

Kashmir Conflict and South Asian Elite Press: A Framing Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Using framing theory and discourse analysis, this study analyzed the editorials of elite English press of India and Pakistan regarding the Kashmir issue and the recent unrest and killings in the Indian -held Kashmir. The study critically analyzed the mediated text to reveal the dominant frames used by elite newspapers of South Asia vis-à-vis the Kashmir conflict. The findings unveil that both the selected newspapers namely *Dawn* and *The Hindu* used different frames to conceptualize the Kashmir issue. *The Hindu* framed it as India's internal law and order issue, while *Dawn* framed it as bilateral cum human rights issue having repercussions for regional peace. The study concludes that the elite press reproduced and reinforced the dominant narratives and closely followed the foreign policy discourse of their respective countries.

Keywords: *Kashmir, elite press, India, Pakistan, framing, editorials, qualitative analysis*

Introduction

Media around the world are considered to have significant effects on what issues the public thinks about and how it thinks about such issues. McComb and Shaw (1977) have argued that media are stunningly successful in telling the audience what to think about. Studies have revealed that news media are major sources of news, shape knowledge, attitudes and ideologies in societies in the modern state system (Spark, 1992; van Dijk, 2011) and play critical role in the formation of public opinion and evaluation of policy issues on international affairs (Cohen, 1973). Given the opinion formation function of media, the foreign policy officials are increasingly using the news media in the arena of foreign policy affairs both for the local and international audiences (Powlick, 1995). Studies have also revealed that there is a significant role of media as sociopolitical institutions to inform the public about the foreign events occurring beyond the national boundaries specifically on conflicts by creating meanings and making sense of such events through the process of domestication to make the news event more compatible with the local political and cultural realities (Altschull, 1995; Lee et al., 2001; Archetti, 2010; Baum & Potter, 2008). During the conflict involving two countries news media are argued to invoke nationalistic feelings among the local audiences (Okuda, 2016). Media in this sense act as national prisms and a site of ideological wars, constructing political and historical narratives for nations (Lee et al., 2001). This discursive construction of the news occurring beyond the direct experience of the audiences closely adheres to the official narratives and foreign policy circles of their respective political governments and national identities (Chan, 2012)

Media scholars have also argued that news media are linked to the sociopolitical structure of the state and frame issues according to the dominant narratives, ideologies, national interest, values and norms of the society and political system within which the media organizations operate and produce and reproduce these dominant ideologies and narratives in their discourses (Entman, 2009, Saleem, 2007; Chang, 1988). News as a form of discourse constructs the world and is a product of many social agencies and agents in the society (Archetti, 2010) and are influential in determining the public attention towards the foreign events through the issue salience of foreign affairs which the audience may not experience personally if not reported in the media (Soroka, 2003). However, it is not only mass media that domesticates foreign news on international events but also other agents including the politicians utilize foreign affairs events by linking them to local politics to meet the political motives (Alasuutari, Qadir & Creutz, 2013). Media scholars have also argued that the media framing of issues has effects on the public understanding of political issues, their causes, responsibility and solution to the issues (Iyengar, 1990) depending on the thematic and episodic framing of issues.

Background of the Study

Since the partition of British India, Kashmir has remained a contentious issue between India and Pakistan resulting wars between the two neighboring yet rival countries of South Asia. Over the years Kashmir has witnessed much unrest and protests for its self-determination. Lately, in July 8, 2016, a young militant of Kashmir, Burhan Wani died during clashes between the protesters and the Indian security forces. His killing triggered massive protests across the Indian-administered Kashmir killing over 100 protesters and injuring thousands when the Indian security forces opened fire on tens of thousands of protestors (BBC, September 5, 2016). These protests and clashes between the protestors and the security forces are reported to be the worst in the recent history of the Kashmir uprising (BBC, 13 July 2016). Though much has been written on Kashmir issue, nevertheless, the issue has not been scholarly investigated how the media on both sides frame the issue as such framing may have consequences for the public understanding of the issue and its resolution. While much political rhetoric was going on pertinent to the recent unrest in Kashmir in India and Pakistan, a discursive war was also going in the media of both countries. Thus this study aims to dwell on what kind of discourse was going in the news media of India and Pakistan vis-à-vis the Kashmir conflict. Researchers have noted that the role of media is critical during the crisis situations between two nations or countries as media can influence the public perception of both domestic and international audience through the framing of issues (Rasul, Robinson & McDowell, 2015). Previous studies have noted that news media produce and reproduce the dominant ideology and narratives in their discourse (Lee et al., 2001; Hook & Pu, 2010; Akhavan- Majid & Ramaprasad, 1998). Keeping in view the aforementioned discussion this study attempts to address the following research questions using the lenses of framing theory to better understand the relationship between media and dominant narratives and media and foreign policy relationship in the elite press of Pakistan and India.

