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Kashmir Conflict in Media: Coverage of Human Rights Violation by *Dawn*, *The New York Times*, and *The Indian Express*

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Abstract

*Media is an important force in conflict situations owing to its capability to persuade adversaries and influence their actions. The issue of whether this impact is positive or negative is resolved by the nature of the journalism offered to the parties in conflict. Media shapes people's thought process: it influences public perception on specific issues by using the framing and priming techniques. By using framing theory, this article investigates how three leading newspapers (*Dawn*, *The New York Times* and *The Indian Express*) frame the issue of human rights violation in Kashmir in their respective news stories and how these diverging coverage methods influence public opinion. Furthermore, by using the content analysis*

method, it is intended to analyze how much importance the international community gives to the world press in making sense of the violence in Kashmir.

Keywords: Human Rights Violation, Kashmir, Media, Conflict

Introduction

Human rights violations in Kashmir by the Indian armed forces have been a predicament for peace in South Asia.¹ India seeks a merger of Kashmir with the Indian administration and has used force to control people of Kashmir.² Kashmiris have been resisting against all efforts and force tactics used by India³ in order to secure their political rights and the right to self-determination as enshrined in the UN resolutions of 1948-49.

Human rights violations⁴ accord when a person or state abuses the basic rights to life, movement, equality before the law, fair trial, freedom of expression, freedom of religion etc. Human rights violation has been a constant and major issue since the creation of India and Pakistan in 1947 as Kashmir, in addition to becoming a boundary conflict between the two,⁵ has become a military state where people live under fear.⁶ India has also indulged in torture and

¹ M. A. T. Butt, & G. Majeed, "A View on the Issue of Occupied Kashmir (2008-2018): Disputed Territory," *Journal of the Research Society of Pakistan*, 57 no. 3 (2020): 237.

² P. Bakaya, P & S. Bhatti, "Kashmir Conflict: A Study of What Led to the Insurgency in Kashmir Valley & Proposes Future Solutions," *Swords and Ploughshares*, 16 (2005): 1-4.

³ World Health Organization, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, *the Right to Health. Fact Sheet No, 31* (2008).

⁴ H. Hamsir, & N. Sastrawati, "Blurred the Meaning of the Word Violation Becomes the Meaning of Crime in the Perspective of Human Rights Violations, (2021).

⁵ Aushaq Dar, "Inter-community Relation in Kashmir," (doctoral dissertation) University of Kashmir, Srinagar, Kashmir. Disputed territory. *Journal of the Research Society of Pakistan*, 57 no. 3 (2015): 237.

⁶ V. Schofield, *Kashmir in Conflict: India, Pakistan, and the Unending War* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2021).

persecution of the Muslim community at large scale over the past seven decades.⁷ These violation of rights have been covered by the media under different themes and frames; for example, the *Economist* (2003) reported that 1150 government buildings, 540 education institutions, 337 bridges and more than 11000 private buildings were completely devastated by the Indian forces.⁸

Literature Review & Theoretical Framework

This study used framing theory on how the human rights violated in Kashmir were given coverage in the print media in *the Dawn*, *the New York Times* and *the Indian Express*.⁹ Furthermore, the study utilizes framing theory to comprehend media coverage on the ongoing turmoil and killings in Kashmir.¹⁰ Framing as a focal idea in the study of news media, goes back to Goffman (1974) who characterized edges as the standards of associations which oversee occasions in the social world. It provides a theoretical framework for media intervention in framing the situation on Kashmir and how the related circumstances have gained coverage.¹¹

Prof. Zamir published an article where he said an enormous number of Kashmiris were killed by Indian security forces to control the rising situation after Burhan Wani's extrajudicial execution.¹² The

⁷ Edward Gargan, "Indian Troops are Blamed as Kashmir Violence Rises," *New York Times*, April 18, 1993.

⁸ S. Narula, *Broken People: Caste Violence Against India's "untouchables."* (Human Rights Watch, 1999).

⁹ S. Z. A. Shah, & K. Faqir, "Assessing the Framing of International Media on Kashmir Issue: A Comparative Analysis of "New York Times" and "The Guardian," *Global Media and Social Sciences Research Journal (GMSSRJ)*, 1 no. 1 (2020): 47-54.

¹⁰ D. Berkowitz, "Who Sets the Media Agenda? The Ability of Policymakers to Determine News Decisions," *Public Opinion, the Press, and Public Policy*, 2 (1992): 81-102.

