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## **Representation of Pakistan and India in Elite Press of US, UK & China**

### **Abstract**

*India and Pakistan are two emerging economies and nuclear powers of South Asia. Both countries are often considered as hostile neighbors and the world media often ascribe high importance over the bilateral issues of Pakistan and India due to nuclear capabilities and significance of the region. This study aims to explore and comparatively analyze the representation of both countries in international press. It examines the issue priming and attributes of both nations through content analysis of three newspapers i.e. New York Times of USA, China daily of China and The Guardian from Britain. News stories were selected purposively from the period from 2013 to 2016. Findings reveal that three newspapers represented India and Pakistan differently. American and British newspapers primed the Indian issues of Democracy, Economy, Sports and scientific development. On the other hand, these newspapers primed Pakistan issues of nuclear assets, terrorism, health and human rights violations. However, China Daily primed India and Pakistan differently. It focused on Indian issues of human rights, security, environment and diplomatic relations. On the other side, it primed the Pakistani issues of economy, trade, defense and efforts for terrorism. Findings imply that representation and issue priming of a nation varies from country to country depending upon different factors including foreign policy, mutual relations and economic ties.*

**Keywords:** International representation, international media, issue priming, Pakistan representation, India representation.

### **1.0. Introduction**

Media role in portraying international relations and world countries always remain an area of interest for international communication scholars. People rely heavily on mass media to get acquainted with the international affairs. There is a positive correlation among the degree of salience given by the media to an issue and level of attention received by the public and policy makers. Different researches conducted in the domain of communication and international relations have found that exposure to news coverage increase awareness and knowledge which can

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significantly influence public perception towards other nations ([Manheim & Albritton, 1983](#); [Perry, 1985](#)).

Pakistan and India appeared on the world map in 1947 after achieving freedom from the Britain. Since from the independence of Pakistan and India there is several kind of issues of contention that hinders the bilateral relation among these states. Boundary disputes, asset distribution, water disputes and most importantly Kashmir issue hinder the normalization of relations among both countries ([Paul, 2005](#)). Both the countries have fought four full-fledged wars including one undeclared war i.e kargil war ([Dixit, 2003](#)).

There are certain factors that contribute towards the coverage in international media as [Dupree \(1971\)](#) identified that factors like volume of trade, population, GNP i.e gross national product, literacy rate, and communication facilities as significant variables that influence coverage of international news. [Rosengren \(1974\)](#) conducted a multivariate analysis of three European newspapers' coverage of 272 parliamentary elections held in 167 political units between 1961 and 1970 and found relative importance variables discussed above. [Galtung and Ruge \(1965\)](#) explored the international news structure and determine the twelve factors associated with international events that contribute towards their newsworthiness. They suggested that an event can be considered as news if it has the conditions like “frequency, threshold, intensity, unambiguity, meaningfulness, consonance, predictability, unexpectedness, continuity, composition, and relevance to elite nations, elite people, persons or something negative”.

Socio-Political and Geo-Strategic differences control the news coverage in international news flow ([Galtung & Vincent, 1992](#)) hence the coverage of the news related India by Pakistani media and Pakistan by Indian news media often cover negatively and unfavorably. Indian news media while covering news in connection with Pakistan depicts India as a stable and world's largest democracy, which is under constant threat by Afghan and Arab guerrillas supported by Islamabad. Exploiting certain international event the Indian media is in effort to associate terrorism and extremism with Pakistan ([Thussu, 2002](#)).

Being the emerging economies and nuclear powers of South Asia, both the countries i.e Pakistan and India have special coverage in international media. Secondly due to war in Afghanistan and Pakistan's leading role in the war also have great significance for international media. An emerging superpower i.e China is the neighboring country of Pakistan which also have attracted special attention for international media especially after the inauguration of China-Pakistan Economic corridor ([Anwar, 2016](#)). Kashmir issue is also one of the major threat of war among India and Pakistan as there is a massive rise in the independence movement in Kashmir after the martyrdom of Burhan Wani, a freedom fighter who attracted attention of the international media. The atrocities and human rights violations committed by the Indian forces and Kashmiris also raise concerns in international media.

This study aims to assess the coverage and treatment given by the international media to the issues related to Pakistan and India. The people of one country formed image of other countries through the lens of media and of interest of the

students of communication science and international affairs ([McCracken, 1987](#)). According to [Soderlund, Nelson, and Briggs \(2003\)](#):-

Mass media influence the public perception of the world events. Reality as we perceive is not only shaped by our direct experience, but also by our reading, seeing and hearing through various mass communication channels. Media being the ultimate source of information for international events hence make us draw inferences and make judgments regarding what is happening, who is responsible, and what the likely impact will be ([Soderlund et al., 2003, p. 155](#)).