Theoretical Framework

The study employs framing theory as a theoretical framework to understand the media discourses on the recent unrest and killings in Kashmir valley. Framing is a central concept in the study of news media. The concept of framing goes back to Goffman (1974) who defined frames as the principles of organizations which govern social events about the social world. A number of studies in the modern studies have used the framing theory as theoretical lens to understand the mediated realities about the social world and how the media and journalists alike construct these social realities in the media discourses by making salience, highlighting and downplaying, including and excluding events using various media frames (Entman, 1989; Tuchman, 1978; Graber, 1988, Goffman, 1974; Gamson& Modigliani, 1987; Pan & Kosicki, 1993). Frames are also seen as the 'interpretive packages' that give meanings to the events (Gamson& Modigliani, 1987). Through the process of framing, journalists conceptualize the issues or events that may have effects on the public understanding of issues. Thus frames in the news media are argued to be seldom chosen conscientiously by the journalists or the speakers who produce the messages. As Iyengar (1977) has explicated that the news frames are frequently drawn from and reflect of the shared cultural narratives and stereotypes which are in resonance with the larger socio-cultural context within which the news media organizations operate. Scholars have noted that frames organize news stories by the process of selection, inclusion and exclusion and interpretation of information (Tuchman, 1978). The public understanding of issues is dependent upon how the media frame them in their discourses and presentations. Entman (1993, p. 52) has defined framing as:

To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicative text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment for recommendation for the item described.

Gitlin (1980) writes " frames are largely unspoken and unacknowledged; organize the world both for the journalists who report it and, in some important degree, for us who rely on their reports" (p.7). Such frames relate media texts to overall social and ideological context. The manifestations of such frames in the media discourses can be; namely, metaphors, catchphrases, exemplars, arguments, word selection, description and visual images (Gamson&Lasch, 1983). In the process of news framing, the news media thus can play a powerful role in determining the success, failure and outcomes of any news event. Other media scholar Lewis and Reese (2009) have discussed that frames are tools used by the social actors to structure reality and are "often embedded in and resonate with the everyday culture, and thus are considered normal and natural, their impact is by stealth" (p.3). In their writing on framing theory, Chong and Druckman (2007) have defined framing as a theory that refers to the process of conceptualization of an issue by the public or reorientation of the public thinking about an issue. Scholars have also argued that news is a constructed reality by the journalists or the news institutions by selecting, highlighting, shaping, framing and shading of the information in their reportage and is said to be the result of interaction between journalists and their sources of news produced within a sense making framework with its own professional rules including moral, ethical and political judgments. Media scholar Schudson (2003) has noted:

Frames in the media are principles of selection, emphasis, emphasis, and presentation composed of little tacit theories about what exists, what happens, and what matters.....[framing] is a persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation, of selection , emphasis, and exclusion, by which symbol-handlers organize discourse whether verbal or visual. (p.35)

Thus the news –making involves not only what has happened but also how it has been reported and presented in the media discourse in the shape of news by the news makers for the readers and viewers of the news. This suggests that framing is an inevitable process involved in the production and dissemination of news. Thus news is not a mirror of reality but a representation of reality about the social world and representations are humanly handled and produced thus are selective (Schudson, 2003). Scholars have also argued that frame could be done in two ways namely; thematic framing and episodic framing. Iyengar (1990) has explained that thematic framing refers to the way in which the media frame events or issues in broader historical context by drawing the backgrounds and foregrounds of issues. Thematic framing provides a more explained account of issues that helps readers to understand the issues from all possible angles. Episodic framing on the other hand is issue-centric without providing much background details of the issues and with no contextual details. Such framing of issues as suggested by Iyengar (1990) can affect the public understanding of issues embedded in society.

