

# Media and Peace building between India and Pakistan: The Case of Kartarpur Corridor

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## Abstract

*Media has remained a powerful tool in modern times that shapes perceptions and builds narratives on each side of the border. In the same context, there are certain narratives that news media has built about India and Pakistan. Both countries share a historically strenuous relationship that has affected peace and security problems for the last seventy-five years. The inter-state issues are all broadcasted through news media. Living in the digital age, media narratives create awareness among the masses regarding national interests. Many researchers consistently have found that at the cost of national interests' media becomes an active agent of wars. Still, on the other hand, media can play a vital role at different levels in mitigating conflict and promoting peace. In this context, this article revisits the literature on how print and electronic media played a pivotal role in promoting peace between the two countries. It has analyzed the role of the print media in peace building by taking into account the establishment of the Kartarpur Corridor in 2019. The article has been contextualized within the theoretical framework of Johan Galtung's "Peace Journalism Framework." The exploratory qualitative research design would be used. Qualitative Content Analysis is the method of data collection. Content analysis of chosen newspapers from Pakistan (Dawn) and India (The Hindu) is part of the study's data set. The focus is on analyzing Kartarpur Corridor-related news, editorials/editorial notes, and opinion articles.*

**Keywords:** New media, Social media, social media trends, impact of gadgets, effect of media, youth, post-truth era.

### **Introduction**

Media has remained a powerful tool in modern times that shapes perceptions and builds narratives on each side of the border. In the same context, there are certain narratives that news media has built about India and Pakistan. Both countries share a historically strenuous relationship that has affected peace and security problems for the last seventy-five years. Whether it is the ongoing crisis in Jammu and Kashmir, the Indian Parliament Attack 2001, India–Pakistan standoff 2001-02, Qasim Nagar Attack 2003, Samjhauta Express bombings 2007, or Mumbai attacks in 2008, the list goes on. The inter-state issues are all broadcasted through news media. Living in the digital age, media narratives create awareness among the masses regarding national interests. Many researchers consistently have found that at the cost of national interests' media becomes an active agent of wars. Still, on the other hand, media can play a vital role at different levels in mitigating conflict and promoting peace.

Muhammad Akram (2010) identified that Mass media has four essential functions: informing, entertaining, educating, and influencing. The information that is received through media is affected by our knowledge, and prior experiences become our perception. These previous experiences are both dependent on psychological surroundings and physical environment. Repetition of the same facts usually changes the perception into convictions. The media performs this job effectively. Media affects not only cognition but also the attitudinal aspects of humans. The expansion and advent of technology have brought media into most people's living rooms in radios, televisions, laptops, tablets, smartphones, print media, etc. It would not be incorrect to say that the media has made the world a global village in the real sense, and nobody can live in silos. In today's connected world, the media's role has immensely grown and influences public opinion at the national and international levels around the clock (Akram, 2010). The media practitioners play a pivotal role in influencing high-level international decision-making because they have persuading features. This feature of

media can be termed as manipulation of media. Manipulating media can create deliberate and desired effects for specific objectives. Governments, commercial organizations, and social groups use media for their motives and priorities.

Conflict journalism researcher Daniel Hallin recognized that the war-media relationship is characterized as symbiotic. Although in his opinion, this nexus has not yet been wholly theorized. It has been generally explored. Here, the question is not what media covers and why media covers conflict; instead, it lies in how media covers and controls conflict (Hallin, 2018).

On the other hand, media can be used for peaceful purposes instead of just inflaming conflicts. While viewing history, it is seen that peace was promoted when the League of Nations launched Nation Radio in Europe in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The United Nations further successfully established the attempt at peace and harmony by founding crisis radios in the unsettled regions of Africa (Becker, 2007). Norwegian Scholar Johan Galtung introduced the term "Peace Journalism." He proposed that two different reporting modes emerged with this advancement, i.e., "peace or conflict journalism" and "war or violence journalism." He provided an alternative version of journalism that he called peace journalism which was against the conventional reporting pattern. The gist of the new version that he introduced is based on conflict transformation. In this type of reporting, the overall focus is on usability and the choice of words, slogans, and language. He suggested that peace-oriented journalism is carried forward by exploring and accepting the conflict as it is and then framing it accordingly to the involved parties and their objectives. (Iqbal & Hussain, 2017)

The significant components of peace journalism are both electronic and print media that can promote peace between the two warring states by playing a constructive role. Therefore, peace journalism advocates for human rights to establish harmonious social institutions.

