Times of India and The Hindu did not give any historical context of de facto Kashmir dispute between India and Pakistan. There was not a single story which mentioned Kashmir dispute.

Dichotomy: Pakistan and Pakistan army was termed as foe 11 times by The Hindu and 11 times by The Times of India, Accusing Pakistan army for attacking on civilians attributing only military or defence ministry sources.

Causalities and Destruction: Both of the newspapers published one sided causalities and destruction due to cross border shellings. The Times of India published 7 times the casualties and destruction of Indian side while as only once showed the casualties of Pakistan side with allege word. The Hindu only showed the causalities of Indian side on 4 news stories.

Context of dispute: Both The Times of India and The Hindu did not give the historical context of the conflict and ceasefire violations.

The Times of India covered more Ceasefire violations stories than The Hindu. The Times of India covered 19 ceasefire violations related stories including both ceasefire violations and peace initiatives. Though the intensity of violations were more higher than rest of the months The Times of India carried 15 stories in the month of August and 4 stories in the month of

September. While as The Hindu carried total 12 ceasefire violations 8 in the month of August and 4 in the month of September

Conclusion: As examined that the most of the coverage was war journalism in nature towards ceasefire violations. Media need to be more responsible to-

wards this sensitive issue because it can lead a nuclear war between two South Asian nuclear countries. To prevent any worst tragedy from happening in the history mankind newspapers must shun this approach towards the opposing countries.

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