Framing studies have also noted that the media coverage of events and issues must be culturally congruent and reinforce the widely held cultural values and schemas. Scholars have maintained that mass media reflect and reify the social consensus in the media account of foreign news and that national interest and dominant ideology play a central role in defining the media accounts of the political world (Lee & Yang, 1995). During the crisis situations journalists generally hold values that are widely shared and accepted within the larger sociopolitical settings the journalists belong to and reproduce and reinforce the official narratives on issues involving two nations or countries. Thus in such situations journalist ‘rally around the state’ by emphasizing and humanizing in-group members in the news coverage and heavily relying on their government sources (Hook & Pu, 2006). From the social psychological perspective, the in-group and out-group identities are very important in the construction of news primarily during a crisis situation involving two ideologically opposite groups. Scholars have argued that during the crisis situations news media construct the in-group identity in a highly positive representation while the out-group identity is presented in highly negative representations (Chan, 2014). On the basis of aforementioned literature review, this study poses the following questions:

RQ#1: How did the Dawn frame the recent conflict/protests in the Indian Held Kashmir?

RQ#2: How did The Hindu frame the recent protests/conflict in the Indian Held Kashmir?

RQ#3: What similarities and differences if any were there in the framing of the Kashmir conflict both in the Dawn and The Hindu?

RQ#4: Do Dawn and The Hindu closely follow the foreign policy narratives of their respective countries in their editorials on Kashmir issue?

Methodology and Selection of Data

Method

This study employs qualitative framing analysis to investigate the research questions. The major inquiry was how the elite press of India and Pakistan frame the recent conflict in Kashmir in their editorial discourses. A number of studies have used qualitative analysis as a methodology in framing analysis to understand the characteristics of the texts and infer reliable meanings from the analysis of the textual genres (Rasul et al., 2015; de Souza, 2010) and also to reveal the persistent patterns and recurring themes/frames from the qualitative analysis (Hook & Pu, 2010). Qualitative method allows the researcher to discern implicit patterns and themes providing more meaningful insights to understand which frames have been used in the discourse (Golan & Lukito, 2015, Golan, 2010, Braun & Clarke, 2006) and goes beyond counting explicit words or phrases and focuses on to discern both implicit and explicit themes and meanings in the data (Guest et al., 2012). First as a rule of qualitative text analysis, all editorial were read multiple times line by line to get an overall sense of the textual data keeping in view how the Kashmir issue is talked about in the editorials of the selected newspapers and what is the 'dominant reading' (Hall, 1980) of the text. Next as a guiding principle of framing analysis, I looked for the key words, phrases, ideological words, exemplars, arguments, word selection and the core idea of the text for the 'interpretive packages' (Gamson & Modigliani, 1987) by reading line by line each editorial for the key frames.

Finally, a framework was generated to examine the categories emerged from the analysis using the constant comparison technique-comparing and contrasting themes that emerged from the analysis and putting them into the categories to avoid the repetition of frames by looking at the overall sense of the editorial (de Souza, 2010). A close attention was also paid to the ideological messages embedded in the text (Lee & Yang, 1995). The unit of analysis is the individual editorial in the selected newspapers. Various studies in the media and communication have used textual analysis as a tool of qualitative research that is useful for deconstructing the text for greater insights by going beyond the manifest content of the media and critically questioning the underlying ideological and cultural assumptions of the text (Fursich, 2009: 240; Derrida, 1976). Studies have previously noted that textual analysis as a methodological tool has been widely used in the media framing of global affairs in the journalistic texts (Golan & Carroll, 2012) and is argued to be an important methodological choice for the study of mediated realities and ideological contestation prevalent in the media texts (Fursich, 2009). Scholars have also noted the qualitative text analysis could lead to discern deeper insights and meanings in the mediated text (Fairclough, 2003) then the explicit measures of the quantitative analysis which is based on the observable and quantifiable data

Data

The corpus the study consists of the editorials appeared in The Hindu and Dawn from July 11, 2016 to 24 September, 2016 discussing the recent unrest in Kashmir.

Editorials are special genres of media organizations having a special role in the newspapers and are less tied to the journalistic norm of objectivity (Lee & Lin, 2006). They are sites for the newspaper organizations to articulate events and participate in the public debate (Le, 2003) and are considered to be free from the journalistic constraints of objectivity in journalism (Ryan, 2004) and provide the newspaper readers with in-depth insights, perspectives and opinions on complex issue of public significance (Golan, 2010). Editorials are also considered significant in their ideological role as they reflect the ideological stance of the news media organizations and owners of those organizations (Izadi & Saghaye-Biria, 2007). Other scholars have also argued that editorials are useful in their interpretations of the news of the day for the readers and reflect the stances of the newspapers on various events in accordance with the institutional orientation of the news media organizations (Onyedbadi, 2016). Editorials thus constitute a site particularly pertinent for observing the media's ideological discourses in their framing of issues and events (Lee et al., 2011) and is a relevant media genre for the study of predominant narratives and ideological assumptions in a society (van Dijk, 1992).

