Global Social Sciences Review (GSSR)
URL: http://dx.doi.org/10.31703/gssr.2021(VI-II).15

Pakistani Press Towards Religious Minorities

Khalil Ahmad [*] Wajiha Raza Rizvi [†]

Abstract *The study aims to explore the image of the media as portrayed in leading Pakistani English newspapers. The objectives of the study are to analyze the framing of news concerning the religious minorities in three national dailies of Pakistan, to determine either Pakistani press portrays the minorities' image positively or negatively. Content analysis was performed on three English leading dailies, The Dawn, The News and Express Tribune after random selection from January 01, 2016 to December 31, 2016. The front, back and editorial pages were the sample size of the study. The findings of the study showed that the media portrayed minorities in positive manner however the newspapers focused more on controversial issues such as forced conversions, attacks on places of worship, violations of right to freedom and other human rights. Softer issues such as Political and Economic Empowerment and Improved Legislation were not covered as frequently. The need of giving more space to education and entertainment need of minorities and to inform the majority about positive contributions of minorities has also been found out during the study.*

- **DOI:** 10.31703/gssr.2021(VI-II).15
- **Vol.** VI, **No.** II (Spring 2021)
- **Pages:** 139– 149
- **p- ISSN:** 2520-0348
- **e-ISSN:** 2616-793X
- **ISSN-L:** 2520-0348

Key Words: Pakistani Press, Religious Minorities, Press and Minorities, Press and Society, Minorities in Pakistan

Introduction

Islamic Republic of Pakistan is the fifth most populous country in the World with 207,774,520 total population as per census results 2017 (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, n.d.). Pakistan's society is a diverse mixture of ethnic and religious minorities. These ethnic and religious minorities are living in different parts of the country. According to the 2017 census, religious minorities make 3.53% of country's population. This includes 4,444,437 Hindus; 2,637,586 Christians; 207,688 Ahmadiyyas; and 20,768 Sikhs. Other minorities such as Kalash, Jains, Buddhists, Parsi, Jews, Atheists, Agnostics comprise of 20,767 people.

Pakistan became member of United Nations on September 30, 1947. Since then Pakistan has been part of several human rights initiatives starting from UDHR in 1948 ("Universal Declaration of Human Rights", n.d.). Major Human rights conventions ratified by Pakistan include Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1990, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women in 1996, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination in 1996, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in 2008, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in 2010, and United Nations Convention Against Torture in 2010 ("UN Treaty Body Database", n.d.). These all commitments showed Pakistan is determined to protect the religious minority's social, cultural, religious, economic and other rights. Since Pakistan has ratified these treaties, it has a legally-binding responsibility to safeguard minority rights. As part of these obligations, Pakistan submits periodical progress reports to the relevant UN Bodies ("Human Rights Bodies", n.d.).

Founder of Pakistan, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, acknowledged the right to religious freedom of every Pakistani during his first address to Pakistan's Constituent Assembly on August 11, 1947 (G. Allana, 1969). Despite being an Islamic State, Pakistan's Constitution

[*] PhD Scholar, School of Media and Mass Communication (SMC), Beaconhouse National University (BNU), Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan. Email: khalilbnul@gmail.com
[†] Associate Professor, School of Media and Mass Communication (SMC), Beaconhouse National University (BNU), Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan.

Citation: Ahmad, K., & Rizvi, W. R. (2021). Pakistani Press Towards Religious Minorities. *Global Social Sciences Review, VI*(II), 139-149. https://doi.org/10.31703/gssr.2021(VI-II).15

recognizes the rights of minorities ("The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan", n.d.). Article 25 (1) recognizes all citizens as equal before law and grants them equal legal protection. Article 33 compels the State to "discourage parochial, racial, tribal, sectarian and provincial prejudices among the citizens". Minority rights have been covered from Article 20 to 22 in the constitution of Pakistan. Despite the presence of these articles for minority rights, according to the critics, the constitutional law of Pakistan has rarely helped the minority because of the powers assigned to Islamic Ideology Council, presence of Sharia Courts and blasphemy laws mentioned under Pakistan Penal Code which have been used to prosecute non-Muslims and the Muslim minority sects.

There's a dearth of laws to safeguard rights of minorities in Pakistan except for some legislations ("The Christian Marriage Act 1872", n.d.; "The Christian Divorce Act 1869", n.d.; "The Succession Act 1925", n.d.; "The Hindu Law of Inheritance Act 1929", n.d.; "Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act 1936", n.d.; "The Hindu Marriage Act 2017"; and "The Sindh Hindu Marriage Act 2016", n.d.). Over the last few year's experts, civil society organizations, social activities proposed amendments in existing legislations however only one law regarding Hindu Marriage Act was amended. The recent developments in bonded labour laws in Pakistan also grant protection to minorities ("Bonded Labour in Pakistan", n.d.). Although minorities have not been directly mentioned in the laws but over the years, they've been the main victims of this ill practice therefore implementation of these laws will grant them protection (Human Rights Watch, 1995).

