

A STUDY OF ENGLISH NEWSPAPERS WITH REFERENCE TO REPORTING OF RELIGIOUS MINORITIES

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ABSTRACT

Religious minorities are considered an integral part of the population of any state. Such minorities are being provided legal, civil, and constitutional protection and tried to be treated with parity. Likewise, media is regarded as the fourth pillar of a state in the context of the ability to advocate the issues of society, shaping the opinion and entrusted to represent all segments of the population with equality. This study is conducted to examine the print media coverage of religious minorities in English newspapers of Pakistan and has been carried out with the purpose of investigating how coverage of such newspapers of English medium is depicting different aspects related to minorities. News reports, editorials, and articles of two widely circulated English newspapers Daily Dawn and The Nation have been analyzed employing content analysis method with quantitative approach. The period of this study was three months i.e. 01st January 2018 to 31st March 2018 wherein the reporting of these newspapers relating to minorities was analyzed at the front, last, and inside pages including the articles and editorials. It is revealed that a total of 31 news reports were published about religious minorities. Out of this, 26 were reported by Daily Dawn and only 05 news were published by The Nation. Moreover, Daily Dawn published 02 editorials, and The Nation published only 01. Besides, it is revealed that the religious minorities are given less reporting in English newspapers and have been portrayed in an unfavorable tone. Finally, it is observed that Daily Dawn provides more coverage to minority issues as compared to The Nation.

Keywords: Content Analysis, Religious Minorities, English Newspapers, Reporting

INTRODUCTION

Media plays an important role to educate, inform, and aware the masses. In media, newspapers are considered an important tool in determining the human mind. They are used to express information, facts, ideas, ideologies, and to create awareness among the masses which helps them to increase their knowledge and broaden their horizon (Dwivedi & Pandey, 2013).

On the other end, minorities have a major role and cause for the society and these are forming a considerable proportion of any population in any state. The minority is a group having a lesser number than the total amount of number which differs from the others in characteristics. A smaller political, religious, national, and ethnic group that is entirely different from the governing and controlling group of any part (Webster, 1979:1146). The minority is a smaller group of people within a state and considers to be different from the mainstream population in terms of caste, religion, and racial differences (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 1992). Minorities are defined based on racial, religion, gender, and political differences which arise among all groups (Brunsma et al., 2015). Contemporary sociologists have defined that minorities are the one group who lacks in power subjected to certain discrimination and differential treatment (Sills, 1968: 365).

Minorities are considered a substantial part of any society. In Pakistan, minorities are playing an essential role in different fields and walk of life. They are working in different professions like medical, business, civil services, engineering, academia, media, and contributing to the welfare of the state. The importance of the minorities can be easily determined by the white part of our national flag which is dedicated to them (Mubeen & Qusien, 2017).

Media have a vital role in depicting and shaping minorities as well. **Besides, the** Media have it's a social responsibility to cover the issues related to minorities. Media is central and considered as the fourth pillar of a state which can help in promoting minority rights. The role of media has to be objective and responsible so that it can create religious harmony among the different cultural, ethnic and religious groups (Hagendoorn & Nekuee, 2018). There are various cases where media

have underrepresented the minorities in Pakistan such as, in 2013, a mob of more than 3000 people burnt 1000 Christian houses in Badami Bagh Lahore (AFP, 2014). In November 2014, a Christian couple who worked at a brick kiln in Kot Radh aKishan (Kasur), was brutally killed and being burnt to death in a kiln fire (Jalil, 2015). Media have the responsibility to inform and educate society, but in certain cases, it has to be objective and responsible. Media can play a role as a bridge in bringing tolerance and harmony among the communities. It is the responsibility of the media to address the issues related to minorities in such a way, so that an impression of underrepresentation or isolation among the majority and minority group may be prevented because the narrative and public opinion that media shapes have a huge impact on the society.