Newspapers Selection

The newspapers selected for the study are Dawn and The Hindu which are stated to be the elite and leading newspapers of Pakistan and India respectively. Both the stated newspapers are argued to have a wide circulation and readership and are influential in the foreign policy making circles (Rasul et al., 2015; Onyedbadi, 2016; de Souza, 2010; Khan, Farooq & Gul, 2016; (Romero-Trillo, 2011). Both The Hindu and Dawn are argued to be the representatives of English journalism in their respective countries and are noted to be the agenda setters for other news media outlets in the media landscape of India and Pakistan.

Finally, while analyzing the editorials close attention was also paid to lexicons i.e. freedom fighters versus terrorists. Sykes (1985) has argued that choice of words referring to the same things by different speakers suggests the ideological orientations of the speakers/producers of the text. In addition to this, to unearth the framing and ideological stance of the newspapers regarding the Kashmir conflict, attention was also paid to the words, idioms, metaphors, catchphrases, exemplars, arguments, word selection, and argumentative structure of the texts as these selection of words and lexicons reflect the framing of the issue by various news media organizations (Gamson & Lasch, 1983).

Finding and Analysis

The inductive framing analysis revealed that there were meaningful differences in the framing of the Kashmir issue in the editorials of Dawn and The Hindu. Although both the newspapers published significant number of editorials on the recent unrest and killings in Kashmir; the frames used by both newspapers differed significantly over the Kashmir issue, its causes and responsibility and solution to the issue. The analysis found two major distinctive frames used by the selected newspapers pertinent to the Kashmir issue. The Hindu framed the Kashmir issue predominantly as an internal law and order issue; Dawn framed it a bilateral and human rights issue. These frames are discussed in more details in the following section.

The Hindu: Kashmir as internal law and order issue

From July 12, 2016 to September 24, 2016, The Hindu published 11 editorials pertinent to recent unrest and killings in Kashmir predominantly framing it as an internal law and order issue. The dominant discourse in its editorials was about how to control the protesters and what measures to be taken by the police to improve the law and order situation in Kashmir. The choice of lexicons and title of the editorials signals how the The Hindu frames the killings and unrest in Kashmir. “Calming the Valley” (The Hindu, July, 12, 2016), “Learning to control crowds” (The Hindu, July 15, 2016), “for starters, ban the pellet gun” (The Hindu, August 24, 2016), “Answering Pakistan’s provocations” (The Hindu, August 17, 2016) were the headlines/ titles of the editorials. This selection of words suggests that The Hindu discussed the recent unrest and killings in Kashmir as a routine internal law and order issue. The primary focus was on how the police should use the force more professionally. It however, criticized the ‘brutal use of force’ by the police on the young protesters. It linked young militant commander who was killed by the Indian police to Hizb-ul-Mujahideen implicating that he belonged to a militant and banned organization and was killed during the ‘encounter’ with police. As the following Excerpt narrates:

It is evident that the security forces have failed to exercise enough restraint given the nature of the injuries sustained by many young men and women. A high injured have suffered pellet injuries in the eyes (The Hindu, July 15, 2016).

..after long, after more than a decade of violence led by foreign militants, he [Burhan Wani] was the rare local boy to be seen in a leadership role (The Hindu, July 15, 2016).

