

CROSS-BORDER NEWS FRAMING OF SOCIAL ISSUES IN INDIA AND PAKISTAN'S ENGLISH DAILIES

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Abstract: *This study analyzed cross border news coverage by India and Pakistan's English dailies (The Times of India, The Hindu, Dawn and The Nation) from 1st June 2014 to 31st May 2018 by focusing on Social indicators such as religion, culture and social structure which are further sub-divided into issues. The study implied quantitative and qualitative approaches and analyzed the content of 4480 news with directional analysis. Two sample proportion tests applied as per the significance and association of variables. It was found that more coverage given to the religious news than other social indicators. Cultural indicator was given most positive and religious news most negative coverage among the indicators while Hindu-Muslim issues was given most negative coverage among news issues. The content denoted war rather than peace journalism. This study recommends practice of peace journalism to promote neutral opinion about culture and especially religious thoughts among people from both sides.*

Keywords: *Culture, Religion, Hindu-Muslim, News Coverage, Peace Journalism*

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Introduction:

All the countries in the world focus on cultivating nationalism and patriotism among their public. The objective is to strengthen the national integrity and the agenda to empower their national doctrine. They play a significant role in developing nationalism and the feeling of patriotism in the mind of any nation (Suhay et. al, 2016). It is used to present the issues, events and ideas about the self and neighboring nations in different ways which not just shape national opinion (Zelizer, 2017) but also serves the interest of the elite and ruling groups in a country (Beste, 2016). Nationalism and patriotism serve as the excuses behind such strategies, war and peace propaganda (Kamalipour, 2015), and national integrity and international image building.

Political scenarios and differences have largely affected the press of India and Pakistan since 1947-Partition though they shared a livelihood for centuries. Today, their media serve their national interests or the interests of their ruling elite in reporting each other's social, political, and national issues. This paper briefly discusses India and Pakistan's dominant sociopolitical issues and media approaches to the said issues. It examines the past literature on the subject especially India and Pakistan's reporting of mutual issues and uses the framing theory for the discussion. It is based on content/directional analysis of various 4480 news headlines and sub-headlines from front, back and international pages of two Indian and two Pakistani national dailies, namely *Times of India*, *The Hindu*, *Dawn* and *Nation*.

It presumes that Pakistani and Indian media, especially their English presses which don't

just have national but also international readership, are influenced by, what Lee (2020) call, the respective national interests. These dailies play a vital role in determining public perceptions about their internal and external issues. Ahmed (2017) say Indian English newspapers are considered to be neutral in presenting Hindu-Muslim issues happening within India as was seen in the case of Gujrat riots. The English dailies favored Muslims while the Hindi language dailies advocated the Hindu majority. The reporting of the incident showed that their nationalism, stance and policies were stimulated by the foreign policy of their respective government against a rival country like Pakistan.

Social issues of India

The largest democratic country, India, has interlinked its social happenings to economic development and political processes. India, though in purchasing power parity, is the 3rd leading economic power in the world. There are problems like organizational corruption, declining literacy rate, poor education system, clean water issues, dearth of proper sanitation facilities, growing health problems with emerging diseases, swelling population, mounting poverty, environmental concerns, pollution, women safety, rape and murder cases, unemployment, infrastructural laggings, weakening agriculture, religious intolerance and religious disputes (Guha, 2017).

Religious rift between Hindu and Muslim, being the most significant of the social issues, has been a reason of social disturbance in India for centuries. The differences in religious practices of the distinctly different Hindu and Muslim groups give rise to serious conflicts which result in

bloodshed every now and then. In 1992, a Muslim religious group burnt a train carrying away Hindus who planned to construct a temple in Ayodhya after destroying their mosque and murdering 55 Muslims. In 2001, members of Hindu religious group entered an ancient mosque and burned Islamic sacred book and hurled pig's meat there which Muslims consider unclean, unhealthy and strictly prohibited under their religious obligations. The Hindu group considered their act was justified as they took revenge of the cow slaughtering and destruction of the statues of Buddha by Taliban in Afghanistan, as both the cow and the statues of Buddha are sacred to the Hindus. According to Tajammul-ul-Islam (2019), Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), is lynching Muslims on different matters of cow slaughtering punishment.

