

To Analyze the News Contents of Electronic and Print Media in Pakistan, Whether Media is Terrorizing or Informing the Community

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Abstract

This article investigates the possible causes of spreading terror instead of information by the national media of the country among the society. The researchers use the observation method of different national media news contents and presentation in the era of insurgency on national level.

The proliferation of mass media in Pakistan has been increased due to the war on terror, instability in political scenario and social disorder in the country, on the other side it has also created panic among the community due to the unverified and subjective news in an exaggerated and sensational form by the national and international media. It is a fact that the unverified, exaggerated and subjective news are creating horror and insurgency in the society.

The present study aims to examine the role of the media ethics, news values and social responsibility of the national and international media.

Keywords: Objectivity, Exaggeration, Unverified news, Infusion, Diffusion, Sensationalism, Media hegemony, media completion.

Introduction

Infusion and diffusion of news in Pakistan is not satisfied because of ineffectual reporting in different situations. Infusion is the process of collecting, selecting and interpreting news from different areas with the help of different sources, why it is correspondents or interpersonal communication or government authorities, while diffusion of news is the process of dissemination and circulation of news through mass media.

According to the media coverage of Pakistani media compilation and gathering of news is mostly related now a day to honor killing, terrorism, government issues and politicians' exaggerated statements of the country. Every state presented the mentioned facts in its own perception and Pakistani media is also presenting in its own frame of reference.

If studied the role of Pakistani media, we can realize that the first one (honor killing) frames with the culture and religion which may cause increase in crimes in the country rather than decrease.g.an honorable father killed her daughter due to love marriage. This notorious action is presented on breaking news in electronic media and published on the front page of newspapers whether it's English, Urdu, local, national or international. But the media persons don't think that what is the impact on the society and whether it is according to the code of ethics of journalism or not?

On the other hand the second one is presented in the slogan of the 'War on Terror' that Pakistan is performing its role as front state allies against the alleviation of terrorism from the world. But why the media men some time think that what will be the effect of live coverage of the bomb blast on the audience whose relatives were died or injured in the attacks? Or what will be the effect of the attack on the credit of security forces? Or why code of ethics permitted us for live coverage of this type of issue or not?

Media is considered as the fourth pillar of the state due to the fact that media highlights the public issues and problems before the politicians of ruling class but on the other side it is giving opportunity to the opposition for criticizing the government. Media is playing dual policy with government; one side is taking opportunities from the ruling in the shape of the advertisement and other side presenting the bad performance to the public.

Roger and Seidel (2003) identifies the infusion and diffusion of news sources in different categories, conducted a survey after 9/11 attack on the United State of America as, telephone, cell phone, interpersonal communication, Radio, television and internet.

He stated that most of the people were got the information through telephone and cell phone from their relatives, friends or family members about the 9/11 attack. They argued that "people at work tend to discover the occurrence of the major event from another person, while those who are at house or elsewhere discover the occurrence of the event from the media."

The study demonstrated that infusion and diffusion of news are deeply related to each other because people and media organizations also gathering and disseminating news through interpersonal communication, telephone, cell phone and from the government authorities. It means that every person who listens accept it as it is conveyed, whether it is true or false and media organizations also now a day performing in the era of terrorism news because most of reporters and media organization the compiling news from the correspondents and a layman whether it's true or false but presenting it as a breaking news.

Roger and Seidel were arose the question that "which sources/channel provide the most accurate news? Television and radio telecast and broadcast every item of news that it could obtain during the first hour or two of the terrorist attack, even information obtaining via telephone from the public. As a result, certain information later was found to be incorrect. This fake information was then passed along by interpersonal channels and telephone. People who learned the news event from interpersonal channel, often then sought additional information via mass media. But now a day television is playing a major role in the infusion and diffusion of news directly.

As like the study of Rogers and Seidel, Pakistani media is also providing news about terrorism, honor killing and political news without conformation and affirmation from the sources, which not only create panic in the public but also in the security forces of the country.

Pakistani media is also collecting terrorism news from different sources like correspondents, interpersonal communication and also getting news and footage from a layman of the society, why it is true or false.

Nayyar Shamsi (2005), in his book *Journalism ethics and code* says that every news story should be clear and fair to find out what really happened, because sometimes the story creates doubts in the minds of readers, listeners and viewers and consider as a subjective news.

He further said that inventing information is mostly wrong and dangerous, not only for media organization but also for the nation and country. He has explained the term objectivity that news must be reported with complete objective manner, without any distortion. Don't mix news and views about an event which create ambiguity among the public.