The narrative structure here narrates the suffering of the protesters at the hand of the police. In the second part of the editorial, The Hindu implicates Pakistan indirectly for the militancy in Kashmir. The word choice ‘foreign’ and ‘rare local boy’ suggests that the movement in Kashmir has been supported allegedly by Pakistan or from outside of India. The overall sense of the editorials written by The Hindu on the Kashmir issue is about the lack of professional capacity of Indian police to control the crowd without revealing the causes behind the protests and what the protestors were demanding at the first hand. To mitigate the demands and the freedom movement, however the The Hindu advised the Indian government for a political ‘exercise’ without explicating what does it meant by political exercise. Without using the words of political solution, autonomy, freedom, self-determination, The Hindu tried to undermine and downplay the actual reasons and demands of the protestors. It did mention for political dialogue with the ‘genuine’ Kashmiri leadership without explaining it. However, in all its editorials it never supported or discussed ‘bilateral’ talks involving Indian, Kashmiri people and Pakistan. By not mentioning ‘bilateral’ talks The Hindu reinforced and supported the Indian government’s policy narratives over the Kashmir issue terming it as an internal issue of India. It did not mention the UN resolutions on Kashmir neither it discussed the Kashmir issue as an international or human rights issue. By framing it as an internal and law and order issue, The Hindu echoed the dominant ideology of India pertinent to Kashmir issue. However, The Hindu criticized the Indian government for its use of force, not

engaging with the Kashmiris and violent actions and condemned “a total clampdown” (*The Hindu*, July 20, 2016) in the valley by the Indian government. The Hindu also criticized the Indian prime minister for his speech raising the issue of Balochistan as it will weak India’s Kashmir case: As the following excerpts state:

Instead of engaging with the range of reasons that drew young Kashmiris out to the streets in the full knowledge that they risked injury, even death, the government at the Centre and in the State took refuge in platitude and evasion (*The Hindu*, July 20, 2016)

The truth is that raising the issue of Balochistan will not solve India’s domestic challenge in Jammu and Kashmir; of failing to humanely control the protests over the past month. Nor will it change Pakistan’s consistent instigation of violence in J& K (*The Hindu*, August 17, 2016)

Using the word ‘instigate’ *The Hindu* has implicated Pakistan for the unrest and protests in Kashmir. The Hindu also criticized the speech of Pakistani prime minister regarding Kashmir and the violent actions of India at the UN general assembly terming it as “rough words” and “castigation” of Pakistan. The dominant discourse in the editorials of *The Hindu* is that Kashmir is an internal issue of India and must be dealt unilaterally. Thus *The Hindu* toed the lines of the Indian establishment by tanking a stance on Kashmir issue as a law and order and internal issue that must not be discussed any international forum including the UN. In its editorial “Jaw-jaw at the General Assembly” (*The Hindu*, September 24, 2016), the newspaper echoed the lines took by the India at the UN forum against Pakistan for the latter’s support of “Kashmiri militants” and termed Kashmir issue as an internal issue. It stated that the international community including the UN pays no attention to the rhetoric raise by Pakistan over the Kashmir issue. As one of its articles stated:

However [given PM Sharif’s rhetoric on Kashmir] in a signal of how little such rhetoric matters, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon made no reference to it in his speech.... the world has little time for a ‘low intensity’ conflict that has stretched on for almost 70 years (*The Hindu*, September 24, 2016).

As the previous studies have noted that during the crisis involving two opposite countries, the press takes the lines of the respective state within which it operates (see the introduction above). When on 18 September 2016, Indian soldiers were killed in an attack; *The Hindu* without presenting any evidence supported the stance taken by the Indian government stating that Pakistani militants have attacked the Indian army in Uri. As the following excerpts states:

Gathering evidence regarding the four terrorists who stormed the army base in Uri, killing 18 soldiers, suggests they are from Pakistan and had been sent across the border explicitly for this attack. In fact, the entire operation has the fingerprints of Pakistan’s military establishment, showing yet again the country’s persistent use of terrorism as state policy (*The Hindu*, September 20, 2016).

The Hindu blatantly blamed Pakistan for the alleged involvement in the killings of the Indian forces in the Indian-held Kashmir and presented it as a ‘fact’. However, the fact was that the attack was condemned by Pakistan and no

intelligence was shared with Pakistan that may confirm the involvement of Pakistan in the mentioned attack. The Hindu discursively constructed Kashmir issue as an internal India issue and the dominant discourse was on how to control an agitated mob and how to improve the police professionalism to restrain the use of force against Kashmiris. By presenting the issue in such a way, The Hindu did not discuss what the protesters were demanding and causes behind the protest in Kashmir. By excluding the freedom and self-determination demands and the waving of Pakistan flags by the protestors; The Hindu downplayed the demands of the Kashmiri protestors and undermined the freedom struggle of the movement. Thus the newspapers produced and reproduced the dominant narratives of India over Kashmir issue and closely followed the foreign policy of India regarding the Kashmir issue. The Hindu did not use the lexicons of human rights, freedom, and self-determination even in a single of its editorials.

