

Media and Propaganda: Framing of the Mumbai Terror Attacks by the Indian and the Pakistani State Media

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ABSTRACT

This research paper touches upon the importance of media as a powerful medium in safeguarding national, cultural and strategic interests of the nations. Whether in Europe, America or Asia, media has attributed a considerable power to shape opinion of the belief, change habits of life, actively mould behavior and impose a political system. While discussing worldwide the importance of media in times of peace and war, the paper specially refers to India-Pakistan media war on Mumbai Terror Attacks. Since the news media play a central role in shaping public perception, if the enemy narrative did dominate the media coverage it might have accentuated the negative perception that each side has of the other. This could impact the renegotiation of peace talks between the two nuclear-armed neighbors and thus impede the peace process. The paper explores different dimensions of the similar issue framed differently in both countries and their implication on the security of South Asia. It is noticed that Indian mindset is more communally charged and views Pakistan with a specific security lens. Whereas, Pakistani media reflected a conciliatory policy, which was rejected by India. Recently, it has begun to counter Indian propaganda in the mass media. The issue of Mumbai Attacks ranks highest on public opinion in both countries, but with a different dimension of concern.

Key Words: **Media, Propaganda, India, Pakistan, Mumbai attacks**

What is the meaning of media?

The word media is derived from the ‘Latin’ word ‘Medius’ which means middle or intermediate; it is the plural of ‘Latin word ‘Medium’ which used for as a channel of communication, simply means a source through which something is conveyed to others. Media is a main source to provide information to the people through radio, newspapers, television, internet and books as well. According to Beth B Hess media is the plural of Latin word which simply means channel through which something is transmitted or carried and the term media is referred to the agent of communication. There are basically two types of media; one is the electronic media and second is print media. The electronic media is consist on television,

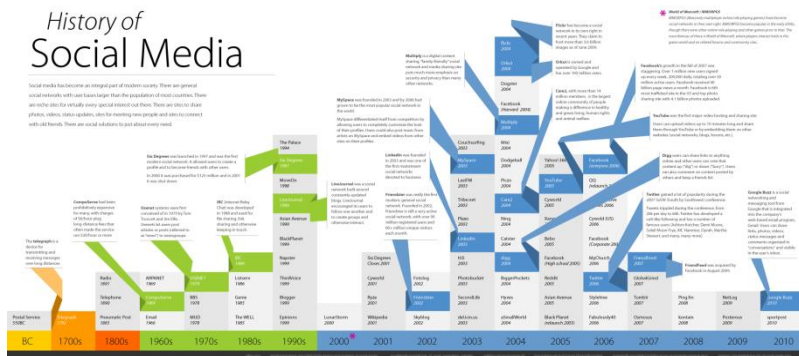
radio, computer and recording etc. on the other hand print media consists of books, journals, magazines and newspapers (Kolker, 2009).

Media is the source of communication between people of the world, to express their demands that are publicized by the media. The word media or mass media is commutatively used for various types of digital, broadcasting and publishing material. These are the ways to deliver messages about criminal activity, various means of business either in written or spoken form to a large audience. Media provides platform for the public to reveal their views about any political issue, any sport and any incident occurring at any place of the world. Media keeps people, governments and businessmen alert about the present situation of their relevant problems (Albertazzi, 2005).

Media provides information about new technologies and techniques to an agriculturist, a trader, a textile mill owner and a fashion designer. Media explores new fashion in market. People seek encouragement to develop their lifestyle. Media have a great effect on people in improving their education, health, food, living style and the most importantly their behavior. Media transfers and stores information and creates influence, memory and knowledge. Events like wars and revolutions gain publicity through media (Feldman, 2005).

Modern media has many different shapes, including print media i.e. books and novels, press i.e. magazines and newspapers, broadcast or social media i.e. radio, television, cell phones, movies, video games, music, fax, direct mail, billboards, computer networking, internet and advertisement. All these media kinds have contents and device to deliver this content. A large number of people are employed in communication industry. On the other hand, media is also a big and main source of propaganda to control the minds of people and it is a real war; to control the minds of people through force is old phenomena now media is strong and cheap weapon to control the minds of people through propaganda. History proved that during the World War II United States and its allied powers used media propaganda to control the public minds and spread hate against the Germany (Carruthers, 2000).

