

Study of Media Practices in Pakistan – Comparison of three Martial Law Periods in context of Baluchistan editorializing

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Abstract

This study is a quantitative analysis of the media practices in Pakistan. The study has compared three Martial Law Government eras in Pakistan. This includes the first period of Field Marshal Ayub Khan and Agha Muhammad Yahya Khan from 27 Oct 1958 to 20 Dec 1971. The second period of General Zia ul Haq was from 05 July 1977-17 August 1988. The third period of General Pervaiz Musharraf was from 12 October 1999-18 August 2008. The study is analyzed in the theoretical framework of press theories. The study has observed the implementation of authoritarian press indicators in the first two eras. However, the third era of General Pervaiz Musharraf practiced libertarian theory. The quantitative analysis of this study that verifies the limited communication in context to Baluchistan specifically in the eras of Field Marshal General Ayub Khan and General Zia ul Haq.

Introduction

Autocracy was replaced by democracy after the emergence of capitalist class in Europe and America since sixteenth century followed by French Revolution in 1789. Capitalist spread the idea of freedom of thought, 'citizens' right and informed rational electorate for the democracy. Modern democracy provide public sphere where the media provide information, opinion, analysis and criticism in order to form informed citizenry (McNair, 2003, p. 20-21). Public sphere comprise of facts and opinions to build knowledge for political action through the media (Ibid, p. 16-19).

However, Pakistan history since its establishment in August 1947 remained dominant by the dictatorial or autocratic rule. Dictatorship is a form of government in which one person or a group in the absence of an effective constitution possesses all powers. The current world dictators are observed to be more tyrants in comparison to the dictators in Roman republic that was a designated temporary magistrate, granted extraordinary powers to deal with the state crises. The modern world dictators are characterized as despotic rulers that maintain government on the basis of power, terror, propaganda and suppression of civil liberties ('Dictatorship', 2016).

Civil liberties include freedom of speech and freedom of press. In the history of Pakistan the government eras that are considered as the autocratic or dictatorial rules are by Field Marshal General Ayub Khan and General Agha Muhammad Yahya Khan (27 Oct 1958-20 Dec 1971), General Zia ul Haq (05 July 1977-17 August 1988) and General Pervaiz Musharraf (12 Oct 1999- 18 August 2008). The respective three eras did not fully practice the Pakistan constitution of the time and government was dominant by one ruler. This study is the analysis of Pakistan press practices and freedom under the mentioned Marshal Law eras. The term Martial Law is used for being governed by the military rulers. The study has significance for the media students and for further studies related to the comparison of press under democratic rulers – pros

and cons.

The media in today's modern democratic world is expected to perform positive role for political communication process. First it performs surveillance role (McNair, 2003, p. 21) i.e. to inform the citizens about the happenings and events, political or other, in the society. It serve as watchman in the society (Dominick, 2002, p.33). Second is analysis and explanation of the facts i.e. termed as interpretation (McNair, 2003, p. 21). Media not only provide factual information and news of the events but also tells the meaning and significance of it (Dominick, 2002, p.36). Thirdly, media provides forum for developing and disseminating public opinion, which is inevitable for the democratic process. Fourthly, media give publicity to the political organizations and Government. It keep watch over their activities and perform watchdog function (McNair, 2003, p. 21).

In last two decades of 20th century political communication due to the technologies of satellite and cable in broadcasting has given vast choices of information. Trend of 24/7 news channels and rise of internet and mobile phones in the 21st century have made drastic change in globalization of information. Today individuals, government, political entities, campaigners all have scope to address to the world through the technology change. Even closed and authoritarian societies get affected due to this information revolution (Semetko and Scammell, 2012, p 1-4). The technology change that affected the Pakistani press is also analyzed in this study.

In today's era of 'media-centered democracies' media and political entities both claim to talk as representatives of public, However, are found pursuing their own self-interests. This is also studied that media remain under the influence of different pressures like self-interests, Government control, and pressures of politicians, political parties, terrorist organizations, proprietors and advertisers. Moreover, due to organizational realities of the media organizations – deadlines, limited or no access to information.