He also viewed that journalist should perform social responsibility to provide truthful, comprehensive and factual report about an event, and not to expend panic and terror among the audience. He further said that like other citizens, journalist is served by all the law of land. He claimed that journalist should present their information in a fair, accurate and unbiased manner. The news should be verified before publication, telecasting and broadcasting.

He supported the point that it is also moral and ethical part of the journalist to correct all the errors from his /her report and avoid exaggerated and sensational heading and news story.

In the era of “Terrorist Activities in Pakistan” media coverage show sensationalism, exaggeration, media hegemony and channel competition in the result of fictional news compiling from the different sources.

Sensationalism, conformation and subjectivity

Fedler, Bender, Davassport, and Drager (2005), presented some facts in their book “Reporting for the Media” said that nowadays reporter prefer news which satisfy their definition of news, that are new, local, interesting, relevant and important to their advance which affect thousands of people simultaneously. But most of the news is lack newsworthy, trust, accuracy and perfectness and also lack objectivity.

He claimed that for making news story, reporters include laudatory adverbs, adjective instead of facts and figures.

News organizations in Pakistan are mostly collecting terrorist news from correspondent hailing from different areas of the red zone area, but whether this news is factual or not? The question brings ambiguity in the minds of audience because a correspondent can't visit the area where the terrorist hideouts, so how they can get correct report about the activities. If a correspondent gets news from the other related persons so why it's will thinking correct in the society or not? On the other hand if a correspondent gets news through cell phone from a related person of terrorist so whether the spokesman is a real person or not?

These types of questions arouse confusion in public's mind. Arguing that the news presented by the news organizations is not factual e.g. like the murder of Osama Bin Ladin breaking news on May 2, 2010. Most of the people don't accept the news report of the international media and especially of American and Pakistani media, because in the military operation areas are cordoned off by the security forces and no one has the authority to inter in the area for the coverage. So how a correspondent or reporter can get accurate facts and figures about the operation in the area.

Therefore, the correspondent/reporter will send fiction news report to the news organization about the attacks and operation. It may become the cause of spiraling of sensationalism and panic among the people.

It means that it is the era of yellow journalism because no one is trying to verify news but broadcast, telecast and publicize it for their own pocket interest.

On the other side if we compare the news by a correspondent and government authorities. We can conclude that the news about terrorism is somehow near to the reality than government authorities. Because the News reports are subjective which will not satisfy the audience but on the other side beneficial for the country and peace?

If we compare them both the news reports are sensationalistic because the news reported by correspondents' are not verified while news reports of government are subjective and one sided.

Joseph plitzer believes that journalist should represent the whole country rather than a group or class and people, he should criticize wrong, bring out facts and also systematic to the poor.

According to Pakistan Press Council (PPC) in 8th May 1983, the reporter should be careful regarding accuracy in reports while other place documented that "Truth is our ultimate goal".

Exaggeration vs Verification

According to Pakistan Press Council 1983, "It is the duty of media to make prompt and complete correction of their errors". In the press council ordinance 2002, section 6, stressed that media only disseminate information that is 'true and accurate'.

G. Michael Killenberg (2008) defined the term exaggeration with the support of example that exaggeration means overstating the importance of events, such as court ruling, election, scientific and other social issues for public interest.

He says that sensationalism is generated by exaggeration, which is not only spreading panic and terror in audience but also even cause fatal destructions. He supported his definition with evidence of "Los Angeles Time" report that 76 attacks were done by Sharks on the people. But the news was not verified and after the investigation it rejected the media organization.

In the era of uncertainty it is the duty of the media to affirm and authenticate the information rather than exaggeration and over lapping, because today people living in anywhere are having anxiety due to terrorism and insurgency in the area.

The fact is vice versa because Pakistani media presents reports and news exaggeratedly rather than based on confirmation. For example if a cylinder blasts in a market or in a house, breaking news comes at that time without any confirmation says that a bomb went off somewhere in the area but we have no further information and when we get new information we well update you.

After some time breaking news is broadcast that it was not bomb blast but actually a cylinder blast in a house. On other hand when a bomb blast occurred in place media shows the gathering public on the spot, particularly women and police. At that time the presenter says that police sources said 3 persons died and 8 sustained injuries in the blast but after a day or two the reality opposite to spot reporter statement.

The recent incident of operation against Osama Bin Ladin, shown by media exaggeratedly but after one week no one accepted the news report, because both the medias have no idea of the real situation but only giving the statements of the high ups of the America

and Pakistan including the senior journalist of the world, and the intelligence agencies' statements of both the countries.