Pakistan notified National Commission for Minorities in 2020 under the umbrella of Ministry of Religious Affairs and Inter-faith Harmony (Ali, 2021). Formation of this commission has been met with great criticism from minorities who have citied absence of Ahmadis, absence of lower caste Hindus, inclusion of Muslim members, and lack of autonomy as major issues ("Minority body approved by cabinet 'violates' SC order | The Express Tribune", 2021; Mahmood, 2021; "Controversy over newly formed national minority commission in Pakistan", 2021).

Religious Minorities in Pakistan have the freedom to contest elections for general seats. However to increase their representation, reserved seats have also been allotted in National Assembly (Composition of National Assembly, n.d.), Senate (Composition of Senate, n.d.) and other provincial assemblies. In 2009, government of Pakistan reserved 5 percent quota for minorities in government jobs (Recruitment, Appointment, Seniority and Promotion, n.d.). However there's a general consensus in economical spheres that this quota hasn't been met due to minority groups not having the required education and skills set because of less opportunities (Riudalbas Clemente, 2021; (National Commission for Human Rights, 2019).

Freedom of Speech has been recognized as a fundamental right of every Pakistani citizen in the constitution under the Article 19 of the 1973 Constitution. Article 19A recognizes Right to information of all citizens and grants them "the right to have access to information in all matters of public importance subject to regulation and reasonable restrictions imposed by law" ("The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan", n.d.).

As results of these articles, following legislations have been passed in the country ("The Right of Access to Information Act, 2017", n.d.; "The Balochistan Right to Information Act 2021", n.d.; "Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Right to Information Act 2013", n.d.; "The Punjab Transparency and RTI Act 2013", n.d.; "The Sindh Transparency and Right to Information Act 2016", n.d.).

Media is widely regarded as a pillar of the state because of its power to inform the masses. The freedoms mentioned in Article 19 of Constitution are not possible without Free Press. According Pakistan Bureau of Statics in 2019 total number of newspapers in Pakistan is 707 including local and regional press (Pakistan Press, Media, TV, Radio, Newspapers, n.d.). There are several Press related laws and code of conducts in Pakistan which defines rules and procedures for the press to play its role of informing, educating and entertaining the masses (Alam, 2015). The presence of these provisions and Under 19A calls for the need to examine whether media is playing its due role in providing wholistic and human-centered coverage to minority issues in Pakistan or not. This study aims to explore "To what extent Pakistani press gives coverage to the news regarding the minorities? and How the news concerning the minorities are framed in national dailies of Pakistan?".

© 2021 The Author(s). This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License

Literature Review

Portrayal of Minorities in Western Media

A study conducted by examining print, electronic and online media from United States in 2011, revealed that religion is covered in news only when it sparks some controversy (Liu, 2012). The study exposed that all top religious stories were related to controversial issues such as violent crimes committed in name of religion, political debates on role of religion in state affairs, and legislations targeted against some religious minority. The study also mentioned that coverage of these news also went along with prevailing notions such as debating on extremist tendencies among Muslims rather than focusing on the act of violence itself.

A study analyzed the framing done by US Media in coverage of 2012 Wisconsin Sikh temple shooting (Pere, 2013). The study revealed that that not only mainstream media doesn't cover religious topics as much as other social issues, the coverage is also merged with some other frame which more often than not is the dominant one. The study mentions that reporting of this coverage included the common frames used in breaking news and feature stories on religion however many reports included that Sikhs might have been targeted because of their resemblance with Muslims. Some newspapers focused on differences between Sikhs and Muslims despite the fact that the incident took in place where Muslims and Sikhs have been residing for a considerable amount of time and there was no need to inform the readers about the differences between the getups of followers of the two religions. The study concludes that extra focus on this frame of "mistaken identity" depicts "lack of awareness and appalling negligence on the part of reporters and news media sources".

A study found that conflict frame is the predominant frame used in newspapers' coverage of religious topics in America (Buddenbaum, 1986). Another study mentions that viewing news from these frames eventually has an impact on audience about other religions. (Stout & Buddenbaum, 2003).

According to Stuart Wright, these 'negative' frames occur due to Lack of subject knowledge of media person, time and funds available to media person to investigate that story, type of sources interviewed, and the extent to which the particular religious group is featured on the publication, and whether the story is for frontpage or back page (Oldfield, 1997).

A study from United States mentioned that although minorities have started to feature more in media, their portrayal is not yet ideal (Cort, 1987). Media portrayal of minorities in news and entertainment media, forms public's opinion about them and enforces the stereotypes. Alongside increased coverage, there's a need to give coverage to minority role models and discourage stereotypes existing in society.

