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Foreign News and Benign Indifference: The Story of Indian Print Media

Dr. Silajit Guba*
Madhuchhanda Das**

ABSTRACT

A widely acceptable cliche - the media have a strong impact on how people view their world. Media presents centrality to public life as it provides environment for balancing issues of national importance. The dynamic and complex relationship between the Indian media and foreign issues has become a major concern in recent times. The Indian media is very keen to show interest in matters relating to countries in its neighborhood. A good number of researches have been conducted all over the world to investigate the role of media towards covering foreign issues. The present study helps to define the texture of foreign news coverage in the national dailies of India. The study tries to focus (qualitatively and quantitatively) on the coverage of foreign news. The Times of India and The Hindu were selected to serve the purpose with an aim to assess the role of print media in covering foreign affairs. The role played by the domestic and regional news agencies in India is negligible, not more than 15 % news stories are sourced from the international news agencies. Instead of mentioning distinctly the sources of news, the Times of India uses the umbrella terms like agencies; 17 % of the stories originated from the agencies for The Times of India during the study period. In case of The Hindu, the bulk of the news comes from agencies. National news accounts for 32% news items were from International news agencies (AFP, AP, Reuters, IANS, Xinhua, Graphic News), followed by National news agency (PIB) as 10%. It shows that even the newspapers with profound international news aspirations and a diverse national readership base, such as The Times of India and The Hindu still are not able to rise above the traditional problems in foreign news coverage.

Keywords: Foreign News Coverage, Conflict, Objectivity, Bias, International Reporting, News Flow, News Determinants

1. Introduction

News has become a harmonized and ubiquitous genre over the years. A news story is important either as a part of valuable information or as a means to minimize our thirst and interest. Proximity is the determining factor recognized by editors and reporters as one of the characteristics of news. As a matter of fact, international news coverage by national dailies has reduced to a large extent.

Martin Moore and David Lohn, mentioned that foreign news coverage has declined in absolute and relative terms, (2010) in Shrinking World: the decline of international reporting in the British press. The convergence of media is promoted by the rise of the internet is reshaping international news coverage and changing relations between nations. The tripartite relationship among the three Ps as Public, Print, and Policy-makers is made tighter by the convergence powers of the web. Over the past three decades, there has occurred a decline in the amount of foreign news coverage in major U.S. daily newspapers. Emery found that international news as a percentage of the total news hole had shrunk from 10.2 percent in 1971 to 2.6 percent in 1988", (1989). Christopher E. Beaudoin, Esther Thorson coined that there shows a decline in the amount of foreign news coverage in major U.S. daily newspapers over the past three decades", (2001), in LA Times Offered as Model for Foreign News Coverage. Carl Session Stepp(1999), in Then and Now, formulated that foreign hard news had fallen from 5 percent to 3 percent of the total news hole.

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and foreign stories were far less likely to appear on the
front page.

2. Objectives of the Study

Objectives of the study are:

(i) To estimate the total news space devoted to foreign
news.

(ii) To assess the pictorial coverage including cartoons
/ sketches

(iii) To identify the sources of news to assess the aspect
of objectivity in coverage

(iv) To explore the composition of editorials in different
Indian newspapers with reference to foreign
coverage.