This article will revisit the literature on how print and electronic media played a pivotal role in promoting peace between the two countries. It will then analyze the role of the print media in peace building by taking into account the establishment of the Kartarpur Corridor in 2019. The article would be contextualized within the theoretical framework of Johan Galtung's "Peace Journalism Framework." The exploratory qualitative research design would be used. Qualitative Content Analysis would be the method of data collection. Content analysis of chosen

newspapers from Pakistan (Dawn) and India (The Hindu) would be part of the study's data set. The focus would be on analyzing Kartarpur Corridor-related news, editorials/editorial notes, and opinion articles.

### **Media and Peace building in India- Pakistan over the years**

Media plays a pivotal role in shaping public opinion that influences the military in the information age. Print and especially television news media impact decision-making (Hahn, 1998). The term "CNN effect" aptly describes how the media gained the primary influence in international politics (Robinson, 2013). Many scholars hold that the media's nature covers disputes, conflicts, violence, and tension by default. In the same vein, News media is often considered and practiced as the arena of War and Peace in India and Pakistan. The function of the media in these two neighboring countries is progressive in nature because it began as a general trustee of the public interest before transitioning into a spokesperson for the freedom movement and, more recently, campaigning vigorously for the continuation and consolidation of democratic institutions (Jabbar, 1994).

Although Jabbar (1994) claims that the media along the border has demonstrated that the media can have a catalytic role in nations' progress, mass media between India and Pakistan has blurred the factual coverage of events in the subcontinents resulting in conflict journalism. It is subject to two primary considerations; the assessment of a conflict by journalists as having an enormous threat to national security and the criticism that resulted from various sources has significantly influenced professional reporting. The higher the threat to national security, the higher its effects affect professional reporting. The lower the threat to national security, the media becomes easy prey to commercial interests. (Hussain, 2005; Bose, 2011).

Often the objectivity in media is questioned and is related to national interests. Numerous studies have confirmed time and again that when national interests are at stake, the media transforms into active agents of conflict. (Thussu & Freedman, 2003; Allan & Zelizer, 2004; Snow & Kamilpour, 2004; Ottosen & Nohresdet, 2010). Media representations of conflict strongly connect to that bias, silence, and omissions. Media treats its audience as the consumers of media (Chattarji, 2008).

Instead of reporting news professionally and impartially, Pakistan's print media takes an attitude that is strongly jingoistic and patriotic in general. Pakistani news headlines are infused with different agendas and power ties, while viewers' reactions show their disapproval of news channel

headlines that are entertainment-oriented, exaggerated, unjust, and moderately informative. In the 1965 war with India, the Pakistani press projected a nationalistic narrative and patriotism. The media portrayed India as the perpetrator of the attack, while Pakistan was portrayed as the sufferer. Similarly, the authors criticized the negligence of not publishing the fall of Dacca for four consecutive days in the Pakistani Media (Hassan, 2018; Iqbal and Hussain, 2018). It also determines that the elite press reports on events guide foreign policy or formulate it. Pakistani and Indian media have been consistent with academic research on media and foreign policy. News framing of Indo-Pak Conflicts regarding War and Peace Journalism infers that media is what a country's foreign policy wishes to speak out (Rehman & Hussain, 2009; Khan and Shabir, 2012; Hussain, 2015). Accordingly, the official viewpoint is prevalent in the press pieces that emanate from government offices. It is argued that both countries' media is militaristic and war-oriented because of the one-sided belief in ultra-patriotism and decades-long animosity. (Siraj, 2008; Sreedharan, 2009; Boss, 2010; Iqbal and Hussain, 2018). Media coverage reflects national duty and propaganda instead of a cynical and critical posture towards respective administrations (Riaz, Shah & Ahmad, 2018; Saffee, 2018)

The governments, media, and the public are principal characters or stakeholders in a crisis. In a similar vein, these three have a significant role in South Asia. One of the pressures they face is the tumultuous history of the relationship between India and Pakistan. An examination of the available research has shown that there are primarily three communication channels between the media and policymakers. These channels are a top-down, media-policy agency, and bottom-up. (Neog, 2018)