Portrayal of Minorities in Pakistani Media

Research by Center for Peace and Development Initiatives notes that Media related laws in Pakistan predated 19A of Constitution of Pakistan therefore they must be aligned to embrace Freedom of Information as mentioned in the constitution (Alam, 2015). The research also calls to enforce the provisions related to flow of information. Never the less, guidelines to ensure religious harmony and rights of minorities are covered in several media laws in Pakistan.

A study on media's portrayal of religious minorities in Pakistan, interviewed minority leaders to formulate suggestions for media (Ali & Jalaluddin, 2010). The suggestions included giving proper coverage to religious festivals of minorities. Print media's role in this regard has been critiqued as they don't give proper coverage to religious festivals especially Christmas, Holi and Easter. Mostly it is the smaller papers or internet publications which do this for areas where religious minorities reside or the coverage is meant to appeal the elite for example a Sindhi newspaper from interior Sindh reporting about a politician celebrating Holi. The study therefore recommends to assigning trained reporters preferably minority representatives to cover on their stories and publishing special periodicals on religious festivals to promote religious and sectarian harmony. Lack of reporting on the need of improving the infrastructure of temples and churches was also pointed out. The study also revealed absence of Sikh, Ahmadis and Paris from media stories other than blasphemy incidents.

A study of representation of religious minorities in Indian and Pakistani Print media observed that there is an inadequate and prejudiced representation of religious minorities in print media of both countries (Batool, 2018). The Pakistani print media gives decent coverage

to Christians but biasedly ignores Hindus by remaining silent. Indian print media also gives decent coverage to Christians and Sikhs but gives negative coverage to Muslims. This treatment creates social divide as Media is a key pilar of the state and the media reports shape public's opinions regarding minority groups.

A 2018 study on Pakistan's media conducted observed that the modernized media scene in Pakistan hasn't proved much beneficial for the religious minorities (Alam et al., 2018). The study discovered that apart from Hindus and Christians, the religious minorities of Pakistan are invisible in media. The study found out that majority of the coverage is focused on blasphemy and conversion stories which are covered in insensitive and sensationalized manner. These stories ignore the 'victim's' point of view and often sways in the direction of popular narrative on that particular incident. An example is reporting on nearly decade long Asia Bibi trial where media included voices of the preparators but blocked out the family and supports of the victim.

A study analyzed headlines of English and Urdu Pakistani newspapers on religious violence, and highlighted several issues in reporting. The study found out that English newspaper go with their own ideology while making the headlines rather than writing it according to the context. The Urdu newspapers mostly sensationalize the news while the English newspapers often tone them down unnecessarily (Bukhari, 2015).

A study conducted in 2020 explored the procedures of electronic media in Pakistan and its regulatory body PEMRA regarding the coverage of plight of Christians. The study releveled that media covers stories related to issues of Christians but on the same hand it ignores many incidents as well. The study highlighted that entertainment media doesn't give proper recognition to minorities (Joshua & Zia, 2020).

A private TV Channel has also been criticized for its Ramadan Transmissions covering religious issues. The host and participants belonging to majority dominations have incited hate speech on Muslim minority sects and other religious minorities (Voicepk, 2020; BBC News, 2017; (Dawn.com, 2018).

A study examined portrayal of religious minorities in Pakistani Cinema. The study examined 30 films from 1963 to 2013 and revealed a negative portrayal of minorities (Khalid & Daudpoto, 2014). The movies have depicted minorities as anti-Pakistan, anti-Islam, Indian agents, terrorists, colonial agents, abusive elites, needlessly modernized and vulgar. Only one film Ramchand Pakistani focused on the actual issues faced by minorities i.e. plight of lower caste Hindus living in boarder area of Pakistan (Holden, 2010). Mehwish Hayat's portrayal of a Parsi girl in movie Actor in Law has also been praised by the critics but they mentioned that the character itself could have been much better (Tribune, 2016).

An internet search on "Famous non-Muslims of Pakistan" has revealed that most of such articles have been covered by tabloid or entertainment sites (Rizvi, 2019; Gul, 2019) Dr. Abdul Salam, Pakistan's only Nobel Prize Winner doesn't feature on them because he belonged to Ahmadiyya Community.

Editorial published in DAWN newspaper questioned the government' handling of proposed bill on Forced Marriages. The editorial mentioned that this issue is continuously discussed from majority's point of view. "Such an approach will further demoralize and alienate non-Muslims in the country and lead Pakistan further adrift from its international obligations" (Dawn, 2021). This editorial was published after Ministry of Religious Affairs organized a meeting to discuss the bill in which religious minorities were excluded. During the meeting the clerics and ministry officials claimed that "there was no forced conversion in the country and most of the cases related to love affairs between individuals" (K. Ali, 2021). Such coverage of this issue has done been done by English newspapers only and in response they receive hate speech in comments.