Constitutional and Legal Protection of Religious Minorities in Pakistan

Pakistan has the clearest and well-written policies regarding the media for the coverage of the minorities issues, especially the religious minorities. Such policies guide the media not to publish content that may cause fear or hatred about minorities. Constitutionally and legally minorities are protected through enough legislation. A brief account of such constitutional and legal protection is given as under:

The speech of August 11, 1947, in the constitutional assembly of Pakistan by Quaid-e-Azam is a landmark in the history of recognizing the rights of the religious minorities which allow them in this state of Pakistan to freely follow their religions. Following this footprint, the same assembly passed a resolution in 1949, popularly known as “Objective Resolution” which resolved that the future constitution of Pakistan will assign the minorities rights of free practice of their religion and develop their culture too.

The first constitution of Pakistan in 1956 in this regard provided Fundamental Rights for the citizens of Pakistan including the minorities. With some exceptions to the constitution of 1962, subsequently, the constitution of 1973 is enriched with the fundamental rights of the minorities and this constitution respects the minority rights at large. Such as article 20 provides that it is the right of every citizen of Pakistan to

profess his / her religion and establish religious institutions. While, article 21 protects the minorities from the taxation on belonging to a specific religion. Besides, article 22 prohibits discrimination in granting admissions in educational institutions based on belonging to any religion. Whereas, article 25 has a greater scope of creating equality for every citizen of Pakistan irrespective of his or her relationship with any specific caste, colour, creed, sex, and religion, etc. Minorities according to the constitution of Pakistan will not be discriminated against in the public services as per articles 27 and 36. Hence, in compliance with the constitutional obligation, Pakistan has reserved a 5% service quota for minorities in government sector jobs.

Additionally, at the national level, Pakistan has laws which are protecting and recognize the religious minority rights in Pakistan like Hindu Marriage Act, 2016. At provincial levels, the provincial governments have tried their best to protect minorities through legislation. As such The Sindh Protection of Communal Properties of Minorities Bill, 2013, The Sindh Minorities Rights Commission Bill, 2015, and The Sindh Hindus Marriage Bill, 2016. Also, other provinces have provided such types of protection to minorities.

So, under these circumstances and in the presence of the legislation, media are also responsible for providing equal representation and opportunities to the religious minorities in Pakistan. It has to devise its agenda as per the prescribed legal and human rights guidelines. As positive and effective role of the minorities is projected in the society.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the research are:

- To examine how and in what manner English newspapers are depicting religious minorities.
- To observe and analyze which aspects of religious minorities are being highlighted by English newspapers.
- To know which of the selected English newspapers gave relatively more coverage to the issues of religious minorities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Most of the media researches that are related to minorities are of the 1970s (Greenberg & Brand, 1994), in this context more literature is the limitation of this study, however, the researchers have tried their best to find out the relevant studies about the topic and the same are discussed in below paragraphs.

A research study conducted by Shahzad Ali based on the portrayal and representation of minorities indicates that the elite English newspapers of Pakistan have depicted and portrayed the minorities favorably. It also states that the Christians were the ones who got the highest coverage in both the newspapers as compared to others (Ali, 2010). Mass Media has been in true manners evolved as an incredible voice for the minorities. In this regard, this community of mass media is opening its doors for the minority's voice (Campbell, n.d.).

A research study conducted on the "Television Portrayal of Minorities and Women" apart from the religious minorities found that the whites were dominant in the content presented on the television whereas, the blacks and others who were less in population were neglected (Seggar et al., 1981). The depiction of African Americans in a research study found that the intervention on the level has improved the portrayal and representation of comical settings. It has been concluded that there is a need for a new separate channel that will work to depict and highlight the issues of minorities (Stroman et al., 1989).

The media literature reveals that the media are focusing on the stereotypical and negative depiction of minorities. The stereotypical coverage is used to affect and create a negative public perception among the audience (Mastro & Robinson, 2000). Media portrayals of minorities are both restricted and restricting. How somebody is addressed in media and same mainstream society impacts self-image. Besides, it affects the perception by the other people too (Merskin, 2017). The Australian media positively portrayed the Muslim minority groups. Their percentage ratio is 8% represents as negative and 35 as positive (Sulaiman-Hill et al., 2011).