Dawn: Kashmir as bilateral cum human rights issue

In contrast to The Hindu, the dominant frame Dawn used vis-à-vis the Kashmir issue and the recent unrest was human rights issue with Pakistan as a stake holder in its resolution. From July 12 to August 22, 2016, Dawn published 14 editorials pertinent to the recent unrest in Kashmir and declared the India killing of Kashmiris as “a war against the people in Indian-held Kashmir” (Dawn, July 21, 2016). The analysis revealed that the Dawn in its editorials discourses condemned the ‘Indian brutalities’ in the Kashmir valley. A cursory look at the lexical choices unveils the significant differences between the two newspapers. Dawn used the framing devices viz. “Kashmir unrest”, “bloodshed”, “Indian Held Kashmir”, “brute force”, “injustices”, “Kashmiri’s sufferings”. These framing devices suggest that the framing of the two newspapers is different from each other. Dawn in its editorials stated Kashmir as a “historical one that needs a political solution” (Dawn, July 12, 2016). It criticized India for taking the Kashmir unrest as a law and order problem. As the following excerpts states:

Indeed, the current disaffection with New Delhi’s rule is very much an indigenous Kashmir phenomenon, while India’s harsh methods are helping create a new generation of militants, such as the late Burhan Wani (Dawn, July 12, 2016).

Contrary to The Hindu, Dawn proposed that solution to the Kashmir issue lies in dialogue that “must involve Islamabad, whenever it resumes- with the Kashmiris themselves taking an active part in conversation”. Dawn supporting the Pakistani official policy stated that both Pakistan and Kashmiris are stakeholders to the solution of Kashmir issue. As the following lines tells:

“A peaceful solution acceptable to Pakistan, India and the people of Kashmir should be goal arrived at on the negotiating table” (Dawn, July 12, 2016).

The overall narrative structure of editorials discourses of Dawn regarding the Kashmir issue were based on human rights violation by India. India and its policies towards the Kashmir unrest were represented very negatively and critically. In so doing Dawn closely followed the policy line of Pakistani state on Kashmir. As the following excerpt describes:

.. the brutal suppression of protesters in IHK and the Indian state’s arrogant assertion that the disputed region is a so- called internal matter for

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India suggests an undermining of the core dialogue process that India and Pakistan must eventually hold (Dawn, 26 July, 2016).

And,

India should realize its strategy in the held territory has not borne fruit; militarizing Kashmir has only increased the local's resentment against New Delhi, which has tried to paint the uprising as a mere law and order issue. The current unrest has roots in the history of the region, and political stalemate.....as Kashmir's recent history has shown, brutal state repression will only further alienate Kashmiris, and cause disenchanting youth to pick up the gun

(Dawn, August 17, 2016).

The aforementioned editorial in Dawn makes India responsible for the unrest and unresolved issue of Kashmir and condemned India for its inhumane treatment of the Kashmiri youth and brutal use of force. The overall sense of the discourse is that India is violating human rights in Kashmir and the issue can only be resolved if India changes its attitude and listens to the alienated people of Kashmir. However, taking a realist approach Dawn also mentioned that since the international community has lost its interests, Kashmir can only be solved bilaterally between India and Pakistan. At the same time Dawn was also critical about Pakistan for not controlling the banned militant organizations that have put the Kashmir cause in danger. In its editorial titled "Kashmir cause in danger" Dawn wrote:

Instead of rallying even the sympathetic parts of world opinion to the plight of the Kashmiris, protests by banned militant groups inside Pakistan may only end up tainting by association the Kashmiri cause (Dawn, July 21, 2016).

Dawn also advocated that both India and Pakistan should co-operate each other on terrorism issues and the militant organization inside Pakistan should not be allowed to sabotage the dialogue process and the Kashmir cause. As in one of its editorials Dawn stated, "India's automatic blaming of Pakistan for major violence in that country is very much a part of the problem" (Dawn September, 19, 2016). It also advised both countries not to blame each other for the terror activities both in India and Pakistan without any actionable evidence and must resume the communication line as there is no alternative to dialogue and should not play politics over the Kashmir issue to appease the local sentiments and to achieve political motives. Over all the editorials of Dawn treated the Kashmir issue as a human rights issue and the uprising therein as an indigenous phenomenon for which India cannot blame Pakistan for the uprising against India for the latter's brutal action and state use of force against the Kashmiri people.