Not all studies reveal negative portrayal of minorities in media. A study found that the media representation and depiction of minority gatherings in two noteworthy Urdu daily papers of Pakistan was generally positive (Ali, 2004). A 2014 study reveals that minorities were portrayed in positive light in Pakistan's print media most noticeably Dawn, The News and The Nation, from 2009 to 2011 (Ambreen, 2014). However, the study also revealed that almost entire coverage is related controversial issues such as blasphemy and conversion incidents. There's no coverage of social topics such as festivals, educational and employment etc.

Similar findings have been reported in a study on Pakistan's TV Channels and portrayal of

minorities. The study revealed that minorities have been portrayed fairly on TV Programs however the channels aren't doing enough to promote harmony between the religions and sects (Mubeen & Qusien, 2017).

Media's lack of coverage on minorities can't be termed as anti-minority because of complex ground realities. The World Press Freedom Index 2020 by Reporters without Borders ranks Pakistan as 145th safest place for journalist out of 180 countries (Reporters without Borders, 2020). A study interviewed five online newspapers to find the reaction they face from public for reporting on religious minorities (Rehmat & Alam, 2019). The respondents mentioned that they face intimidations, vulgar and profane comments, and labels of anti-state whenever they report on minority and human rights stories. These threats are given by individuals, religious and political outfits. Similar challenges have been reported in other studies conducted with media personnel reporting on human rights issues, religious issues and terrorism (International Media Support, 2009; Ul Hassan et al., 2020; Reporters without Borders, 2018). Lack of visibility of minority operated media is because of the similar reasons. Christian owned TV Channels of Pakistan have reported that they remain selective and fearful in their operations due to backlash from majority (Deutsche Welle, 2021).

Methodology

The study aimed to analysing the Pakistani press coverage towards religious minorities. It examined and explored how religious minority's issues are presented in Pakistan's leading newspapers, how proportion and placement of the coverage of religious minorities' issues in leading English newspapers, how Pakistani press portrays the religious minorities across the country.

Random sampling method technique for research. The top three read newspapers from Pakistan i.e. The Dawn from The Dawn Group, Express Tribune from Express Group and The News from The Jang Group were examined for this study. All selected three newspapers have a good reputation in Pakistan to covering the all-important issues of the country and world. These newspapers have large numbers of qualified, specialized in their teams in shape of reporters, editors and photographers. These three newspapers have a healthy competition to raise the issues, get attention, formation of public opinion and set the agenda for public and policy makers in the country. In this study the researcher will examine that what was the stance of these three leading newspapers towards religious minority's issues in Pakistan.

All the hard and soft and follow up news related to religious minorities published on front, city, national, opinion pages and back pages of the selected newspapers from January 1, 2016 to December 31, 2016 were analysed for this study.

According to demand and nature of this research, content analysis methodology was used. Content analysis is mostly used for media and communication researches because it is a very effective and resourceful for analysing the media messages content. The study has also utilized Framing analysis which has been part of many studies conducted on religion and religious minorities (Pere, 2013). Other studies mentioned that viewing news from these frames eventually has an impact on audience about other religions (Buddenbaum, 1986; Oldfield, 1997; Stout & Buddenbaum, 2003). Agenda setting theory is another interlinked theory to the current inquiry because framing is used as a tool in setting the agenda for the audience.

For this study, researcher used the quantitative analysis methodology. To know the how many news stories published, what was the length of news story, what is the frequency? After getting these details the researcher used the qualitative approach as well to analyze the angel of content especially in editorial and opinion articles. The complete content of news stories was selected as coding unit for content analysis. The content of news stories was counted in term of positive, negative and neutral. For sample, if the text of news stories, editorials, and opinion articles are in favor of protection and promotion of religious minorities' issues, it was considered as positive. If text of news stories angling or portraying threats for religious minorities it was considered as negative. If the news stories content related to religious minorities is not in favorable or unfavorable it was considered as neutral. The complete content of each relevant news stories, opinion articles, editorial and pictures are the contextual unit of analysis for this study. Words and placement of stories were counted and length of news stories was measured to know number of words. Those news stories had photos; the space of pictures

had also measured to examine the importance of news given by newspaper.

The research used the SPSS software for data analysis. Only relevant and valid samples were considered for final analysis. The Only valid and complete samples had been made a part of the final analysis.

Discussion

The stories covered on religious minorities dominantly fall in eight categories: Promoting Religious Freedom, Highlighting the need to protect Social and Cultural Rights, Attacks on Places of Worship, Covering demands for Political Rights, Forced Conversion Stories, General Issues related to Human Rights, Covering demands for Economic Rights and Highlighting the need for improved legislation.

