

A photograph of a man with a long white beard and a white cap, seen from the side, looking towards a newspaper kiosk. The kiosk is filled with various newspapers, and the Urdu title 'کنشیر' (Kanshir) is visible on one of the papers. The background shows other people and more newspapers, suggesting a busy newsstand or market area.

Individualland

Where the individual counts

**URDU MEDIA
ANALYSIS
FROM A
CONSUMER'S
PERSPECTIVE**

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FÜR DIE FREIHEIT

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Introduction

Journalism is the discipline of collecting, analysing, verifying and presenting information regarding current events, trends, issues and people. News-oriented journalism is sometimes described as the ‘first rough draft of history’ because it often records important events. The general perception is that media is power. But, its most important component, the journalism, is being phased out. It is “increasingly difficult to distinguish from things that look like journalism but are primarily advertising, press agency, or entertainment.”¹

Media outlets are the channels along which information, largely about events, is passed from local retailers and their customers, but it is no longer exclusive. The competition, particularly among private TV news channels, is ‘who is first’ to report the event, and this race is influencing the working of print media also. Reporters are too rushed to get beneath the surface, and editors and news editors are too fearful and squeezed to be creative. Now, the good news for newspapers and TV channels is that they make good money.

Many news organisations claim proud traditions of holding government authorities and institutions accountable to the public, while media critics have raised questions about holding the media itself accountable. According to Philip Meyer, the philosopher-king of journalism, journalists cared about results beyond their own career spans.² They wanted to protect the long-term welfare of both their businesses and the communities they served. They recognised that a community is defined by both economic and social forces, and a good newspaper is a meeting place where those elements come together to form a public sphere. The audiences of electronic and print media in Pakistan feel that journalism is in crisis of the crisis of values, quality and of credibility.

The functions of journalism are to provide quality information and a wide range of perspectives and choices, to promote informed citizenship by supporting public participation in democratic discourse and the most important duty is, to report fully and correctly. More and more consumers of news and views are realizing that media contents are largely driven by market and commercial pressure, intervention of state agencies and militant groups is increasing and there is inadequate consideration to ethics of public service.

The general principle is that for suitable choices and decisions, citizens must be able to trust the information. Breakdown in the trust between the citizen and the journalism means breakdown of the credibility of journalism. Citizens, i.e. consumers of news and views, cannot afford to avoid their duties towards ensuring the rights as well as responsibilities of media. Citizens’ active role in critically monitoring media contents and pro-

¹ Alterman, Eric: Bush’s war on the press. In: The Nation. July 23, 2005. pp. 11 f.

² Meyer, Philip: Saving Journalism. How to nurse the good stuff until it pays. In: Columbia Journalism Review. November/December 2004. p.56.

grams is a recognised function. It is time to debate whether the citizens should – and can – demand a new commitment to openness not just by the governments but the news media as well.

Monitoring the media

Individualland is an organisation which represents a group of citizens engaged with monitoring and analysing the contents of news media with the consumer (reader, viewer, listener)'s perspective. While analysing the contents, Individualland keeps in view the universally recognised standards and 'ethics of journalism' as a barometer. These codes commonly appear in statements drafted by professional journalists' associations and individual print, broadcast, and online news organisations. Most existing codes share common elements including the principles of:

- Truthfulness
- Accuracy
- Objectivity
- Fairness
- Public accountability

Besides the above mentioned principles, Individualland has judged news stories, articles, columns etc. on the principle of 'limitation of harm'. This often involves withholding of certain details from reports which might harm someone's reputation. Though, some journalistic Codes of Ethics, notably the European ones also include a concern with discriminatory references in news based on race, religion, sexual orientation, and physical or mental disabilities. The European Council approved in 1993 Resolution 1003³ on the Ethics of Journalism which recommends journalists to respect yet the presumption of innocence, in particular in cases that are still *sub judice*.

The organisation has also kept in view the elements of newsworthiness of a news story which are the following:

- Timeliness
- Proximity
- Impact
- Currency
- Oddity
- Prominence
- Controversy

³ Resolution 1003: on ethics of journalism. Parliamentary assembly. Council of Europe. 1993. Accessed from: <http://assembly.coe.int/Main.asp?link=/Documents/AdoptedText/ta93/ERES1003.htm> Accessed date: February 10, 2011.

Methodology

This research and analysis have been done from a reader's point of view and can be understood easily. Every possible effort has been made to remain impartial while analysing the news contents. We have tried to identify inaccuracies and have also generated comments so that our point of view is clarified.

Popular mainstream Urdu newspapers have been selected for the research. Every news report is examined for inaccuracies regarding facts and use of sources by the respective reporter. It is a common practice of not mentioning a source of news precisely and keeping it anonymous, which has been pointed out in a number of examples.

The research and analysis report covers the period of five months, i.e. August to December 2010. Headline, sub-headline and content of a particular news report were monitored and after identifying the inaccuracy of facts, bias or partiality, or unfairness, the researcher gave his/her comments and analysis. Newspapers were monitored daily during this period.

Why Urdu newspapers?

Urdu is the most widely read, written and understood language in Pakistan and Urdu language newspapers are the primary source of news and views for the public at large. According to a survey in 1997, the average circulation of Urdu dailies was 3,017,310, of weeklies 580,380, of fortnightlies 65,117, monthlies 859,470 and quarterlies 13,691. By 2006, the average circulation of Urdu dailies was 6,472,510, weeklies 520,710, fortnightlies 79,370, monthlies 1,471,651 and quarterlies 15,973.⁴

We, being consumers of news media, and keeping in view our requirements, analysed different Urdu language newspapers in detail the pointed out inaccuracies or biases that, as we understand, should have been printed or reported in a different way. We monitored different Urdu language newspapers in terms of their content, language, inclination of the news organisation and space allocated etc. The aim of this research was certainly not to pinpoint a particular newspaper group. However, newspapers having particular point of view like Jang, Nawa-e Waqt, Aaj Kal, Khabrein, Ausaf and Pakistan were selected for monitoring and analysis. One of the underlined objectives of this research was to know whether or not the national language newspapers reflect diverse point of view.

In Pakistan, Urdu newspapers are widely read and some of the publications are working since her independence. Long eras of dictators also had a profound effect on newspaper publications, as different publishing houses were either taken over by the government or were shutdown in case of non-compliance. However, presently the media enjoys more freedom compared to previous years.

⁴ Asif, Qazi: Newspaper number decreases as readership increases. In: The Daily Times. March 4, 2008. Accessed from: http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2008\03\04\story_4-3-2008_pg12_11 Accessed date: February 10, 2011.

We can clearly see the difference in language, headline, structure and composition. Even the figures of injured people in the incident are different in all three of the newspapers. There are only a few liberal publications in Urdu language in Pakistan; most of these are magazines like Hum Shehri, Salam Pakistan and Dastak, while Aaj Kal is one of the liberal Urdu language newspapers. The difference between liberal and conservative publications is also attributed to our own judgment as consumers of media and it is totally based on the methodology described earlier.

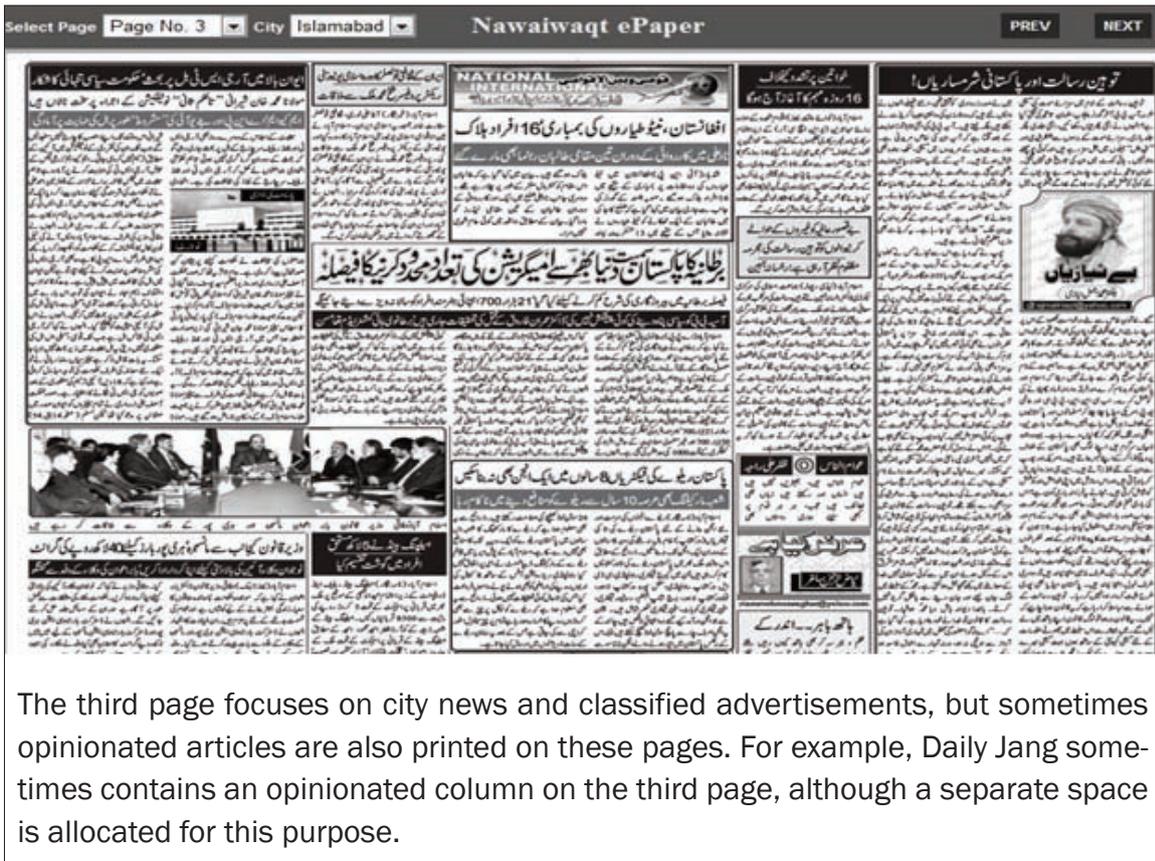
Terrorism being the most pressing issue for the country dominates the news as well. That's the reason why a number of examples presented here are also related to the reporting or analysis of terrorism incidents. Another aspect of terrorism and media is the use of newspaper medium by terrorists to further their nefarious desires. One of our objectives was also to analyse newspapers and their content based on their alignment with militancy and how some of the newspapers play a vital role in projecting extremist forces.