Our media also presents criminal news like honor killing very exaggeratedly and presents it in such a manner that readers, listeners and viewers have sympathy with the accused not with the deceased family.

It includes in all the codes of ethics, "photos and videos of mutilated faces and dead bodies should be avoided, because these pictures and videos affecting the human brain badly." 6 But we can see that our media is freely showing photos and videos especially in case of terrorist attacks, bomb blasting and the situation after a suicide attack.

Journalism is thought to be a flag bearer of unity but our media is highlighting excessively the performance of the government. Thus the country becomes prey of political instability which is harmful for the safety of it.

Media Hegemony

The concept of media hegemony states that the idea of the ruling class in society becomes the ruling idea. The mass media seems to be controlled by the dominant class in the society.⁷ According to the above statement Pakistani media is also controlled by multiple groups, on one side the Pakistan Electronic Media Regularity Authority (PEMRA), government, corporate agencies and on the other side by terrorism.

If we study the media content in the slogan of "war on terror" the government does not disclose the real reports, progress and damages reports to the media which shows that our media is working under some pressure groups, and it is compelled to not to explore some of the reports for the sack of country security reason.

Media Competition

Media competition has been started due to two reasons, one was regime of General Pervez Musharraf and the other was operation against Taliban in different parts of the country. It was boosted not only by a number of media organizations in the country but foreign news organizations were also established in the different parts of the country to document the situation.

On 12th October, 1999 the Army Chief General Pervez Musharraf took over power from elected Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. In his address he said; "Media forms a central part of statehood. In this era of information, I have great regard and respect for the media. I trust it to play a positive and constructive role. An am affirm believer in the freedom of press and even considering liberalizing the policy on the establishment of private television and radio station."

For the first time, in the history of Pakistan private radio stations and TV channels were launched. PEMRA issued licenses to 16 satellites TVs, nearly 1,140 cable TVs, 5 MDs and 16 foreign channels, up till to now PEMRA has issued nearly 162 FM radio broadcast licenses for nearly 57 cities in Pakistan.

According to statistical department of Pakistan 1562 newspapers were launched in different parts of the country in which most were established in the burning area of terrorism of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Some foreign media organizations are also working there like Internews, inter media, pact Radio and CRSS, covering the social issues and terrorism activities of the area.

The second one is the war on terror, the emergence of Taliban terrorist activities; developed the interest of many foreign media organizations in Pakistan especially in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. As a result in competition many news channels emerged, try to give breaking news coverage to influence the audience.

Conclusion

The sensationalized and exaggerated news reports of media in the era of war on terror in our country must raise controversy, and contradictory claims regarding the balance of verification and objectivity in the mind of the audience. If the media is spreading sensational news then there will be no authenticity in the report, but it will be false news only, which defames the objectivity of the news and will raise the subjectivity.

It is a fact that impartiality and verification can be brought in the situation where the media person works for the national interest rather than his personal interest. The other remedy which decrease the verification and objectivity is the competition of the emerging news channels in the country because every organization wasted to spread the news as first and exclusive in the form.

In the coverage of terrorist activities by the media excluded the religious terms from the news reports and current affairs programs particularly in Pakistan, the word “Shaheed” in Urdu news and “martyr” in English news. This is a great loss for the spirit of our religious thoughts.

Definition of Keywords

Objectivity- The concept of objectivity as used in this study refers to the display of the lack Of bias, factual accuracy, transparency in sources with the separation of facts from comments in news stories.

Exaggeration: In the study the word used as the news editors are prepare the news overstatement and the news caster are presented it with emphatic and stress pitch of voice.

Unverified news: The News which are confirm but the news organization are presented as it is, why it true or false.

Infusion: The process of gathering, selecting and interpreting of news from different area with help of different sources, why it is correspondents or interpersonal communication or government authorities.

Diffusion: Diffusion of news is the process of disseminating and circulation of news through mass media.

Sensationalism: Mean that the unverified and subjective news bring thrilling and panic in the community.

Media hegemony: According to the ideas of Gramsci (in Thussu 2000: 68), a governing Group in society has the ability to exercise intellectual and moral control over society at large, with the support of a system of social alliances.

Gate keeping: Kart Levin (1947) The process of selecting, filtering and screening the news for the publishing, on-airing and telecasting.

Framing: Many researchers have different opinions about Framing that what exactly framing is, in this study the Framing mean the fact of cutting and trimming news stories in order to filter it and shape it as the sender wish. In other words, it is not just is said in news reports, but how they are characterized and presented.

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