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Abstract: *In the political and military tensions between India and Pakistan, print media play an important role in stabilizing the issues or portraying the narrative of the state to the world. Both the countries spend more on defense in comparison to other sectors. The main reason for spending billions of USD on the military is the Kashmir issue. Though both countries have a long-lasting history of rivalry when it comes to the Kashmir issue after the Pulwama attack, the tensions between the two neighboring countries were the worst in the last thirty years. In such a horrible situation, media from both sides were busy defending their stances. This study aims to the comparison of Pulwama attack coverage in English newspapers from both sides (Daily Dawn from Pakistan & the Hindu from India) that how these most circulated newspapers covered the whole conflict, what were their contributions to peace, and how they portrayed the stance of their governments. As the incident started on 14 February 2019 after the bomb blast, therefore we have covered editorials of both newspapers from 14 February to 5 March 2019. Both sides exaggerated the whole issue however; we noticed that Indian media and Political leadership used harsh words and false statements.*

Key Words: Pulwama Incident, India, Pakistan, Kashmir Issue, Balakot Strike

Introduction

Media acts as a backbone in all the matters of the state because it informs people about different issues happening on a global level (Ali & Shahid, 2012). In the twenty-first century now, media has brought many changes such as social media sites which influenced almost every aspect of our life. Earlier the traditional media was used only for information and entertainment purposes but now it acts as a "watchdog" as they have eyes on what Politicians are doing or what is going on in society. (TOIJA CINQUE). The

importance of media coverage to India and Pakistan ties is very crucial because both of these countries are always trying to give tough to each other on different forums so in such cases reporting from the media of both sides acts as a brainstorm for the public and it is categorized as war or peace journalism reporting because it's quite clear that the peace and stability of South Asia are important for the maintenance of global peace. (Ahmed, 2014; Saleem, 2017 and Yousaf, Elahi & Adnan, 2018). Indo-Pak in the majority of cases has tried to escalate the

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situation and tensions between these two neighbour states rather than resolving it. Whenever an incident happens media from both sides start blaming each other without proper evidence and attribution. Just because of this irresponsible behaviour, a Pakistani Journalist Mr Najam Sethi once said: "I regret to say that the media in both countries entrapped in narrow nationalism and remained part of the problem rather than the solution". (Bose, 2011: 1)

Pulwama Attack

On 14 February 2019, a young Kashmiri militant blew away himself on the convoy of buses of the Indian Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) about 40 soldiers lost their lives in this deadly attack while more than a dozen became injured. In the past 30 years, this attack was considered the worst one on Indian Forces in the occupied territory. Indian government and media, without any relevant evidence immediately accused Pakistan of the incident. However, a militant group Jaish-e-Muhammad accepted responsibility for the attack, thus India once again propagated negatively about Pakistan that they are in support of terrorist organizations in Kashmir. (Warrich, Haseeb-ur-Rehman et al., 2020). The Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi started hateful speech against Pakistan and threatened Pakistan for launching surgical strikes while Prime Minister Imran Khan offered help in a fair investigation to India, but the Indian authorities neglected this offer (Bukhari & Miglani, 2019).

On 19th of February 2019, the Prime Minister of Pakistan addressed the International community and Pakistani Nation about the False flag operation of India in Pakistani Administrated Kashmir and at the same time he warned India what kind of consequences India would face if they attacked Pakistan. However, despite all these warnings, Indian fighter jets on the 26th of February entered Pakistani territory

but due to the quick response of PAF Indians, plans dropped their payloads in an opening in Balakot. The Indians claimed of targeting a camp of Jaish-e-Muhammad and their media started reporting that 250-300 Pakistani militants have been killed in this strike (known as a surgical strike in India). Later on, local and International Journalists visited that area which negated the Indian claim. On 27 February 2019, Pakistani authorities said that their Air has carried out Air strikes inside India. Pakistan also said they have shot down two Indian jets that violated LOC (Line of control) and captured one of their Pilot; later on, the pilot was released by Pakistan as a Peace gesture. (Farhad Safi, Bahire Efe Özad, Liaqat Iqbal).

Despite supporting Pakistan's step, the Indian media was completely supporting the war slogan of their government. However, there was a contradiction in their reporting and the sources, they used were weak, because they do not try to carry out an independent investigation on the Pulwama issue. Suchitra [Vijayan](#) and Vasundhara Sirnate Drennan published an article in Washington Post in which they stated that: "After Investigating on Indian media reporting on Pulwama we came to know that all the sources provided by them were biased and there was a huge contradiction in them because they attributed they source as "anonymous government officials" or "intelligence officers". (Global Opinions, March 5, 2019), (Farhad Safi, Bahire Efe Özad, and Liaqat Iqbal).