3. Literature Review

3.1 International Coverage in foreign media

David Weaver and G. Cleveland Wilhoit came to the
conclusion that foreign news is incomplete and biased,
focused primarily on the developing world and is largely
negative in nature”, (1981), in Foreign News Coverage in
Two U.S. Wire Services. In terms of sources and story
characters, Wilhoit and Weaver determined that most
international news is “official” news, focusing on stories
that flow from government and involve “official” sources
and characters. Johan Galtung and Mari Halmiøe Ruge,
(1965), in their work The Structure of Foreign News: the
presentation of the Congo, Cuba and Cyprus Crises in
Four Norwegian Newspapers dealt with hypothesis
involving twelve factors (such us luck of ambiguity,
references to elite nations, etc) which together are said to
determine the structure of foreign news. Raymond F. Smith,
after his study found that international relations, as per The
New York Times are comprised of as predicted of a series of
simple, discrete and dramatic events, (1969). Seib and
Philip (2005) opined that the convergence of media
cultivated by the rise of the internet is restructuring the
international news coverage and changing relations
between nations. Their study also revealed that the internet
presents new challenges to systems of international
relations, beyond news and other communications
functions. On the other hand, H.Denis Wu, (2007)
commented on online and traditional media that the trade
volume and existence of news agencies are the two
leading determinants of international news coverage. The
news media remain principal information sources for
diverse policy and political constituencies, developing the
capacity to better inform them remains a critical goal in a
world increasingly shaped by the forces of interdependence,
globalism, and Continuing international and “asymmetrical” conflict.

Bridge, (1995) commented that women were portrayed in
a stereotypical manner in international news stories. A
major concern for the developing and the developed
countries is the imbalance in global news flow. International
news is mainly the news stories from North America,
Europe and in certain cases, the Middle East. It is very
difficult to identify that the newspapers are not focusing on
international news happenings that involved the United
States. The media in many developed countries do not give
emphasis on foreign news, which is in anyway mostly
about events in countries that were large, rich or proximate
both geographically and culturally. Further, such news was
intently focused on the interests of the receiving country.
Previously foreign news mainly dealt with politics, war,
diplomacy, trade and now the scope of international news
has expanded and includes sports, media and entertainment,
finance, fashion and tourism. But, if we discuss about the media of the developing world we will
find it blinkered and extremely inward looking.

3.2 International Coverage in Indian media

Indian media coverage of international news is “non-
existant” as per Saeed Naqvi, (2007). “Take the recent
Tsunami disaster” he added, “the BBC reporter was
anchoring a one hour bulletin from Banda Aceh within a
couple of days of the disaster. No Indian journalist
managed to reach there”. Even in the Andaman and
Nicobar Islands, the Indian television companies however
had no presence. The television crews managed to reach
the islands only after the magnitude of the disaster became
normal. In a typical Indian news organization, the foreign
desk ranks well below the national desk. It’s not hard to find
the reasons for this bias. News media’s own gatekeeping
mechanism and news flow by way of agencies are the
determining factors.

International news and events are not covered under the
pretext that there is a lack of appreciative audience for
international content in India. “It is one of those convenient
myths perpetuated by decision makers so that they can
avoid applying their minds to make international stories
relevant for their audiences”, Seema Sirohi, (2010). The
extent of coverage of international news and the quality of
reportage in India is, “disgraceful” as per a Delhi based
foreign correspondent (who pleads anonymity). The Indian
media tends to focus only on a few countries with which
India has strong relations. “It almost completely ignores
Africa, the Caribbean and even South East Asia to some
extent,” Seema Sirohi, (2010). News organizations like the
BBC and the New York Times devote considerable time
and energy in an attempt to offer a well-rounded
perspective on a country like India; no Indian publication
or news channel on the other hand, covers either the UK or
the US in such a comprehensive manner.
3.3 International Communication and NIIO

The flow and structure of international news are the most important factors in shaping the picture of the world. Consequently, the scientific study of the flow and structure of international news is significant. The determinants of foreign news coverage are very different from those entertained by the debate about the New International Information Order (NIIO): national interest and media traditions. Thus, the Indian newspapers devote little space to foreign news. The NIIO discussion suggests that third world newspapers, dependent mostly upon Western wire services, have little choice but to print what they get. It is far from clear why these agencies happen to be the only source used by these newspapers when some of these have already attained an amount of financial sovereignty and more importantly, the way they structure the news is necessarily identical with that of the news eventually published. In a way, most third world newspapers or news agencies still suffer from the syndrome of looking at the world or interpreting the world through the vantage point of transnational news agencies. Horton (1978), Rubin (1977), Sussman (1977), Rosenblum (1977, 1979) and Righter (1978, 1979) talked about the present "order" to stress that structural dependence upon Western agencies that results in an unbalanced foreign coverage, at the expense of the third world.