The findings of several comparative, content, and discourse analysis imply that representation and issue priming of a nation varies from country to country depending upon different factors, including foreign policy, mutual relations, and economic ties. Studies claim that international media priming and agenda are different from one another. It mainly depends upon the connections with other countries. Media coverage is determined mainly by the two countries' economic, political, and strategic interests. It is argued that international media coverage can be gained and influenced by global public relations. Many News channels are likely to sensationalize commercial gains and political scoring, but fair accuracy is paramount in this regard. Therefore, to be honest in reporting, there is a need to engage with local and regional

news narratives in conflict situations ( Raghavan, 2013; Hafeez,2015; Ali, Haq and Aslam, 2019; Hernández, 2020, Nadaf,2020).

The role of journalists and governments in curing this ailment is exceptionally vital. Objective journalism can reduce tensions that exist in India-Pakistan relations. Deconstructing the conflict in a fair and balanced way can accomplish this goal. This approach has the potential to assist journalists on both sides of the border in seeing reason, altering their mental makeup, and engaging in genuine journalism. After this, peace and a deeper understanding of each other's perspectives between the two nations will emerge on their own. For conflict resolution, media could catalyze if romanticizing, glamorizing, or dehumanizing a conflict is avoided (Bose, 2011)

When it comes to endorsing the concept of "peace" and the "language of peace," the media plays a highly significant role. In spite of the fact that journalists have a difficult time accepting this role, the fact remains that it casts a shadow over "objectivity." The term "peace journalism" refers to a set of journalistic practices that adhere to a code of ethics and are intended to serve the interests of the media in a variety of nations that are currently undergoing wars and peace processes. These ethical standards are conducive to ongoing growth and development. As another example, journalists can quickly get themselves into trouble when covering complex conflicts; however, the more one knows about what's going on in a conflict and the role of a conflict journalist, the better coverage they will be able to provide. (Ersoy, 2017; Michelis, 2018).

In the course of the last few decades, a number of scholars, media professionals, and activists for peace have formulated guidelines and in-depth how-to manuals in an effort to persuade journalists to prioritize peace journalism over war journalism. The credibility of peace journalism was rarely questioned empirically until the beginning of the twenty-first century. As a result, most of the existing literature on peace journalism was normative in nature. The field of peace journalism has recently seen a flurry of empirical study by scholars worldwide. Mainly quantitative, this research examines how the war/peace framing competition affects news coverage of the conflict and uses content analysis to identify its prevalence. Finally, as the scope and diversity of peace journalism research have grown, a growing number of academics have called for a broader range of methods. In this context, recent studies have examined conflict coverage in the media, both in text and image form (Kalfeli and Frangonikolopoulos, 2019).

Peace journalism occur when editors and reporters make decisions – about what to report and how to report it – that allows society at large to

consider and value non-violent conflict resolution (Lynch, 2008). Similarly, peace journalists can interview and report on various peace organizations and mediators to learn about their plans to prevent or end a violent conflict. Health pages in newspapers are popular, and it is to be expected that writing about peace proposals will be similarly popular once they become available (Fischer, 2008; Alankuş, 2016).

The media has a significant impact on the hostile relations between the two sides of the border. Most of the films and dramas in India and Pakistan were focused on provoking hatred among themselves. Both countries' media should also foster harmony and unity among the masses. However, the accurate picture is that print and electronic media raise tensions and play a negative role in building ties between them. In Track II diplomacy, there is a need to create a one-on-one interaction of the public to make peace in the region and be built through peace. The two governments have entirely failed to construct peace in their respective countries. Therefore, one of the remedies that can guarantee a peaceful future is through the phenomenon of peace journalism. Conflict-resolving initiatives can settle the hostilities between India and Pakistan. Framing analysis of such initiatives is necessary. In this regard, media, especially print media, can play a pivotal and constructive role. Similarly, the print media coverage of the Kashmir dispute is based on how media can influence conflict prevention and its resolution (Malik, 2012; Mohammad & Naqvi, 2012; Khalid, 2014; Batool, Yasin and Khurshid, 2015; Zia and Syedah, 2015).

