Chapter 3

Theoretical Framework and Methodology
3.1 ROLE OF THEORY IN QUALITATIVE SOCIAL RESEARCH

The present section is an attempt to understand the role of theory and theoretical framework in social science research. As understood in the terminology of research, theory is a statement consisting of explanation of facts and phenomena, logically inter-related, and empirically verifiable set of propositions (Parsons, 1938). Theory facilitates prediction of natural and social phenomena and helps explain patterns of relationship among observed phenomena. Explanation, prediction, description, control and interpretation are functions of theory.

The character of theory is multi-dimensional and essentially it is a contested terrain. Theory can mean different things to different schools of thought\(^1\). This contested character makes the task of a social science researcher all the more challenging. However, the centrality of theory to research is undisputed and no theory can be disconnected from research. The significance of theory in social science research is derived from its study of human settings and human behaviour. Researchers either use theory to test hypothesis developed by them or generate theory in the process of research. Thus, ‘theory testing’ and ‘theory building’ are two major pre-occupations of research. The present research is qualitative and inductive in nature and falls within the purview of a non-positivist

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paradigm since it employs various theoretical frameworks in relation to procured data to provide and explanation for the media’s role in India-Pakistan conflict mediation.

### 3.1.1 Theoretical Framework in Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative data is usually thick, rich and raw in nature and involves the use of text and words to explain social reality. Qualitative analysis techniques involve extracting recurrent themes/patterns from data in order to facilitate interpretation and analysis. Since qualitative analysis operates on the premise of context, a theoretical frame-work serves as a canvass on which the researcher can locate his/her work. Data collected, if subjected to rigours of a theoretical framework, leads to derivation of context specific explanations. Theory provides a backdrop against which collected data can be analyzed; it also provides sufficient ground for developing indigenous explanations in research. Unlike quantitative analysis that emphasizes on generalization and statistical measures, qualitative analysis is not straight-jacketed. A theoretical framework is significant in deriving indigenous explanations as the researcher is able to interrogate data within specific contexts. The inductive nature of qualitative research, it’s pre-occupation with patterns, trends and themes make the use of theory inevitable.

### 3.2 OUTLINE OF THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS WITH REGARD TO MEDIA’S ROLE IN CONFLICT

Theorizing media’s role in conflict is important owing to limited scholarly attention to theoretical aspects in the domain of ‘media and conflict’. Since, much research in this area is empirical; exploring theoretical dimensions has helped develop an in-depth understanding of media’s various roles in conflict. Building on a study of theoretical frameworks to examine the intersection between media and conflict carried out in the previous chapter, the present section categorizes, outlines and provides a critical overview of various theoretical understandings as below. The attempt at such categorization is not a general one and no such categorization has been attempted in related literature. The categorization is meant for the purpose of this particular study and has facilitated selection of appropriate theoretical framework for each event. This attempt at categorization must not be
looked upon as a general statement on theoretical understandings of media’s role in conflict. Practical logistics and nature of the study demanded this categorization. It is not based on any epistemological or normative undertones, but on the theoretical understanding and its central arguments about media’s role in conflict.

**Category I**

(a) **The Propaganda model**

The Propaganda Model (The Theory of Manufacturing Consent) was developed in 1988 in Herman and Chomsky’s seminal work - *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* (Herman & Chomsky, 1988). The primary argument of this model is that mainstream media work to restrict the network of political and social debate by serving as a propaganda organ for elites in the society. Media controls thoughts and opinions and serves the interests of the powerful and privileged. Under the false appearance of a free market for debate, the media determines, selects, shapes, controls and restricts the realm of political debate, thus producing an outcome that is convenient to the elite. According to Herman and Chomsky, news reaches consumers via five filters namely size, ownership and profit orientation of mass media, advertising as the primary source of income for mass media, sources for mass media news, flak and enforcers, ideology. For instance, when hundreds of thousands of East Timorese were slaughtered in a horrendous genocide under the regime of Indonesian President Suharto in 1975, there was hardly any testimony or opinion reported in the western media whereas in the same year, the massacre of urban population in Cambodia by communist leader Pol Pot was extensively reported on.