¹¹ E. Goffman, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience* (Harvard University Press, 1974).

¹² F. A. Leghari, & I. H. Qaisrani, *Pakistan's Low Yield Nuclear Weapons and Indian Option of Limited* (2020), 342-51.

protestors demanded for a peaceful and free Kashmir where the right of life could be secured.¹³

Kashmir valley has seen massive violations of human rights by Indian Army, Police, and Special Forces¹⁴ since 1989. Scores of people lost their children, daughters, sisters, mothers, and women lost their husbands, becoming half widows. Thousands of houses and shops were burnt due to turmoil situations since Kashmir issue has started.¹⁵ Many stories reported in media show that the Indian Army is involved in defilement of human rights, custodial deaths, disappearances, rapes and abuses of children.¹⁶

Framing theory used along with content analysis to analyze the news stories of *the Dawn*, *the New York Times* and *the Indian Express*¹⁷ and how they give coverage to human rights violation in Kashmir. Content analysis¹⁸ technique is used for collecting data for this study. For the purpose, frequency of the news stories of selected newspapers and the space given to them is to be considered from the front to back pages. Contents of two years from January 2016 to December 2017 have been selected for analysis. Purposive sampling technique is used because this study is limited to human rights

¹³ T. Hanitzsch, "Journalists as Peacekeeping Force? Peace Journalism and Mass Communication Theory," *Journalism Studies*, 5 no. 4 (2004): 483-95.

¹⁴ H. A. Wani, A. Suwarta, & J. Fayeye, "Untold Stories of Human Rights Violations in Kashmir," *Educare*, 6 no. 1 (2013).

¹⁵ A. H. Zargar, S. Ahmad, S. R. Masoodi, A. I. Wani, M. I. Bashir, B. A. Laway, & Z. A. Shah, "Vitamin D Status in Apparently Healthy Adults in Kashmir Valley of Indian Subcontinent," *Postgraduate Medical Journal*, 83 no. 985 (2007): 713-16.

¹⁶ R. Sehgal, "Kashmir Conflict: Solutions and Demand for Self-determination," *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 1 no. 6 (2011).

¹⁷ D. Ray, *Frames in the US Print Media Coverage of the Kashmir Conflict* (2004).

¹⁸ W.L. Neumann, *Social Research Method: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, (2013).

violation in Kashmir.¹⁹ Two categories have been designed for this research.²⁰ Major category is the loss of human rights and civil liberties in Kashmir and the secondary or minor category aligns the subjects of study, the Kashmiris, with news stories about extrajudicial killing and incarceration, crackdown on the freedom of expression and ban on media.²¹

To check the reliability of the information, a reliability test has been run in the SPSS. At first, we check the reliability in the SPSS after that coordinating the merits of reliability with the genuine

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	150	91.5
	Excluded ^a	14	8.5
	Total	164	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.749	3

Cronbach's alpha values that predict the consistency of our data that should relate with our qualities of the reliability harmonizing with the internal consistency values than our information filled is solid. First, we need to check that our data filled against *Dawn* is reliable and for that we have to run a reliability test. If the value falls above 0.7 then the data is reliable, and our value is 0.968 against the Stories of *the Dawn* news.

¹⁹ J. S. Ovsiovtch, *Human Rights Coverage in the Media: A Quantitative Content Analysis*, (1993).

²⁰ S. M. Caliendo, M. P. Gibney, & A. Payne, "All the News that's Fit to Print?" *New York Times* coverage of human-rights violations. *Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics*, 4 no. 4 (1999): 48-69.

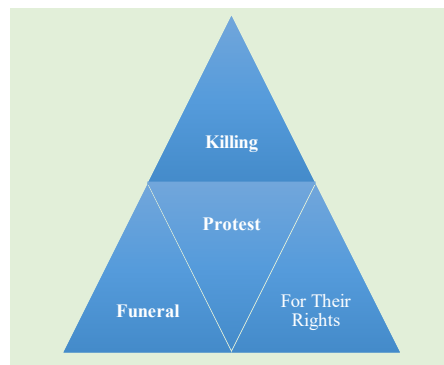
²¹ I. U. Haq, & M. A. Dar, "Human Rights Violation in Kashmir," *European Academic Research*, 2 (2014).