Peace journalism in Pakistan lies in the liberalization of media that began after the Musharraf era. In Pakistan, the press saw a boom in the industry. Television channels increased dramatically from three to ninety in one decade, simultaneously giving birth to the five principal media owners who own major media outlets. This accumulation of ownership brought on unequal income distribution, class inequalities, uninformed citizenship, commodification, and minority marginalization. Thus, the recent liberalization of the media has become a threat to society's democratic norms (Gul, Obaid, and Ali, 2017).

The negative factors for journalistic autonomy in Pakistan that affect the peace journalism approach are military and state security, editorial policy, advertising considerations, media owners, media laws and regulations, and editorial supervisors. Besides the low pay of journalists, meeting deadlines, and taking the lead on other media outlets for news breaking, media owners' influence in Pakistan is also causing unprofessionalism and low journalistic autonomy. In a similar context, the effect of Indian journalistic orientation on the already strained

relationship between the two nuclear giants has been rooted in the communities of Indian societies. The Indian journalists have turned a blind eye to accuracy, objectivity, and balance, which are the most critical prerequisites for covering news and events. (Siraj and Hussain, 2017; Khanum,2020)

In their study, Verma and Sharma (2016) gained that events like Pathankot Attack and instigated Media can reshape the insurgency across the border and reflect religious harmony in the region. In this context, objectivity is the essence of peace journalism. Still, Khan and Khan (2020) analyzed that peace journalism depends heavily on the elite position. Patriotic and elite-controlled media produced more escalation than conflict in which journalists used the relatively free press (Verma and Sharma, 2016; Hussain, Siraj and Mahmood, 2019; Khan and Khan, 2020)."Although government policies influence media coverage, media coverage improves when officials act positively toward one another. It supports the conclusion that the media's attitude shifts in response to changes in official policy. It also validates the 'official truth theory' and thus makes an essential contribution to the body of knowledge about Pakistan and India (Malik, 2015).

### **The Opening of the Kartarpur Corridor**

On 9<sup>th</sup> November 2019, the opening of the Kartarpur Corridor for Sikh pilgrims by Prime Minister Imran Khan's government can be considered a small step toward reconciliation and fostering shared cultural and historical linkages (Mazhar&Goraya, 2020). This reconciliation act has invited much attention from the media.

Sri Kartarpur Sahib is considered to be one of the holiest pilgrimage destinations for Sikhs all over the world, as the religion has over twenty-seven million adherents (Awan&Khalid, 2020). In accordance with the plan for the country's partition in 1947, the holy site was incorporated into the territory of Pakistan. Pilgrims of the Sikh faith who wish to travel to their holy sites in Pakistan and India have had a difficult time doing so because of the ongoing conflict between the two countries. According to Awan and Khalid, "To facilitate the Sikh pilgrims desiring to visit Kartarpur Sahib, the newly elected government of Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf took a bold initiative on 18th August 2018 when it announced the opening of Kartarpur Corridor. An attempt was made in the past in 1998 during the visit of Indian Prime Minister Mr. Atal Bihari Vajpayee to

Pakistan during the tenure of Mian Nawaz Sharif. Still, after laying down a stone mark near the river, no further steps could be taken in this regard. During the time of Pervaiz Musharraf's regime, some efforts were made, and approvals for the construction of the corridor were signed; however, the project was delayed due to tensions between the two states. The presence of Mr. Navjot Singh Sidhu, a former cricketer who is now the Minister of Local Government, Tourism, Cultural Affairs, and Museums of Indian Punjab, turned the tables at the oath-taking ceremony of the former Prime Minister Imran Khan. Consequently, the Chief of Army Staff of Pakistan, General Qamar Javed Bajwa, provided an informal assurance that the Kartarpur Corridor would be opened. Additional work on the project was carried out, which brought the respective governments closer together, garnered support from around the world, and encouraged the presence and coverage of the media (Awan&Khalid,2020).

### ***Research Questions***

1. How has the print media promoted the peace building event during the opening of Kartarpur Corridors in the year 2019?
2. How can media promote peace building in the region in the future?