## **2.0. Literature Review**

[Shoemaker, Chang, and Brendlinger \(1987\)](#) conducted the content analysis and concluded that those events which occurred in those nations that have certain kind of political or economic significance for United States and that are "deviant" in certain ways from U.S. values are more likely to be get covered by the U.S newspapers and channels. [Chang and Lee \(1992\)](#) surveyed about views of editors of American newspaper to assess the newsworthiness of particular events and found that "differences in these views could be attributed to individual differences, such as professional experience, and to organizational constraints in the newsroom, such as availability of wire services." According to [Bennett \(1990\)](#) & [Wolfsfeld \(2001\)](#) as quoted in [Siraj \(2008\)](#) an ethnocentric view of the world is usually presented by the media which often becomes blatant especially in times of crisis. A saying of Turkish journalist was shared by [Ozguness and Terzis \(2000\)](#), "I am always thinking of our national interest and the interest of my newspaper when I am reporting Greek-Turkish affairs. At the end of the day, I don't want to criticize my government because objective reporting might be used wrongly by the other side." "(p. 416).

[Siraj \(2008\)](#) analyzed image of Pakistan in the US newspapers, concluded that news coverage related to Pakistan-India relations was mostly focused on peace. He argued that the US government required that Pakistan and India should make peace and put all energies to fight against terrorism. The role of Mass media cannot be ignored in constructing the image of various nations, societies and their people and it is the news about other countries that make up our national mind([Brennen & Duffy, 2003](#)). [McChesney \(2002\)](#) criticized the media of US for undue favor of government policies. He opined that US media exhibit the distorted coverage of other countries and the world events that is the direct outcome of professionalism of media and journalists, media houses owned by powerful profit seeking corporations and ownership regulations. He further asserts the US media protects the interest of ruling class.

"The representation of the other countries in media depends upon several kind of factors and interest belonging to that country and to the media houses. South Asian countries are considered as less comparatively developed countries to the European countries hence this also matters while covering the news about these countries. [Poornananda \(1998\)](#) assessed that the countries considered as South Asian countries get very marginal coverage in US media. In his research article, coverage of South Asia in two leading US newspapers, he found that very little coverage has been given by The Los Angeles Times and Washington Post to South Asia and usually those stories were generally got prominence which were related

to crimes, disasters, conflicts, failure of governments, institutions and individuals were focused while other areas like arts and culture, development and science were significantly marginalized.”

This study is an attempt to assess the portrayal of Pakistan & India in three international dailies; New York Times, China Daily & the Guardian. This study further aims to assess the international news coverage of the issues and event related to Pakistan and India, and how these events and issues and being portrayed by the international media. This study will comparatively analyze the issues that are being primed in the newspapers of U.S, U.K and China about India and Pakistan.

### **3.0. Theoretical Framework**

According to the priming hypothesis, people rely on that information to make evaluation and judgments which is most accessible in their memory ([Tversky & Kahneman, 1985](#)). In the field of mass communication, the priming hypothesis states that the criteria used by the people to evaluated the performance of political actors got affected by the media agenda ([Iyengar & Kinder, 2010](#)). The mass communication scholars often attributed priming as an extension of agenda setting ([Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2006](#)). Media put emphasis on certain issues to make them more prominent by ignoring certain issues hence influence the hierarchy of issues that public perceive as important while making or evaluating political decisions.

Priming is done by making specific issue more accessible in the memory of people utilizing certain tactics by the media ([Iyengar & Kinder, 2010](#); [Krosnick & Kinder, 1990](#); [Price, Tewksbury, & Powers, 1997](#)). This can also be called as agenda setting part of the priming. Secondly the individuals put those issues in their accessible memory to whom they often got encountered through media hence evaluate the performance of political actors on the basis of these issues. Hence, by priming certain issues the media transform or lead the criteria to evaluate political actors by the people ([Iyengar & Kinder, 2010](#); [Krosnick & Kinder, 1990](#)). If the media prime the issue of foreign affairs, then people would like to judge agenda or manifesto of political parties by their agenda related to foreign affairs or in case of economy the performance of political parties will be assessed in relation with economic development ([Iyengar & Simon, 1993](#); [Krosnick & Kinder, 1990](#); [Pan & Kosicki, 1997](#)). Media exposure of an issues make that issue more accessible in the minds of people, hence resulted in heightened accessibility which likely to increase the subsequent evaluation based on their memory accessibility and thinking about that particular issues ([Brewer, Graf, & Willnat, 2003](#)). The present study aims to use media priming of countries. It takes India & Pakistan as political actors of world and studies how international media prime these countries. ”

### **4.0. Objectives of the Study**

Followings are the major objectives of study.

- 1) To study the portrayal of Pakistan & India in three international dailies; New York Times, China Daily & the Guardian.
- 2) To highlight the international media priming of Pakistani & Indian issues.

- 3) To compare the media priming of Pakistan & India among three international dailies; New York Times, China Daily & the Guardian.

### **5.0. Research Questions of the Study**

Followings are the major research questions of the study.

**RQ1:** How are Pakistan & India being portrayed by three international dailies; New York Times, China Daily & the Guardian?