Reliability of the data mined in the SPSS is 0.749 which is also perfectly reliable data filled in the SPSS against the content analysis. The hypothesis is that the reliability measures will turn out to be the same for *Indian Express*, *the New York Times* and *the Dawn*.

Data Analysis

This section analyzes the data coded in the news and what the frequency test said about the news coverage of the Kashmir issue. Firstly, the reliability of the data will be checked before proceeding further to frequency tests against the following variables of this research.²²

- **First Analysis:** Check the variables availability with statistics in the frequency test 1-Extra Judicial Killing 2-Injured 3-Detention 4-Freedom of Expression 5-Torture 6-Curfew 7-Ban on Media
- **Second Analysis:** Secondly, we shall analyze the context of the news in the criteria below. Community of Kashmir is remonstrated in lower than three facet mostly on carnage of their loved ones.²³



²² Mushtaq, *Psychological Impact of Human Rights Violation on Kashmiri People* (Aligarh Muslim University, 2016).

²³ T. Joseph, "Kashmir, Human Rights, and the Indian Press," *Contemporary South Asia*, 9 no. 1 (2000): 41-55.

On the funeral of a person slayed and for their rights and independence because they want their land to be self-governing and free from Indian army with their violation.

Source of the News Reporting and Source within News

At next stage we need to analyze that what was the source of the news reporting Official, Army, Police, Witness, and Use of Force and who is reporting the information; News Agency, Reporter, Foreign Media Report, Monitoring Desk or Any other Source²⁴ And the most important is that which media channel among *The New York Times*, *Indian Express* or *Dawn* reported that news on priority.

Results

Sample of 50 contents of *Dawn*, *Indian Express* and *The New York Times* using pilot study of the newspapers and rest of 150 newspapers stories were analyzed with the help of the SPSS software.

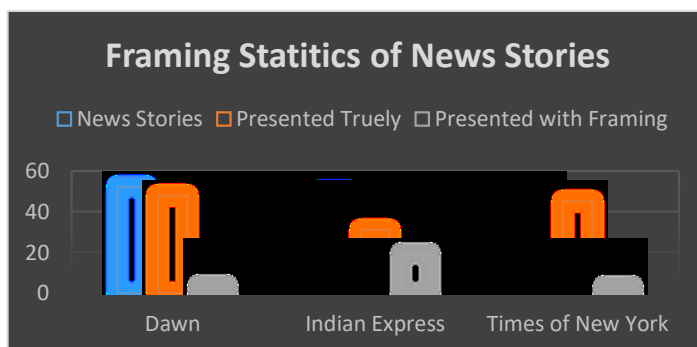
R Q 1: Which newspaper gives more coverage of human rights violation in Kashmir?

Data was collected from newspapers that were covering aspects of the coverage of these three newspapers with different regions of Kashmir. Around 200 news stories collected of three newspapers and the material was extracted.²⁵ As per News Stories' coverage, there were 52 stories that were being framed by the *Dawn*, 48 covered by *The New York Times* and 50 stories about the Kashmir were given coverage by the *Indian Express*. It is concluded that *Dawn* is covering the maximum number of stories, compared to *The New York Times* and *The Indian Express*.

²⁴ M. A. T. Butt, & G. Majeed, "A View on the Issue of Occupied Kashmir (2008-2018)," (2020)

²⁵ A. Remes, "Kashmiriyat: Culture, Identity and Politics," Bachelor's Thesis, Leiden University, 2017, 10.

Descriptive statistics tests of the newspapers content revealed the fact that India is utilizing framing concept more in seeking their concerns towards Kashmir occupation with respect to the stories covered by *The New York Times* and *Dawn* were not presented in frames. All the stories were presented with its true picture as it exists.²⁶



R Q 2: Which newspaper Published maximum information about human rights violation in Kashmir?

Dawn gives more coverage and more information about human rights violation in Kashmir indicated in our results to be more than 50%. Print Media of *Dawn* is talking about the facts about killings in Kashmir as compared to *The Indian Express*. In Indian print media more injured and less killings were reported as compared to *The New York Times*. It means *The Indian Express* framed a lot of contexts toward seeking their own concerns. At the end, the most important section was content analysis of all variables. Given in our investigation that how these three newspapers only government based medias appointed at the Kashmir had been writing on the below elucidated points.²⁷

²⁶ M. A. A. Khan, "Impacts of Climate Change on the Human Rights of Displaced People: Bangladesh Perspective," (Doctoral Dissertation, Western Sydney University, 2015 (Australia).