### **Theoretical Framework**

The study has been contextualized within Johan Galtung's Peace Journalism Framework. The concept of Peace Journalism was first coined in the 1960s by the Norwegian Scholar Johan Galtung. After Galtung, many other scholars have given the idea a more detailed view and formulated a proper framework for the academicians. He identifies that peace journalism implies that an event must pass through four criteria to become newsworthy. First, it should involve high-ranking countries. Secondly, the event involves high-ranking people. Thirdly, the event involves actors rather than processes and structures. Lastly, the event is adverse (Galtung, 2014). In this regard, there seem to be two ways of looking at a conflict: the high road and the low road. (Galtung, 2003)

The dominant track is *the low road* used in the media, which sees a conflict as a battle, a sports arena, or a gladiator circus from Galtunian Perspective. In his opinion, the conflicting parties view each other as combatants struggling to impose their goals. He has compared them to military command. Negotiations are considered verbal battles. War journalism has sports journalism and court journalism as models (Galtung, 2003)

The peace journalist takes the subservient track called the high road, which focuses on conflict transformation. "Conflicts are seen as a challenge to the world, like having 2,000 nations wanting a nation-state in a world with only 200 countries and only 20 nation-states (Galtung, 2003)". In this approach, conflict is seen as a clear opportunity for human progress, using the war to find new ways, being imaginative and creative, and transforming the conflict, so options take the upper hand. Below is the table that Johan Galtung gave in 2003 explains both Peace Journalism and Conflict Journalism.

Peace/conflict journalism	War/violence journalism
<p><i>I. Peace/Conflict-oriented</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore conflict formation; x parties, y goals, z issues; general "win-win" orientation</li> <li>• Open space, open time; causes and outcomes anywhere, also in history/culture</li> <li>• Making conflicts transparent</li> <li>• Giving voice to all parties; empathy, understanding</li> <li>• See conflict/war as problem, focus on conflict creativity</li> <li>• Humanization of all sides; more so the worse the weapons</li> <li>• Proactive: prevention before any violence/war occurs</li> <li>• Focus on invisible effects of violence (trauma and glory, damage to structure/culture)</li> </ul> <p><i>II. Truth-oriented</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expose untruths on all sides</li> <li>• Uncover all cover-ups</li> </ul> <p><i>III. People-oriented</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on suffering all over; on women, aged, children, giving voice to the voiceless</li> <li>• Give name to all evil-doers</li> <li>• Focus on people peacemakers</li> </ul> <p><i>IV. Solution-oriented</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peace = non-violence + creativity</li> <li>• Highlight peace initiatives, also to prevent more war</li> <li>• Focus on structure, culture, the peaceful society</li> <li>• Aftermath: resolution, re-construction, reconciliation</li> </ul>	<p><i>I. War/Violence-oriented</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on conflict arena, two parties, one goal (win), war general zero-sum orientation</li> <li>• Closed space, closed time; causes and exits in arena, who threw the first stone</li> <li>• Making wars opaque/secret</li> <li>• "Us-them" journalism, propaganda, voice, for "us"</li> <li>• See "them" as the problem, focus on who prevails in war</li> <li>• Dehumanization of "them"; more so the worse the weapon</li> <li>• Reactive: waiting for violence before reporting</li> <li>• Focus only on visible effect of violence (killed, wounded and material damage)</li> </ul> <p><i>II. Propaganda-oriented</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expose "their" untruths</li> <li>• Help "our" cover-ups/lies</li> </ul> <p><i>III. Elite-oriented</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on "our" suffering; on able-bodied elite males, being their mouth-piece</li> <li>• Give name of their evil-doer</li> <li>• Focus on elite peacemakers</li> </ul> <p><i>IV. Victory-oriented</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peace = victory + ceasefire</li> <li>• Conceal peace-initiative, before victory is at hand</li> <li>• Focus on treaty, institution the controlled society</li> <li>• Leaving for another war, return if the old flares up</li> </ul>

## Methodology

### ***Research Design***

The study is qualitative, analytical, and exploratory as it takes an inductive approach. The research is qualitative because it explores answers about experiences, meanings, and perspectives. It investigates ideas and ideational factors behind a problem (Newman, 2014). It is analytical as it studies and analyses articles, texts, and documents. As Lawrence Newman (1991) identifies, exploratory research is when one has a first-mover advantage. It creates a general mental picture of conditions and generates new ideas. It determines the feasibility of conducting research. Exploratory research formulates and focuses on questions for future research (Newman, 2014). As mentioned above, the study is analytical, which means it will analyze the data and produce logical reasoning. Analytical research refers to collecting and analyzing information, problem-solving, and making decisions (Potter, 1996).