Figure 1.1 show the history of social media



Source: www.emarketeers.com

Importance of the media

The importance of media cannot be neglected and today media considered as the fourth pillar of the government. Media also plays an important role in nations building. Media means a carrier or medium which reflects information or communication. Today, the whole families sits in front of television and get information about fashion, food, business, house making, interior designing, electronics, medicines and politics and can enjoy with the comedy serials. Media has great power as it is doing an extraordinary work to create and shape the public opinion. Media is strengthening the awareness of society and creates consciousness to protect the interest of public. It is the arm of democracy because today politicians and crime mafia have gained authority and make the life of common person difficult, the Media has the great responsibility to save public interest by keeping them up to date about the activities of the criminal society. Media has the role of spectator for the persecution, lack of fairness of justice, maltreatment in a society.

‘Media is considered the sea in which we have sunk. It is surrounding us and people are in constant interaction with social media for their own pleasure or satisfaction by sharing their knowledge and skills acquired by some event. It provides a carrier to people to make their identity, to reveal their details and become of a vast society which are continuously encountering with each other. Media can activate a passive audience in this way it plays the role of a hypodermic needle. Media has the power to change the society without the need of an army. It is considered the building block of society as it is easily understood and appreciated by the public. There are four basic functions of electronic media.

- 1) To **P**rovide information
- 2) To **P**rovide education
- 3) To **I**nfluence public opinion
- 4) To **E**ntertain with objectivity

Power of media

The stature of any nation in the world is determined by the amount of authority it enjoys exerting itself over other nations. This authority which a nation exercises is derived for its national power. Paul Josphe Goebbel quoted, “Give me resources, I will make people believe that devil is God”. The national power is the cumulative sum of certain elements existing within the ideological and practical domain of a nation. Human resource, military might and economic development are the tangible elements, whereas the ideology, morale of a nation, vision and leadership fall into the category of intangible elements of national power.

Emergence of media has made it a strong contender in the major players of a state. The reach and impact of media are unquestionable. Propaganda is the key to achieve far reaching psychological gains, and no other medium than the modern

day media can serve that purpose. Pakistan is no exception when it comes to the importance of media. Pakistani media enjoys the freedom and has the reach which if tapped in properly can definitely be a source of furthering national agenda; Pakistani media thus can become an element of national power.

Nature and agents of conflict communication

Conflict communication takes place under tensions, expectations, negative energies and prejudices that antagonists hold against each other. Negotiations, bargaining, compromise, persuasion and influence are a part of this process. The nature of conflict communication varies from phases of conflict to those of peace. Hence, it may either ease the relationship between antagonists or strengthen already rigid positions. Conflict communication is not limited to conflicting parties and also involves other actors such as citizens, mass media, civil society and the international community that may play a mediatory role. Conflict communication can operate both ways; it can either widen the rift between antagonists or facilitate the process of reconciliation. Primary agents of conflict communication are antagonists themselves governments, foreign offices, diplomatic missions and political leadership.

These agents serve to develop initial contact between antagonists. Direct communication at the highest levels of leadership impacts conflicting relationships the most. These primary agents who are at the helm of decision-making and executive play a vital role in charting the conflict's future course. Other agents not directly involved in the conflict are placed at the second rung of conflict communication. These come to fore when primary agents fail to perform their role. The process of involvement of a 'third party' that is not a direct stakeholder in the conflict and its attempts to intervene to bring antagonists to the negotiating table is known as Mediation'. The present research study examines the 'mediating role' of mass media against the backdrop of proliferating media technology and globalization.

Mass media and international conflict

Post-cold war media landscape

The expansion and proliferation of media technologies in the decades following end of the Cold War (1947-91) signaled the dawn of a 'mediatized' era that witnessed a transformation from society-centric media to media-centric society. The processes of globalization, information revolution and digitization have ensured that media occupies a central place in international politics. Media accounts constitute an increasingly important source of knowledge about public affairs and international issues. The media's deliberative function in a democratic set up was elucidated by Jürgen Habermas in his work on 'public sphere'. Post-Cold War media landscape is characterized by the exponential growth of

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traditional media forms and advent of alternative spaces such as internet, mobile phones, blogs, social networking websites, community media and rise of citizen journalism.

A few characteristic features of the post-Cold War media landscape are - emergence of powerful media conglomerates, concentration of media power in hands of few, media interface with civil society and non-state actors, media's rise as a purveyor of infotainment and collusion with state, society and religion. In a democratic set-up, media have performed the role of opinion shapers and watchdogs. While facilitating public debate, media ensures that citizens actively participate in the political process. An important development of the post-Cold War period is the changing nature of media's political economy. News is now sold as a 'commodity' to audiences and media are known to employ sensationalism, dramatization and trivia as tools of coverage.