²⁷ M. Khan, "Kashmir Dispute and the Prospects of India-Pakistan Peace Process," *NDU Journal*, 2 (2008).

The results resembled with the literature that there is exclusive relationship between the factors involved of the fact whether positive or negative. It is concluded that if news stories of the Pakistani media *Dawn* increases than definitely with increase in protesting about the different aspects' measurement in the Kashmir. In other sense *Dawn* is measuring more about all the issues with all aspects more in the people of Kashmir and giving more importance to the coverage of the issues in Kashmir. It can be translated as *Dawn* is printing more about the news stories' issues inclusive of killing and protest stories about the people of Kashmir. But it is very weak relation almost negligible among news reporters of *The Indian Express* and news stories in the people of Kashmir. It could be interpreted as Indian media is giving less importance to the issues of the people of Kashmir. But the American media is neutral about Kashmir as it is a third-party judge that is willing to make peace in the region.²⁸

Discussion

These were about source of news 33 News Agencies, 25 News Reporters, 11 Foreign Media Report, 37 Monitoring Desks and 44 were reported by the anonymous sources who had reported the news. It was revealed that monitoring desk was found to be reporting the news stories mostly as because of being available at most of the points at all times.²⁹

²⁸ Zargar, et.al., "Vitamin D Status in Apparently Healthy Adults in Kashmir Valley of Indian Subcontinent," 713-16.

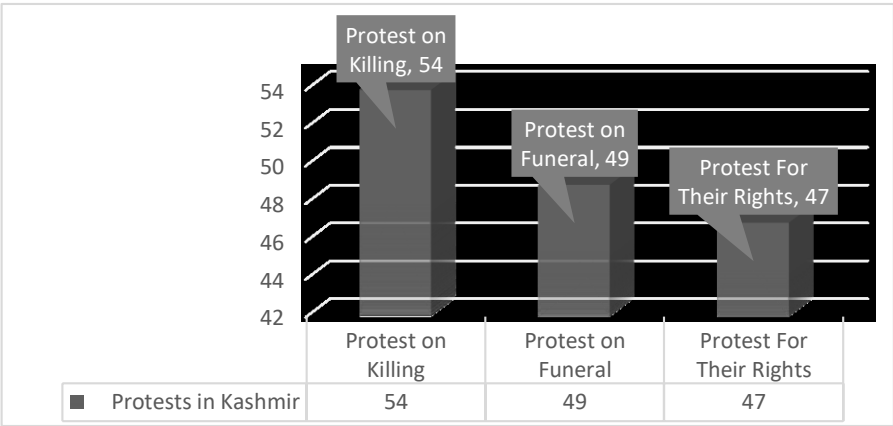
²⁹ I. U. Haq, & M. A. Dar, "Human Rights Violation in Kashmir," *European Academic Research*, 2 (2014).

Frequency Chart of News Reporting Source



While comparing with the monitoring desk, news were reported from other sources which were not confirmed or mentioned properly in the print media parallel to the Monitoring Desk. After getting tips from the monitoring desk and anonymous sources, news agencies and their reporters were mostly reporting the news which was found to be almost equivalent with these. It is hence concluded that most of the issues were aborted without given importance whereas only 50% were given importance by the media. Finally, the foreign media reporting about the killings and other movements such as protests in Kashmir, the international media was giving less importance to the Kashmir issues. It is because only these three got proper independence by the Indian Army and that is the very reason, they were reporting more news stories than other media outlets.³⁰

³⁰ Hamsir, & Sastrawati, "Blurred the Meaning of the Word Violation Becomes the Meaning of Crime in the Perspective of Human Rights Violations."