Media depends more on sources of political parties, Government, civil servants and given press releases and handouts (McNair, 2003, p. 71-72). Media is dependent on who wield political and economic power. Sources of information now have become so professional to control the flow and impact of communication and information spread. Governments have control over information and many information is so vague to interpret. Therefore there are different factors in which press works and that effect content of press (Negrine, 1996, p. viii-x).

Press theories have been proposed by the scholars and philosophers as per the societal changes (political, economic & societal) since sixteenth century, significantly. This study data is analyzed in the theoretical framework for three press theories that are authoritarian, libertarian and social responsibility. These theories include following postulates:

- **Authoritarian**

The authoritarian theory was aroused in the sixteenth century. It says:

- All forms of communication are under the control of the Government or governing authorities to maintain social order (Dennis & Baran, 1995, p. 79)
- It is the responsibility of the ruling government and elite class to guide the common citizen about society.
- The layman are considered with low intellectual ability
- Therefore common citizen discussion and argument about any Government activities or political, economic and other societal system are considered as harmful and are not tolerated.

- Therefore, Government and authorities for any deviation restrict the press and media using tactics of licensing, censorships, control of printing rights and materials and harassment and punishments (Dominick, 2002, p.465).

- **Libertarian**

It says that:

- All humans are intellectually sensible and capable of analyzing the information making evaluations.
- Governments' responsibilities are to serve the citizens and that is best serve by free flow of information
- It believes on citizens right of freedom to have access of all sort of information through which they can make judgments
- Any action by the Government or authorities are considered to trespass the citizen right, if controls the free flow of information
- Press must be free from all sorts of control (Dominick, 2002, p.466)
- Fair and truthful critique win over lies and deception (Dennis & Baran, 1995, p. 79)
- In traditional liberal theory the democratic function of media is to have check on the activities of the state and expose the abuses of power (Curran & Gurevitch, 2005, p.122)

- **Social Responsibility**

It believes:

- The citizens have right to access of information and media to serve it
- However, it says that media can criticize the Government and other institutions but being responsible to the democratic values and safety
- Press responsibility is not to please its own interests but to serve responsibly the society, citizens and democratic needs
- It allows Government to watch over media, and can restrict it through regulations if find in violations of any public interest guidelines (Dominick, 2002, p. 466)
- It believe on libertarian theory point of freedom of expression but also believes that freedom is not free. Means should not harm others freedom ('Social Responsibility Theory', 2016).

The study has researched the dominant factors in the treatment and control over press by three Marshal Law Governments in Pakistan. The term Marshal Law for three eras is used as these are governed by the military rulers. Moreover, the term authoritarian is analyzed in this study i.e. if the three eras were authoritarian in characteristics as per the description and definition, described earlier for autocratic and authoritarian.

Method

The researcher has used the quantitative method for the analysis of data. The following questions are answered through this study.

1. Does in the Martial Law era of General Pervaiz Musharraf more editorializing communication is done about Baluchistan in comparison to the eras of Field Marshal Ayub Khan, General Agha Muhammad Yahya Khan and General Zia-ul-Haq

2. Do the three Martial law eras were dominant by the authoritarian press control

The content analysis method is used to study the political communication process in respect to Baluchistan editorializing during three Martial Law eras. The political communication process is analyzed in terms of *constructed political reality* i.e. political events as covered by the media (McNair, 2003, p. 11-14). The data that how Dawn and Jang newspaper editorialize about the Baluchistan issues is used to analyze Martial Law government controls over press in terms of selection of content.

The content analysis has been done in following steps as are also described by the Wimmer & Dominick (2003, p. 145):

The Universe

This researcher has done the content analysis of editorials of Dawn and Jang newspapers for the three Martial Law periods of Government i.e.