This monitoring and analysis report is our first undertaking from the news consumer's point of view. We intend to pursue further studies on similar issues. Hopefully, a similar research would also be conducted on the English language and regional language newspapers in the future.

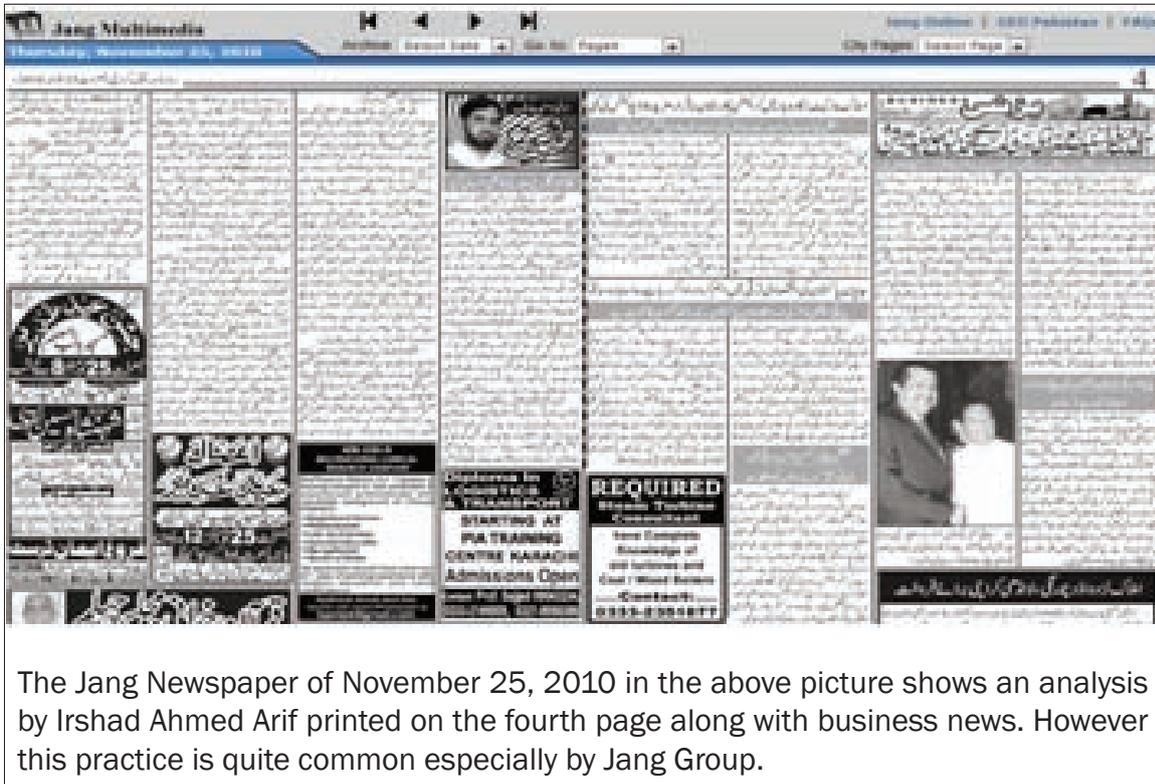
The Reality

A standard copy of an Urdu daily usually consists of 12 pages. The front page carries important national and international news. Usually, there is a main headline with a sub-heading. The masthead of the newspaper is printed on the upper right corner of the paper, with name, insignia, date of publication and other important details regarding the paper. The main headline is usually centralised with a larger font as compared to other subheadings.

Second page focuses on city news, but this page varies in content because the city of publication for the same paper varies. For instance, Daily Jang, Nawa-e Waqt and a few other newspapers are simultaneously printed in Rawalpindi/Islamabad, Lahore, Multan and Karachi. So the content on city news page usually varies according to the city of publication. Sometimes the number of subheadings also varies depending upon their relative importance for their city of publication. Nawa-e Waqt publishes national and international news on the third page with advertisements and classified advertisements, as shown in the image on the following page.



The third page focuses on city news and classified advertisements, but sometimes opinionated articles are also printed on these pages. For example, Daily Jang sometimes contains an opinionated column on the third page, although a separate space is allocated for this purpose.



The Jang Newspaper of November 25, 2010 in the above picture shows an analysis by Irshad Ahmed Arif printed on the fourth page along with business news. However this practice is quite common especially by Jang Group.

Standardisation is an issue pertaining to Urdu news publications, because copies of a particular newspaper might vary from day to day as described above.

The fourth page of Daily Jang and Aaj Kal has business news. However the same page of Nawa-e Waqt contains news from surrounding areas.

Images of different daily newspapers would help in identifying the difference:





After comparing page four of three dailies i.e. Daily Jang, Nawa-e Waqt and Aaj Kal, we can see that there is a major difference in content, i.e. one of the newspapers has business news on the same page while the other has news from surrounding areas.

Pages five to seven in most of the newspapers contain remaining news and classified ads. Editorial section has now been moved in the coloured pages. The eighth page contains national and international news.

Rest of the pages are coloured ones and the opinion-editorial pages.

Common inaccuracies

After monitoring/analysing different Urdu News publications since August 2010, we have witnessed the following violations of the universally accepted standards and Code of Ethics that limit the scope of Urdu news publications as reliable source of information:

- Violation of Privacy
- Single or Unknown Source
- Lack of professionalism
- Opinionated news stories
- Biased reporting

Some particular trends have been noted during the monitoring. For instance, in Daily Jang it is a common practice to print opinionated articles as news reports. Ansar Abbasi, Shaheen Sehbai, Rauf Klasra and Saleh Zafar are among the journalists whose articles were printed as news reports. This practice is deceptive for the common reader as the content under the headline differs and is largely based on the views of a particular reporter. Whereas, the right place for the opinionated article is the opinion section that mostly contains similar material.

Violation of privacy

Article 14⁵ of the Constitution states, “The dignity of man and subject to law, the privacy of home, shall be inviolable.” Article 15⁶ states that, “Every person shall have the right to remain in and subject to any reasonable restriction imposed by law in the public interest, enter and move freely throughout Pakistan and to reside and settle in part thereof.”

A news report about of the Interior Minister’s family was published in the Daily Jang on 27th of September, 2010. It stated that “Rehman Malik sent his family to London on urgent basis.” However, Rehman Malik’s close associates clarified that his family resides in London and was here for *eid*.

رحمن ملک کے اہل خانہ لندن میں رہتے ہیں، رواں گئی غیر معمولی بات نہیں، ذرائع
اسلام آباد (جنگ نیوز) وزیر داخلہ رحمان ملک نے اپنے اہل خانہ کو ہنگامی طور پر لندن بھیج دیا۔ ذرائع کے مطابق رحمان ملک کے اہل خانہ گزشتہ صبح
قومی ایئر لائن کی پرواز پی کے 785 کے ذریعے لندن روانہ ہو گئے ہیں۔ ذرائع کے مطابق وزیر داخلہ رحمان ملک نے اپنی اہلیہ اور بیٹے کو گزشتہ صبح 10 بجے
لندن بھیج دیا جو وہاں پہنچ چکے ہیں۔ دریں اثناء رحمن ملک کے قریبی ذرائع نے بتایا کہ رحمن ملک کے اہل خانہ لندن میں رہتے ہیں اور وہ پاکستان آتے
جاتے رہتے ہیں اس مرتبہ وہ عید منانے کیلئے پاکستان آئے ہوئے تھے اور انکی لندن روانگی کوئی غیر معمولی بات نہیں ہے۔

⁵ Fundamental Rights: Chapter 1. In: The Constitution of Pakistan. Accessed from: <http://www.pakistani.org/pakistan/constitution/part2.ch1.html> Accessed date: February 10, 2011.