The most important finding of this study is that the top three English newspapers of Pakistan covered minorities in positive manner. Dawn (86%) gave most positive coverage to minorities, followed by The News (83%) and Express Tribune (81%). These findings are in line with 2014 study conducted which examined Dawn, The News and The Nation published from 2009 to 2011(Ambreen, 2014) and 2010 study which examined Dawn, and The Nation published in 2005 (Ali & Jalaluddin, 2010).

Major percentage of the coverage comprised of Hard News i.e. fact-based reporting. Express Tribune lead the way with 82% of its total coverage being hard news, followed by Dawn with 77%, and the News with 76%. However Dawn published 28 more hard news than Express Tribune therefore it remained a hard-hitting publication as far as minority issues is concerned. Majority of the hard news were positive. While this shows a positive trend it also reinforces findings of previous studies which mentioned that minority stories picked by media mostly contain incidents of violence or human right violations in which there's little room to cover the story objectively or portray minorities negatively (Mubeen & Qusien, 2017; Ambreen, 2014; Ali & Jalaluddin, 2010).

Small percentage of soft news i.e. opinions, features reinforce the findings of previous studies that Media only covers minorities only in controversial issues which appear in the headlines momentarily and then disappear with time because of little to no follow up. In this regard, the findings are in line with results of past studies (Joshua & Zia, 2020; Batool, 2018; Alam et al., 2018); Mubeen & Qusien, 2017; Ambreen, 2014; Liu, 2012; and Ali & Jalaluddin, 2010).

Higher percentage of negative coverage in Soft News category is also a key finding of this study. 21% of soft news published in Dawn were negative. This percentage falls to 10% in case of hard news. 44% of soft news published in The News were negative. This percentage falls to 12% in case of hard news. 62% of soft news published in Express Tribune were negative. This percentage falls to 7% in case of hard news. Overall 39% of soft news were negative compared to 8% in case of hard news. This indicates that when media is not reporting about incidents, it tends to go with majority's opinions. This is supported by the fact that Dawn is read mostly by foreigners and elites whereas The News and Express Tribune are mostly read with educated middleclass Pakistanis who form major chunk of Pakistanis familiar with English language. This finding is in coherence with a previous study (Bukhari, 2015).

The average length of positive and negative and soft and hard news articles was almost same for all three newspapers. This is because news related to religious minorities are usually given designated portions on designated pages. This finding hints the claims of Traditional agenda setting studies that the media tell us not what to think but what to think about (OpenLibrary.org, 2020) as well as second-level agenda setting theorists who suggest that the media tell us how to think about issues (McCombs et al., 1997). However this requires further analysis.

The sources contacted and interviewed for publishing minority issues is also important. The three newspapers examined in the study heavily relied on private sources for the stories published regarding minority affairs. The results show that most of the stories that officials don't want to comment on minority affairs or ignore the matter altogether. The topic of Forced Conversions is an example where only 10 stories were obtained from official sources compared to 90 from private and 10 from other sources. This is in line with incidents such as a meeting organized by Ministry of Religious Affairs to discuss the bill on Forced Conversions in 2021. During the meeting the clerics and ministry officials claimed that "there was no forced conversion in the country and most of the cases related to love affairs between individuals" (K. Ali, 2021). It is therefore understandable that

reporters will rely on private sources to cover the incident. The only category where percentage of official sources was higher is 'Attack on Places of Worship'. This is also understandable because in such factorial incident, police, local government officials and provincial and federal ministers are 'forced' to give their stance.

The three newspapers examined in the searched relied on the stories by Pakistani. The ratio of the stories reported by foreign reporters is very low than the stories reported by Pakistani reporters. This rejects the popular notion that English newspapers are working on foreign agenda by including write ups of foreigners are writing on minority issues in Pakistan to malign Pakistan's image. This finding is in line with past studies (Ul Hassan et al., 2020; Rehmat & Alam, 2019; Reporters Without Borders, 2018; International Media Support, 2009) which highlighted that media wants to report the issues of religious minorities but face intimidations, vulgar and profane comments, and labels of anti-state whenever they report on minority and human rights stories.

Conclusion

On the basis of the findings it is concluded that the issue of religious minorities is portrayed positively by the three leading English daily newspapers in Pakistan Dawn, The News and Express Tribune. However it should be noted that these newspapers used dominant framing by focusing more on controversial issues such as forced conversions, attacks on places of worship, violations of right to freedom and other human rights. Softer issues such as Political and Economic Empowerment and Improved Legislation were not covered as frequently. The coverage of softer issues was slightly negative and only Dawn which has a decent proportion of foreign based readers, wrote about these issues in more positive manner.