1. Field Marshal General Ayub Khan and General Agha Muhammad Yahya Khan (27 Oct 1958-20 Dec 1971)
2. General Zia ul Haq (05 July 1977-17 August 1988)
3. General Pervaiz Musharraf (12 Oct 1999- 18 August 2008)

Sample

For this study purposeful random sampling has been used (''Purposive sampling'', 2015). The important political events related to Baluchistan during the three Martial Law periods were studied and selected from newspapers and academic sources. The complete month of each important event was analyzed.

Unit of Analysis

All the Editorials of all sample months were studied as unit of

analysis.

Categories and Coding for Analysis

Each editorial of the selected time period about Baluchistan was studied completely. The Editorials are usually consists of Intro, discussion based on facts and a conclusion. (“Writing an Editorial”, 2015), the study of complete editorials is found important for the comprehension of the topic and its trend towards Government. The editorials were divided into following categories with operational definitions.

- **Politics**

Any information related to Government, political leaders, political parties, or any other body in context of Baluchistan political arena.

- **Development Projects**

Information or discussion in editorial related to any educational, social, health, economic or other progress or development related to Baluchistan.

- **Terrorism/Violent Acts/ Crime**

Information or discussion in editorial related to any sort of violent activity in Baluchistan that includes terrorism acts and crime. Like; bomb blasts, murders, firing, robbery, honor killing or any other crime by law.

- **Accident/ Calamities**

Any unexpected and unintentional incidents related to Baluchistan that cause injury or damage, like road accidents, fire, natural calamities etc.

The trend (favorable, unfavorable and neutral) of each Editorial is analyzed in relation to the category of **Government**: The Ruling Government of the respective era. The categories and trends of

editorials were coded by the researcher.

- **Favorable**

The trend of editorial was considered favorable if the discussion favors the policies or actions of the respective category.

- **Unfavorable**

The direction of editorial was considered unfavorable if the discussion opposes the policies or actions of the respective category.

- **Neutral**

The direction of editorial is considered neutral if the discussion neither favors nor opposes the actions or system of respective category but remains silent about it.

1. Press during 27 Oct 1958-20 Dec 1971 – Martial Law Period I

Ruler	Period
President Ayub Khan	28 October 1958-25 march 1969
President Agha Muhammad Yahya Khan	25 March 1969-20 Dec 1971

In the era of Field Marshall General Ayub Khan the press laws were considered as the Draconian Laws. The facts are as distorted or untold. The Ayub Khan period is considered as with zero tolerance for free press and difference of opinions.

Ayub Khan Government took the ownership of many progressive newspapers. Journalists were bribed by Governments for favors in Ayub and Yahya period. Majority of journalists and press,

especially Urdu press followed the instructions as per control of the government (Niazi, 2005, p.26 & 45).

The Press and Publication Ordinance 1960 is entitled of banning various publications, journalists' arrests, direct and indirect censorship and press suppression. Promulgation of Press and Publications Ordinance 1963 was implemented by Ayub Khan and Zamir Niazi called it as the blackest of the black laws.

As per section 22 of PPO it was made compulsory that all press notes, handouts (official statements, gazette notifications, clarifications, explanations) must be incorporated in the newspapers and journals without any change. As per section 23 and 24 of PPO if any newspaper or journal publish anything that disobey government guidelines or material not for public good, government designated officials could take punishing measures against them (ibid, 2005, p.24-25).

Press advice system was also introduced by the Ayub Khan regime, through which Press Information Departments instruct government agendas by highlighting or eliminating any news or photographs.

National Press Trust was also formed under General Ayub's Martial law era in 1963 with the objective to raise the standards of journalism (ibid, 2005, p.37-38). However, the papers under NPT followed government transcripts. It was finally closed under 1996 government of Benazir Bhutto. This resulted in loss of credibility and closure of major no. of newspapers.

Under Security Act in Ayub's Martial law 1953, actions were taken against Progressive Papers Ltd. (PPL) dailies The Pakistan Times and Imroz and weekly Lail-o-Nahar. These publications were taken over by the Ayub's government. (ibid, 2005, p.81-84).