⁶ Ibid.

Single or unknown source

It is also a common practice in Urdu newspapers that reporters usually refer to unknown sources or single source, in order to authenticate their news stories. This is an incorrect practice while keeping in view the standards followed by international media. Multi-sourcing increases the authenticity of the news story as it describes the viewpoint of more than one individual.

For instance, a news report in the Daily Jang of October 14, 2010 explained the above described principle, i.e. “Pakistan refuses to share list of Air passengers with U.S.”⁸ The news story states: *America wants Pakistan to share the list of all passengers that land and take-off from Pakistan. This demand was put forth after Faisal Shehzad’s attempted attack on Times Square. However, Pakistan did not share the list as it would put the travel of ISI agents at risk. According to Bob Woodward ISI agents travel east i.e. India and Bangladesh. Thus, the U.S. suggested that names of those passengers be shared who travel to Middle East, Europe and USA. However, this request was also turned down.* It is not appropriate to base a story solely on one source, which is a book.

In another example it was reported in Daily Jang that “ISI’s officer recorded his statement in front of Umer Cheema Judicial Commission.”⁹ The story further reads that “An important breakthrough occurred in Islamabad. ISI finally submitted to the increasing pressure, as an ISI official recorded his statement in front of the Umer Cheema Judicial Commission.”

The news story is contradictory because on one hand it described the session of the judicial commission as secret and on the other the “exceptionally reliable source” talked to a mainstream newspaper about it. Details of the source are not given, which has become a norm in reporting news stories that are contradictory in nature. Jang and The News being the newspapers of the same group often share news stories and sources. It is also a common practice to translate news stories from English to Urdu and vice versa.

Lack of professionalism

One of the prime examples of this important problem is the depiction of TV programs in news report form. This shows the unprofessional attitude of reporters, who adopt this approach to rid themselves of the important duty of being a reporter. For instance, “Ministry of Information’s Advertisement led to the escape of Miscreants in Karachi.”¹⁰ This report is a written depiction of Geo TV’s programme “Aaj Kamran Khan Kay Sath” that was aired on October 20, 2010. Kamran Khan presented his analysis over the prevailing situation in Karachi and said that even after 24 hours of firing in Kabari Market; the killers are still roaming freely.

⁸ Shaheen Sehbai. In: Daily Jang. Rawalpindi/Islamabad. October 14, 2010. p.1.

⁹ Daily Jang. Rawalpindi/Islamabad. November 2, 2010. p. 8.

¹⁰ Daily Jang. Rawalpindi/Islamabad. October 21, 2010. p. 8.

This practice might be helpful for those readers who missed the program on TV, but is of no use to the reader who is rather interested in a news story.

Another example that highlights the unethical attitude of reporters is represented by following headline of a news story: "Waqt news kept its distinction by airing the news before other channels."¹¹ This news story is related to the airing of the decision of court on the 18th Amendment for the first time on Waqt News, a news channel of the Nawa-e Waqt group. This is not news, but a self-praising statement by the newspaper.

In another example, a reporter filed a news report about the marriage of a visually impaired couple in the following words, "Blind Love, Blind couple did Court Marriage."¹²

The title of the story clearly describes the affair by exploiting the disability of the couple, which makes for insensitive reporting.

All these examples reflect the lack of professionalism in most of the reporters in Urdu news publications. They are assigned duties without even knowing, how they would perceive a particular event and simply based on their own analysis and knowledge they file a report.

Opinionated news stories

This is also one of the leading problems in the Urdu news publications and one can easily come across such news stories on a daily basis. Even the most senior journalists were involved in filing opinionated news stories and deviated from the ethical standards of reporting.

A news story was filed on 3rd November's Daily Jang in the following words: "Goldmine worth 260 billion dollars going out for peanuts."¹³ It reads that "last week representatives of two prominent mining groups secretly met President and Prime Minister." This is an analysis not a news story; so should not be on the front page but in the opinion section. However, opinionated news stories are a common feature of a few newspapers like Daily Jang.

In a similar example, a journalist filed a news story in the following words: "During 145 years, Midterm elections have helped to build nations, not to break them."¹⁴ The story reads that "Although Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gillani has termed the advice of PML-N for mid-term elections as an effort to break the country, but history has shown that midterm elections have always helped to build nations, not to break them." This was actually a well researched opinionated article, not a news story and articles are mostly published in the opinion section not as news stories on front or the page 8 of the newspaper.

¹¹ Nawa-e Waqt. Rawalpindi/Islamabad. October 22, 2010. p. 8.

¹² Sehbai, Shaheen. In: Daily Jang. Rawalpindi/Islamabad. October 29, 2010. p. 1.

¹³ Shah, Sabir. In: Daily Jang. Rawalpindi/Islamabad. November 3, 2010. p. 1.

¹⁴ Daily Jang. Rawalpindi/Islamabad. November 04, 2010. p. 8.

Comments represent the personal or overall objective of the organisation that a reporter is working for, so using them in news stories is inappropriate. It is better to give these journalists space in the opinion sections of their respective newspapers so that they can easily express their views.

Biased mindsets / irresponsible reporting

A reporter should not use biased words or statements in his/her news stories, because not only it is unethical but also changes the scope of the news story and contributes towards hatred against a particular group or individual.

Some newspapers are particularly aligned with the mindset of a particular group and from time to time represent their sentiments by printing news stories for their promotion. For instance, a news story in Nawa-e Waqt was printed in the following words: “In order to repeal the Blasphemy Act, leaders would have to pass over millions of dead bodies: Ulema”.¹⁵ This is representation of the views of one side or faction and doesn’t represent the viewpoint of all others who live in this country. This news story might give air to extremism. This law has been used mostly for settling personal vendettas and the call to repeal it was a joint statement of the liberal groups in Pakistan. However, now the government under pressure from these groups said that it won’t repeal the law, but will take appropriate measures so that it is not misused.

In another example from Nawa-e Waqt a reporter filed a news story as “Qadiyanis are traitors of Pakistan. The whole nation should unite to fight these forces.”¹⁶ The story reads that, “Speakers while addressing the first International Conference on *Khatm-e Nabuat* held in Sargodha’s Chak No. 87 Southern said that Qadiyanis were traitors of Pakistan and Islam. The whole nation must stand united against these evil forces.” The event was certainly eligible to be selected as news. However, the portrayal of the event should have been done in a manner that it shouldn’t incite hatred against other Pakistanis.

A similar example from Nawa-e Waqt can be seen in the following news story: “Protests continue against the publication of caricatures, Christians and Jews have adopted lame tactics: Scholars.”¹⁷ The story reads that, “Protests against the publication of caricatures of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) continue across the country”. However the reporter has not given the reference of a particular event or place, where these statements were given. This news story has the potential to damage the interfaith harmony across the world.

The above mentioned examples clearly define the mindset of a particular newspaper and how the reporters file these reports without even thinking about their implications.

¹⁵ Nawa-e Waqt. Rawalpindi/Islamabad. November 25, 2010. p.1.

¹⁶ Nawa-e Waqt. Rawalpindi/Islamabad. October 25, 2010. p. 8.

¹⁷ Nawa-e Waqt. Rawalpindi/Islamabad. October 26, 2010. p.1.

The aspiration

The examples given above have hopefully helped the reader in understanding the central theme of the research. Based on the presented facts and being active consumers of media, we can say that there are a number of aspects that can be improved between media and consumers. International best practices are there to guide media personnel and concerned readers about standards to be followed while reporting.

However, consultations with media, analysts and readers can really help in generating a set of rules that can define the sphere of a reporter. All these stakeholders in the process will define the basic framework on which Urdu news reporting should be based.

Manzoor Ali Memon in one of his articles argues that, "Media literacy has so far not garnered the attention of policymakers and other stakeholders. It should be a fundamental component of our media and communications policy. The public sector should lead this drive under a public-private partnership scheme involving broadcasters, regulators, media organisations, journalists associations, educational institutions, and citizens' bodies."¹⁸ This statement is valuable and defines what needs to be done. There is a serious gap in the standards that are followed internationally and the ones followed in our country.

¹⁸ Memon, A. Manzoor: Promoting Media Literacy. In: The Dawn. June 9, 2010. p. 7. Accessed from: <http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/editorial/promoting-media-literacy-960> Accessed date: December 1, 2010.

Elements of news reporting

Timeliness

Time is of utmost importance in news reporting. This principle applies to all the media, but since the inception of live news channels, the timeliness of news for newspapers has been affected. As the news gets reported on TV, so its importance is somewhat reduced, but for those who are interested in knowing the details of that news report would of course read the newspaper.

Impact

Impact of a news story is also of great importance. If the impact is national, the news story might turn in to a headline. If the impact is local, then it might be a smaller news report. For instance, the news report of the earthquake that hit Pakistan in 2005 had a great impact on people all around the world, because the world had not seen an earthquake like this before.