(b) **Political Contest model**

Developed by Gadi Wolfsfeld in his work *Media and Political Conflict: News from the Middle East* (1997), the model contends that a major element of modern political conflicts is competition over the news media. During conflict, there is a competition to promote one’s own media frames as a means to achieve political influence. This is also done to mobilize public support for the conflict.
The focus of this model is on unequal political conflicts in which one party is superior to the other. The five major arguments put forth by Wolfsfeld are:

- The political process is more likely to have an influence on the news media than the news media are on the political process.

- The level of control that ‘authorities’ exert over the political environment is one of the key variables that determines the role of news media in political conflicts.

- The role of media in political conflict varies over time and circumstances.

- The best way to understand variations in the role of news media in political conflicts is to understand the competition among the antagonists (conflicting parties) in two ways – structural and cultural dimensions.

- Even though authorities have advantage in terms of quality and quantity of media coverage, challengers can overcome these obstacles and use media as a tool for political influence.

(c) Policy Media Interaction model

Figure 3.1: Theories of Media-State Relationship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of elite consensus</th>
<th>Media–state relationship</th>
<th>Role of the media</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elite consensus</td>
<td>Media operates within ‘sphere of consensus’</td>
<td>Media ‘manufactures consent’ for official policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elise dissensus</td>
<td>Media operates within ‘sphere of legitimate controversy’</td>
<td>Media reflects elite dissensus as predicted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elite dissensus plus policy uncertainty within govt and critically framed media coverage</td>
<td>Media takes sides in political debate and becomes an active participant</td>
<td>Media functions to influence direction of govt policy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 Wolfsfeld undertakes a case study of media coverage of Palestinian Intifada to explain the political contest model in his work.
Developed by Robinson Piers (2001), the model explores the relationship between media and policy-making. This model builds upon earlier theories of media influence and accounts for instances in which media influenced policy making. According to Piers, media criticises and challenges policy only when there is elite conflict over the policy, in this case policy of ‘war’. The figure above represents theories of media-state relationship as put forward by Piers.

(d) Indexing theory

Developed by Daniel Hallin in his study of media reporting of the Vietnam War (1986), the theory argues that media is not independent and they work within the boundaries of elite debate. Hallin conducted content analysis of TV coverage of the war in Vietnam for more than 7 years (20 August, 1965 - 27 January, 1973) using a random sample of 779 TV broadcasts. Findings of the study dismissed earlier researches that talked of media’s natural critical stance. According to this theory, the news media is indexed to frames of references of the policy elite and a shift in media’s position emerges from a shift in elite debate. Hallin refers to three journalistic spheres namely – sphere of consensus, sphere of legitimate controversy and sphere of deviance in his work\(^\text{ii}\). Thus, according to Hallin, US media during the Vietnam war mirrored the version of conflict reality desired by the government. Other scholars like Lance Bennett have also supported the indexing hypothesis with their empirical studies.

Category II

(a) Peace Journalism

This is a normative approach pioneered by Johan Galtung (Galtung & Lynch, 2010). It was developed as a critique to mainstream ‘War Journalism’ which sees war as a sport spectacle in which one side has to necessarily win. By taking the case of the Gulf War (1991), Galtung argues for some standards on the basis of which media reporting of war should be analysed. Galtung’s work presents differences between war and peace journalism and advocates use of peace journalism by mainstream media to report conflict.
Figure 3.2: War and Peace Journalism approaches to media reportage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>War Journalism</th>
<th>Peace Journalism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Follows the low road of reporting and is violence and victory oriented.</td>
<td>Follows the high road of reporting and is peace oriented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chases war, elites that run the war and focuses on win-lose outcome.</td>
<td>Focuses on conflict transformation, people who suffer from violence and aims for a win-win outcome.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This is driven by propaganda and manipulations and hence is biased and distorted.</td>
<td>Explores the reasons behind the violence, provides voice to all parties and is empathetic and understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeps account of war damage in terms of human life and material damage.</td>
<td>Humanizes the enemy and is more truthful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polarizes people, escalates violence and hatred. Promotes more hatred and violence and dehumanizes the enemy and sees ‘them’ as the root of the problem.</td>
<td>Highlights peace and conflict resolution and talks about potential and actual victims. Does not focus only on ‘our’ sufferings due to ‘them’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focuses only on visible effect of violence (killed, wounded and material damage)</td>
<td>Focuses on invisible effects of violence (trauma and glory, damage to structure/culture)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(b) Agenda Setting theory