Ayub Khan imposed Defense of Pakistan Rules (DPR) and state of emergency during 1965 war with India. The emergency and martial law continued for next twenty years by successive

Governments. These laws were used for restricting the press and journalists.

Ayub’s era was followed by the Rule of Gen Yahya Khan. During civil war in East Pakistan, Yahya Khan imposed censorship to keep the West Pakistan people ignorant of the tyranny being committed there (Shelton, 2002, p.160-161).

The example of censorship in that era was mentioned by Zaffar Abbas in his article “The Missing pages of history: 70 years of Pakistan and Dawn” i.e. after the surrender of Pakistani forces in East Pakistan Dawn was only allowed to mark headline as ‘Fighting ends in East Wing’. However, before a day the press was saying that Pakistan was wining against Indian forces.

Press during 05 July 1977-17 August 1988 –Martial Law Period II

President Zia ul Haq	05 July 1977-17 August 1988
Prime Minister Muhammad Khan Junejo	23 March 1985-29 May 1988

The second period is of General Zia-ul-Haq, also considered as an authoritarian period of Dictator. Zia’s period is considered as a squeal of Ayub’s era with harsh censorship policies and little appetite for dissent. There was no permission n to talk about the Pakistan People’s Party leadership, political opponents behind bars and journalists torture stories etc.

In Zia era there was a ‘Press Advice’ given by the controlled Information Ministry to the press for what was permitted or prohibited to get publish. This was later replaced by direct censorship. The newspaper content was scrutinized before going into publication if found to give bad name to the policies or action of the military government.

Initially some newspapers adopted policy of leaving the censored story space blank to let the readers know about government policies. However, this was also taken into notice by the regime and was prohibited by filling material with other soft content (Dawn). To counter the pre-censorship by Zia newspapers deceive the censor authorities by publishing international news stories about violation of human rights with similar situation in Pakistan. Some succeeded and learnt to say things in between lines (Niazi, 2005, 40-47).

Four newsmen, in May 1978 were ordered to be whipped by military courts and the event got coverage in the National press but no reaction was showed from political leaders or parties or the public in general. Only some reaction were showed by the press but not else from the reading public, intellectuals or revolutionary organizations (ibid, 2005, 71-73).

CMLA-President General Zia-ul-Haq in March 1982 said “I could close down all the newspapers, say, for a period of five years, and nobody would be in a position to raise any voice against it. If they try to organize a meeting or procession I will send them to jail.” (ibid, 2005, 41)

On press complains about erosion of media credibility government made commitments for limiting censorship to subjects like national security, operation of martial law regime, minimize the inconvenience caused in newspaper production, forming complaint cells to register unfair cuttings and trimming. But nothing such happened or gets fulfilled.

Zia government amended Laws of Libel, 1860 Sections 499 and 500 of the Pakistan Penal Code. The amendment prohibited the publication of matter against any person even if it is true and in favor of public interest. Amendment in Libel law gave shelter to law breakers, drug mafia, and criminals. But press was trailed strictly even for unproved fault (ibid, 2005, 45-48).

PID (press information department) in form of pre-censorship decides what to get publish in press. For local news, press was dependent on the press notes and government handouts. The pre-censorship ordinance was remain in force for six years, six months and 24 days and was withdrawn on July 10 1986 (ibid, 2005, 51-53).

In way of investigating reporting the main hurdle was government attitude of keeping everything secret. In Zia era (July 1977-August 1988) particularly the most of official documents and information was marked as ‘Secret’ (ibid, 2005, 28-29).