There is another implication of this important principle. A false news story which is not based on facts, figures and sources might have an impact on readers if it gets printed in an influential newspaper. For instance, a news report got published in the leading newspapers of the country about the involvement of Indian spies in the Baluchistan region based on leaked cables by Wikileaks. However, the very next day the newspaper group retracted the news story and said that the story was dubious and may have been planted.¹⁹

Another news story that might help understand this important principle reads “America is using Pakistani Taliban against Pakistan: Zardari”.²⁰ This news story further explains that President Asif Ali Zardari seriously believes America is behind Pakistani Taliban and arranges suicide bombers. This was claimed in front of former Ambassador for Afghanistan Zalmay Khalilzad. Where Hamid Karzai was also present, the President said that U.S. does not go after Pakistani Taliban and targets only Al-Qaida. His views were reaffirmed by Hamid Karzai. The source of this is Bob Woodward’s book “Obama’s Wars”.

Now, this news story is totally based on the analysis of this book. The journalist has merely reproduced what Woodward has reported. The headline is inaccurate as it seems that Zardari has given a public statement. So there should be a clear distinction between news stories having a negative or positive impact. A reporter should take care of this important principle because misreporting can result in serious implications.

¹⁹ Pakistan media retracts fake Wikileaks story. AFP. December, 10, 2010. Accessed from: <http://www.dawn.com/2010/12/10/pakistan-media-retract-fake-wikileaks-story.html> Accessed Date: February 14, 2011.

²⁰ Sehbai, Shaheen. In: Daily Jang. October 13, 2010. p. 1.

Proximity

Proximity is also an important principle, because for instance the plane crash that happened in Karachi on November 5, 2010 made headline news in the newspapers printed in Karachi, while the plane crash that happened in Islamabad on July 28, 2010 made headline news of newspapers across the country. The reason is obvious. The commercial airliner that crashed in Islamabad was carrying 152 passengers and crew members, who belonged to different cities in Pakistan along with foreigners. However, the plane crash that occurred in Karachi was a private jet and was carrying personnel of a private company.

Controversy

Deborah Potter in the Handbook of Independent Journalism argues that, "It's human nature to be interested in stories that involve conflict, tension, or public debate. People like to take sides, and see whose position will prevail. Conflict doesn't always entail pitting one person's views against another. Stories about doctors battling diseases or citizens opposing an unjust law also involve conflict."²¹

The following three news clippings would hopefully illustrate the difference. All these news stories are related to the implementation of Revised General Sales Tax (RGST) and flood surcharge. One of the stories explains the government's side while the other two talk about its implications and its effect on prices.

²¹ Potter, Deborah: What is News? In: Handbook of Independent Journalism. U.S. Department of State Publication. April 10, 2008. Accessed from: <http://www.america.gov/st/democracyhr-english/2008/April/20080416211618eafis0.8870203.html> Accessed date: February 14, 2011.

Militancy (in) Media

“Terrorism is theatre,” and terrorist attacks carefully choreographed to attract the attention of the media. Brian Jenkins noted this important point in the 1970s.²⁵ We can relate this directly to what has been happening today around the world. Jenkins continues by saying that, “the media responds to these overtures with almost unbridled alacrity, proving unable to ignore what has been accurately described as an event fashioned specifically for their needs.”²⁶ This perceived benefit out of the media by terrorist organisations is the subject of this chapter.

Terrorist organisations have used media, especially Urdu media, as a tool to promote their extremist agenda since the creation of Pakistan. In the past few years the usage of this tool has been maximized. It was in the last decade or so when the media witnessed more dynamic vibrancy and evolved. This section of the report will focus on such examples. It is divided into four parts as below:

- a. **Portrayal of militants in media**
- b. **Ideological tilt of the media**
- c. **Spinning in conspiracy theories**
- d. **Militants using the New Media**

The first part of the chapter will discuss reasons why terrorist organisations use media. Various methods will be highlighted. Subsequently, reasons and methods of media reporting on terrorist attacks will also be discussed. This part will include examples only from recent years to focus more on what has been happening recently. The beginning will discuss the different forms of media and its usage by various militant outfits to promote anti-state elements and their ideology. Examples support the fact that there is no doubt of an existing symbiotic relationship between portrayal of terrorists and the media, particularly in cases of news media. Terrorists seek to have their voices heard on a platform that extends to a wide audience. For this purpose, they use glorification through various mediums. We will closely discuss the portrayal of militants in the media and how they are depicted to people to gain advantage. The magnitude of influence on the mindset of citizens will also be discussed in this part of the chapter.

In the second part of the chapter we will discuss the ideological tilt of the media. Many times journalists and columnists tend to share content and opinions on main pages of newspapers that lack authentic sources. The views are subjective to a specific country or person which gives birth to biased reporting. This is done due to various reasons which will be illustrated with examples in the chapter.

In the next part of the chapter we will discuss the circulation of leading Urdu newspapers which is sizeable. The national language being Urdu – it is easier for people to read and

²⁵ Yang, Linsay: International Terrorism: Terrorism via Media in Philippines and US. In: Scribe; Academic Blog for Philippine Foreign Policy. July 20, 2010. <http://phifocy-yangl.blogspot.com/2010/07/international-terrorism-terrorism-via.html> Accessed date: February 14, 2011.

²⁶ Ibid.

share in this language – Urdu newspapers are read more than Sindhi and English newspapers. When conspiracy theories appear in Urdu newspapers, the influence is large on the readers due to a higher circulation. This influence which benefits militant organisations will be illustrated with examples. Some might call this as pressure from radical groups which will also be kept under consideration.

The last part of the chapter addresses the many ways for terrorist organisations to directly show their messages such as through mobile phones and internet. It will focus on the new media that is actively being used by terrorist organisations to convey their message. This part of the media in the present era is doing great damage and the chapter will attempt to identify the magnitude of this.

Portrayal of militants in media

Glorification and gaining respect

The portrayal of militants in the media and especially news media remains a debatable topic over the course of years. The depiction of militants in the mainstream media in recent years has increased due to frequent terrorist actions. At times the reporting of a terrorist action portrays terrorists as heroes. Not only electronic media has done this but also print media including Urdu newspapers. Examples will be illustrated later in this chapter. Also on some instances there has been glorification of militants in the mainstream media. It is imperative to understand that the audience of terrorist attacks does not only include potential victims that have to be frightened, but potential supporters as well. These potential supporters – the people in whose name the terrorists claim to act – have to be impressed by the portrayal. They are following each and every attack of theirs. The way newspapers also portray them is being monitored. This is an important objective of terrorists who rely on media for their glorification. It is vital for them to show the potential supporters that they can deliver.²⁷ People, who are perhaps mildly interested in the activities of a particular group, see that the organisation is actually able to have an impact on the legitimate political establishment. These people may become more respectful or sympathetic toward a terrorist cause or organisation. Of course, this again, requires agenda setting. A good example can that be of the 9/11 attacks on the Twin Towers. The images of such attacks, especially in cases such as 9/11, can inspire awe. For instance, after 9/11 and other attacks, Osama Bin Laden became much more popular among groups in the Muslim World. This was not the case prior to the media attention he received. During his media coverage he was glorified as an Islamic revolutionist who would impose *Sharia* law through violence. Even though Bin Laden openly raged war against the West, he was given immense media attention.

Another example that can be quoted is Hizbollah. They attempt to use media as an aggressive tool and show people in and outside the Arab World that they are able to with-

²⁷ Terrorism and the Media: Transnational Terrorism, Security & the Rule of Law. European Union. Deliverable 6, Work package 4. July 23, 2008. p. 10. <http://www.transnationalterrorism.eu/tekst/publications/WP4%20Del%206.pdf> Accessed date: February 14, 2011.

stand major attacks. Through media they glorify themselves as something many Arab nations have not been able to do in the past. The organisation uses various footages to prove that its attacks are successful. In turn, Hizbollah is seen as the new “lion” of the Arab World.²⁸

Content

Militants are using content in media as an effective tool to promote extremist agenda and their ideology. The content published in print media regarding actions of terrorist organisations works in favour of militants. Terrorist organisations receive free self-marketing. It appears that objectives of a terrorist organisation are being facilitated by our own media. Pakistani print media in its newly founded independence appears to be sometimes not very responsible. Even on our television screens, horrific content of bomb blasts are often beamed. This is done with total disregard to the fact that it might have a traumatic effect on children and could be inexpressibly painful for members of the bereaved families. Mainstream channels are in the habit of repeatedly telecasting dreadful scenes and their newscasts or their anchors repeat bad news so many times that one would be saturated. This technique adopted by television channels has serious psychological implications.²⁹ The maximum benefit out of such actions is extracted by terrorist organisations. Repetition of content regarding a terrorist action gives so much publicity to the specific organisation that a terrorist is portrayed as a martyr.

National security linked to the content being published in the print media is a critical subject of debate with the “War against Terrorism” at its peak. The need of the hour is to be very careful while publishing content related to terrorism and about the content’s authenticity.