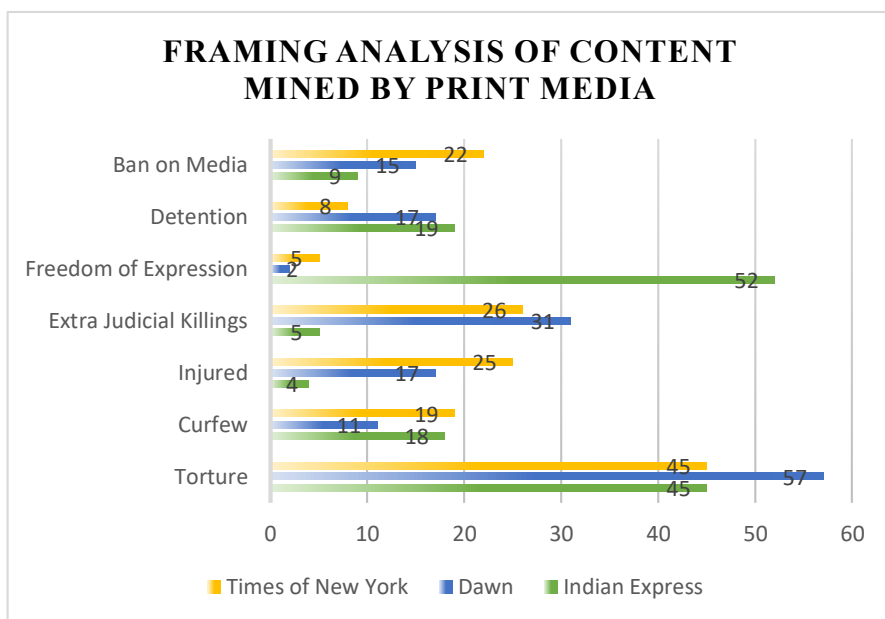


Protests in Kashmir

It is a known fact that armed Indian forces have been deployed for more than seventy years are using force against Kashmiris. Hence use of force was the next source within the news which reported the stories. Sources used to corroborate the news stories were mostly official as the newspapers reporters were stationed or transferred at Kashmir by taking approval from their respective governments.³¹ However, the army, the police and other witnesses were reporting cases very rarely. While matching these statistics with seven points to know that the above statistics had been detected that the news contexts mostly were set about killing of the people of Kashmir, who were mostly Muslims. They were killed mostly at protest gatherings or processions. Statistics about the killing on the protest were 54. The quantity of the killings at the protests was 49. And occasionally they were protesting for their rights about their independence from Indian forces with a quantity of 47. At last killings were observed more times than protesting was.³²

³¹ M. Alfini, “Human Rights Framing in US Newspaper Coverage of the Sochi Olympic Preparations,” *ELON Journal of Undergraduate Research in Communications*, 6 no. 2 (2015).

³² R. Chowdhary, *Jammu and Kashmir: Politics of Identity and Separatism* (Routledge India, 2015).



Mostly news reported about violence of selected three newspapers as extra judicial killings by *Dawn* while others did not. Seven types of violence reported by selected newspapers were presented in different numerical statuses.³³

Explaining the qualities, we are inferring the constructive relationship with Pakistan media revealed that there exists resentment in the general population of Kashmir. Contrary to that, Indian media, with which the relationship of Kashmiris is exceptionally weak, implies that there had not been any critical reporting by Indian media reporters. The reports of human rights violation were either not explained by the Indian media altogether or implied that there is nothing serious to worry about the general population of Kashmir as we realize that go swing to the circumstance has no effect on increments of melancholy may not

³³ Wani, Suwirta, & Fayeye, "Untold Stories of Human Rights Violations in Kashmir."

build estimation of Indian media in light of the fact that the estimation of the connection is close to a separation point. As per the announcement of Indian press media, Kashmir is a part of India.³⁴

Through methodology, researcher want to check the ground reality and to find out the triangular coverage aspects of the Kashmir covered by the officially deputed media from three countries.³⁵ The research reveals the actual picture by content analysis of the news stories of these three-print media as to which one is framing truth and which ones are framing untruths.

Running a descriptive statistics against these values, it was found that the print media were framing numerous stories about Kashmir under the framing technique; however the content presented for public consumption has been versatile. The test of descriptive statistics mentioned above has been completed by comparing the news reports of the three selected newspapers for this study.

Conclusion

This research analyzed the coverage of human rights violation in Kashmir through the news stories appeared in the *Daily Dawn*, *The New York Times* and *The Indian Express* from 2016 to 2017. One of the major findings of this study is that the nature of coverage of respective newspapers regarding the human rights violation stories of Kashmir diverge from one another; for example, the *Daily Dawn* covers more stories on this issue while others not so much. By focusing on the coverage of violence and conflict, this study is a significant contribution to media and conflict studies.

³⁴ Sehgal, "Kashmir Conflict".

³⁵ Ray, Frames in the US Print Media Coverage of the Kashmir Conflict."