The disputes between the two major religious groups depict the sensitivity of religious matters that make social stability vulnerable as Hindus leave Muslim neighborhood and Muslims sort to live in Muslim majority areas. These incidents contradict the very spirit of the Indian Constitution that says that India will be a secular democracy. The extremist Hindu element has never accepted this position (Chatterji et.al,2019). It always tries to subjugate religious minorities whether Muslims, Christians or Sikhs.

Hindu Nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is particularly notorious for persecution of religious minorities. They are always promoting Hindutva doctrine (Josh, 2018). Modi, the current Prime Minister, is allegedly blamed for the massacres of Muslims in Ahmedabad and Gujrat and his party BJP believes that India belongs to Hindus and other religious minorities should

either leave India or be slaves and subservient to Hindus.

Social issues of Pakistan

Pakistan is not as big as India in terms of its size or population. It is a Muslim majority country with 96.28 % Muslims, 1.60 % Hindus and Sikhs, and 1.59 % Christians, and 0.52 % people of other religions. Pakistan's social, political, infrastructure and corruption issues are similar to those of India.

The religious parties want Pakistan to be a purely religious Islamic state (Sunnis who form 70 percent of the population want to follow Saudi Arabian model, whereas Shias who are 30 per cent want to follow Iranian Model). This debate of whether founders of Pakistan wanted a religious or a secular Pakistan has been going on for the past 72 years and the issues related to this major problem have not been resolved.

Among Pakistan's various sociopolitical issues, issues of women and religious minorities are the most highlighted in the media. According to Karamat et. al. (2019), Sunni extremist groups want Shias to be declared a religious minority and Pakistan a Sunni Wahabi state. The said political parties want religion to be applied as the state of affairs by the government. They want the Islamic laws to be imposed in order to run the country. The extremist parties do not want to give any rights to either women, or religious minorities, including the smaller denominations of Muslims.

There is wide spread discrimination against women, religious minorities and Shias and Ahmadis. They are treated like untouchables, just the way Hindus treated

Muslims as untouchable. Some reports have confirmed that the education system and syllabus also promote religious extremism and an extremist and violent mindset among the students (Bugti et. al, 2018). No government has ever tried to manage this matter of religious concerns as it can trigger riots by the vast majority of uneducated and religiously motivated population in the country.

Among Pakistan's social issues, honor killing, gender discrimination, domestic violence and rape cases are also the most highlighted issues by the media. Zia (2019) says the rape cases are creating problematic scenarios for Pakistan. where the fight between genders has erupted to take over rather sorting the issue in an equal manner. Children, boys or girls, of very small ages are victimized due to the increasing frustration in not just elder people but also young people aging just 13 and above that are involved in sexual assault and harassment cases.

A fraction rape cases of victims from religious minorities especially of those from poor background, or less educated class are most significant. Which show social injustice by the dominant patriarchic setup and, in this case, related to Muslim male (Hadi, 2017). A higher number of Muslim victims is ignored and is reported as Pakistan's bad face to the Indian public by the Indian press. Resultantly, Pakistan's image is also damaged.

Indian Media and its approach towards Pakistan

Indian stance on terrorism spread by Pakistan is depicted through their media vividly (Shabbir et.al, 2014). India relates every news of terrorism attack directly or indirectly with Pakistan and Muslims. The hatred about Islam and Pakistan is

predominant in Indian media and news pertaining to Islam and Muslims is framed to show them as the culprits behind any bad news (Narayana & Kapur, 2011). Most of the Indian English newspapers get the services of foreign agencies for gathering information and their prime focus remains on showcasing the Indian security, or image building. According to A. Gupta (2012), Indian media focuses on building the national image of India as a religious entity, framing hostile news against Muslim countries like Pakistan, Yemen, Afghanistan and Egypt, and hardly covering India's population or trade issues with these countries. Indian media portrays mainly the directives and policies of the government by using the umbrella of religion.

Pakistani Media and its approach towards India

Pakistan and India have been in constant disputes on several other issues, water being very significant. Pakistan occasionally took this matter to the United Nations and ran media campaigns to highlight Indian intentions to flood Pakistani areas by releasing water without any prior intimations (Gupta, 2010). Among other issues, Pakistani media conventionally highlights India's Muslim minority issues. It also highlights incidents of forceful conversions of Hindu and Christian girls to Islam by marrying Muslim men. Though Schaflechner (2018) states that less coverage is given to such issues of minorities due to the involvement of religious element, Ali (2010) and Rahman (2012) say Pakistani media reflects a neutral and positive attitude towards issues of the minorities, bringing their fundamental issues to the limelight.