The study also supported previous studies which have highlighted the need of giving more space to education and entertainment need of minorities and to inform the majority about positive contributions of minorities. The general perception that only foreigners report minority rights violation in Pakistan has been rejected as most of the stories written were produced by local reporters. The study further supports reinforces the point of view of civil society that government doesn't take minority rights issues seriously as majority of the sources from which the news was obtained were private. The study backs the opinion of media that they want to report more on minority rights violations however they face verbal and physical threats when reporting on human rights issues, religious issues and terrorism.

In the light of current study, media is advised to improve reporting on Pakistan's International and National Commitments towards the rights of Religious Minorities. Media groups should increase hiring of reporters and media personnel from religious minorities and provide them adequate training to reduce the sensationalism and to produce human centric stories. Media should also follow Up stories on incidents of human rights violations. To promote religious harmony feature stories on role models and celebrities belonging to minorities is required along with Zero tolerance policy towards trolls and hate speech against all minorities on websites and social media sites.

Government is advised to increased protection for journalists covering human rights and minority rights issues and adopt zero tolerance policy towards individuals and anchors promoting speech against all minorities through print, electronic and social media. All minority issues related debates should be made public and it should be mandatory for representatives to respond to questions on minority rights issues in professional and humanistic manner.

Websites of newspapers such as Dawn and Express Tribune have become the major source of information in recent years. Readers take more interest in them compared to print version because these sites are updated in real time and allow the readers to comment. Replicating same methodology on websites can give a better picture of media portrayal of religious minorities. This is because such a study can examine any changes in first draft and updated version of the articles to find the seriousness of the effort put by the publication in drafting news on minorities. Furthermore the comments can be analyzed to see the extent of hate speech and response of the publication (any increase or decrease in coverage in future). Same frames can be used to conduct a study on Television programs such as political talk shows, because TV is a key medium of information and shapes up opinions of public. In case of Television the duration of programs can be included.

The major limitation of the present research study is that it only focuses the English newspapers of Pakistan. It might be possible that Urdu newspapers portray the different image of the minorities. Investigating this is important because English newspapers often get the blame of being anti-Pakistan and anti-Islam. Therefore in order to examine whether media wants to report on minority rights and whether the media portrayal of minorities is positive, Urdu newspapers should be included in the city which wasn't possible due to time and resource limitations. Moreover, the researcher didn't select the articles published on websites of same newspapers.

References

Alam, M. A. (2015). Right to Information and Media Laws in Pakistan. Centre for Peace and Development Initiatives. https://www.cpdi-pakistan.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Right-to-Information-and-Media-Laws-in-Pakistan1.pdf

Ali, K. (2021). Govt notifies reconstituted commission for minorities. DAWN.COM. 18 August 2021, https://www.dawn.com/news/1556477/govt-notifies-reconstituted-commission-for-minorities.

Ali, K. (2021, August 27). Clerics reject proposed anti-forced conversion law. DAWN.COM. https://www.dawn.com/news/1642778#comments

Ali, S. (2004). Urdu press of Pakistan and image of the minority Groups. *Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities XII*(1), spring. 2004.

Ali, S., & Jalaluddin. (2010). Portrayal of Minorities in Elite English Press of Pakistan: A Study of Daily Dawn and the Nation. *Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences (PJSS), 30*(1), https://www.bzu.edu.pk/PJSS/Vol30No12010/Final_PJSS-30-1-13.pdf

Allana, G. (1969). Pakistan Movement Historical Documents (pp. 407-411). University of Karachi. Department of International Relations.

Ambreen, Q. (2014). Representation of Religious Minorities in Pakistani Print Media: a study of Daily Dawn, the News and the Nation. *American International Journal of Contemporary Research, 4(1)*, http://www.aijcrnet.com/journals/Vol_4_No_1_January_2014/15.pdf

Batool, S. (2018). Representation of Religious Minorities in Pakistani and Indian Print Media: A Comparative Analysis. *Pakistan Social Sciences Review, 2*(1), 247–258. https://doi.org/10.35484/pssr.2018(2–1)20

BBC News. (2017, January 26). Pakistan bans TV host Aamir Liaquat Hussain over "hate speech." https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-38761742

Bonded Labour in Pakistan. paycheck.pk. 18 August 2021, https://paycheck.pk/labour-laws/fair-treatment/forced-labor/bonded-labour.