3.4 International News and Conflict

The advent of television has added increased the cross-cultural flow of news. International terrorism has always sought to achieve a very high media profile for its actions. Millions of people all over the world watched the live television coverage of the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks in New York and Washington. The September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in the United States had increased some world news reporting for a while in general, but for many years coverage of international news has been declining. In some countries, just a few months after the tragedy of September 11 saw increase in international news coverage and it began to decline again. The element of violence in terrorism often seemed secondary to that of dominating newspaper headlines and television coverage. Rather in most cases, violence or televised violence became the primary news value. Even in the developed and free, democratic nations, news and information is subject to parochialism and unbalanced coverage or just plain omissions of the major issues.

4. Research Methodology

The technique of content analysis, both quantitative and qualitative, was employed in the analysis of the coverage of foreign news by the two prominent national dailies-The Times of India and The Hindu. All the news stories, articles, cartoons, photographs and editorials related to foreign news coverage in these two newspapers, were analyzed for the time period of seven months i.e. from January 2011 to July 2011. The sampling technique is purposive. Each newspaper was scanned, especially its front page, editorial page and global/international page for foreign news. Each sampled newspaper then was analyzed for one day in a week starting with Monday and once seven days were covered over a period of seven week, the researcher had reverted back to Monday on the eighth week. Likewise, each day in the week was analyzed taking the total sample size to 62 with The Times of India and The Hindu together. The process ensured equal importance to all the days in a week at both conflict-ridden times and normal times and left less room for error. All the editorials, articles, cartoons, sketches, news stories and photographs published on those days were analyzed by applying both quantitative and qualitative approach. The editorial page of the newspaper reveals specific opinion on a given topic and hence, reflects the paper’s editorial policy. The photographs as always remain an imperative and crucial device for grabbing the reader’s attention to a particular development in the entire saga.

4.1 Sources of international news

Six major sources have been identified ranging from staff reporter to the top three global news agencies (AFP, AP and Reuters) and other western and Asian News agencies. The news where the source names were not mentioned taken under not mentioned category. Staff reporter correspondents were clubbed together from one single sort. The mostly preferred trend of The Times of India is that instead of mentioning distinctly the agencies name, the newspaper uses the umbrella term, ‘agencies’, and thus agencies is another category. Out of the total 260 international news stories of The Times of India 67 (33%) comes under not mentioned group, 78 (30%) news from international news agencies (AFP, AP, Reuters), 44 (17%) agencies news, 38 (15%) news from national news agency, 13 (5%) were from staff reporter correspondent.

After analyzing The Hindu it has been found that the newspaper is strictly dependent on its own foreign city based correspondents and staff reporters. Out of total 215 international news, maximum number of stories 126 (59%) were supplied by their own staff reporter correspondent. Significantly 68 (32%) news items were from international news agencies (AFP, AP, Reuters, IANS, Xinhua, Graphic News), followed by a national news agency (PTI) is 21 (11%). The researcher found that unlike The Times of India, The Hindu has not gone for using any opaque terms like the agencies.

5. Analysis and Discussion

5.1 Space devoted to foreign news / pictures

Space devoted to foreign news in the front page (1764.421), editorial page (2177.977) and global page
(5.790.312) of The Times of India is 9732.71 col. cm. Total print space is 32574.2 col. cm, the space for advertisement in the front page, editorial page and Global page is 694.64 col. cm and the total news hole is 25879.56 col. cm. Whereas space devoted to foreign news in the front page (1866.93%), editorial page (3109.56%) and international page (7860.49%) of The Hindu is 12836.998 col. cm. Total print space is 33266.067 col. cm, where the space for advertisement in these three pages is 2917.474 col. cm and the total news hole 30348.593 col. cm.