Media attention is measured by the number of newspaper stories, space allocated to those news stories or length of broadcast segments devoted to terrorism. It is also measured by content analysis of the coverage the media provides.³⁰

In the recent years, terrorists have used print media as a vital weapon to publish content which promotes their mindset. For them a casualty rate of 100–150 is not huge. The fact that so many people will be glued would ensure that their message of terror is spread.³¹

Let us now discuss an example of a columnist³² from an Urdu newspaper³³. “In 1948, 1965, and 1971 and again in 2009 we are fighting a fourth war with India. In this war

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Rind, Alam: Terrorism and Media. In: The Pakistani Spectator; a candid blog. December 19, 2010. Accessed from: <http://www.pakspectator.com/terrorism-and-media/> Accessed date: February 14, 2011.

³⁰ Chermak, S. M., & Gruenewald, J: The media’s coverage of domestic terrorism. In: Justice Quarterly. 23(4). 2006. pp. 428–461. and, Delli Carpini, M. X., & Williams, B. A: Television and terrorism; Patterns of presentation and occurrence, 1969 to 1980. In: Western Political Quarterly. 40(1). 1987. pp. 45–64. Accessed from: https://www.ihssnc.org/portals/0/Documents/VIMSDocuments/IHSS_Research%20Brief_Walsh.pdf Accessed date: February 14, 2011.

³¹ Terrorists use Media as a Tool. In: Indian express.com. December 18, 2009. Accessed from: <http://www.indian-express.com/news/terrorists-use-media-as-a-tool/555588> Accessed date: February 14, 2011.

³² Abdul Qadir Hasan (Journalist).

³³ Daily Express. May 17, 2009.

we fight not only India but also its two patrons, USA and Israel. This triad is bent on destroying us. And this war is much more dangerous than the first three wars. In those wars, armies faced and fought armies, but this time it is a clandestine war, in which one side consists of *bharat*-trained and armed guerrillas, i.e. Taliban, and facing them on the other side stands the regular soldiers of Pakistan.”

This theme, common to so many columnists, was given its interpretation five days later on May 22, by another columnist³⁴ in *Nawa-e Waqt*. The column was titled as “Pakistan will be the battlefield of the Third World War.” In this three powerful assertions were made – he did not use the word *mubayyana* (alleged) anywhere (The word is rarely, if at all, used in Urdu columns).

It is important to note here how through the media so many things are communicated to readers. With no strict check-and-balance system or self-regulation, various countries are named in this piece and Taliban are being mentioned without keeping in mind the extent of influence.

On behalf of the print media, reporting and publishing content, it is important to keep in mind that armed forces are also part of a society and reported content might adversely affect the morale in the “War against Terrorism”.³⁵ We will discuss examples later in the chapter how content printed in the media can have an impact on the reader.

Terrorists using the media for propaganda

The use of media is so important for Al – Qaida, that many within the organisation have publicly stated that Bin Laden is “obsessed” with international media, that he has become “a publicity hound”, and that he has “caught the disease of screens, flashes, fans, and applause.”³⁶ The popularity that he has received since the attack on the Twin Towers is enormous and we all have witnessed it.

The media is very well suited for the purpose of propaganda. Terrorist organisations can reach a large audience in a matter of seconds. Several theories concerning characteristics – or capabilities – of the media explain part of this phenomenon. Two of the most important media theories in this context are agenda setting and framing.

Agenda setting is the theory that, the more attention a media outlet pays to a certain phenomenon, the more importance the public attributes to such an issue.

The theory of framing states that the way a news item is presented can have an influence on how it is interpreted or understood by the audience.³⁷

³⁴ Dr. Ajmal Niazi (Journalist)

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Terrorism and the Media: Transnational Terrorism, Security & the Rule of Law. European Union. Deliverable 6, Work package 4. July 23, 2008. p. 4. <http://www.transnationalterrorism.eu/tekst/publications/WP4%20Del%206.pdf> Accessed date: February 14, 2011.

³⁷ Terrorism and the Media: Transnational Terrorism, Security & the Rule of Law. European Union. Deliverable 6, Work package 4. July 23, 2008. p. 5. <http://www.transnationalterrorism.eu/tekst/publications/WP4%20Del%206.pdf> Accessed date: February 14, 2011.

Gaining attention is strongly linked to Agenda Setting. Terrorists are trying to be in all forms of media as often and as long as possible. This is in order to become well known to the public. If a terrorist organisation does not exist in the media, then it will not be able to recruit convincingly. Terrorists attempt to influence media outlets so that journalists, in turn, will influence the audience by spreading the word on the existence of an organisation. Terrorists get attention and people know of their existence, methods, and targets. In fact, terrorists are thus carrying out propaganda by proxy.

There are many examples that seem to confirm that gaining attention and cognisance through the media are important aspects of a terrorist strategy. The attacks in the year 2009 and 2010 in Pakistan can be quoted as effective examples of how terrorists try to reach this first objective. Indeed, it seems to prove that terrorists devise sophisticated media tactics to get as much attention as possible. In these two years especially, terrorist organisations have plotted attacks where there is already abundant media coverage present. The *Ashura* suicide blast in the year 2009 created a rage all around the country because the event was being covered by almost every news channel.

A global example is of the attacks that took place while the G-8 Summit was held practically next door, in Scotland. Terrorists took over the news and pushed the G-8 leaders off the front pages.³⁸

Ideological tilt of the media

The ideological tilt of a newspaper envisages various components such as the language used, the pattern on which the stories are filed, what position and space a story gets, the analysis and outcome of terrorist attacks. Let us now discuss some examples in which journalists and columnists share content and opinions on main pages of Urdu newspapers that are beneficial to terrorist organisations. These views are subjective against a specific country or race which reflects a certain ideological stance of a paper. Many a times, such actions tend to create outrage and hatred worldwide which leads to chaos. Such ideological tilt only promotes the objective of terrorist organisations, which is to create havoc.

This is not to state that subscribing to an ideology is incorrect. However, being a journalist it is vital to keep aside an individual ideology and just report facts. When a journalist attempts to bring his or her own ideological perspective about a certain story into reporting, this kills the purpose of balanced reporting. The role of a journalist and a newspaper is to report facts without any alteration or personal opinion about the story. This ideological tilt can also allow newspapers to publish content that is Public Relations for militant organisations. Let us discuss a recent example of how an ideological tilt can outrage the people and benefit the terrorist organisations.

³⁸ Terrorism and the Media: Transnational Terrorism, Security & the Rule of Law. European Union. Deliverable 6, Work package 4. July 23, 2008. p. 7. <http://www.transnationalterrorism.eu/tekst/publications/WP4%20Del%206.pdf> Accessed date: February 14, 2011.

On September 27, 2010 Nawa-e Waqt published an article titled, "Afia's sentence is a challenge to Muslim Umma's honour" which appears to be a little more like a Taliban press release.

The story by Haji Pariz Gul quotes a spokesman of Taliban³⁹, who termed the sentence of Dr Aafia Siddiqui, in a United States' court as an insult to the Muslim Umma's honour. In the article, he laments the Government for being a puppet of the United States. The correspondent writes about the Taliban spokesman who urges the Pakistani government to support them and join hands with the Taliban. The correspondent repeatedly points out how the Taliban leader urges Pakistanis to stand up against the enemies of Pakistan and to support the militant organisation in its objectives.

In this example, much of what is stated without attribution blurs the line between what is being said by the Taliban and what is being said by the correspondent. For a reader, the content is as if Nawa-e Waqt has become a source of a specific mindset. Such a mindset is similar to extremist agenda thus making both the ideologies somewhat similar. Through the newspaper the nation and government is being asked to join hands with Taliban in their cause against a specific country.⁴⁰

The news correspondent should not aim to ask leading questions or provide any comments. In this case, the correspondent not only reacts but also adds comments to the statement of Taliban spokesperson in support.

To the reader, it appears that the statement of Taliban spokesperson has been spiced up. Even if the story of Aafia is a controversial one, it is crucial to report as it is, rather than state one's own opinions or statements in it. With the addition and pro-Taliban content of the correspondent, sympathy allegedly is diverted towards one party.

Let us now move to an example from a more senior journalist ⁴¹ who we often see on television and is a frequent writer for the newspaper Jang. Jang is one of the most read newspapers in the country amongst the masses. The author gave it the title "Children, True of Heart." In it, the journalist described a meeting in which he addressed a school. A child stood up and told him something that according to him he had not known before. The journalist claims that the child stood up and told him that "America is the biggest enemy of Pakistan. America never accepted Pakistan as a sovereign country and also wanted to destroy it as soon as it gained independence. The U.S. did not put Pakistan on the world map because it assumed Pakistan would collapse within the next few years". The journalist was so moved by the innocent child that he dedicated a full article to him.

³⁹ Azam Tariq.

⁴⁰ Daily Nawa-e Waqt publishes more Taliban PR. In: Pakistan Media Watch. September 9, 2010. <http://pakistan-mediawatch.com/2010/09/29/daily-nawa-e-waqt-publishes-more-taliban-pr/>.

⁴¹ Mir, Hamid. Children, True of Heart. In: Daily Jang. April 27, 2010. p. 6.

The article has content without any specific sourcing or authentic information. The U.S recognised Pakistan on August 15, 1947, and opened an embassy on the same day.⁴² The first American Ambassador arrived six months later. The point submitted by the journalist that the U.S. did not recognise Pakistan is not correct.