Arguments about agenda-setting function of the press were developed by Maxwell McCombs & Donald L. Shaw in their book *Emergence of American Political Issues* (1972). They conducted empirical studies to highlight similarities between the media and the public’s agenda during elections. According to this theory, media can transfer their agenda to people and make it a public agenda. Two levels of agenda-setting are important: the first level decides about the common subjects that are important and the second level decides about the parts of the subject that are important. Agenda setting is carried out by media gatekeepers like editors, managers, advertisers, public relation professionals and spin doctors who decide what the media should report and what it should not. There are also external influencers like the government, people in power, elites, business houses and so on. In context of media’s role in conflict, agenda setting is significant because certain conflicts remain in media glare, whereas others are pushed into oblivion.
(c) Framing theory

Developed by Robert Entman (1993), the framing theory argues that media shapes public opinion by framing events and issues in a particular manner. Thus, media not only determine which issues are priority, but also how these should be presented to audiences. Media focuses attention on certain events and places them within a field of meaning. This is known as the process of ‘framing’\textsuperscript{iii}. Framing essentially involves selection and salience, making a piece of information more noticeable, meaningful and memorable to audiences. Framing has been used in several researches on war and media in order to understand how media frames conflict and its subsequent impact on audience perceptions. For instance, the invasion of Afghanistan (2001) has been examined through frames of ‘freedom versus terror’, ‘humanitarian intervention versus imperialism’, ‘democracy versus authoritarianism’.

(d) CNN Effect

This thesis was developed during the 1990 Gulf war when foreign relations were believed to be influenced by global mass media and CNN was touted as an important player in international conflict through its broadcast of the war (Gilboa, 2005). The thesis argues that since the arrival of global television, the nature and conduct of foreign relations has been mediatized. The media’s power in forcing governments to take policy decisions during war is a primary contention of the CNN Effect (Hoge, 1994). It is through the media that people can exercise their influence in foreign policy decisions. For instance, emotive media coverage of people’s sufferings in Northern Iraq, Somalia and Ethiopia led to the US intervention.

3.2.1 Critical analysis of Theoretical Frameworks with regard to media’s role in conflict

A critical appraisal of theoretical understandings in the media-conflict relationship brings forth the fact that all existing theoretical explanations are western in their origin and are largely influenced by western political, social and philosophical orientations. For instance, the Manufacturing Consent model and
the CNN Effect thesis are based on empirical evidence gathered in the context of politics and society in the developed world. This limited focus presents a skewed picture of media’s role in conflict. The ever evolving socio-political scenario in the developing world has been neglected despite the reality of ever increasing conflicts in the region. Theoretical explanations do not take into account the diversity and complexity of conflicts all over the globe. Conflicts by their very nature are varying in origin, evolution, strategies, goals and mechanisms owing to which a uniform explanation of media’s role will not suit different types of conflict. For instance, there is no theoretical understanding to exclusively explain media’s role in racial/ethnic conflicts, incidences of terrorism etc. Frameworks in both categories make presumptions that could be questioned; such as – media either operate under the influence of government/political elites or are absolutely independent and powerful to influence the conflict agenda related policies. This does not account for other influences on media’s role in conflict namely journalistic routines, professional settings of a newsroom, journalist’s own values and beliefs, media’s commercial inclinations, civil society, pressure groups, non-state actors.

Also present is criticism with regard to specific theoretical understandings:

- The manufacturing consent model assumes that news media is passive and non-influential. Recent developments in the Middle East and during political protests the world over stand opposed to this assumption\(^iv\).