Significance of Study

This research of India and Pakistan's news frames is important as Indian and Pakistani

medias have been engaged in continuous propaganda wars (Awan et. al, 2019). Media in both the countries have been influenced by emotionally overwhelmed populations that emphasize their religious fervor and political rage since the time of separation (Tripathi, 2016). In the present era of social, economic and political development around the world, India and Pakistan are prolonging the never-ending conflict by using media factor which, if let unbridled, will never let the two countries wash away the leftovers of their enmity.

Literature review:

Tripathi (2018) identified the core aspects of India and Pakistan's education system in shaping the opinion of patriotism through their text books during the eras of the Indian BJP government of 1998 till 2004 by the Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Pakistan's government by Gen. Zia-ul-Haq (1977-1988). Marie stressed the conflict originated due to such ideological propagation through education. She expressed it as an international issue of concern as both the countries are manipulating and deteriorating the curricula of textbooks taught in schools. These steps are taken directly by the controlling governments that molded their contemporary governing policies through all political and nonpolitical means.

Streifer&Sabitov (2020) suggested a view about cultural impact on thinking when American media framed the shooting down of Korean plane by Soviet Union as "the KAL attack". It was conceived as the impact of the preexisting cultural expectation and schematic consideration of the anti-Soviet perception by the viewers. It was obvious to apprehend that American viewers will tend to think it as an attack. The same impact was witnessed when the U.S. shot down an Iranian plane but showcased it as the result

of atechanical fault. Unlike the KAL incident, the U.S. media framed it with a neutral viewpoint to get away from the blame attack. They emphasized on some technical fault to avoid their audience getting critical about their own mistake. Thus, they maneuvered the reality, making it less noticeable for the targeted audience. It helped them in achieving desirable frame of mind among the audience. The *Time* and *Newsweek* covers also highlighted the U.S. shooting of the Iranian plane, as an ambiguous or unclear happening just to confuse the reader in an abstract understating, or to deviate the attention by describing it "Why It Happened" or by playing down and killing the news story. As opposed to the Iranian, they had framed the shooting down of the Korean plane as "shooting to kill", "The Soviets destroy an airliner" and "Murder in the air". These headlines clearly depict the real intention behind framing the two similar scenarios with two different strategies.

Joye et. al. (2016) indicated the prevalence of negative news which has spread out more probability than positive news. Even if the positive news is evident in some cases, it requires more proof than negative news. It catches the attention of the audience and may prevail as an unambiguous piece of information. They pointed out the press attempts to satisfy the respondents while studying the crises of Cuba, Cyprus and Congo in Norwegian Press, and noted that the categories of frequency, unpredictability, cultural proximity, demand and multiple other conditions mattered in this regard. News stories build the readers' perception and interpretation about the situations. General perception, patriotic and popular views supports the news, whether truth or lie. People feel comfortable being satisfied by the news which is dominantly believed and felt complied with.

Wasike, (2013) highlighted the modern journalism through internet and specifically the twitter, a worldwide popular social networking website. He examined the interaction of social media editors from print and television media with their twitter followers. He found that print media editors framed more news pertaining to conflict, economy and human interests on their social sites as opposed to social media editors of TV that were more in touch with their twitter followers and highlighted technological frames in their news. The difference between mainstream media frames and social media frames surprisingly varied. Studies suggested that mainstream media focuses more on economy and conflict frames whereas the social media showcases more human interests and technological frames. Social media trends point to a paradigm shift of frames as the audience is much more reliant on technology news and human interest than on political news, or disaster and war frames. The social and traditional media framework differs.

Narayana & Kapur conducted the analysis of five Indian English Dailies to explore the framing of Muslims' image in press (2011). They found that Muslims being the biggest minority in world's largest democratic country, India, have peculiar presentation through their news media. English dailies give positive and unusual coverage to Muslims in different events, majorly the Gujrat riots where Muslims minority was framed negatively in traditional media. The communal media was pro-Hindu and primarily anti-Muslim while the English dailies opted the policy of pro-Muslim framing by neutralizing the stance of hatred and diffusing the matter by presenting facts and soft image of Muslims.