Press during 12 Oct 1999- 18 August 2008 – Martial Law Period III

Ruler	Period
President General Pervez Musharraf	12 October 1999-18 August 2008
Prime Minister Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali	21 November 2002-28 May 2004
Prime Minister Chaudhry Shujat Hussain	22 November 2002-25 August 2004
Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz	28 August 2004-18 January 2008

It is a fact that the information revolution in Pakistan has been brought under the rule of a military dictator General Pervez Musharraf. In 1999 when Pervez Musharraf took over the charge of Government there was only one State run Pakistan Television (PTV) Channel and one Radio Pakistan. Musharraf introduced liberal policy for media and many new private TV and radio Channels were given licenses. Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) was established in 2002 to regulate and facilitate the establishment and operation of electronic media in Pakistan.

Pervez Musharraf practiced liberal media model by tolerating the oppositions and biased media. Also, let people decide among the variety of opinions and analysis. However, the liberal policies at last change into authoritarian attempts when TV Channels including GEO was banned in 2007 and 2008 (Iqbal, p. 237-240).

Press Council concept in order to safeguard press freedom and public interest if any violation of Code of Ethics had been done by the newspapers or journalists. The idea was disfavored by the journalist and considered as an attempt to slave the journalists.

Freedom of Information Ordinance 2002 acknowledges the citizen's right to know but restrict this freedom in different areas. Therefore, it can be considered in its primitive stages.

Press, Newspapers and News Agencies Registration Ordinance 2002 revoke Press and Publication Ordinance 1963 and Registration of Printing Press Ordinance 1988. The new law introduces code of conduct to provide the self-governance mechanism to the press.

PEMRA played as havoc for the Electronic Media during judicial crisis in Pakistan. On giving coverage to the dysfunctional Chief Justice, different TV channels were closed.

Defamation Ordinance 2002 gave public right to claim against any print or electronic media if defamed anyone. Besides, give code of conduct for the media and journalists. However, was considered to restrict press freedom (Iqbal, p. 242-247).The era of Pervez Musharraf also ended with the restricted press freedom especially the broadcast media, simultaneously as the Government get weak.

Data Representation

Total Editorials about Baluchistan

Dawn Newspaper

Period	58-71		77-88		99-2008	
	f	%	f	%	F	%
Politics	00	0%	01	33%	69	75%
Development Projects	05	83%	02	67%	14	15%
Terrorism/Violent acts/ Crime	00	0%	00	0%	05	5%

Accident/Calamity	01	17%	00	0%	05	5%
Total	6	6%	3	3%	92	91%
Grand Total	101					

Government	58-71		77-88		99-2008		Total	
	f	%	F	%	F	%	f	%
Favorable	05	16%	01	3%	25	81%	31	31%
Unfavorable	01	1%	02	3%	67	96%	70	69%
Neutral	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00
Total							101	

Total Editorials about Baluchistan

Jang Newspaper

Period	58-71		77-88		99-2008	
	f	%	f	%	F	%
Politics	04	67%	08	53%	60	58%
Development Projects	01	17%	06	40%	06	6%
Terrorism/Violent acts/ Crime	01	17%	01	7%	35	34%
Accident/Calamity	00	00	00	0%	03	2%
Total	6	5%	15	12%	104	83%
				Grand Total	125	

Government	58-71		77-88		99-2008		Total	
	f	%	f	%	F	%	f	%
Favorable	01	1%	07	10%	65	89%	73	58%
Unfavorable	04	8%	06	12%	39	79%	49	39%
Neutral	01	33%	02	67%	00	0%	3	3%
Total							125	

Discussion

This study ascertained that in the era of Field Marshal General Ayub Khan and Agha Muhammad Yahya Khan there were strict Government control over the press. It was not free to criticize government policies or actions. The facts were censored. Many press publications were banned, journalists were punished and jailed. Press was not allowed to write against policies of Government in the name of the state security and interests. Press advice system by Ayub Government is considered as the means of agenda setting by the Government. However, veteran writer and journalists were also blamed for supporting Government.

Laws like Press and Publications Ordinance 1963, National Press Trust (NPT), Defense of Pakistan Rules (DPR) and Security Act in Field Marshal General Ayub Khan Era are considered the tools to control and suppress the press and its freedom.