### ***Data Collection***

#### ***Sampling***

The universe of this study comprised The Dawn from Pakistan and The Hindu from India. The timeframe selected was from October to December 2019. A combination of News and Editorials pertaining to the opening of the Kartarpur Corridor was selected.

#### ***Data Analysis***

In the social sciences, one method of research known as content analysis is frequently utilized in order to investigate various aspects of communication content. In essence, it is a study of human communication in any form—whether it's a book, painting, or law. The selection of content analysis was made to investigate how print media content was handled concerning the topic of the Opening of the Kartarpur Corridor as a Peace building Mechanism in India-Pakistan Relations.

#### ***Findings***

Overall, there were 67 articles and editorials, 31 from The Hindu and 36 from The Dawn, which were further categorized in the following manner. In addition, the news and editorials are separated into the categories of positive (+), negative (-), and neutral (0) statements.

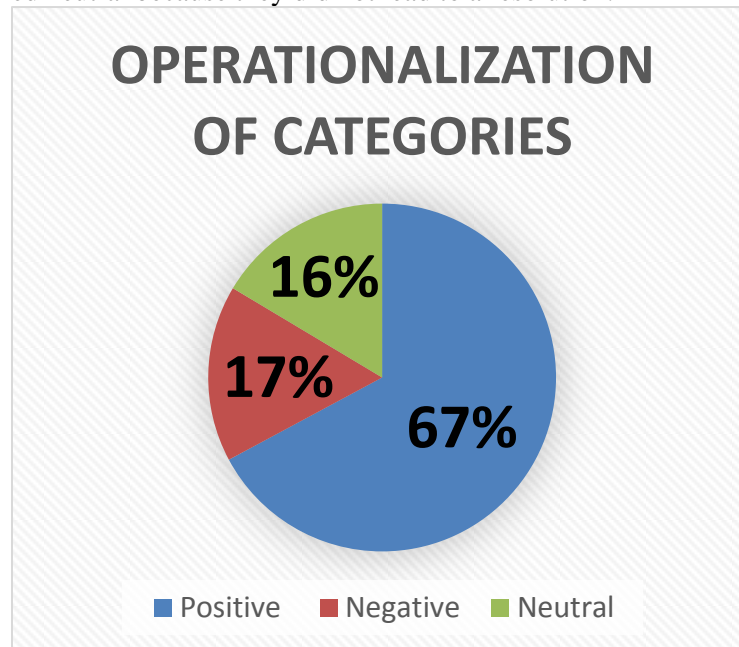
### ***Operationalization of Categories***

***Positive*** The articles and editorials published in The Dawn and The Hindu reflected a positive coverage of the peace process, promotion of relations, new steps are taken, and successful dialogues have been

operationalized as having a positive impact. These articles and editorials have constructively discussed the topic of peace building.

**Negative** The criticism that is shown in the news and editorials published in The Dawn and The Hindu, as well as the publications' lack of support for gestures of goodwill and inability to foster a sense of harmony, have been viewed as having a negative impact.

**Neutral** News and editorials that are neither pro nor anti-peace are considered neutral because they did not lead to a resolution.



As shown in the graph, there were 45 positive articles and editorials, 11 negative articles, and ten neutral ones. According to the results, 67 percent of the sample discussed peace building positively. It reflected the positive coverage of the peace process, the promotion of relations, the new step taken, and successful dialogues. One-seventh of the people express their displeasure, do not reciprocate the goodwill, and do not foster a sense of community. Neutrality is defined as a position of not supporting nor opposing the peace process by 16 percent of those who respond in this way.

**Thematic Analysis**

Since I preferred to employ qualitative content analysis, the following common themes were taken out after reading and scanning the news articles and editorials concerning their frequency.