Causes of the Pulwama Attack

Kashmir Issue

The tension stems from the countries' common colonial history. From the seventeenth through twentieth centuries, the British governed the majority of the Indian subcontinent, initially via the British East India Company and then officially through the British crown beginning in 1858. Britain's control over its colony deteriorated

over time, and a burgeoning nationalist movement endangered the crown's fading dominion. Pakistan became a sovereign Muslim-majority country on August 14, 1947. The next day, Hindu-majority India followed. Over 550 princely kingdoms in colonized India which were never directly administered by Britain may choose to join an independent country or stay autonomous under the hurried conditions of partition. Kashmir was one of those states, which was ruled by Maharaja Hari Singh.

The Kashmir issue appeared for the first time on the global level in 1947 with the independence of two newly born states of the world, India and Pakistan. Until August 1947, the Maharaja of Kashmir was sovereign over whether to join India or Pakistan so, he opted for India. Pakistan simply challenged this decision because it was quite clear according to the British plan that it is up to the people of the princely states that to whom they are giving preference for their future, also the population of Kashmir was Muslim. Both the countries allowed United Nations as a third party after the war broke out for the first time in 1948 between both sides. The Muslim-majority status of Kashmir was significant for India due to its importance in the context of Indian secularism. (Malik, 2002). By 1950, the Pakistan Administrated Kashmir, which is almost one-third of the whole of Kashmir, was divided into two major parts. (Northern areas like those that are closed to Chinese and USSR borders and the remaining territory is known as Azad Kashmir. Kashmir was also known for its special status on the Indian side as per Article 370 but last year BJP government revoked this status of the state which results in an escalation of the conflict between both these neighbouring countries. (Rajat [Ganguly](#)).

Indian Internal Political Affairs

India is a master at using false flag operations to harm Pakistan's worldwide image. The Pulwama tragedy in 2019 was utilized by the BJP to win the Lok Sabha elections. Modi was brilliant in putting the lives of 40 security people in jeopardy and finally killing them in order to blame Pakistan for the disaster. hit reaction, an Indian attack hit Balakot and Pakistan shot down at least one Indian air force fighter jet. It is possible to assume that Modi's RSS administration utilized the Pulwama event as a political instrument to win the Lok Sabha elections in 2019. Not only that, but Pakistan's spied agency just revealed another The Modi government conducted a false flag operation only days ahead of the fourth commemoration of the Pulwama attack. The scheme included strikes on military locations with the intention of blaming the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). Furthermore, the atrocities committed by the Modi-led BJP administration in Kashmir against Muslim populations are well known. Since 1947, Indian military forces have mercilessly slaughtered innocent Kashmiris demanding their rightful rights. The situation deteriorated further when the BJP administration repealed Articles 370 and 35(A) and declared itself a certified occupying army. As a result, Kashmiris' lives have devolved into hell on Earth. The Indian government has put at risk the lives of Kashmiri Muslims by converting the Muslim-majority territory into a Hindu-majority state. The Kashmiri Muslims are being ethnically cleansed in a methodical manner. It is equally critical to recognize that religious freedom within India has taken a sharp decline under Modi. For the first time since 2004, the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) accused the ruling party BJP of discriminating against minorities and enabling violence against them to go unpunished and named India a

country of particular concern. Despite this, former US President Donald Trump stated, "The US and India are battling radical Islamic terrorism, and Modi strongly supports religious freedom."

Beyond that, India has consistently managed to depict Pakistan as a terrorist state, which is unfounded and based on false propaganda. This, in turn, assists the BJP and Modi in garnering sufficient support in their national elections. The EU Dis Info Lab research clearly demonstrated India's active role in propagating deceptive campaigns against Pakistan, affecting EU nations and US public opinion. Such Indian propaganda tarnishes Pakistan's strategic relevance in Asia as well as the peaceful attitude of the Pakistani people.

Objectives of the Study

This study aimed to find out answers to the following questions:

- 1) Which side covered the incident with strong Attributions and sources?
- 2) Which media neglected the aspect of peace in reporting?
- 3) According to international media either Indian or Pakistani media played a vital role in normalization of the conflict.

Literature Review

(Bar-Tal & Carruthers, 2000) argued and explained the statement that the way media cover conflicts mostly escalates the situation. (Saqib Riaz, Babar Hussain Shah & Shakil Ahmad). The Indo-Pak media performed very poorly in the presentation and portrayal of the Pulwama issue to the public. (Akhund, 2019). In February 2019, it was for the first time that both states violated LOC and carried out air strikes. In such a tense scenario, still, the media of both sides were reported in the context of war. However, the release of an Indian pilot from Pakistan was a step towards peace but still

Indian media was busy with their notorious war journalism. (Suchitra Vijayan and Vasundhara Sirmate Drennan). The most common failure of Indian media was their weak sources as almost all the well-known Media houses of India attributed their coverage to unknown, anonyms, Intelligence or secret Police sources and at the same time there was a lot of contradiction in their statements (Like initially they claimed of hitting a Jaish-e-Muhammad camp in Balakot strike and death of about 250-300 militants but later on Shusma Suraj denied this). (QRIUS.com, February 2019) Soon after the news of Pulwama became viral, Indian media started sensationalizing and exaggerating the whole context. They quoted political figures of India like the Prime Minister, Finance Minister and Defense Minister to use harsh words and statements against Pakistan without proper evidence. For instance, The Indian Express quoted Narendra Modi who targeted Pakistan that Pulwama Attack was their well-planned strategy.