Media can be helpful in providing rights to indigenous groups and minorities to state against the policies which are affecting their rights and Media have to provide them the platform so as their voices can be heard (Meier, 2008). Regarding the culture, in a study, it has been identified that diversity can be helpful to address the issues related to minorities (Henrard, 2002: 221). The democratic and globalized countries believe to support the people from minorities and ethnic diversities (Kymlicka, 2002, pp. 18-19).

The reporting of the religious incidents repeatedly provides one angle, which perhaps may be a general observation. Whereas, it may be apart from the truth (Rais, 2007). In the preceding times, media provided more coverage to the “white” people. In this way, the ideas of the majority people were propagated and minorities were kept at the peripheries levels (Tukachinsky, 2015). Media in Pakistan is required to produce the coverage of minorities issues with accuracy. Furthermore, media should play it’s social responsibility rather than pursue financial gains (Faruqi, 2011). The majority of the participants were of the view that media provided coverage and importance to minority issues. However, fifty participants were of the view that media incited conflict of Muslims and Non-Muslims through the reporting of the minority issues (Shehzadi, 2017). The stereotypes and prejudice prevail in the Pakistani media about minorities. Specific incidents against minorities are reported judicially such as forced conversion but the media adopts silent about the increasing conversions (Madelin, & Kissenkotter, 2014).

THEORETICAL IMPLICATION

This research “A Study of English Newspapers with Reference to Reporting of Religious Minorities” attracts theories like the social responsibility theory, the class dominant theory, and the cultivation theory.

Theory of Social Responsibility

Media plays the role of watchdog of society with having a social responsibility to highlight all the practices and efforts that are being in practice in a particular society. Social Responsibility theory is a part of normative theories. It actually, provides the concept of accountability of

the media to society. This theory is often considered as a modified form of free press theory.

The media has to recognize its social responsibility and have to resolve all the social conflicts through coverage, giving equal representation, and discussing the conflicts on neutral grounds because media can form attitudes and opinions (Ravi, 2012). Being a mirror of the society, media have to be objective, responsible and careful while giving any piece of information about the minorities as they might not feel isolated.

The Class Dominant Theory

As media usually works on an agenda and most of the media are privately owned under this perspective it only propagates the point of view of a higher, powerful, and dominant class. So, class dominant theory can easily be applied to this study.

The class dominant theory explains that the media projects and highlights the view of only the class which is controlling it. Hence, media is the voice of the elite class. The owners of the media corporations are belonging to the elite class. In sociology, Karl Marx and Max Weber have discussed in detail in their sociological thought the class system in society. Especially, Karl Marx has projected this point of view in detail and highlighted the theory of class conflict in this regard.

The Cultivation Theory

The cultivation theory is also appropriately applied to this study in terms of the repeated portrayal of media generates and creates attitudes and perceptions among the individuals (Gerbner & Gross, 1976). When media repeatedly portrays some groups of the population positively or negatively, this in the consequences generates a public attitude of such nature regarding that specific group. Theory of Cultivation is a framework in communication as well as in sociology that suggests that long-term exposure to the media shapes the perception of the world and the behavior of media consumers (Nabi & Riddle, 2008).

METHODOLOGY

This study is quantitative. The method of content analysis has been employed for the collection of data. Two Pakistani English newspapers Daily Dawn and The Nation have been selected for the collection of the data. The criteria and reasons for selecting these above-mentioned newspapers are:

- a) One of the most prominent and leading English newspapers among the masses.
- b) Both the English newspapers have a wide audience including luminaries, stakeholders, policymakers, and government officials.
- c) These English newspapers are highly influential and have created a huge impact while shaping the narratives among the masses.