News Framing

Tuchman (1978) denotes framing with an intervening concept in reality where the facts are maneuvered and presented in special manners. Framing is a way of selecting a content to be showcased and presented to inculcate the desired interpretation (Gitlin, 2003). Framing involves an intentional assortment of different features of reality and projects their importance in regards to problem, its peculiar interpretation and proposed solution (Entman, 1993) while even manipulating the story to serve particular interests, (Herman & Chomsky, 2000). Framing is about the presentation of issues through news stories in a way that the receivers get influenced and yet relate to it with their own perceptions (Kuypers, 2009).

Objective of the Study

- To study the nature of social issues covered by the Indian and Pakistani press

Hypotheses of the study:

H1: The English press of both India and Pakistan will predominantly cover the religious news as compare to othersub-categories of culture and social structure.

H2: The selected newspapers of India and Pakistan gives greater coverage to Hindu-Muslim issues as compared to othersocial issues (art, education, poverty, health, gender discrimination, etc.)

Research Design:

This study undertakes quantitative and qualitative approaches: content analysis and directional analysis methods to examine

positive, negative and neutral slants of social news of India and Pakistan's English dailies.

This study is analyzing news stories from front, back and international pages of two English dailies of India, which are *Times of India* and *The Hindu*, and two English dailies of Pakistani which are *Dawn* and *The Nation*.

Population:

News stories published in English newspapers of India and Pakistan within the selected period of time; 1st June 2014 to 31st May 2018, is the population of this study. News stories related to India and Pakistan on the front, back and international pages of English newspapers from India: *Times of India*, *The Hindu* and Pakistan: *Dawn*, *The Nation* are collected for analysis.

Data presentation

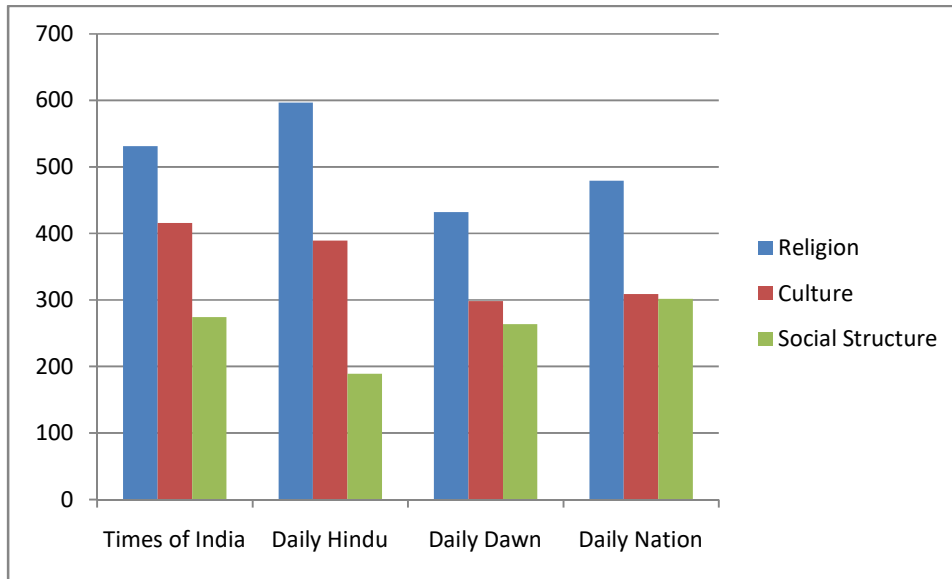
Table 1. Overall coverage of social news in both Indo-Pak selected English dailies

	<i>Times of India</i>	<i>The Hindu</i>	<i>Dawn</i>	<i>The Nation</i>	Total
Social Category	1221 (27.25%)	1175 (26.23%)	994 (22.19%)	1090 (24.33%)	4480 (100.00%)

Hypotheses analysis

H1: The English press of both India and Pakistan will predominantly cover the religious news as compare to other sub-categories of culture and social structure.