- In the case of CNN Effect, despite moving images of human suffering relayed by the western media, governments chose not to intervene, for instance in the case of crisis in Rwanda and Burundi\(^v\).

- Peace Journalism is criticized for idealistic assumptions that stand insignificant in the realm of mediatized politics\(^vi\). Conflict resolution is not the media’s responsibility, the state and international organizations are responsible for the same.

- The agenda-setting function accords immense power to media and dismisses other factors that wield the power to set public agenda.
3.2.2 Theoretical frameworks in current study

An amalgamation of different theoretical frameworks is employed in the study to seek answers to research questions. The researcher has relied on an eclectic approach that uses different theoretical frameworks to derive conclusions regarding media’s role. In the absence of a holistic and comprehensive framework to understand media’s role in conflict, eclecticism lends theoretical diversity. In a study like this where media’s manifold roles are examined, difference in the nature of events under study required an eclectic approach to be followed. Choice of theoretical framework was made in accordance with the nature of event and data gathered. Variations in terms of theoretical cogency and rigour can be found due to use of different frameworks.

The following theoretical frameworks were adopted for select events:

- Agra Summit – Political Contest model
- Attack on India’s Parliament – Framing theory
- Mumbai terror attacks – War and Peace journalism model
- Border strife and Afzal Guru’s execution – Framing theory

3.3. RESEARCH PLAN

3.3.1 Research Design

The approach employed towards the present research study is qualitative, exploratory and descriptive. Since a qualitative inquiry aims to answer questions such as ‘why’ and ‘how’, it was found suitable to the present study for its ability to offer in-depth and critical analysis. Quantitative aspects can only be found in the study at a very preliminary level, the aim being to shift focus to a qualitative scrutiny of the nature, content, tone and slant of press coverage rather than a statistical representation of news discourse. The study’s exploratory nature is owing to the research gap identified in the previous chapter, which eventually calls for knowledge generation in the media-conflict domain in South Asia. The dynamic nature and workings of South Asian media in the post cold-war period,
popularity and extent of online media in both the countries also propels an exploratory inquiry. The study employs description as a tool to analyze and explain media’s varying roles in conflict mediation. This has been carried out through an extensive use of textual content and its interpretation aided by theory. Finally a hermeneutical approach leaves derived findings open to further interpretation, scrutiny and research.

### 3.3.2 Methods, tools and sources of data collection

Method employed for collecting relevant data was through a search for secondary sources from libraries, archival offices of newspapers, databases and e-newspaper consortia available on the web. For the present study, qualitative content analysis was employed as a method to analyze relevant data. A content criteria was prepared to carry out this task. Criteria incorporated an analysis of nature of coverage, slant and tone of the news story/article, stand taken by news story/article and key themes extracted from the content. An initial search for archives of newspaper content led the researcher to several research centers and libraries across the country.

The Times of India digital archives were obtained through the Proquest Historical Newspapers Program, a free trial version of which was made available to the researcher by The Hansa Mehta Library (www.hmlibrary.ac.in), M.S.University of Baroda. The trial version was used for a period of one month to obtain relevant news clippings. News clippings of The Indian Express were obtained from the archival office located in Chandigarh. A few archives were obtained through Indian Express digital archives section on the newspaper’s official website.

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3 Hermeneutics is the study of interpretation of texts in the humanities. Hermeneutics tries to arrive at a valid interpretation of the meaning of a text. Emphasis is on the multiplicity of meanings. In a hermeneutical approach, knowledge can be obtained only by interpretation. Hermeneutical interpretation depends on context, experience, values and personal reflections.


Archives of Dawn were obtained from The Library of Congress\(^5\), Washington DC through a formal request for research access put up to Dawn’s editor. Archives of The News International were procured in digital format through a request put up for research access to The Institute of Regional Studies in Islamabad (Pakistan)\(^6\). News clippings of Mumbai Terror Attacks (2008) were obtained from e-papers of select newspapers\(^7\). Inputs like ‘key terms’ and ‘date range’\(^\text{viii}\) were employed to search articles on specific events from e-paper websites of select newspapers. Since the study was carried out with an intent to analyze newspaper content, newspapers were used as primary sources of data even though they majorly serve as secondary sources in research\(^8\).