The items of analysis in this research study are complete news reports published on the front, last, and inside pages including the articles and editorials. Every possible effort is made to take into consideration every piece of information relating to religious minorities. Three months' consistent period of study from 01st January 2018 to 31st March 2018 have been selected for this research. The period was selected keeping in view the scenario of festivities of different minority groups and similarly, several incidents and happenings took place that created a huge hype in that particular period.

In this regard, the tone, size placement, and frequency of all published news items were examined keeping in view the objectives of this study in terms of tone, the news reports, editorials, and articles are coded in two different categories favorable and unfavorable. The news reports which will reflect the positive and developmental changes in economics, political, social life, culture, and religious festivities have been coded as favorable. Although, the news reports which are depicting corruption, anarchy, poor living, disputes, conflicts, killings, violence, and brutal acts have been coded as unfavorable. Whereas, the size of the news reports, editorials, and articles are categorized as ordinary, prominent, and extraordinary. This has been measured through a word count of published news items. The news reports which are above 1000 words have been marked as extraordinary, below 1000 and in between 500 words have been marked as prominent, less than 500-word news reports

have been marked as ordinary. While, the placement of the news stories on the front page is considered very significant among others. The placement of news items plays a role in determining the human mind. So, in this context, the front page news stories placement is scrutinized with great care. While, all other pages are coded as “other pages” except articles and editorial pages.

RESULTS

News Reports: The data collected from both of the selected Pakistani English newspapers reveal that from January 2018 to March 2018 both newspapers have published a total number of 31 news reports related to religious minorities. Out of this total number of news reports Daily Dawn has published 26 and The Nation has published only 05. Furthermore, in terms of the news reports, it has been observed that Daily Dawn has given more coverage to the issues and aspects of the religious minorities in Pakistan as compared to The Nation daily English newspaper.

Editorials: During the selected time frame of three months i.e. 01st January 2018 to 31st March 2018, both the selected newspapers have just published 03 editorials in total regarding minorities. The Daily Dawn has just published 02 editorials related to minorities and The Nation has published only 01 editorial. It is observed that the coverage is provided in terms of the editorial is very low and has a minimal ratio. On the other end, the coverage on the editorial is very important for any newspaper and considered as a narrative of any newspaper.

The frequency of news reports and editorial is one of the ways to analyze the coverage of media given to minorities (Norris, 1995). The results suggest that the English newspapers have not given priority to the issues and news items related to religious minorities. Hence, it has been proved by the data that only 31 total news reports have been published in the three months period of this study. It is further clear that at what proportion the English newspapers provide importance to the coverage of the issues of the minorities and how it is representing different aspects of the lives of religious minorities.

Table 01

Frequencies of news reports and Editorials published in English and Urdu newspapers

Newspapers	News Reports	Editorials
Daily Dawn	26 (83.87%)	02 (66.66%)
The Nation	05 (16.13%)	01 (33.34%)
Total	31(100%)	03 (100%)

As far as the tone of news reports is concerned, most of the news reports published in both newspapers in a negative perspective. The coverage of selected newspapers is portraying the minorities negatively. The majority of the news reports are based on the stories of the killing of religious minorities that took place at different locations. Therefore, it is revealed through the data that English newspapers are representing the minorities only in a negative term.

The data shows that both the newspapers have given less priority and covered a single dimension of the issues related to religious minorities. The data shows that the Daily Dawn has published a total of 26 news reports and out of this total 12 were positive (favorable), while the rest of the 14 news reports are coded as negative (unfavorable). Meanwhile, on the other end, The Nation just published 05 news reports which all were coded as unfavorable. The 03 editorials that are published by both newspapers are almost found negative, only one of the editorials can be coded as positive and favorable for the minorities.