### **1. *Enhancing Religious Tourism***

The opening of the Kartarpur Corridor shall enhance religious tourism, which will eventually increase interfaith harmony and people-to-people contacts. The Prime Minister of Pakistan, Imran Khan, has mentioned the importance of religious tourism. He has asserted multiple times about the positive impact the project shall bring. He said, "This will become a major religious hub for the Sikh community and boost the local economy, resulting in foreign exchange for the country and creating jobs in different sectors, including travel and hospitality. Religious tourism is on the rise in Pakistan. Earlier, Buddhist monks visited various sites for religious rituals, followed by the opening of #Kartarpur corridor" (Dawn, 2019). With other significant Sikh shrines in HasanAbdal and Lahore nearby, it has the potential to foster social interaction among Pakistan's many religious communities.

As a result of the establishment of Kartarpur, Pakistan has demonstrated its intentions to ease bilateral tensions between the two hostile countries while also making it easier for non-Muslim visitors. Since Pakistan is a neighboring country, India should reciprocate by allowing Pakistanis to visit the Sufi shrines in India.

### **2. *Promoting the Positive Role of Media***

Pakistan's Foreign Office urged the media on both sides of the border to play a positive role in this context. The media have the ability to seize a significant window of opportunity for human advancement by capitalizing on the war to discover new paths, exercising their imagination and creativity, and reshaping the conflict in such a way that options gain the upper hand.

Munizae Jehangir, a renowned Pakistani Journalist, asserted the role of media could play a pivotal role in enhancing positive relationships between India-Pakistan. She complained that the restrictions on the media in the country do not keep it objective and the main aim of such media houses is to secure their business. According to Khawar Naeem Hashmi, journalists' self-serving journalism has replaced journalism in Pakistan. After the Zia era, media owners and journalists learned to work for themselves. Journalists who obliterated the concept of ideological journalism in Pakistan should be held accountable.

Journalism was revolutionary in the West, according to journalist and academic Farooq Suleria. Eventually, the market and oppressive tactics were used to keep it under control. The Pakistan Times, Imroze, and Lail-o-Nihar were revolutionary publications in Pakistan's early days, but

oppressive measures marginalized them. He said social media was initially out of government control, but it was now being brought under "their" control.

### **3. *Attempts of Conflict Resolution***

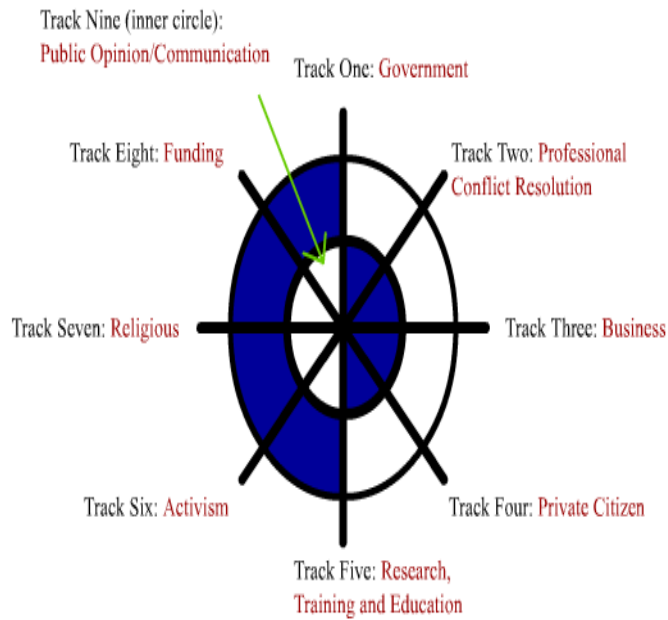
In a recent editorial by Ashraf Jahangir Qazi, he pointed out several out-of-box options for the peace building mechanism and conflict resolution. They are as follows.

- a) Engage in talks about common threats, especially Climate Catastrophe, Eliminating terrorism, and Settlement of the Kashmir Dispute
- b) Working to prevent the conflict from spiraling out of control, endangering both countries as well as the wider region and global community;

### **4. *Maximizing Multi-track Diplomacy***

Louise Diamond and John McDonald, who were both involved in founding the Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy, are credited with developing the idea of multi-track diplomacy and putting it into practice. The idea is an expansion of the original distinction made by Joseph Montville in 1982 between track one (official, governmental action) and Track two (unofficial, non-governmental action) approaches to the resolution of conflicts. Track one refers to official action taken by governments, while track two refers to action taken by non-governmental organizations. Considering the tracks given by the two practitioners, there are nine tracks that can facilitate a peace building mechanism