Buddenbaum, J. M. (1986). An Analysis of Religion News Coverage in Three Major Newspapers. Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly. Published. https://ur.booksc.eu/book/29463075/0ff5cd

Bukhari, S. (2015). Comparative Study of Urdu and English Newspaper Headlines of Pakistan: Different Representation, Same News. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 5*(10 (1)). http://www.ijhssnet.com/journals/Vol_5_No_10_1_October_2015/24.pdf

Composition of National Assembly. National Assembly of Pakistan. 18 August, 2021, http://www.na.gov.pk/en/composition.php

Composition of Senate. Senate of Pakistan. 18 August 2021, http://www.senate.gov.pk/en/essence.php?id=10&catid=4&subcatid=138&leftcatid=125&cattitle=About%20the%20Senate

Controversy over newly formed national minority commission in Pakistan. South Asia Journal. (2021). 18 August 2021, http://southasiajournal.net/controversy-over-newly-formed-national-minority-commission-in-pakistan/.

Cort, C. (1987). A Long Way to Go: Minorities and the Media | Center for Media Literacy | Empowerment through Education | CML MediaLit Kit TM |. Media & Values: Cracking the Color Code: Minorities in Media, 38. https://www.medialit.org/reading-room/long-way-go-minorities-and-media

DAWN. (2021, August 26). A question of faith. DAWN.COM. https://www.dawn.com/news/1642699

Dawn.com. (2018, May 26). Pemra bans Dr Amir Liaquat for 30 days over 'unwarranted drama' on religious matters. https://www.dawn.com/news/1410133

Deutsche Welle. (2021). Why Pakistan's Christian TV channels keep a low profile. DW.COM. https://www.dw.com/en/why-pakistans-christian-tv-channels-keep-a-low-profile/a-56370688

Gul, A. (2019, August 28). 69 Non-Muslims Pakistan That Have Made The Country A Better Place. MangoBaaz. https://www.mangobaaz.com/68-non-

muslims-legends-of-pakistan-that-you-should-know

Holden, S. (2010, April 30). A Boy Caught in the India-Pakistan Crossfire. The New York Times. https://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/21/movies/21ram.html

Human Rights Bodies. Ohchr.org. 18 August 2021, https://www.ohchr.org/en/hrbodies/Pages/HumanRightsBodies.aspx.

Human Rights Watch. (1995). Contemporary Forms of Slavery in Pakistan. 18 August 2021, https://www.hrw.org/reports/1995/Pakistan.htm

International Media Support. (2009). Between radicalisation and democratisation in an unfolding conflict: Media in Pakistan. https://www.mediasupport.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/ims-media-pakistan-radicalisation-2009.pdf

Joshua, R. A., & Zia, A. (2020). Exploring the Policies for Coverage of Minorities Issues in Pakistani Electronic Media. *Global Social Sciences Review, V*(II), 106–114. https://doi.org/10.31703/gssr.2020(v-ii).10

Khalid, B., & Daudpoto, A. F. (Eds.). (2014). Minorities' Stereotypes in Pakistani Films: The European Conference on Film & Documentary 2014. http://papers.iafor.org/wp-content/uploads/papers/eurofilm2014/EuroFilm2014_00242.pdf

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Right to Information Act 2013. Kpcode.kp.gov.pk. 18 August 2021, https://kpcode.kp.gov.pk/uploads/2013_27_THE_KHYBER_PAKHTUNKHWA_RIGHT_TO_INFORMATION_ACT_2013.pdf

Liu, J. (2012, February 23). Religion in the News: Islam and Politics Dominate Religion Coverage in 2011. Pew Research Center's Religion & Public Life Project. https://www.pewforum.org/2012/02/23/religion-in-the-news-islam-and-politics-dominate-religion-coverage-in-2011/

Mahmood, A. (2021). Punjab Assembly resolution for conditional inclusion of Ahmadis in minorities commission. DAWN.COM. 18 August 2021, https://www.dawn.com/news/1556677/pa-resolution-for-conditional-inclusion-of-ahmadis-in-minorities-commission.

McCombs, M., Llamas, J. P., Lopez-Escobar, E., & Rey, F. (1997). Candidate Images in Spanish Elections: Second-Level Agenda-Setting Effects. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly, 74*(4), 703–717. https://doi.org/10.1177/107769909707400404

Minority body approved by cabinet 'violates' SC order | The Express Tribune. The Express Tribune. (2021). 18 August 2021, https://tribune.com.pk/story/2216462/1-minority-body-approved-cabinet-violates-sc-order?amp=1.

Mubeen, A., & Qusien, R. (2017). Minorities in Pakistan: Role of Pakistani Private TV Channels in Highlighting Minorities' Rights. *Online Journal of Communication and Media Technologies, 7*(2). https://doi.org/10.29333/ojcmt/2593

Oldfield, D. M. (1997). Special Issue: Mass Media and Unconventional Religion || The Right and the Righteous: The Christian Right Confronts the Republican Party. Review of Religious Research: *The Official Journal of the Religious Research Association, 39*(2), https://doi.org/10.2307/3512188

OpenLibrary.org. (2020, August 23). The press and foreign policy. (1963 edition). Open Library. https://openlibrary.org/books/OL17223073M/The_press_and_foreign_policy

Pakistan Bureau of Statistics. Salient Features - 6th Population & Housing Census 2017. 18 August 2021, https://www.pbs.gov.pk/sites/default/files//population_census/sailent_feature_%20census_2017.pdf.