Table 02

Tone of News Reports & Editorials Published in Both Newspapers

Newspapers	Tone	Favorable	Unfavorable	Total
Daily Dawn	News Reports	12 (46.15%)	14 (53.85%)	26 (100%)
	Editorials	01 (50%)	01 (50%)	01 (100%)
The Nation	News Reports	00 (0%)	05 (100%)	05 (100%)
	Editorials	00 (0%)	1 (100%)	1 (100%)

Comparison of Daily Dawn and The Nation Reporting

The data shows that both newspapers have underrepresented and depicted religious minorities in a negative perspective. Daily Dawn has published 26 news reports, while, The Nation has provided 05 news reports relevant to the minorities in a specified period of three months. The frequency of news reports and editorials clearly shows and helps to measure that the Daily Dawn has covered the minorities more than The Nation. As far as, the tone is concerned the news reports that are published completely are in a negative (unfavorable) perspective. Whereas, the tone of the editorials is slight of different nature. Almost, both of the newspapers are equal in terms of covering the editorials related to minorities. On the other end, both of the newspapers are more critical towards the minorities. As they presented the news reports related to the killings and protests being made by the minorities. The data indicates that the newspaper has set an agenda to cover the minority's issues only in the happening of critical and big issues.

This research study has exposed that both newspapers have addressed the issues of minorities related to killings, conflicts, disputes, violence, anarchy, poor living, and corruption. However, there is some content that is published in terms of their rights, social life, culture, services, and rich traditions. The same results are being in terms of frequency and percentage is described under the following table.

Table 03
Content Categories and Depiction of Minorities in News Reports

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Culture	03	9.68%
Killings & Conflicts	10	32.25%
Social life	03	9.68%
Violence	04	12.90%
Arts	02	6.45%
Poor Living	03	9.68%
Minority Rights		9.68%
Miscellaneous	03	9.68%
Total	31	100 %

On the size of the news reports, the data indicates that the Daily Dawn has produced 18 (69.2%) news reports which can be coded as ordinary news while, 08 (30.8%) news reports are as prominent news. However, The Nation has published 03 (60%) news reports as ordinary news and 01 (20%) news report coded as prominent news. There is only one news report 01 (20%) that can be coded as extraordinary.

Table 04

Size of the News Reports Published in The Nation and Daily Dawn

Size	The Nation	Daily Dawn
Ordinary	03 (60%)	18 (69.2%)
Prominent	01 (20%)	08 (30.8%)
Extra Ordinary	01 (20%)	00 (0%)
Total	05 (100%)	26 (100%)

It is important to mention that the news reports published on the front page have more prominence than being published on other pages. The data indicate that both the newspapers have not published a single news story on the front page regarding the minorities especially the religious minorities. This ratio of publishing news on the front page is 0 (0%) in both newspapers which clearly shows the intention of editorial and news policy of the newspaper in terms of agenda-setting and dominant class towards the minorities.

Table 05

Place of News Reports Published in English and Urdu newspapers

Placement	The Nation	Daily Dawn
Front Page	00 (0%)	00 (0%)
Other Pages	05 (100%)	26 (100%)
Total	05 (100%)	26 (100%)

DISCUSSION

The fundamental purpose of this research is to examine how and in what manner English newspapers are depicting religious minorities. Besides, the study also analyzes different aspects of religious minority's life which are being highlighted by English newspapers. Finally, we have

made the comparison of the coverage being provided to the issues of the religious minorities by the English newspapers. Earlier research suggests two points of view regarding the depiction and portrayal of religious minorities by the media. As per Mastro and Robinson (2000) the media literature reveals that the media are focusing on the stereotypical and negative depiction of minorities. The stereotypical coverage is used to affect and create a negative public perception among the audience. However, Ali (2010) and Campbell (n.d.) in their respective studies have observed favourable and positive depictions and portrayals of minorities by English newspapers and other media outlets.