Sub categories	<i>Times of India</i>	<i>The Hindu</i>	<i>Dawn</i>	<i>The Nation</i>	Total
Religion	531 (11.85%)	597 (13.33%)	432 (9.64%)	479 (10.69%)	2039 (45.51%)
Culture	416 (9.29%)	389 (8.68%)	298 (6.65%)	309 (6.90%)	1412 (31.52%)
Social Structure	274 (6.12%)	189 (4.22%)	264 (5.89%)	302 (6.74%)	1029 (22.97%)
	1221 (27.25%)	1175 (26.23%)	994 (22.19%)	1090 (24.33%)	4480 (100.00%)



Test and CI for Two Proportions

Variable/Newspaper	News Coverage	N	Sample P
Religion	2039	3451	0.590843
Culture	1412	3451	0.409157

Difference = p (1) - p (2)

Estimate for difference: 0.181686

95% CI for difference: (0.158487, 0.204886)

Test for difference = 0 (vs ≠ 0): Z = 15.35 P-Value = 0.000

Fisher’s exact test: p-value = 0.000

Test and CI for Two Proportions

Variable/Newspaper	News Coverage	N	Sample P
Religion	2039	3068	0.664602
Social Structure	1029	3068	0.335398

Difference = p (1) - p (2)

Estimate for difference: 0.329205

95% CI for difference: (0.305578, 0.352831)

Test for difference = 0 (vs ≠ 0): Z = 27.31 P-Value = 0.000

Fisher’s exact test: p-value = 0.000

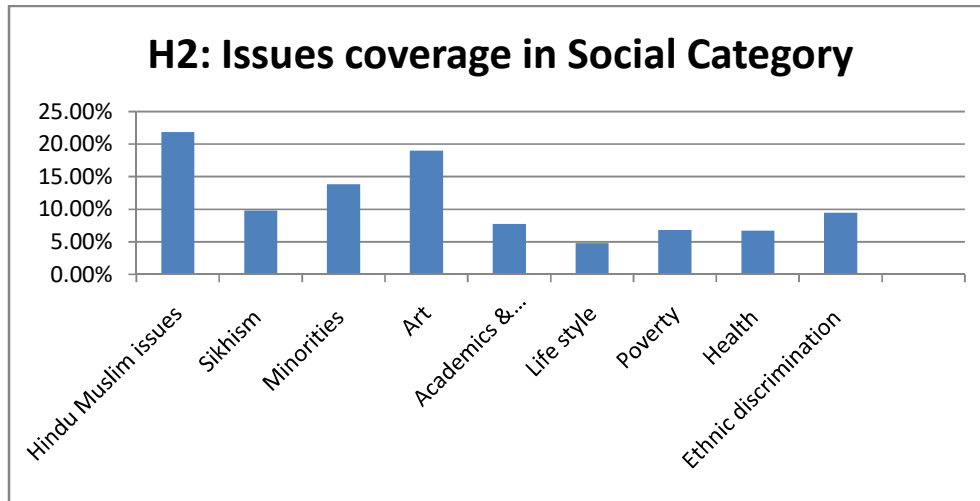
Statistical Analysis:

The hypothesis test of the two types of samples indicates that both Pakistani and Indian English dailies give significant coverage to religious news as compared to

two other sub-categories related to culture and social structure. As the p-value is less than 0.05, the hypothesis is correct and strongly supported through findings of the study.

H2. The selected newspapers of India and Pakistan give greater coverage to Hindu-Muslim issues as compared to other social issues (art, education, poverty, health, gender discrimination, etc.)

Category	Sub-Categories	Issues	<i>Times of India</i>	<i>The Hindu</i>	<i>Dawn</i>	<i>The Nation</i>	Total	Total of sub-category	Total of Category
Social	Religion	Hindu Muslim issues	259	271	218	232	980 (21.88)	2039	4480
		Sikhism	111	148	77	103	439 (9.80%)		
		Minorities	161	178	137	144	620 (13.84%)		
	Culture	Art	290	201	189	170	850 (18.97%)	1412	
		Academics & literature	77	111	69	90	347 (7.75%)		
		Life style	49	77	40	49	215 (4.80%)		
	Social Structure	Poverty	96	41	76	92	305 (6.81%)	1029	
		Health	76	50	95	79	300 (6.70%)		
		Ethnic discrimination	102	98	93	131	424 (9.46%)		



Test and CI for Two Proportions

Variable/Issue	News Coverage	N	Sample P
Hindu Muslim Issues (highest)	980	4480	0.218750
Life Style (lowest)	215	4480	0.047991

Difference = p (1) - p (2)

Estimate for difference: 0.170759

95% CI for difference: (0.157131, 0.184387)

Test for difference = 0 (vs ≠ 0): Z = 24.56 P-Value = 0.000

Fisher’s exact test: p-value = 0.000

Statistical Analysis

The two samples proportion test application of statistics indicated that there is significant difference between the coverage of Hindu Muslim issues as compared to other issues within social issues. Hindu Muslims issues are given more coverage than others. The highest coverage was compared with the lowest coverage in the statistical test. As the p-value is lesser than 0.05, this hypothesis stands true and accepted.