Pakistan Press, Media, TV, Radio, Newspapers. (n.d.). Press Reference. 18 August, 2021, http://www.pressreference.com/No-Sa/Pakistan.html

Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act 1936. Indiacode.nic.in. 18 August 2021, https://indiacode.nic.in/bitstream/123456789/2476/1/a1936_____3.pdf

Pere, S. (2013). Of Minorities, Media and Misinformation: A Framing Analysis of The U.S. News Media Coverage of The Wisconsin Sikh Temple Shootings.

Recruitment, Appointment, Seniority and Promotion. (n.d.). Federal Service Tribunal. August 2, 2021, https://fst.gov.pk/fst-panel/uploads/tribunal_act/file_1597991806.pdf

Rehmat, A., & Alam, M. A. (2018). Hate Speech Versus Free Speech – Shrinking Spaces for Minority Voices online. Institute for Research, Advocacy and Development.

Reporters without Borders. (2018). Online Harassments of Journalists: Attack of the trolls.

Reporters without Borders. (2020). World Press Freedom Index. https://rsf.org/en/ranking

Riudalbas Clemente, S. (2021, June 22). Pakistan: Discriminatory job offers in the Government of Sindh. *Global Human Rights Defense*. https://ghrd.org/discriminatory-job-offers-in-the-government-of-sindh/

Rizvi, S. (2019, November 20). 25 Non-Muslim Pakistanis Who Have Contributed A Lot To Our Society. Parhlo. https://www.parhlo.com/25-non-muslim-pakistanis-who-have-contributed-a-lot-to-our-society/

Stout, D. A., & Buddenbaum, J. M. (2003). Media, Religion, and "Framing." *Journal of Media and Religion, 2*(1), 1–3. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15328415jmr0201_1

The Balochistan Right to Information Act 2021. pabalochistan.gov.pk. 18 August 2021, http://pabalochistan.gov.pk/pab/pab/tables/alldocuments/actdocx/2021-03-29_13:06:13_d8817.pdf

The Christian Divorce Act 1869. Punjab.gov.pk. 18 August 2021, https://hrma.punjab.gov.pk/system/files/THE%20DIVORCE%20ACT%2C1869.pdf.

The Christian Marriage Act 1872. Hrma.punjab.gov.pk. 18 August 2021, https://hrma.punjab.gov.pk/system/files/CHRISTIAN_MARRIAGE_ACT%2C_1872.doc_.pdf.

The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Pakistani.org. 18 August 2021, http://www.pakistani.org/pakistan/constitution/.

The Hindu Law of Inheritance Act 1929. punjablaws.gov.pk. 18 August 2021, http://punjablaws.gov.pk/laws/141a.html

The Hindu Marriage Act 2017. na.gov.pk. 18 August 2021, http://www.na.gov.pk/uploads/documents/1474902799_197.pdf

The Punjab Transparency and RTI Act 2013. punjablaws.gov.pk. 18 August 2021, http://punjablaws.gov.pk/laws/2547.html

The Right of Access to Information Act, 2017. na.gov.pk. 18 August 2021, http://www.na.gov.pk/uploads/documents/1506960942_594.pdf

The Sindh Hindu Marriage Act 2016. pas.gov.pk. 18 August 2021, http://www.pas.gov.pk/index.php/acts/details/en/31/310

The Sindh Transparency and Right to Information Act 2016. pas.gov.pk. 18 August 2021, http://www.pas.gov.pk/index.php/acts/details/en/31/379

The Succession Act 1925. Sja.gos.pk. 18 August 2021, https://www.sja.gos.pk/assets/BareActs/SUCCESSION%20ACT%201925.pdf

Tribune. (2016, August 15). Review: Actor in flaw? The Express Tribune. https://tribune.com.pk/story/1181281/review-actor-flaw

Ul Hassan, T., Jam, A. M., & Hussain, J. S. (2020). Crime against Media Personnel and Threats to Media Houses in Pakistan: *A Journalistic Perspective*. Researchgate.Net. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/338534579_Crime_against_Media_Personnel_and_Threats_to_Media_Houses_in_Pakistan_A_Journalistic_Perspective

UN Treaty Body Database. Tbinternet.ohchr.org. 18 August 2021, https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?CountryID=131&Lang=EN.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights. United Nations. 18 August 2021, https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights.

Voicepk. (2020, May 26). Sectarian Argument Breaks Out on BOL TV Program. Voicepk.Net. https://voicepk.net/2020/05/sectarian-argument-breaks-out-on-bol-tv-program/