3.3.3 Sample and sampling technique

In concurrence with the use of thematic and qualitative content analysis, purposive or judgemental sampling was used in this study. It is a kind of non-probability sampling technique also known as convenience or deliberative sampling (Bhattacherjee, 2012). The study’s requirements and research questions guide the choice of sample in this technique. The reason for using this sampling technique is two-fold, one - limited availability of archival news sources and the

\(^5\) http://www.loc.gov/index.html

\(^6\) http://www.irs.org.pk/

\(^7\) TOI archive online -

http://epaper.dawn.com/ (Dawn)

http://e.thenews.com.pk/ (The News International)

\(^8\) Primary data is first hand data gathered by the researcher to address his/her research problems, whereas secondary data is data that has already been gathered for a previous research study. Secondary data analysis involves the use of data collected by someone else to answer one’s research questions. The same data set can be primary for one researcher and secondary for the other.
Sample size for the study was limited to four mainstream English language newspapers published in India and Pakistan (two Indian and two Pakistani newspapers were selected). The newspapers under study are: The Times of India (Mumbai and Delhi Edition), The Indian Express (Delhi Edition), Dawn (Karachi edition) and The News International (Islamabad Edition). All four newspapers are part of the mainstream and popular press in their respective countries. They enjoy credibility, mass appeal and a wide circulation. The Times of India (TOI) and The Indian Express (IE) enjoy a pan Indian appeal - being published from various cities across India. While the TOI is a market leader\(^9\), IE is inclined towards critical commentary and an intellectual tradition of journalism. Similarly, both Dawn and The News International occupy leading positions in circulation and readership\(^10\). While Dawn caters to the intellectual community, The News caters to popular appeal. Selection of these newspapers is a relevant combination of diverse range of ideologies, opinions and commentaries on politics and society, and an eclectic readership. Archival availability played a major role in sample selection\(^ix\). Role played by English language press in shaping public opinion on foreign policy issues, their significance in public debate and their relationship with the elite political and intellectual class in influencing opinion in both countries propelled selection.

New media’s popularity\(^11\), its interactive and user-friendly characteristics served as a rationale in selection of digital content created and maintained on a

\(^9\) According to the Indian Readership Survey (2012), The Times of India is one among the top ten publications in the country. For more see http://mruc.net/irs2012q3_topline_findings.pdf

\(^10\) No official, authentic source could be obtained for circulation and readership figures of Pakistani newspapers. Frequent interactions with Pakistani journalists, scholars, academicians and other acquaintances suggested the prominent position occupied by Dawn and The News in Pakistan’s media landscape.

shared basis by Indians and Pakistanis. Owing to limitations on information exchange via traditional mass media, citizens on both sides of the border have in large number taken to the new media for dialogue. An analysis of ‘traditional’ press and ‘contemporary’ new media offers useful comparative insights on the role of two different kinds of mediums in conflict mediation.

3.3.4 Nature of data

Nature of data obtained for the study is qualitative, inductive and descriptive. It is also textual, rich, deep, flexible, probing, hermeneutical (open to multiple interpretations), text-heavy, thematic, bulky and voluminous. It has facilitated thematic and hermeneutical interpretation in order to further research agenda in this area.