Historical developments

Towards the end of nineteenth century, mass media were used as instruments of propaganda. During the First World War, media used by the British to mobilize favorable public opinion create enemy images, portray German aggression in a negative light and project the war as a crusade for civilization. Similarly, during the Second World War, Hitler employed trained speakers and mediums like films, radio and newspapers as tools for exclusionary nation building activities (Louw, 2010). Warfare practices were dramatically altered due to developments in industrialization, mass media and the spread of democracy. Media eventually became accomplices in manipulating masses and supporting the wars. During the Cold War also media was used for propagandist purposes by both ideological blocs. While the Soviet media was essentially subservient to the state and functioned in support of the regime, it was the commercial media in the United States that was co-opted with the government and supported its Cold War policies (Gorman & McLean, 2003).

Media's role in the Vietnam war (1959-75, the first televised war) taught several important lessons to policy makers who realized the importance of controlling media during conflict. Television coverage was blamed for American loss in the war. In the aftermath of Vietnam, media did not remain free in conflicts in Falklands and Grenada and was co-opted into government and military campaign. This was achieved by blocking access to media and using it as a means for propaganda (Gorman & McLean, 2003).

Media's role took a new turn of events during the 1990 Gulfwar (Operation Desert Storm) wherein through the 'pool system'; media was used to create a sanitized and bloodless version of war without loss of life and property. Understanding of war as an undesirable phenomenon stood completely diminished. Military restraint on media activities during conflict took a new turn during the 2003 Iraq war (Operation Iraqi Freedom) wherein the administration

adopted the practice of embedding. Journalists were made part of combat troops and put into the service of military. Experiencing and witnessing soldiers fight for their lives turned media into cheerleaders resulting devoid of objectivity. During recent events of terrorism, sophisticated use of media technology by both state and non-state actors has come to fore (Basu, 2003). Here, media is neither manipulated nor misled as it chooses to sacrifice skepticism and doubt, and instead agrees to whatever the administration conveys (McChesney, 2002). For instance, during the attacks on World Trade Center (2001), US media colluded with the official apparatus to promote narratives of nationalism and security.

Media and propaganda

The nature of conflict in post-cold war world has transformed and soft war is the new way to go and media is the new weapon. Low Intensity Conflict, Sub conventional warfare are the names of present generation of warfare and media stands out as one of the favorite arsenals for example the CNN, BBC, Fox News and the list goes on of the mainstream western media which made the world believe that Iraq was in possession of WMDs and was a threat to the world peace. Thereafter, it was revealed to the world that no such threat was possessed by Iraq. The second Gulf war was the practical manifestation of the power of propaganda and the tool through which it was spread out the media.

Chomsky explained that propaganda is the basic and main source to control the minds of people through media and it is real war; to control the minds of people through force is old phenomena now media is strong and cheap weapon to control the minds of people through propaganda. He explained that history proved that during the World War II United States and its allied powers used media propaganda to control the public minds and spread hate against the Germany.

Media is being managed in a way to serve the interests of the state policies and the big names of media industry in U.S like CNN and Fox News have a different brand of programming for both international and domestic viewers. In the post WWII era, it was the American media including Hollywood which portrayed the Soviets as monsters and Communism as an evil. With the downfall of Communism the same main stream Western media embarked upon the journey to make the world believe that Islamic extremism and terrorism were the only threat to the global peace.

The Indian state (DD) media

Mumbai terror attacks and the Indian news media (DD)

Coverage in this channel was reflective as media war, since it revolved around elite opinion, focused on differences between the two parties, remained limited to an analysis of the present conflict situation and labeled India as a 'victim' and Pakistan as the 'perpetrator' of terrorism. Coverage was driven by an agenda to put Pakistan in the dock over its role in the attacks. Attacks were framed as a 'war' on

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the Indian nation-state, as a threat to the sovereignty and integrity of the country and as a conspiracy driven by a largely anti-western agenda. They were depicted as the worst and the bloodiest in India's political history. An overtly nationalistic position was adopted with regard to the threat of terrorism faced in the country. Commentaries focused on devising and suggesting policies to counter terrorism and put forth dichotomy of expectations, response and reaction by the two conflicting parties. Indian response was framed in strong terms of demanding action against perpetrators, while Pakistani response was framed in terms of denial to cooperate on issues that affected both countries.

Reflection of highly polarized sentiments, call for national unity against the enemy and reinforcement of anti-Pakistan mood among citizens served to legitimize official response to the attacks. The Indian government was portrayed as a helpless victim fighting Pakistan backed terrorism. Rarely were any harsh questions and critical concerns raised about the government's stand on issues like national security, terrorism, possibility of the involvement of home-grown terror elements.