5.2 Space devoted for Foreign Pictures including cartoons / sketches

Total Space devoted to International pictures in The Times of India is 1590.536 col. cm; that comprises of, at the front page 268.43 col. cm, editorial page 269.43 col. cm and in the Global page 1052.676 col. cm. Total number of foreign news pictures which have been published in The Times of India is 153. On the other hand, space distribution for international pictures in case of The Hindu stands at 2252.5 col. cm; that comprises of, at front page 519.8 col. cm, in the editorial page 96.1 col. cm and in the Global page 1636.6 col. cm. Total number of foreign news pictures which have been published in The Hindu during the period is 79.

To discuss the story angles of international news in the editorial pages of The Times of India and The Hindu, it is found that international coverage in both the newspapers are more negative than positive. Crime coverage was extensive and often wallowed out in personal details. Maximum number of stories in The Times of India, (i.e. 65%) talked about murder, crime, violence, kidnapping, terrorism, and bomb blast and in case of The Hindu, 60% news items were mainly about conflict and terrorism. Development and news on women, the elderly and children were conspicuous by their absence in foreign news section, especially in text. 25% and 15% of news stories can be taken to have a positive angle in Times of India and The Hindu respectively and 10% (TOI) and 25% (The Hindu) news items can be categorised as neutral.

The study suggests that The Times of India has been successful in its attempt to cover the world for its diverse community. To begin with, it is apparent that The Times of India has prioritized foreign news coverage. Although, the news hole measures are different for various cited studies, it is impressive that foreign news has made up a large percentage of the newspaper's total news hole. In addition, The Times of India offered more context than expected, and its coverage focused heavily on Pakistan and American affairs. Also, on the positive side, the study found that The Hindu does not focus on the news from the United States and other Western nations alone. American and other Western sources were found at lower than expected rates. Coverage, especially in terms of print, shows that The Hindu is attempting to present a broader picture of the world. The study reveals that The Hindu focuses more on the developing world than the developed. Curiously foreign news in both the newspapers is carried in snippets and is usually accompanied by large pictures. Photographs of the developed world were deemed more newsworthy, especially in case of The Times of India.

Foreign news coverage by these two national dailies carries some weaknesses. Foreign news coverage in these newspapers showed some impressive amount of contextual information. Similar to the findings of previous studies, international coverage in The Times of India and The Hindu are more negative than positive. Coverage of the developing world was more negative and loaded with negative news frames and domains than that of the developed world. Conflict, military and security issues and politics are the highly preferred criteria in covering foreign news. The prominent Indian national dailies with its extensive reporting team, should take major step to improve upon the standards of global news coverage. The study reveals the age-old malaise affecting Indian journalism of not spending money and resources on collecting information unlike Western journalistic practices. The newspapers under discussion are essentially the two most influential newspapers of the country and their inability or unwillingness to spend on news gathering practices smacks of a deep rooted crisis in Indian journalism. The study suggests that the Indian journalism will need to continue evolving as the world grows closer and more closely interrelated, just to survive if not for the purpose of upholding a better quality of journalistic practices. With the internet and social media marching in, the high-handedness in news distribution exhibited by The Times of India and The Hindu is unlikely to draw readers and more likely to draw flack. It also leads to a serious erosion of the credibility of these two newspapers as they are incomparably a part of a smaller world where except for the stories from deep down Africa, people are reliant more and more on instant and diffused media stories. The deeply entrenched imbalances in the news flow may be a thing of the past, but the centre to periphery phenomenon in news flow still persists and while The Hindu tries to stem the rot by providing a wider spectrum of news from developing societies, the typical practice of The Times of India to dwell on happy-go-lucky aspects of the developed world in essence further emphasises the story of imbalance in international news flow.