3.4 PLAN OF ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

3.4.1 Qualitative Thematic and Content Analysis

Qualitative data analysis used in the present study makes use of themes, patterns and trends to decipher meaning out of collected data. A search for general statements, underlying patterns and themes (Marshall & Rossman, 2006) has directed the process of analysis and interpretation. The plan of analysis and interpretation aided by qualitative thematic and content analysis has been presented in the flow chart below. Single news story/news article is the ‘unit of analysis’ in the study.

published in February 2013 by Internet and Mobile Association of India
An amalgamation of thematic analysis and qualitative content analysis was carried out to answer research questions laid out in the study. The nature of data procured called for an analysis grounded in these two techniques. A primary level of thematic screening allowed for themes to emerge from the data itself. Themes are key aspects of qualitative data and thematic analysis allows a search for aggregated themes. It involves examining commonalities, differences in data as well as relationships between various elements of analysis (Harding, 2013). After an initial thematic screening, qualitative content analysis was applied to the data. It deals with documentary and textual data where words are used to explain and understand social reality. Historically, it has been used as a tool to study news content categories by scholars in media studies and political science. Its use as a systematic and scientific method received a boost during World War II due to the emergent concept of political propaganda. Purpose of qualitative content analysis in the present study is to explore and understand both explicit and covert meanings derived from data so as to design content categories relevant to research questions (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009). A drawback of this method however, is...
the lack of an agreed upon and defined manner of execution with concerns of validity and reliability of coding scheme in case of a single researcher.

### 3.4.2 Data presentation

Analysis of newspaper content (here news stories, articles, edit pieces, commentaries and opinions, niche columns, letters etc) is presented in a descriptive format with appropriate illustrations pertaining to specific research questions. The researcher has engaged in limited quantification of aspects related to press coverage (this majorly incorporates the number of articles appearing in the select period under study). Data presentation is carried out in a text-rich, descriptive format based on the selected newspaper and event of study. Event-wise analysis for each newspaper from among four newspapers is presented in terms of content categories, themes and frames of coverage, in both a descriptive and tabular format. Such a presentation has facilitated emergence of generic content themes as well as comparative trends in press coverage.

### 3.5 METHODOLOGICAL LIMITATIONS

In terms of selection of research design and sampling procedures, the researcher encountered a few limitations. These are - a pure qualitative approach did not allow for the study of statistical aspects of press coverage namely physical space occupied by and frequency of news themes, limited generalizations in view of a constructivist research approach, limited and non-representative sample of newspapers and events and use of newspaper data as a primary source of information.

### 3.6 EVENTS AND PERIOD OF STUDY

Events selected for the study were used as a case analysis to dissect media’s role in the Indo-Pak conundrum. Though not all encompassing, these are representative of the trajectory of relations between India and Pakistan and are significant in understanding Indo-Pak realities in the post cold-war period.

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12 Limitations of sample size are owing to research related constraints of time, archival availability and resources at disposal.
India-Pakistan relationship has been witness to shifts from phases of peace to those of conflict and vice versa. For instance, the Lahore declaration (1999) was followed by the Kargil war (1999) that resulted into breakdown of relations. This was followed by the Agra Summit (July 2001) and a terrorist strike on the Indian Parliament (December 2001). Progress of the peace process (2004) was stalled by the Mumbai terror attacks (2008) resulting in a diplomatic freeze. Border confrontations and tensions (2013) have shaped contemporary realities of the relationship. Thereby, looking into the complexity that marks this relationship, following events were considered:

(a) **The Agra Summit (July 2001)** – The historic peace summit between Prime Minister of India, *Atal Bihari Vajpayee* and President of Pakistan, *Pervez Musharraf*, was held amidst immense media hype in July 2001. Invitation for the summit was extended by the Indian Prime Minister to his Pakistani counterpart. It was held in the backdrop of the failed Lahore summit (1999) and the Kargil misadventure (1999) by Pakistan. It was seen as an opportunity for the two countries to resume dialogue. Extensive media coverage generated much hope and expectations from the summit. While India stressed on the need for composite dialogue, Pakistan was committed to discussion on Kashmir. The summit ended up in a deadlock as both sides could not reconcile to mutually exclusive positions and differences on the ‘core’ issue could not be mitigated. Both sides ended up blaming each other for the summit’s failure. Media also indulged in post-facto descriptive analysis of summit events (Dixit, 1998). This peace summit makes a relevant case analysis for understanding media’s role in international diplomacy and negotiations. The watershed moment that the Agra summit proved to be - justifies its selection for this study.