The results of our study show that English newspapers have the least priorities for the publication of news reports about religious minorities. As our data reveals that only 31 total news reports have been published in the three months of this study. Secondly, in the majority, the news reports of the minorities are covered in both newspapers in a negative tone and this coverage is portraying the minorities negatively. The data shows that the Daily Dawn has published a total of 26 news reports and out of this total 12 were positive (favorable), while the rest of the 14 news reports are coded as negative (unfavorable). On the other end, the nation just published 05 news reports which all were coded as unfavorable. The 03 editorials that are published by both newspapers are almost found negative, only one of the editorials can be coded as positive and favorable for the minorities. Both newspapers have addressed the issues of minorities related to killings, conflicts, disputes, violence, anarchy, poor living, and corruption. However, some content is published in terms of their rights, social life, culture, services, and rich traditions. Under this perspective cultivation theory of media can be applied to this study. It means as per this theory; this type of repeated stereotypical and negative portrayal is not creating a positive attitude of the general public about religious minorities. We consider the reporting of protest necessary for bringing the voice of the religious minorities to the authorities. At the same time, media are under the duty to provide coverage about rights, social life, culture, services, and rich traditions of religious minorities as well. Moreover, this finding is being supported by the study carried out by Madelin and Kissenkotter (2014) who identified that stereotypes and prejudice prevail in the Pakistani media about minorities. Specific incidents against minorities are reported judicially

such as forced conversion but the media adopts silent about the increasing conversions.

A piece of news published on the front page of any newspaper attracts more to the readers and such news has more prominence than being published on the other pages. In our study, the data shows that both the newspapers have not published a single news story on the front page regarding the minorities especially the religious minorities. This finding reveals the need for more coverage by the media especially by the newspapers of minorities issues on the front pages. Hence, this result of our study attracts the findings of the study conducted by Faruqi (2011) who reminds the media about its social responsibility rather than pursue financial gains. It is the social responsibility of media overall especially, the English newspapers in terms of this study to provide due coverage to the minority issues. This will in the results create a sense of equality and parity of the minorities. Whereas, comparatively Daily Dawn has published more news reports during the study period than The Nation. Therefore, Daily Dawn has published 26 news reports, while, The Nation has provided 05 news reports relevant to the minorities in a specified period of three months. Almost, both of the newspapers are equal in terms of covering the editorials related to minorities.

CONCLUSION

This study has been carried out to know comparatively the coverage given by two leading English newspapers i.e. Daily Dawn and The Nation to the issues of religious minorities. The content analysis method was applied to collect and analyze the data. It has been revealed that selected newspapers have provided less coverage to the issues of religious minorities during the three months of this study. Total 31 news reports regarding religious minorities have been published and out of this total Daily Dawn published 26 and 05 were published by The Nation respectively. Total three editorials about minorities provided space by these newspapers and out of this total 02 editorials belong to Daily Dawn and only one with The Nation. No news item about religious minorities has been provided space on the front page. It is further identified that minorities are depicted negatively by these newspapers. Most of the news is related to the negative aspect of the minorities and their positive aspects are provided less coverage. It has been revealed by the study that

religious minorities are underrepresented by the English newspapers. Finally, the study comparatively exposed that Daily Dawn published more news reports and editorials as compared to The Nation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The English newspapers especially the selected newspapers i.e. Daily Dawn and The Nation should provide priority to the coverage of the issues of the religious minorities. As, these newspapers are one of the leading in the English language, having great circulation and being referred and preferred by the policymakers. This will be helpful in the resolution of the issues of religious minorities related to their social life. Moreover, religious minorities are protected and safeguarded under the constitution of Pakistan. So, it is recommended that media that shape the opinion of the public should deal equally with all portions of the population. Hence, news items portraying positively to the religious minorities should be published on the front pages of the English newspapers. The issues related to minorities should be quoted in an objective and responsible way. As, this will be assisting to create a positive image of our religious minorities in our society. Issues related to religious minorities should be addressed and discoursed in media in such a manner that maybe beneficial for religious minorities and state both.

Furthermore, for the purpose to realize the media it's social responsibility, more studies about the coverage of religious minorities are suggested to be conducted. This study has been conducted on a very small scale wherein the reporting of three months is covered. It is recommended, studies on large scale covering the reporting of six months to one year should be conducted involving the newspapers of different languages i.e. English, Urdu, and regional languages.

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