Discussion and Conclusion

Editorial discourses play important role in stating the ideological stances of news organizations over important political and social issues and shaping the public opinion and understanding of salient issues (Entman, 2008). The study aimed at how the elite press of South Asia frames the Kashmir issue in general and specifically the recent unrest and protests in the valley in their editorial discourses using the framing strategies. The analysis reveals that there are irreconcilable

differences in the framing of *The Hindu* and *Dawn* vis-à-vis the Kashmir issue. *The Hindu* taking the Indian official line on Kashmir framed the Kashmir issue as an internal law and order issue and not a freedom struggle or self-determination movement. Its editorials primarily focused on how to control the crowd and how to avoid the use of police force. It depicted that the killings of the Kashmiri youth happened during 'encounter' with police suggesting that the mob was violent and aggressive and the police had to take actions. The lexicalization of editorials of *The Hindu* mainly reflected the issue as a routine law and order issue. *The Hindu* did not use words like freedom, struggle, indigenous movement thus constructed the issue using the linguistic choices as an internal issue. It downplayed the causes of the uprising, its roots, and demands of the protestors. It used episodic framing (Iyengar, 1990) in discussing the Kashmir issue focusing on the event itself and avoided to discuss it in a broader historical context detailing the reason and causes behind the protest. In this way *The Hindu* tried to dilute the demands of the protestors and their struggle for independence from the Indian state. Studies have shown that the language and selection of words and lexicons in the media texts can be essential in both the escalation and de-escalation of conflict and the language is in no way neutral or objective but ideologically loaded (Romero-Trillo, 2011). Thus the textual analysis of *The Hindu* reveals that the linguistic choices and semantic structure of the discourse are ideologically loaded reinforcing the dominant Indian narratives vis-à-vis Kashmir issue. *The Hindu* thus closely followed the Indian policy narratives on Kashmir and treated it as a unilateral issue of India and its solution lies within India and not with the bilateral talks with Pakistan. *The Hindu* did not use once the words like bilateral, self-determination, freedom struggle and Indian held Kashmir in its discourses. It often referred to Pakistan and its political leadership in an overwhelmingly unfavorable tone and represented Pakistan negatively; thus reproducing the dominant Indian ideology and nationalistic biases toward Pakistan over the Kashmir issue. *The Hindu* prevalently quoted the Indian official sources and did not give any space to the Kashmiri voices including the protestors despite having direct access to the valley.

Dawn framed India as aggressor and violator of human rights in Kashmir and framed Kashmir issue as an historical one rejecting the Indian claims of it being an internal India issue. Through its linguistic choices and framing device *Dawn* framed the issue as a genuine and justified struggle against the Indian state oppression. It rejected the Indian claims of external involvement and reinforced the Pakistani official narratives that Kashmir struggle is an indigenous one and cannot be suppressed using the 'brutal' force of India. Furthermore the analysis reveals that *Dawn* has treated the Kashmir issue as bilateral issue with Pakistan as an important stakeholder. However, *Dawn* also warned Pakistan not to allow the militant elements within Pakistan to sabotage the Kashmir cause. Using the thematic framing (Iyengar, 1990) *Dawn* discussed the Kashmir issue in a broader context narrating the roots, causes and responsibility for the suffering of Kashmiri people. Thus using the thematic frame *Dawn* discussed the issue in more details providing the readers with a broader context of the issue of Kashmir. By framing the Kashmir issue as human rights and bilateral issue, *Dawn* reflected the dominant Pakistani official narratives over the Kashmir issue and advocated that the only solution to Kashmir is the dialogue involving India, Pakistan and the people of Kashmir. Both newspapers unequivocally supported the official foreign policy of their respective countries. This study supports the previous findings and

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concludes that the media discourses on foreign affairs especially during the crisis situation often reflect and reinforce the official discourse (Entman, 2003) and domesticate foreign news within frameworks that is compatible to the local norms and consumption (Alasuutari, Qadir&Creutz, 2013). This study has many limitations. It considers only editorials of the selected newspapers. Future study may be conducted on how the Kashmir issue is framed in the news and opinion discourses of the elite and vernacular press of India and Pakistan. Given the ubiquity of TV and new media, studies can also be conducted on how the Kashmir issue and the uprising therein are framed in the TV and social media.

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