(b) **Attack on India’s Parliament (December 2001)** – Shortly after a peace summit between India and Pakistan, the edifice of Indian democracy – the Parliament, was attacked by terrorists on December 13, 2001. The Indian government blamed Pakistan backed terrorist outfit *Lashkar-e-Tayiba* for the attack (The Attack on Parliament: Two Years Later, 2003). This attack galvanized Indian decisions makers into action and proved to be not only a provocation
but also an opportunity. The Indian leadership showed strong commitment to retaliate (Basrur, 2005). What followed was a military build-up initiated by India on its border with Pakistan. This military confrontation continued for a period of ten months (December 2001 - October 2002). Tensions built between India and Pakistan during this period with preparations for a large scale conventional conflict. The attack took place at a time when the United States was engaged in the ‘war on terror’, with Pakistan as its strategic ally. The backdrop of a dramatically altered global security environment post 9/11 led India to withdraw its military build-up. Though unconventional in nature, this attack presented high possibility of confrontation between the two countries.

(c) Mumbai Terror Attacks (November 2008) – On November 26, 2008 Mumbai – the financial capital of India was attacked by ten gunmen belonging to the Lashkar-e-Tayiba terrorist outfit that is supposedly backed by Pakistan. The targets of terrorists were common people and gunmen attacked several prominent locations in the city like a restaurant, a hospital, two hotels as well as the city’s lifeline – the main commuter train station (Haq, 2009). The attacks were launched at a time when relations between India and Pakistan were in the process of normalization. Since, the target of attacks was the layman, extensive media coverage was given to events in the post-attack scenario. Indo-Pak relations embittered thereafter even as blame game and denial from both sides continued. An examination of media coverage of the Mumbai attacks lends contemporariness to this study.

(d) Border skirmishes and Afzal Guru’s execution (January-March, 2013)xii – In the initial weeks of January 2013, Pakistan alleged that Indian forces had attacked a Pakistani border post resulting into the killing of one Pakistani soldier. Indian forces described it as retaliation against preceding Pakistani ceasefire violations. Tensions along the Line of Control (LoC) increased post the incidence of the killing of two Indian soldiers by Pakistani troops on in Jammu and Kashmir’s Mendhar sector, in which an Indian soldier was allegedly beheaded (India rejects Pak’s claim on beheading of troops, 2013). The beheading controversy occupied front pages of newspapers and prime
time slots on television. Execution of Afzal Guru, mastermind in the attack on India’s Parliament provided for a significant link between an event in 2001 with its culmination in 2013. The execution was condemned by Pakistan’s Parliament which passed a resolution seeking return of Guru’s body to his family. It also reiterated Pakistan’s decade long demand for a plebiscite in Jammu and Kashmir.

Study period for coverage of each event is as delineated below:

- Agra Summit – June 15 to August 15, 2001
- Parliament Attack – December 14, 2001 to January 31, 2002
- Mumbai Terror Attacks – November 27, 2008 to January 31, 2009
- Border Strife and Afzal Guru’s execution – January 9 to March 6, 2013

Analysis of contemporary events was undertaken to offer a comparative take on media coverage of back dated events vis-a-vis recent ones. This enhanced understanding about nature of media’s different roles – whether it has remained static or changed with time?

3.7 MEDIA IN INDIA AND PAKISTAN

An evaluation of the nature and workings of media in India and Pakistan serves as background to media content analysis undertaken in this study. It has also facilitated the kind of comparative inferences drawn in the study. Despite the study’s focus on the press in India and Pakistan, this section offers a generic commentary on the nature, growth and development of media in India and Pakistan, with particular emphasis on the contemporary landscape.