6. Suggestions

The study suggests that a lot of efforts are required from Indian newspaper particularly, the giants like The Times of India and The Hindu to break the jinx of dependency on foreign news sources regarding the news coverage and presentation of the events of foreign nations. In this
endeavour, Indian newspaper barons will have to put more money and resources for collecting and gathering the news of foreign countries. Further, Indian dailies will have to produce wider coverage of the world with more positive news. This will help the readers to comprehend the global scenario in holistic and broader perspectives.

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ISSUES OF PAKISTAN IN INDIAN NEWSPAPERS: AN APPRAISAL

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Abstract

The press presents centrality to public life because it provides a forum for debating issues of national importance. It is found that the coverage of foreign news in the Indian Press has declined in absolute terms in recent times, but in case of covering Pakistan, the story is somewhat different. It is not merely a sophistry that the Indian media is apt to display an astonishing interest in matters pertaining to Pakistan as compared to any other South Asian countries. The present study is a content analysis of foreign news with special reference to Pakistan, by two major English dailies in India, The Times of India and The Hindu. The news stories were recorded and collated under the various module headings: Politics, religion/religious, culture and history, arts and entertainment, conflict, military and security issues and economics. An item analysis revealed that conflict is the most preferred criterion in covering Pakistan encompassing 35% and 36% in The Times of India and The Hindu respectively. Conversely, Military and Security issues dominated in both the newspapers, politics is the third leading category. Despite the emergence of numerous domestic and regional news organizations in India, the role played by them is negligible, not more than 20% news stories are sourced from the national news agencies. Instead of mentioning distinctly the sources of news, The Times of India uses the umbrella terms like agencies; there were 37% of Agencies stories covered by The Times of India during the study period followed by news from AFP, Reuters and AP. In case of The Hindu, the staff reporter and correspondents were the major source of news accounting for 81% of total Pakistan based news.

Keywords: News Flow, News Determinant, Foreign Coverage, Conflict, Objectivity, Bias

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Introduction

The imbalance in global news flow is a universal phenomenon and presumed to be a matter of concern for both the developing and the developed nations, albeit to varying degrees. While Many Voices, One World or other similar concerns were expressed at the international forums over the news flow from the North to the South, not much is talked about how the news flow is determined between the South and the South. In addition to the concerns on the news flow imbalance, it is also important how a particular nation finds, what kind of news are found to be interesting by its readers about a neighbour. If the national newspapers of a country are dominated by a certain kind of news items originating from across the border, and if the practice is near exclusionary, then it can be assumed that it is not only a balance of news problem, but at the centrality of news production process lies a parochial view of the world. The dynamic and complex relationship between the Indian media and Pakistan related issues has become the prior means of concern. So a content analysis of foreign news with special reference to Pakistan, by two prominent English leading dailies of India, The Times of India and The Hindu is attempted to examine the attitude of prominent Indian newspapers towards Pakistan issues and it is found that the reporting pattern in both the newspapers follows a particular trajectory despite professed differences in the editorial policy of the two newspapers.

Media Coverage of Foreign Affairs

The internationalization of news was first started with the rise of global news agencies in the 19th century. With the expansion of technology this process was further accelerated in the 20th century and stimulated by war, trade, imperialism and industrial development. A distinctive news story pertaining to conflict, disaster and even progress in South America, might elicit interest even as far as Central Asia. The advent of television has increased the cross-cultural flow of news. Previously foreign news mainly with politics, war, diplomacy, trade and the scope of international news has now expanded and includes sport, media and entertainment, finance, fashion and tourism. But if we discuss about the media of the developing world we will find that it is blinkered and extremely inward looking.

Foreign coverage has declined in absolute and relative terms (Martin Moore, 2010). The unbalanced global flow of news has been raging for several years. A plethora of empirical studies of imbalance in news has illustrated that the news media in all developing countries were heavy importers of news, while audiences in developed countries were supplied with home-produced news, even when it was about foreign events. The “lack of autonomy in news production” troubled national cultural progress in countries like India which were often ex-colonies
and limited their full independence and sovereignty. International news—as a percentage of the total news hole—had shrunk to its greatest extent, (Michael Emery 1989). The media in many developed countries did not give emphasis to foreign news, which anyway was mostly about events in countries that were large, rich or proximate both geographically and culturally. Further, such news was intently focused on the interests of the receiving country.