(The Washington Post, 04 March 2019) In this very crucial situation instead of airing positive facts, the Indian media presented themselves as a propaganda machine for the state, which resulted in an escalation of the issue and a harsh response from the opponent military and leadership. The Indian media not only supported the arrest of thousands of Kashmiri youngsters but also silently neglected the corruption stories of the BJP government in Rafael's deal with France. Daily Dawn framed all the information with objectivity however; on the 15th of February 2019, the second largest circulated newspaper in Pakistan News International shared an article in which they shared narratives of Kashmiri leaders and video content of suicide bombers. This depicts the difference in mass media of the country that how their narratives vary in state affairs (The Foreign Policy Magazine, Vaishnavi Chandrashekar, 1 March 2019)

After the Pulwama attack Indian mainstream and social media was completely on demand from their govt. to take revenge on Pakistan. Hashtags like (Revenge Pulwama, we want revenge, not condemnation) were seen everywhere in Indian media. The anchorpersons were in an angry mood like Arnab Goswami when the wife of a slain soldier asked him about the failure, that why govt. has failed to stop attacks people called her a coward. The Indian media also claimed of Balakot strike but there are some questions, which they failed to answer like (Where are the footages of a strike? What is the exact number of causalities? Was Pakistan prepared or not?) However, they failed to answer these questions.

(GULF TIMES, 2 March 2019 - DAILY SABAH, 28 February 2019 - THE NEWS INTERNATIONAL, 12 March 2019) In order to de-escalate the tensions between two neighbouring nuclear power states Prime Minister of Pakistan Imran Khan announced the release of Indian Pilot Abhinandan Varthaman. The International and local leaders praised this step of the Pakistani govt. for resolving issues. President of Turkey Erdogan, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and other leaders supported this step of the country. However, the Indian government and political leadership were still busy propagating against Pakistan.

Galtung Peace Model

Johan Galtung ([1964](#)), the main and founding figure of peace research in the Editorial to the first edition of the Journal of Peace Research in 1964 explained the idea of negative and positive peace. However, Galtung further explained the concept towards indirect and structural violence or peace. According to Galtung's perception "negative peace is one where there is an absence of violence and war and positive peace means integration of human society". (Journal of Peace Research 1964, page 2).

This theory of peace has undergone changes since its evolution (1964), Galtung's views on peace and violence keep changing continuously because of the causes and effects of violence and that was the reason he added more terms to it. The main problem and challenge for him were those critics who opposed the views of Galtung on the peace project. In the era from 1964 to 1971, Galtung published many papers the explanation of his structural theory which includes; aggression (1964), institutional conflict resolution (1965), integration (1968), violence, peace and peace research (1969), structural and direct violence (1971) and imperialism (1971). For an understanding of the direct-structural and cultural violence model Galtung coined the concept of power and its four dimensions which has an impact on positive and negative peace: cultural, economic military and political. According to Galtung violence can be broken with peace flowing from cultural through structural peace towards direct peace. (Bonish, A. [1981](#))

Findings and Conclusion

After studying the editorials of two main newspapers (THE HINDU & DAWN) of India and Pakistan, it is very clear that both sides somehow misguided the audience however; the role of Indian media was not responsible. Every local and International media house reported on the Pulwama bomb blast in a different way according to their organizational policy but as per this piece of study, we found that Indian media along with their government played an important role to miss leading their local civilians and the international community as well.

According to the coverage of Pakistani media and speeches of the Prime Minister of Pakistan this incident, occur due to brutal steps of the Indian military in Kashmir; however, the Indian side only reported and focused on the happenings of the attack and

they completely neglected the actual reason of the attack. On both sides, Media tried their level best to give coverage in a patriotic way. We also examined that the Pakistani media in some cases reported friendly bilateral ties with India but the Indian media as expected exaggerated the whole content and their coverage was war friendly. Besides all these aspects our last question was whether Indian or Pakistani political leadership played an important role in de-

escalating the tensions. After observation and deep study, we came to know that Imran Khan was the leader who played his role for peace by releasing the Indian pilot after the 27th February 2019 incident. Therefore, after analysis and study, we can say that Indo-Pak media always focus on events and issues rather than the reasons. They only highlight the agenda and policy of the state against each other.

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