As the fourth estate of India’s democracy, media in India proliferated in the post cold-war period, especially after the liberalization of Indian economy in 1991. Advent of broadcast and digital media, media privatization, entry of foreign media and increased consumer access to media choices are the characteristic features of media in India. Along with this, media’s contribution to the growth and evolution of India’s political and democratic fabric is noteworthy. However, commercialization, corporate control of media, collusion with political actors, practices of paid news and an inclination towards sensationalism & trivia plague
the workings of media in India. Despite these short-comings, media in India continue to be a pillar of public deliberation. Role of media in mobilizing public opinion towards decisive issues such as violence against women (mass movement post the Delhi gang rape) and malpractices in public life (anti-corruption movement led by Anna Hazare) represent a streak of media activism. Additionally, rise of the regional language press, community media, alternative media, media watchdogs, social media have sustained the dynamic nature of media in India. In the words of noted Indian journalist Praveen Swami, “the Indian media has flowered into a formidable institution ever since its origins in the late eighteenth century and has come to occupy a prominent place in the shaping of Indian democracy. However, it is bound to face several challenges which will be institutional, economic and political in nature and those will be completely different from the ones it faced before independence” (Swami, 2009).

Media in Pakistan are the prime source of intellectual discourse and opinion generation in society and politics. An examination of media in Pakistan has to be essentially carried out through the post-partition lens. Initial years after independence were those of struggle for media in Pakistan as media elites possessed loyalties that were frequently changeable according to political interests and affiliations (Mishra, 2011). For a long time, press in Pakistan was seen as the only credible institution that commanded public loyalty. Lack of political stability and Islamization of Pakistan ensured that media always operated under limited autonomy. In the contemporary scenario too, Pakistan’s media encounters pressure from several quarters such as the state, military, fundamentalist elements etc. The past few decades have seen media professionals in Pakistan operating under a high risk political and media environment. The press in Pakistan is diverse in character with a range of publications being produced in different languages. Post 2002, the electronic media scenario has also turned out to be quite promising (Tikekar, 2004). In a country plagued by political instability, media have played a remarkable role in restoring people’s faith in the idea of democracy. Media in Pakistan have mastered the art of nurturing radical opinions amidst severe constraints. They do not easily confirm to state diktats, strive to fulfill their role as
information disseminator and thus have managed to stay vibrant and dynamic (Sareen, 2000).
References


**Notes**

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i Divided into two categories, the first category consists of frameworks that explore the relationship between media and the state apparatus – i.e. political elite, state managers and decision makers, policy-makers and political structure. The second category comprises of theories explaining the media’s role in covering conflict as delineated by media theorists. Their focus is more generic and not limited to an examination of the media-politics relationship.

ii **Sphere of consensus** – in which media are patriotic and do not take a critical stance.

**Sphere of legitimate controversy** – in which media are objective – and media take a cue from elite debate. During the Vietnam War, after the Tet offensive, the elite were in disagreement with each other.

**Sphere of deviance** – in which the views discarded by mainstream society are found. They face deviance, exclusion and condemnation

iii Frames are interpretative packages that give meaning to an issue. To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation for the item described.


vi For a critique of peace journalism see Hanitzsch, Thomas (2004), *The peace journalism problem: Failure of news people – or failure on analysis?*

vii The researcher visited and procured relevant literature and archives from – Gujarat Vidyapith (Ahmedabad), Jawaharlal Nehru University, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, India International Center, Indian Council for World Affairs, Parliament Library and Ministry of External Affairs Library (New Delhi).


ix Since the study involved analyzing news content of back dated events, issues of archival availability were faced by the researcher. The attempt to procure news archives was the biggest stumbling block in the research process. A non-flexible and inept information exchange regime between India and Pakistan acted as a barrier. Future research in this area (especially content studies) should seek to address issues of archival access for researchers, scholars and media professionals in order to help overcome methodological limitations.
As defined by Hsieh & Shannon (2005), content analysis is “a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns.”

Events varying in nature were chosen for the study. While the Agra summit signifies an attempt at peaceful reconciliation, remaining three events are the mark of an antagonistic relationship. The attempt was to examine media’s role in both peace and conflict narratives.

Due to non-availability of archives of the attack on India’s Parliament for The News International, it was decided to compensate for the lack of this data by a study of the execution of Afzal Guru, whom India held responsible for the attack.