**RQ2:** Which issues of Pakistan & India are being primed by three international dailies; New York Times, China Daily & the Guardian?

**RQ3:** Is there any difference among the priming of Pakistan & India in three international dailies; New York Times, China Daily & the Guardian?

### **6.0. Methodology**

This study uses qualitative approach of content analysis for study of media priming of Pakistan & India in international press. News stories of three international newspapers were analyzed for the period from January 1, 2013 to December 30, 2016. Purposive sampling technique was used. Every news story mentioning Pakistan or India was retrieved through websites of selected newspapers. Unit of analysis was news story mentioning the name of India or Pakistan. Two coders were trained for coding purpose. Descriptive statistics of frequencies were used to answer the research questions.

### **7.0 Findings & Discussion**

The analysis of the collected data reveals that all three newspapers gave more coverage to Pakistan as compared to India. However, China Daily gave highest coverage to Pakistan as compare to New York Times & The Guardian. The data further reveals that although New York Times and The Guardian gave high coverage to Pakistan yet they cover Pakistan negatively as compared to India. While, on the other hand China Daily cover Pakistan positively. Moreover, China Daily's coverage of India seems fairly negative as compared to Pakistan.

**Table 1**

*Priming of Pakistani Issues in three international dailies; New York Times, China Daily & the Guardian*

Sr.	Issues	New York Times	China Daily	The Guardian
1	Democracy,	23	12	13
2	Economy	17	85	12
3	Sports	2	14	3
4	scientific development	5	13	4
5	nuclear assets	34	0	36
6	Terrorism	61	7	57
7	Health	12	2	34
8	human rights violations	32	3	29

9	Security	13	23	7
10	Environment	1	0	0
11	diplomatic relations	7	4	3
12	Trade	2	114	6
13	defense	7	48	5
14	efforts for terrorism	13	41	9

Findings highlight that New York Times and The Guardian primed Pakistan issues of nuclear assets, terrorism, health and human rights violations. On the other side, China Daily primed the Pakistani issues of economy, trade, defense and efforts for terrorism (Table 1).

**Table 2**

*Priming of Indian Issues in three international dailies; New York Times, China Daily & the Guardian*

Sr.	Issues	New York Times	China Daily	The Guardian
1	Democracy,	21	4	11
2	Economy	23	2	9
3	Sports	19	2	9
4	scientific development	16	1	7
5	nuclear assets	0	0	0
6	Terrorism	1	1	0
7	Health	3	1	0
8	human rights violations	2	23	1
9	Security	9	34	1
10	Environment	7	11	0
11	diplomatic relations	2	21	1
12	Trade	11	2	4
13	Defense	7	2	2
14	efforts for terrorism	1	0	0

Finding reveals that American and British newspapers primed the Indian issues of Democracy, Economy, Sports and scientific development. On the other side, China Daily focused on Indian issues of human rights, security, environment and diplomatic relations (Table 2).

### **7.1. Discussion & Conclusion**

International media coverage of nations is considered the determinant of global perception about nations. India and Pakistan both are atomic powers and largest economies of South Asia. Both countries are often considered as hostile to one another. Moreover, world largest economies like America, Britain & China also have keen interests in these countries. Present study found that Pakistan is given more coverage in three dailies; New York Times, The Guardian and China Daily (Figure 1). However, further it is showed that New York Times and The Guardian portrayed Pakistan negatively and on the other side they portrayed India positively

(Figure 2 & 3). Furthermore, China Daily agenda is different from these two papers. China Daily portray India negatively and Pakistan positively (Figure 2 & 3). These findings answer RQ1. These findings show that foreign relations and diplomatic ties play a significant role in media coverage of countries. China is considered the strong economic ally of Pakistan. On the other hand, U.S supports India in defense and strategic platforms. Media content also reflects it.

Another research question of the study is about the issue priming of nations. Present study found that that New York Times and The Guardian primed Pakistan issues of nuclear assets, terrorism, health and human rights violations. On the other side, China Daily primed the Pakistani issues of economy, trade, defense and efforts for terrorism (Table 1 & Figure 4). Furthermore, findings reveal that American and British newspapers primed the Indian issues of Democracy, Economy, Sports and scientific development. On the other side, China Daily focused on Indian issues of human rights, security, environment and diplomatic relations (Table 2 & Figure 5). These findings support the priming hypothesis that media emphasize certain issues at the expense of others ([Iyengar & Kinder, 1987](#); [Krosnick & Kinder, 1990](#); [Price et al., 1997](#)). In this way, study also highlights that New York Times and The Guardian emphasized negative issues of Pakistan and Positive issues of India. Conversely, China Daily primed Pakistani positive issues and Indian negative issues. Thus we argue that media priming varies according to the foreign relations and diplomatic ties.

Lastly, study claims that international media priming and agenda is different from one another. It largely depends upon the relations with other countries. Media coverage is largely determinant by the economic, political and strategic interests of two countries. It is argued that international media coverage can be gained and influenced through international public relations.

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