The DD war of word were consisted on

The above mentioned war word of DD present direct involvement of the Pakistani state in the attacks. Not only were the terrorists identified as Pakistani, the Pakistani state was also indicted. Pakistan's initial agreement to send the ISI (Inter-Services Intelligence) chief to India and backtracking on the same later was heavily criticized and framed as a proof of Pakistan's guilt. Pakistan's offer of cooperation in probing the attack (at a later stage) was ridiculed. Belligerent statements emanating from the Indian leadership were also found in this channel. The theme of all news channels of Indian state DD media was;

- ❖ Blame on Pakistan for carrying out the attacks.
- ❖ Intelligence failure, crisis in internal security.
- ❖ Pakistani response to the incident.
- ❖ Role of the US and impact on 'War on Terror'.
- ❖ Speculations about possibility of military confrontation.
- ❖ Details of investigation, confessions of arrested terrorist.
- ❖ Criticism of government's weak response to terrorism.
- ❖ Opinions – International, domestic and popular.
- ❖ Anti-India sentiments, hard-line opinions in Pakistan.

The Pakistani state media (PTV)

Mumbai terror attacks and the Pakistani news media (PTV)

The Pakistani PTV state T.V news channels reinforced that terrorism was a common enemy against whom India and Pakistan ought to unite. Sufferings of Pakistani citizens at the hands of extremists, penetration of violence and terrorism

in the Pakistani society and Pakistani state's struggle against non-state elements were at the center-stage. Mumbai terror attacks for which India blamed Pakistan and Pakistan as a 'victim' of Indian allegations and nudged India to look beyond Pakistan in order to identify the real culprits. Indian media's coverage of the attacks was criticised excessively. Both commentators and readers came down heavily on Indian media for indulging in jingoistic and provocative coverage.

Role of the US in the entire imbroglio was framed in terms of the 'war on terror', its support to India in context of the attacks and Pakistan's role in eliminating extremism. A critical and accusatory tone was adopted to discuss the role in terms of US support to India and its admonishing of Pakistan. At the same, through the use of a 'pro-Pakistan international opinion' frame. The state channel of the Pakistan clearly showed Indian media's role in context of the attacks. It was accused of giving pitch to negative coverage about Pakistan, finger-pointing and fanning emotions and opinions against Pakistan. A few commentaries also came down heavily upon Pakistani media's role. Limited discussion on identity of Ajmal Kasab (one of the main attackers, captured eventually) was found. Reference to his Pakistani identity began only in the month of January. Unlike Indian state and private media that gathered and reported information on Kasab's Pakistani connection, state media in Pakistan turned defensive by denying Kasab's Pakistani nationality. Opinions from international community were limited to power elites such as the US, UK and China. Opinions from other international players were not covered as vigorously as of those who possessed power and status in international relations to win over strategic as well as diplomatic approval for Pakistan's stand.

Other content categories derived were

- ❖ Pakistan as a victim of terror and blame game initiated by India.
- ❖ Domestic/home grown angle into the terror attacks (essentially a role of Hindu extremist elements from India).
- ❖ Pakistan's willing cooperation as opposed to India's disinterest in peaceful negotiation.
- ❖ Response to India's accusations.
- ❖ Pakistan's extension of cooperation to India.
- ❖ Denial of accusations put by India
- ❖ Pakistan's counter-offensive

International opinion

- ❖ Positive opinions about Pakistan.
- ❖ Favourable projection of Pakistan at the international level.
- ❖ International solidarity and support to Pakistan.
- ❖ Positive role in the fight against terrorism.
- ❖ US response and US role vis-a-vis India- Pakistan.

Cooperation & restraint

- ❖ Identification of common threats like terrorism.
- ❖ Solidarity with India.
- ❖ Co-operation with India at a time of crisis.
- ❖ Condemnation of hawkish elements on both sides.
- ❖ Call for cooperation to fight terrorism jointly.
- ❖ Terrorism as a common enemy of both countries.

Conclusion

In 1964, Pakistan launched its first official or state channel Pakistan Television (PTV) and the biggest challenge to encounter the Indian state television propaganda against Pakistan on the issue of Kashmir, cross border conflicts LoC and Indian Parliament and Bombay terrorist attacks. At that time PTV was sole channel to encounter Indian stance or propaganda. To date, the state channel has greatly raised the true narrative of Pakistan government and performed a pivotal role in fabricating the opinion of the people. Similarly over a period of time more specifically after the wars of 1965, 1971 and 1999 (Kargil War); the Indian propaganda of claiming Pakistan to create anarchy in the region was outrageously countered by the channel. The DD is clear part of the Indian propaganda to achieve the regional strategic goal and portray Pakistan as the mother of terrorism. Now Pakistani state T.V (PTV) fought for the people of Pakistan at the regional and international levels and still protects Pakistan from Indian propaganda against Pakistan at the domestic, regional and global levels.

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