### The Nine Tracks of Multi-Track Diplomacy



Source: Diamond and McDonald, [The Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy \(IMTD\)](#)

Efforts and Sessions such as Scholars rethinking Pakistan's concept to overcome oppressive trends based on the book "Rethinking Pakistan: A 21st Century Perspective" are an example of one of the essential tracks that took place as part of the Multi-track Diplomacy Model. This track was one of the nine that were available to participants. According to Ashraf Jahangir Qazi, a comprehensive plan that includes bilateral exchanges, trade and investment, conferences, and seminars on a variety of pertinent issues can help build partnership and long-term commitment.

#### **5. Minimizing Internal Pressures**

Whether it was Pakistan's internal political pressure or the skepticism of Indian politicians, it is imperative to bring this to the minimum level. The Pakistani political parties claim it as the wrong timing for opening such an establishment is inappropriate. At the same time, Indian Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh was happy to visit the Kartarpur Sahib

Gurdwara, which had been part of their religious practice, Ardās. However, he was still suspicious of Pakistan's intent. He believed the Kartarpur Corridor was an operation by Pakistan Inter-Services Intelligence to woo the Sikhs ahead of Referendum 2020 being promoted under the guise of Sikhs for justice.

Similarly, Indian Politicians, on multiple occasions, have resented and felt disappointed about charging fee to visit the religious site. It is seen not in accordance with the religious and spiritual sentiments of Indian pilgrims but rather as a business out of faith. Not waiving the fee is a disappointment and instead seen as a strategic purpose.

#### ***6. Support from International Community***

Both China and U.S. have supported the opening of the Kartarpur Corridor. The U.S. says that Kartarpur Corridor sets a positive example. Morgan Ortagus, a spokesperson for the State Department, referred to the opening of this new border crossing as a significant "step towards promoting greater religious freedom." (Dawn, 2019)

On the other hand, China expressed its satisfaction with the historic opening of the Kartarpur corridor and expressed its hope that India and Pakistan "can continue to show goodwill" to resolve their differences through dialogue (The Hindu, 2019)

#### ***7. Rise of Social Media and Age of Digital Diplomacy***

Several Twitter trends, Facebook threads, and Instagram posts started to take the internet. #HinduMuslimbhaibhai, #KartarpurCorridor, #550thPrakashPurab, etc. Users who posted under the hashtag #KartarpurCorridor expressed joy over the significant achievement for India-Pakistan relations and expressed optimism for continued collaboration. It had over 86,000 tweets, making it the fourth most popular topic trending anywhere in the world.

#### **Conclusion**

Therefore, the thematic analysis has indicated that media coverage has a strong relationship while building peace between India and Pakistan. Several factors can influence media, but the internal political makeup needs to have a balanced approach among these. Blame-gaming each other's governments will not help either of the two. Religious tourism can enhance inter-faith harmony resulting in peace building and peaceful coexistence of two very different cults of religion. However, Media must

be transparent and away from the shackles of all restrictions to facilitate peace in the region. Here one cannot forget the role of the tracks of multi-track diplomacy that can promote and establish long-term peace and harmony and eventually win the hearts and minds of conflicting parties. It is also indicated from the thematic analysis that media is under the clasped hands of restrictions and censorship; therefore, the rise of social media and the age of digital diplomacy can give rise to the parallel medium of building narratives and creating a soft image of each other. As said by Habermas, "Everything has to pass through the filters of the culture industry," Similarly, peace also can pass through the filters of the culture industry and prevail.

There is a need for more cross-border information, providing more reportage of economic, infrastructural, and cultural issues, reinforcing journalism's best practices, easing visa restrictions and restrictions on each other's media, training workshops for reporters on specific subjects like Kashmir, water resources, and terrorism, monitoring television talk shows, and developing a code of ethics on issues of mutual concern. These things are necessary for ensuring peace through journalism in each other's countries. India and Pakistan have been actively engaged in several initiatives to normalize relations between the two countries over the past two decades. India is hampered by the inadequate coverage it receives from the media. Normalization of relations with Pakistan and bilateral interactions (Bose, 2011; Mediratta, 2014).

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