Discussion:

The analysis of the collected data indicates that both the Indian and Pakistani media present each other’s social, economic and political issues in negative manner. They

frame a less amount of news was about each other in positive and neutral ways. In the sub-category news, the newspapers of both the countries give more coverage to religious news than news stories in other sub-categories. In issues among the sub-categories, Hindu-Muslim issues, minority issues, ethnic discrimination are given more coverage than any other issues.

The sub-category of “religion” got more coverage as compared to other “Social” sub-categories. As the religion form the prime demarcation scheme between the two neighboring countries, which become the key reason of their major conflicts ((Mamoon, 2018).

The newspapers of the two countries gave more coverage to news stories of “Hindu-Muslim issues” in the sub-category of “religion” than other issues. Indian Citizen registration law, the issues of Muslims’ lynching by Hindus in India for cow slaughtering, forced conversion of Hindus in Pakistan and Hindu-Muslim skirmishes on both sides of the border become the reason of more reporting of the issues during the selected time period.

“Art” issue of the sub-category “Culture” got more coverage as entertainment industry from both sides exchanged their talent of Music, acting, drama and film production excelled during the selected research time period.

The Hindu from India and *The Nation* from Pakistan framed news stories about each side more negatively than their counterpart: *Times of India* from India and *Dawn* from Pakistan. The latter two portrayed less negative news as compared to their counterparts and gave more positive coverage and emphasized on neutral framing social issues of each side. Both sides tend to portray the situation of other’s religious minorities negatively by framing the news in a manner which the other country would not officially agree to or acknowledge as a fact. For example, *The Hindu* printed the headline: “In Pakistan, anyone and everyone can be a target” on 15th May 2015, and further emphasized the killings of the Shia citizens of Pakistan. It said, “Pakistan is a country of ghosts. They are everywhere, the victims and the perpetrators both”. In another report on 29th December 2017, *The Hindureported*, “Rabwah, a sanctuary for Pakistan’s persecuted Ahmadis”, and on 16 April 2018, it reported “Religious minorities continue to face violent attacks in Pakistan.” Similarly, *The Nation* reported on 26th March 2016, “RAW rocks Pak-India peace efforts”. In

another report on 24th April 2017, *The Nation* reported, “Massive Sikh gathering in New York demands separation of Punjab from India”.

It was also observed that the selected dailies gave more negative coverage to “Hindu-Muslim issues”, “Sikhs” and “minorities issues” as compared to other news issues. The issues of “art”, “academics & literature”, are given more positive news framing as compared to other issues. Issues related to “poverty” and “health” are given more neutral framing than other issues.

Dawn has frames Hindu-Muslim issues more positively than its Indian counterparts whether *Times of India* or *The Hindu*.

Arts & literature has been framed positively throughout, reflecting hardly any negative presentation. The exchange of talent of film and music industry and intermingling of artists has been the key to give constructive impression to the media and eventually for the people from both sides.

There is also positive coverage of religious issues by the selected dailies which indicates the professional journalism pertaining the true presentation to the occasional true presentation of the incidents, of the facts. On 01 October 2014, *Dawn* reported, “Pakistan schools teach Hindu hatred”. On 06 March 2015, *The Hindureported*, “Pak. Students act as human shield for Hindus celebrating Holi”.

Conclusion

The findings of this research elaborate that both India and Pakistan portray each other’s social issues more negatively than positively or neutrally. The content of the news is observed to be direct announcements, attacking proclamations, biased and partial pronouncements, patriotic statements and war journalism rather than peace journalism practice. Media from both sides portray, mostly, the inferior and deteriorated social

aspects of the neighboring country and blame any troublesome occurrence on each other. Both the countries convey a message of enmity, hatred and mistrust among their respective audience about their social issues. Considering the media's role in directing governments' policies and public opinion formation is significantly important, India and Pakistan can use their media to normalize their relationships. Cohen says it may be done by portraying and presenting news about each other with the intention to keep a reasonable balance of power and peace between the neighbors and in the region, at large (2013).

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