Advertising and ideological tilt

Firstly, it is imperative to have a clear understanding of the effect of advertising on the content that is published. According to the British Communication expert Gillian Dyer, advertising has a direct influence on the editorial environment of a newspaper.⁴³ It can be further noted that such news does enhance the circulation of newspapers because spice is added to the news for selling it. Advertisers will look for the right editorial environment as well as the right readers when they buy space. From this it can be concluded that majority of criticism of an advertiser's business activities will be avoided in the editorial sections of newspapers.⁴⁴

On the other hand, a 2008 paper by Kelly E. Campbell ⁴⁵, a researcher in San Diego University, also explains that the editors and journalists are aware of external pressures that may influence the reporting. She explains that there is some sort of advertiser pressure. It would be interesting to examine in this case how advertisers themselves perceive their role in influencing editorial content. It is also important to examine the advertiser's role in shaping society's values, habits and direction. If banned outfits try to play role of advertisers, then Pakistan can face a problem as their mindset is extremist.

Terrorist organisations such as Lashkar-e Jhangvi (LeJ) and Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT) are some that aim to promote extremist agenda.

Under circumstances when Pakistan is confronted with the challenge of extremism running advertisements of banned militant outfits is questionable. Let us discuss a recent example shown below in which advertisement was taken from a banned outfit.

Jamaat ud-Dawa (JuD) an ally of Lashkar-e Taiba (LeT), is a banned Islamic organisation. On December 10, 2008 the United Nations decided to ban it on behalf of its alleged involvement in the Mumbai terror attacks.

This organisation was launched in 1985 as Markaz Da'wa w'al-Irshad. The organisation later decided to change its name after the United States State Department declared LeT to be a terrorist organisation. It also publicly retracted itself from any nominal association with the LeT.

⁴² Paul, H. Alling. http://islamabad.usembassy.gov/pakistan/former_ambassadors.html.

⁴³ Dyer, Gillian. Advertising as communication. Volume 1982. Part 2. p. 67.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Campbell, Kelly. E. Advertiser influence on News media: A literature review. San Diego State University. December 8, 2008.

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

جب تک انسان اپنے بھائی کی مدد میں مصروف رہتا ہے
اللہ تعالیٰ اُس کی مدد کرتا رہتا ہے (حدیث)

اپیل سیلاب زدگان برائے

پاکستان کے مختلف شہروں اور علاقوں میں
بارشوں اور دریاؤں کی طغیانی کی وجہ سے

شدید سیلاب ہے جس سے ہزاروں اموات کے علاوہ فصلیں اور آبادیاں
تباہ ہو گئی ہیں، لاکھوں افراد بے گھر ہو چکے ہیں۔ متاثرہ بھائیوں کے مال مویشی
بہہ جانے اور مکانات تباہ ہونے سے اربوں روپے مالیت کا نقصان ہوا ہے۔
خوراک اور پینے کے پانی کی کمی سے بعض علاقوں میں قحط کی صورتحال پیدا ہو رہی
ہے۔ وبائی امراض بھی پھوٹ پڑے ہیں، ان حالات میں ضرورت اس امر کی
ہے کہ ہم بحیثیت قوم اللہ تعالیٰ کے حضور اجتماعی توبہ و استغفار کریں اور مشکلات
میں گھرے ہوئے لوگوں کی مدد کے لئے بھرپور تعاون کریں۔

جماعۃ الدعوة کے ذمہ داران اور کارکنان ترجیحی بنیادوں پر سیلاب زدگان
کی جانفشانی سے مدد کریں، پانی میں پھنسنے ہوئے لوگوں، سامان اور جانوروں کو
محفوظ مقامات تک پہنچائیں اور انہیں خوراک، لباس، بستر، ادویات اور صاف
پانی مہیا کریں۔ اللہ ہم سب کا مددگار ہو۔

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The act of accepting advertising from this organisation would say much about the priorities and editorial stance of a newspaper. If a newspaper accepted payment for the advertisement, how has that affected its stance on organisations operating illegally in the country? If a newspaper provided advertisement without charge, then is this demonstration of ideological tilt towards militancy?⁴⁶ These are some valid points that can be pondered upon. In this example, the banned group JuD has paid an Urdu newspaper for advertising space – and the newspaper accepted the offer. This raises further questions about the specific newspaper priorities. Nawa-e Waqt ran a large paid advertisement signed by Professor Hafiz Saeed, the head of JuD⁴⁷ that says, “Responsible people and members of JuD, help the flood victims on a preferential basis”.

We are only looking at an example in which the advertisement amount has not been made transparent, if there was one made. If it is a hefty advertisement amount, then the advertiser, in this case JuD, would be comfortable paying it where the environment is most conducive.

It is appropriate to observe that the advertisement shown above appears on one of the main pages of the newspaper. It also has contact numbers for people to reach this organisation who show interest in the cause. The advertisement is clearly asking the people of Pakistan to give money to help flood victims through JuD. In one way or the other, the advertisement promotes the reputation of a banned organisation. JuD is depicted as a saviour when fellow brethren are in trouble with major lack of transparency in utilisation of the funds collected.

If the advertisement is observed closely, it can be seen that it makes a direct connection between the victims of the flood and the relief efforts of JuD. The support is coming from a banned organisation that has been promoting terrorism in the country. This aspect has been completely ignored which raises further questions. The newspaper ignores the broader mission of the organisation which is to spread their extremist interpretation of Islam.

The advertisement suggests that the best way to help flood victims is to give financial contributions to JuD. It is understandable that at a time of emergency funds have to be raised at a rapid speed. However, the utilisation of the funds collected by this organisation is not transparent at all. This is due to the credibility and frozen accounts of the organisation.

Furthermore, the fact that JuD’s accounts have been frozen raises the question of how the advertisement was paid for. If the accounts of organisations have been seized, this only leaves the option of cash payment. The readers of this advertisement will naturally have a soft corner for JuD in their hearts after this philanthropy claim. The citizens will fail to realize the overall objective of JuD behind this advertisement and the lack of transparency in the utilisation of funds collected.

⁴⁶ Newspaper Accepts Paid Advertisement From Banned Groups. Pakistan Media Watch. September 7, 2010. Accessed from: <http://pakistanmediawatch.com/2010/09/07/newspaper-accepts-paid-advertisements-from-banned-groups>. Accessed date: February 15, 2011.

⁴⁷ JuD Advertisement. In: Nawa-e Waqt. August 6, 2011. p. 1. Accessed from: <http://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/E-Paper/Lahore/2010-08-06/page-1/detail-26>. Accessed date: February 15, 2011.

At a time, when Pakistan faces turmoil due to such terrorist organisations that promote violence in the country, the print media must act more responsibly. JuD continues to use print and electronic media despite a government directive to the contrary because of it being a banned organisation. The most glaring instance is that of Abdullah Muntazir, the JuD spokesman. In a January 6, 2010 interview, Muntazir literally threatened the Government of Pakistan if it decides to act against the JuD; it would be a big mistake on the part of the government.⁴⁸

These are some aspects that need to be highlighted to analyse the ideological tilt of a newspaper. The actual answers remain complex but are worth pondering upon and it is hoped that also others more skilful on the subject would take notice of it. Such actions from newspapers make the readers sympathetic to the banned outfit. It is worth questioning what such advertisements mean about the priorities of newspapers. If such acts continue, it will surely add to the ideological tilt of the newspaper overall.

Driving sympathy and popularity

It was noted in the previous example that Daily Nawa-e Waqt accepted advertisement from a banned group irrespective of the controversy surrounding it. This leads to further questions of whether such advertisements would influence the content and reporting of the particular paper. Let us now discuss an example of how accepting advertising sets an agenda for the newspaper and limits the journalist to write in a specific state of mind. There is an effect on the reporting and editorial stance of the newspaper due to advertisements which can be experienced in the example below.

A column on page two from Nawa-e Waqt on September 7, 2010 highlighted a claim that JuD “has made over one million suits for flood victims”. A staff reporter also went on to report that JuD is providing milk packets to 7,000 children. The crux of the column focused on the relief efforts made by JuD for the flood victims.

It can be noted that this aid is appreciable but is a minimal amount for the flood victims. The Pakistani Government and other organisations have raised millions of dollars but that is not being highlighted here. The column does not mention the goods delivered by non-partisan Non-governmental Organisation (NGOs). The aim of the column is to put JuD’s efforts and portray it as the saviour of the flood victims.

The accounts of JuD have been banned in Pakistan just like they have been in other countries. Nowhere in the column, are these facts mentioned about JuD and the reader is misguided. Eventually, the reader will think of JuD as a great social worker organisation. Due to the frozen accounts, there is no transparency to show that the funds are being used for flood victims or militancy purpose.

This example gives us an idea how some journalists, either unwittingly or for various incentives, appear to be providing publicity to banned organisations. Research tells us that newspapers charge according to the size and word count of the advertisement.