General Zia's period is considered as a sequel of Ayub's era with harsh censorship policies and little appetite for dissent. Press and Publications Ordinance 1963, National Press Trust (NPT), and Defense of Pakistan Rules (DPR) remained effective during General Zia period. The government used direct censorship in this era to stop any material from publishing. Books, magazine and newspapers all faced censorship policies and government control. It was started with restoration of two banned newspapers of Bhutto era but later every type of criticism or disagreement with the agendas of the government was not allowed. General Zia era is also considered to control press in favor of Government agendas. After assassination of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, his name was considered as taboo to be written in newspapers. PID (press information department) placed pre-censorship for press.

The information revolution in Pakistan is considered to be started during the General Pervaiz Musharraf regime. During this period licenses were given to the private TV and Radio FM channels. This era is considered to allow practice of liberal press, allowed

government criticism and accept citizen right to know. However, in the succeeding years General Pervaiz Musharraf regime is considered to start exploiting the laws against the press and citizen like of Defamation Ordinance 2002, Press, Newspapers and News Agencies Registration Ordinance 2002 and Freedom of Information Ordinance 2002. During 2007 and 2008 banning of TV channels were also observed.

Besides, one argument is advancement of media technology, internet revolution and democratic awareness in the world are also the factors that affected the Government control over press in Pakistan during the General Pervaiz Musharraf era. Freedom of press was also the need of the time. However, the researcher cannot discredit the General Pervaiz Musharraf Government for providing most freedom to the press in comparison to the previous Martial Law governments.

The quantitative analysis that has studied the editorializing coverage of the Dawn and Jang newspapers in context of the Baluchistan issues, observed major difference in numbers in General Pervaiz Musharraf regime in comparison to the eras of Field Martial General Ayub Khan, General Agha Muhammad Yahya Khan and General Zia ul Haq. During selected sample of this study, ninety two editorials related to Baluchistan are published in Dawn newspaper and one hundred four during rule of General Pervaiz Musharraf, however, only nine editorials are published in Dawn newspapers and twenty-one in Jang newspaper during former two Martial Law eras.

During the selected era of General Pervaiz Musharraf sixty nine editorials are published related to the topic of politics in Dawn newspaper and sixty in Jang newspaper. But during the eras previous Martial Law government only one editorial on the topic of politics is published in Dawn and twelve in Jang newspaper.

During General Pervaiz Musharraf era, out of total ninety two editorials in Dawn newspaper related to Baluchistan, sixty seven

are found unfavorable to government and twenty five in favor of government. In Jang newspaper thirty nine are found unfavorable to government and sixty-five in favor of Government. This verifies the freedom of press and criticism during his era. Whereas, during Field Marshal General Ayub Khan and General Agha Muhammad Yahya Khan era from six editorials five are published in favor of government and only one as unfavorable in Dawn newspaper. Whereas, in Jang newspaper one are found in favor of government and four are unfavorable.

During the era of General Zia-ul Haq out of three editorials one was found favorable and two unfavorable in Dawn Newspaper, however, in Jang newspaper seven are found favorable and six unfavorable. But it's hard to consider Zia era as liberal on such low ratio of editorials.

Conclusion

This study verified the limited editorializing communication about Baluchistan issues during the first two Martial Law eras of Field Marshal General Muhammad Ayub Khan and General Agha Muhammad Yahya Khan from 27 Oct 1958 to 20 Dec 1971 and of General Zia ul Haq from 05 July 1977-17 August 1988. However, in comparison the third period of General Pervaiz Musharraf from 12 October 1999-18 August 2008. The era of General Pervaiz Musharraf is verified to provide most freedom to press and permission to criticize. The data of both Dawn and Jang newspapers give similar results. This era can be said to attempt to practice liberal press and social responsibility theories. However, in later years this freedom is observed to turn into similar autocratic control. The former two Martial Laws eras, though, completely remain dominant by authoritarian practices.

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