Foreign hard news had fallen from 5 percent to 3 percent of the total news hole and that foreign stories were far less likely to appear on the front page, (Carl Sessions Stepp' 1999). In recent years, owing to demands of corporate and conglomerates for bigger profits and a disjointed audience has seen a gradual but steady decline in international news coverage by the U.S media. Modern readers and viewers instead seem to care more about celebrities, reality shows, scandals and local news as compared to world affairs. Newspaper editors and television news executives have realized this trend and consequently devote much less time and space to foreign news, a decline by 70% to 80% during the past 15 to 20 years. British media were highly accepted for a balanced coverage of international interactions, compared to other moderately developed nations. But in reality, "The international documentary is virtually dead" in Britain, as per 3WE’s (Third World & Environment Broadcasting Project) report for 2001, named Losing Reality, recommended that it has found a trend of declining coverage of international issues and an increase in entertainment and "dumping down".

The Dominance and Influence of Big Three:

The flow and structure of international news are the determining factors in shaping the picture of the world in one’s mind. The New International Information Order (NIIO) (1980) discussion came out with the fact that third world newspapers are dependent heavily upon western wire services, have little choice but to publish what they get. The dominance of big three (AP, AFP, Reuters) cannot be unseen. These agencies are the only source used by third world newspapers and the way they structure the news is necessarily identical with that of the news eventually published. Horton (1978), Rubin (1977), Sussman (1977), Rosenblum (1977, 1979) and Righter (1978, 1979) dealt with the issue and concluded that "news is heavily biased towards the industrial countries" Righter (1979). Horton (1978) argues that "the news flow is too heavily weighted with news about the industrial countries." Rosenblum (1979) carries the subject one step further and states that "in the pears of most Third World Countries, news items are predominantly from industrialized countries". Rosenblum (1979) also believes that the United States media coverage of the developing countries has tended to be ill informed and superficial. "Rubin (1977) concludes that "Africa has been the most neglected part of the world in terms of correspondents". Much of the criticism of the present
“order” stressed that structural dependence upon western agencies results in imbalanced foreign coverage, at the expense of the third world. Hence, after analyzing all these statements we can emphasize the point that the western media coverage of the world is thin and maintains its audience in a state of near ignorance.

The Indian Media and Pakistan

Indian newspapers have reduced distances, gone away with national boundaries and time differences and brought the horrors of terrorism into almost every house around the nation. Large scale coverage is devoted to Pakistan by Indian media which continues to cast a pall of gloom over the South Asian region. The Indian press is overexcited to cover issues of Pakistan as this region has often been termed as a high risk conflict zone on the back of territorial disputes, tense relations-border clashes, limited or large scale wars and proxy wars between these two neighbors. The leading newspapers of India have been found to be quite apt in displaying an astonishing interest in matters pertaining to Pakistan as compared to any other country in its neighborhood. Both the media-India and Pakistan are trapped in “narrow nationalism” and is part of the problem in relations between the two countries (Najam Sethi, December 2009). The regular coverage of the controversy in Pakistan was in sharp contrast to the amount of interest shown in developments in Bangladesh at about the same time.

Subarno Chattarji, in his work, Tracking the Media: Interpretations of Mass Media Discourses in India and Pakistan, in August 18, 2008, dealt with the ways in which English language publications contribute to and function within middle class matrices of modernity, consumption, conflict, and conservatism in India. The prominent Indian national newspapers have galvanized the nation in times of war with Pakistan with their print reportage and visual coverage. Nevertheless, when it comes to covering Pakistan’s proxy war and terrorism against India, the record of the Indian media is not all that promising and praiseworthy. However, the criticism applies more to the Indian electronic medium than the Indian print medium. Indian print medium has the advantage of time in order to present a relatively more balanced reportage, which crystallizes in the time span between terrorist incidents and their reportage in print. Theoretically privately-owned Pakistani TV channels cannot be seen in India. But in case of dramatic story the footage finds its way to Indian audiences (Sevanti Ninan, Mar, 2007).