⁴⁸ In: Now, ‘banned’ Jamaat ud-dawa Attempts to forcibly occupy Lahore Mosque. The Indian News. August 9, 2010. Accessed from: http://www.thaindian.com/newsportal/south-asia/now-banned-jamaat-ud-dawa-attempts-to-forcibly-occupy-lahore-mosque_100409323.html. Accessed date: February 15, 2011.

However, what is not understood that due to lack of professional training of journalists such advertisements promote the ideology of terrorist organisations. Naturally, citizens are bound to think positively about a banned outfit that is getting press attention and helping fellow brethren in time of turmoil.

Since the newspaper has accepted advertising from banned groups, the question must be asked whether these illegal organisations are using PR methods to influence media coverage. Whether the continued praise of illegal organisations reflects certain political bias by editors and reporters at these newspapers?⁴⁹ These are some questions that will also be addressed in the next section.

Spinning Conspiracy Theories

The circulation of leading Urdu newspapers is immense and thus the influence of conspiracy theories is sizeable, once they appear. Some may call it as pressure from radical groups in Pakistan. The effect of such conspiracy theories on the mindset of readers will be discussed in the example below. Conspiracy theories naturally abound in the columns, with three dependable conspirators: America, India (i.e. *bharat* in Urdu), and Israel. The labels may change and become Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), and Mossad⁵⁰, or *Nasara* (the Christians), *Hunud* (the Hindus), and *Yahud* (the Jews), but their axis of evil remains unchanged. The alliteration of the last two – *Hunud* and *Yahud* – makes them a favourite and indivisible pair; they generate an assertion that no one questions in Urdu in Pakistan.⁵¹

In our examples, we will see that content in the Urdu newspapers can promote conspiracy theories day in, day out. There have been numerous occasions where instead of expert knowledge, most editorialists and columnists rely on crude propaganda, emotionalism and bigotry. However, this is one tactic used for higher circulation of the specific newspaper but the most benefit that is extracted by such methods is by militant organisations.

Let us discuss an example from recent times which shows how Urdu newspapers can publish content linked to conspiracy theories. This was published on October 1, 2010 in Daily Khabrian.⁵² The news talks about tribals' protest against drone strikes in Waziristan. The alarming factor is that the news talks about a sensitive issue on one of the main pages of the newspaper but fails to give authentic source of all that is being reported. The news report by monitoring desk quotes a private TV channel on the protest of tribals in Waziristan where they closed down the markets and waved black

⁴⁹ Evidence that Advertising Is Driving PR For Banned Organisations. Pakistan Media Watch. September 9, 2010. Accessed from: <http://pakistanmediawatch.com/2010/09/08/evidence-that-advertising-is-driving-pr-for-banned-organisations>. Accessed date: February 15, 2011.

⁵⁰ HaMossad leModi'in uleTafkidim Meyuchadim.

⁵¹ Pakistan's Urdu Columnists live in the La-La Land of Conspiracy Theories. August 21, 2009. Accessed from: <http://pakteahouse.wordpress.com/2009/08/21/pakistan%E2%80%99s-urdu-columnists-live-in-the-la-la-land-of-conspiracy-theories>. Accessed date: February 15, 2011.

⁵² Daily Khabrian. October 1, 2010. p. 3.

flags. The TV channel is not named and only vague information is being provided. No specific area is given at even district level. The news just says that the incident took place in Waziristan and neither are the numbers of protestors reported. All the news tells is that the terrorist still have a stronghold in Waziristan and have the capability to bring everyday life to a standstill by closing businesses.

Such reporting without an authentic source certainly adds more spice to the news, which in turn means more circulation for the newspaper. However, terrorist organisations appreciate this sort of news as it is giving them publicity and more perceived power. In a continuous race for revenue generation, some of the Urdu newspapers have compromised on the content. It is worth to mention revenue generation in accordance with advertisement from outfits promoting extremism agendas because below we will analyse such an example. The examples below will also shed light on the concept of fact checking.

Conspiracy of Twin Tower attack

Over the past decade, there is no better example to illustrate the self-contradictory attitude of Urdu newspapers, as their treatment of September 11, 2001. Except for some columnists, almost all Urdu newspapers continue to declare that the attack on Twin Towers in New York City was a Zionist conspiracy. This has been continuously declared in various newspapers throughout, as an article of faith.

More importantly such repetition has benefited the militant organisations to recruit more Muslims worldwide for their purpose of terrorism. Such conspiracy theories have only benefited extremists, by developing hatred against Jews for staging a huge conspiracy against Muslims. When a newspaper with high circulation around the country states that the terrorist attacks on 9/11 in the US were staged, then a majority of the people tend to believe it. The source of such news will not be challenged by the majority of the public. Let us discuss an example that used the 9/11 attacks without authentic sourcing.

A renowned columnist and more importantly the owner of the Nation and Nawa-e Waqt newspapers, claims in his column (The Nation. March 7, 2004) that the attack on the Twin Towers was a Jewish conspiracy.⁵³ This attack meant to be solely against Muslims worldwide. As expected, this news produced an outrage around the country as it was appearing in a mainstream newspaper.

The columnist went ahead and added that American media has also revealed the same theory. He pointed out that American print media exposed that on September 11, 2001 there was no Jew present in the World Trade Center. The Jews on the specific day were advised to take a day off. The columnist fails to name the American newspapers that are being mentioned in his column, as a source. Apart from lacking any source, the column is specifically based on targeting a country.

⁵³ View Point: 9/11 and Pakistan's Urdu Press. Pakistan Media Watch. Accessed from: <http://pakistanmediawatch.com/2010/09/13/view-point-911-and-pakistans-urdu-press> Accessed date: February 15, 2011.

This story was not contradicted for many years and instead others followed in the footsteps of this irresponsible reporting. Another column appeared in the newspaper a few days later.⁵⁴ that was similar. It asserted that George Bush was the architect of 9/11. The statement targeted a single person and went into printing without any censorship, not to mention it lacked a legitimate source, but even then the newspaper reached to all parts of the country.

In 2005, an article was written entitled “Jews, not Muslims, are the enemies of America”. This was published on July 20 and once again it propagated the conspiracy that no Jews died in the 9/11 attacks. The article lacked any source. The statistics provided that the majority people dead in the attack were Muslims was not backed up by any fact or legitimate source. The Nawa-e Waqt Kuwait-based correspondent Abdus Shakoor Abi Hasan also made a similar claim about Jewish casualties in 9/11 on July 26, 2005. These claims lacked authentic source once again but were not stopped from being published.

The allegations stated above are all conspiracy theories that fail to cite any legitimate source. The repeated publishing of such columns does great damage to Pakistan. It creates an outrage in the minds of citizens. Citizens trust the media and begin to believe the conspiracy theories which at the end only serve the purpose of generating some revenue and also benefiting terrorist organisations.

While examining such stories it is important to identify the sway of both sides. On the other hand, the information provided by the United States State Department was as follows:

“A total of 2,071 occupants of the World Trade Center died on September 11, 2001 among the 2,749 victims of the WTC attacks. According to an article in the October 11, 2001, Wall Street Journal, roughly 1,700 people had listed the religion of a person missing in the WTC attacks; approximately 10% were Jewish. A later article, in the September 5, 2002, Jewish Week, states, “based on the list of names, biographical information compiled by The New York Times, and information from records at the Medical Examiner’s Office, there were at least 400 victims either confirmed or strongly believed to be Jewish.” This would be approximately 15% of the total victims of the WTC attacks. A partial list of 390 Cantor Fitzgerald employees who died (out of 658 in the company) lists 49 Jewish memorial services, which is between 12% and 13%.⁵⁵

The information released above from a United States department source tells us that there was a percentage of Jews along with Muslims among the terrorist attack. The families of these persons had to go through the same trauma like others. However, it is painful to see that the newspapers did not condemn their deaths on basis of religion. For a long time the newspaper continued publishing conspiracy theories which promoted hatred against Jews and the West.

⁵⁴ Dr. A. R. Khalid. In: Nawa-e Waqt. December 18, 2007.

⁵⁵ US Department of State. January 14, 2005. Accessed from: <http://usinfo.state.gov/media/Archive/2005/Jan/14-260933.html>. Accessed date: November 2, 2010.

Nawa-e Waqt ignored this fact more than once for many years. This was at a time when people were already outraged and such news fuelled this even more. Such horrifying allegations were printed in form of news which made not just the people of Pakistan but Muslims worldwide more angry.⁵⁶

The effect of such news is enormous and the columnists with no source targeted one specific race and helped the militant organisation show Jews as enemies and to wage '*Jihad*' against them. Such news and columns discussed above in Nawa-e Waqt, stating that there were no Jews in the Twin Tower and that the attack was a pro-Zionist American propaganda, tells a lot about the content of the newspaper. Another point to be noted is that if the owner of a newspaper can state opinions without verification, it can really outrage many readers.

Religious leaders affiliated to various terrorist organisations promote such stance of Urdu newspapers. Such conspiracy theories being published in newspapers are beneficial for militant organisations. One of the main objectives of militant organisations is to make the people stand against other faiths to create havoc. Stability is grave threat to militant organisations and such news promotes chaos amongst people.