The foreign desk ranks well below the national desk in a typical Indian news organization. It’s not hard to find the reasons for the bias. News mediums own
gatekeeping mechanism and news flow by way of agencies are the determinant factors. If we discuss how Indian media covers its neighbourhood, we will find little or no coverage that seeks to analyse the social dynamics of the South Asian countries. An extraordinary interest is always there in covering Pakistan by Indian media. The Indian national dailies have the record to report in times of war with Pakistan with their print reportage and visual coverage. Conflict, terrorism, warfare, insurgency are the most preferred apprehensions towards covering Pakistan. Indian Press is much more interested in Pakistani politics than the Pakistanis are in Indian politics, (Masooda Bano, 2007). Simultaneously there is hardly any coverage of Indian political developments by Pakistan media, if the story is sensational enough it will certainly be printed in Indian newspapers.

**Objectives of the Study are:**

1. To find out whether conflict is the most preferred criterion for the coverage of Pakistan by Indian newspaper

2. To identify the sources of news in order to know the aspect of objectivity of coverage

**Methodology**

The technique of content analysis has been employed for the purpose of this study. This study has evaluated foreign news coverage with emphasis on Pakistan by two Indian major English dailies The Times of India and The Hindu over a period of four months, January 2011 to April 2011. Each news item was recorded and collated under various module headings: Politics, religion/religious, culture and history, arts and entertainment, conflict, military and security issues, economics. The international page, cover page and editorial page were mainly selected for analyzing quantitatively.

**The Newspapers for the Study**

**The Times of India**

Owned and managed by Bennett, Coleman & Co. Ltd. (The Times Group), by the Sahu Jain family is the leading English broadsheet in India. The Times of India is the highest circulated English-language daily in India, certified by Audit Bureau of Circulations (ABC). In 2008, the newspaper reported (with a circulation of over 3.14 million) as the 8th largest selling newspaper in any language in the world.
The Hindu

The Hindu is an Indian English-language daily newspaper, with a circulation of 1.45 million—the second-largest circulated English newspaper in India. The Hindu was first published in 1878 by a group of six young men, led by G. Subramania Iyer, as a weekly, and became a daily in 1889. In 1995, The Hindu became the first Indian newspaper to offer an online edition. Owned by Kasturi and Sons and edited by N. Ram, the newspaper is published in the city of Chennai.

Sample

Population: All newspapers published from India

Sample: The two leading dailies, The Times of India and The Hindu

Sampling technique and Selection: The sampling technique is Purposive. The researcher had selected The Times of India and The Hindu because of their credibility and the distinct International/Global page. Each newspaper was scanned for foreign news especially Pakistani news for a period of four months i.e. from January 2011-April 2011. Each sample newspaper was then analyzed for one day in a week starting with Monday and once seven days were covered over a period of seven weeks, the researcher had reverted back to Monday on the eighth week. The process would ensure equal importance to all the days in a week at both conflict ridden times and normal times and thus leave less room for error.

Unit of Analysis and Data Collection

The unit of analysis for The Times of India and The Hindu was the news item from foreign countries or one which was based in India but had foreign origins and special emphasis was given to Pakistani news story, widely covered Pakistani news item and its sources. It has been found that total number of foreign stories appeared in the Times of India in the front page, editorial page and international page is (50 + 31 + 103) 184 and in The Hindu is (21 + 30 + 93) 144. Out of which the total number of Pakistani news in front page, editorial page and international page of Times of India is (16 + 4 + 14) 34 and in The Hindu is (6 + 9 + 10) 25.