Militant organisations can easily promote such bigotry from Urdu newspapers and use it as proof for their distorted ideologies. Terrorist organisations as we are aware of, portray many countries as the enemy of Pakistan and thus it is very important to authenticate what is being printed in the newspaper. The content and opinions should not be such that are not factual and might promote hatred in the country.

Let us now move to a much recent example from year 2010, when the strategic alliance of Pakistan with other countries is truly critical.

A front page story⁵⁷ from the Nawa-e Waqt newspaper about a Christian church in Florida, USA that has organised a rally to burn copies of the Holy Quran. This article makes the claim that "Western countries have resorted to presumptuous attacks", and reports that some *Ulema* have condemned the West and the United Nations for their "silence". However, the truth is that there has not been a silence on this matter. It has been widely condemned by Christian religious groups in the US and even the US government and UN has taken part in condemning it. The Ambassador of the United States came forward and explained that the best antidote to intolerance is a combination of robust legal protections against discrimination and hate crimes. She also emphasised on a proactive government outreach to minority religious groups and the vigorous defence of both freedom of religion and expression. On this issue she mentioned that the United States supports the full use of office and moral authority to speak out against intolerance and instances of hate speech where they occur. Not only her but even Hillary Clinton came forward publicly and condemned such actions.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Reis, E. Robert: How Many Jews Died at the World Trade Center on 9/11? The New York Times. Accessed from: http://majorityrights.com/index.php/weblog/comments/how_many_jews_died_at_the_world_trade_center_on_9_1. Accessed date: February 15, 2011.

⁵⁷ Nawa-e Waqt. September 1, 2010. p.1.

⁵⁸ Quran Burning-Facts and Fiction. Concerned Citizens Society of Pakistan. Accessed from: <http://www.ccp.org.pk/articles/53-facts-fiction>. Accessed date: February 15, 2011.

The front page report in Nawa-e Waqt is misleading and based on false rumours that are easily disproven with the smallest amount of research. Considering that the vast majority take their news from Urdu sources, it is essential that people get fair and accurate information, not hysterical falsehoods and religious exploitation.

Militants using the new media

During the 1990s, terrorists communicated with their audience(s) by more traditional means, such as journalist interviews, fax, face-to-face propaganda and even press conferences. At the end of 1998, there was a shift in the primary strategic communications means due to technological advances.⁵⁹

New Media

Let us first analyse briefly what has been the trend of new media and militancy globally over the past few years. After September 11, 2001, Islamist terrorists greatly expanded their communication infrastructure. Along with this they received awareness of more methods of communication considerably. The year 2001 saw the formation of the As-Sahab (The Cloud), Islamic Media Publication Company. It was essentially the main entity of the media production division of terrorist organisations such as Al-Qaida, which relies heavily on the Internet. It produces video files of interviews, documentaries, speeches and news programs that are related to terrorist organisations such as Taliban. These were updated daily on the website and it became a one stop shop for individuals aligned with the mindset.

If observed closely, all speeches by senior leadership of the original Al-Qaida released after June 2006 carry the As-Sahab logo. This gave the opportunity to As-Sahab to market itself. The frequency, quality and style of the video messages even today are getting more and more professional. The techniques used are increasingly sophisticated. The media rhetoric is mainly built around the visual component that is later floated on the internet free of cost. The circulation of such videos is immense and there is no set time period or airing cost over the internet.

Email, Skype and other Voice-over-Internet-Protocol (VOIP) programmes are some increasingly popular visual modes that are becoming more and more common modes of communication. Islamist terrorists are utilising this technology in conjunction with the Internet abundantly. English, either spoken or in subtitles, is regularly the language of choice. Other subgroups use different mods *operandi* and video production features like subtitles and logos. By creating their own training modules and video tapes, terrorists groups support organisational learning. This mode gives them an opportunity to produce videos with firsthand experience (learning by doing) and the audience viewing the video with second hand experience.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Bockstette, Carsten Jihadist: Terrorist use of Strategic Communication Management Techniques. George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies. Occasional Paper Series. No. 20. December, 2008. p. 12. Accessed from: http://www.marshallcenter.org/mcpublicweb/MCDocs/files/College/F_Publications/occPapers/occ-paper_20-en.pdf. Accessed date: February 15, 2011.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

The new media has provided a vehicle for spreading of terrorist messages much more easily than before. The greater the violent audacity and the larger the scale of the cold-blooded brutality of a terrorist act, the more coverage it usually receives in the new media. Suicide blasts and beheadings are effective examples that can be found floating on the internet with large viewership. This mode of media has been beneficial to militant organisations as they do not have to approach any professional. If a militant leader wants to address his followers around the world, it can be done within seconds. A leader can record his address and upload it on the internet while keeping confidential his/her location. An immediate response on the address can also be viewed within the next few hours.

Thereby terrorists reach a global public, including any desired audience. They certainly recognised the revolutionary significance of the evolution of the media infrastructure. They are cognisant of the fact that using strategic communication through new media can be on equal footing with conventional armed forces. In the new media, international terrorism has at its disposal an instrument of substantial power with which it can compensate for a significant part of its asymmetry in military might. Terrorists have adapted innovative 21st century information and communications technologies and the associated infrastructure to maximize the psychological impact of their operations and communicated through the use of video messages.⁶⁰

Global mass media & the internet

The organisational structure of many terrorist organisations such as Taliban has changed over time. After the loss of important physical bases in South Asia such as Afghanistan, these organisations were forced to scatter. The conversion from a clandestine organisation to a decentralised, open network organisation was the only possible means of survival. Global mass media and the internet were the tools which gave them the best opportunity available to go through this transformation.

The dependence on traditional mass media was compensated for and even excelled by the use of the internet. The aim is to effect the transformation of dispersed followers and sympathisers in the Muslim community into self-made terrorists. The volunteer leg-work by terrorist sympathisers is therefore highly welcomed.

Emergent digital technologies expanded their communicative possibilities. By using global mass media and the internet as their main communication infrastructure, Taliban and Al-Qaida survive as terrorist organisations, through publishing written statements, blogs, articles by ideological leaders and online-magazines. Terrorists profit from the fact that the world of mass communication is evolving into a world of networked mediated mass communication, where different mediated technologies combine interpersonal mediation devices with mass communication ones.⁶¹

⁶⁰ Ibid.

The different media are connected through interpersonal communication sources such as mobile phones and the World Wide Web. The fusion of interpersonal communication and mass communication, connecting audiences – that all can also be publishers or broadcasters at the same time via the World Wide Web – enhances the resonating cavity of terrorists and greatly increases their access to audiences.⁶²

Already, terrorists make abundant use of the internet for internal and external communication. They raise capital, franchise their brand name, recruit followers, find partners and suppliers, provide training materials through their online library and manage operations. Terrorists capture information about the users who browse their sites. Users who seem most interested in their terroristic cause or well suited to carrying out its work are then contacted. Thanks to the communicative possibilities of the Internet, terrorist groups have become more numerous, agile, and well coordinated.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

Conclusion

One of the most important questions at the present time is: What can and should be done, realistically, to curb the relation or link between terrorism and the media? Concrete steps are required to minimise the manipulation of all forms of media by the terrorist organisations.

With a clear vision of this objective it will be easier to devise strategies and counter-measures. First of all, extremism will spread if terrorist organisations continue to manipulate the Pakistani media in this manner. Terrorists try to use Pakistani media to their advantage and media are very happy to broadcast events related to terrorism. This is where sensational reporting comes in. It is important that some lines are drawn so that terrorist organisations do not receive free publicity mostly through the media. It is also imperative to make distinction between old and new media in accordance with technological advances. Terrorism and the news media have experienced important changes in the recent decades. On one hand Pakistani media has received freedom and at the same time terrorist organisations have been smart enough to capitalize it. The numerous technological and data advances during this tenure have also been utilised by terrorists. These changes have been opted by them to advance their strategies for maximum damage. On the other hand these changes open up new questions for research on media attention to terrorism. Next to developing a current strategy to offset terrorist organisations to manipulate media, we also need to focus on opposing the operational effectiveness of terrorist use of the new media as discussed in the last part of the chapter. This usage of the media by terrorist organisations can only be curbed if the root causes are addressed and we hit the centre of gravity of such organisations. The need of the hour is to develop messages and build a critical mass with an open mind rather than an extremist agenda. No tool can be better used for this purpose than media itself.

Individualland (IL) is an active non-partisan and a not for profit liberal civil society group. It has worked on governance, rule of law, strengthening civil society and democratic development. Individualland has a demonstrated track of working with legislators and civil society organizations engaged in advocacy work. Hence, it has a strong national footprint and has the experience of implementing initiatives aimed at strengthening and institutionalizing interaction between the civil society and parliamentary committees. IL's world view is based on liberal values. It believes firstly in the individual, secondly in individual freedom and then consequently social responsibility but from the reference point of the individuals. Individualland is a space for liberal, secular individuals who believe that the state is for the individual and not vice versa, minimum government is more than enough, private entrepreneurship is the vehicle and root of creativity and progress and market need to be open and globalization to be embraced.

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