Categories of Pakistani News

1.1. A. An item analysis of The Times of India revealed that in covering Pakistan the Indian newspaper conferred superfluous weight to conflict. Conflict is at the
heart of every news story of Pakistan covered by The Times of India. Politics, religion, art and entertainment, culture and history, military and security issues, economics and others are 7 different categories of Pakistan news covered.

The maximum number of stories dealt with conflict 35% (12). The Times of India's coverage of military and security issues 35% (12) comprises of dispute, Army, Para-military forces or the police and security issues as national integrity and national fabric. These two are most extensively covered topics by The Times of India. Where 9 % (3) stories were of politics, 3% (1) of stories on religious issues, 3% (1) stories on culture and history, 3% (1) stories on art and entertainment, 3% (1) stories of Economics and others carried 9% (3) stories of Times of India during this period of time.

Fig: 1.1. A. Categories of Pakistani News Covered by The Times of India

1.1. B. An item analysis of The Hindu comes out with the fact that conflict, military and security issues are highly covered news items. Intra-state conflicts comprising proxy war, terrorism, insurgency and militancy were spanning the entire length and breadth of the newspaper.

A very coincidental revelation is that conflict, military and security issues hold the top position sharing the same number of news, in case of The Hindu too. By analyzing these three pages of the Hindu (front page, editorial page, Global pages) it has been found that, maximum number of stories dealt with conflict
Findings and Conclusion

The analysis of the data reveals hard hitting facts. Both the leading newspapers of the country have an abiding interest in covering Pakistan when it comes to conflict. Military might, warfare, comparison of relative strength of the armed forces of both the nations and terrorism is what adds to the gristmill of both the newspapers. There is no room to say that the researcher was surprised, in fact had it been otherwise, that would have raised a few eyebrows. Both the newspapers have shown scant regard for human interest stories, a cursory view reveals that most of the stories are besotted with a jingoistic undertone clothed in a language of concern at the growing might on the either side or a probable wartime situation at the border.

The Times of India in accordance with its practice of providing its readers with a wider spectrum of news is seen to be dabbling in a wide area of news production. It has given news on the art and cultural scene in Pakistan. The Hindu is virtually silent on that. Both the newspapers have converged on the relative importance of certain particular issues out of a plethora of issues despite the fact that ostensibly they have completely different editorial policies and their perspective on what constitutes as news is also known to be radically different.

So far as the source of the news is concerned, The Hindu is the only newspaper in the country to be allowed by Pakistan to have its own correspondent on Pakistani soil. Predictably the newspaper has been able to come up with a good number of stories filed by its correspondent and yet in that case also, the bottom line happens to be conflict and military strength related stories. It is unfortunate that the correspondent of The Hindu has failed to go beyond the army jugular, has failed to understand that there could be a different framing strategy when it comes to news from Pakistan. The Times of India cannot be accused of being parochial in the strictest sense of the term as it is known to depend squarely on the ‘agencies’ for its stories on Pakistan. The framing of news on Pakistan by ‘agencies’ follow a distinct pattern worldwide which as conceived by the popular press in the west, as one of the most dangerous places in the world and one of the most important nesting places of terrorists in the whole world. The Times of India has been forced to follow the beaten track even if they had no intention otherwise.

This entire story of following a certain news framing strategy on the whole by both the newspapers reveals a systematic failure on the part of these two leading newspapers of the country. Grown in the underdeveloped parts of the world and having achieved financial superpower status among the newspaper houses, both the newspapers could have tried to bring in a certain amount of balance to the
existing news flow. A news flow carries in it the framing strategy of newspaper powers, which The Times of India and The Hindu have decided to follow throwing into the winds their core journalistic practices. As for the unnegotiated public, the reporting practice brings into sharp focus a host of questions. These newspapers do not need to follow a didactic approach as proposed by the leaders on both sides, but they must seriously start considering that framing strategy should include a few more ideas within its ambit to give the people an impression that it is not war and jingoism which constitute the bedrock of Pakistani society.

References


