



RESEARCH PAPER

**Representation of Religious Minorities in Pakistani and Indian
Print Media: A Comparative Analysis**

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PAPER INFO

Received:
February 15, 2018

Accepted:
June 24, 2018

Online:
June 30, 2018

Keywords:

Media
Representation,
Religious
Minorities,
Pakistan and
Indian Media

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed to analyze and compare the pattern of minority representation in Pakistani and Indian print media. Representation of minorities in the media is important to address as mass media is playing apart in making and maintain the identities. There are many discourses on image building of minority groups. Considering the sharing of common background of Muslims and Hindus the study investigated whether there are any biases with regard to the representation of religious minorities and specifically Indian Muslims and Pakistani Hindus in their respective print media from 1990 to 2010. Through content analysis and working under the theory of media hegemony the study concluded that there is an unequal and biased representation of religious minorities in Pakistani and Indian print media. Pakistani print media has been more silent with respect to Pakistani Hindus whereas Indian print media has given more negative representation to Indian Muslims

Introduction

The question of minority, although not new, has been very crucial than ever before. As the fast means of communication technology, global trade and tourism are making the world shrink into a small village of diverse population with their own ideologies and value systems. The countries are no more having a single culture but have transformed into multicultural societies having varieties of cultures due to various religious, ethnic and racial minority groups practicing their own culture and rituals. Different countries treat minority groups according to their policies towards them whereas the image of minority group can be imagined through one's own perception. Moreover, unequal social structure can also lead to perceive their image (Richard, 2002). Media as an important social institution and a mean of socialization shares responsibility in terms of equal and balanced representation of every group of society. Population distribution by religion in

Pakistan, 1998 Census reported 96.28 % Muslims of the total population, 1.6% Hindus, 1.58% Christians, 0.22% Ahmadis, 0.25% scheduled castes and 0.07% others (PBS, 2011). The population census of India in 2001 reported 80.5% of Hindus of the total population whereas 13.4% Muslims, 2.3% Christians, 1.9 % Sikhs, Buddhism as 0.8% and Jainism counts about 0.4% whereas rests of the minorities practice other religions. Yet, there had been many conflicting situations with regard to religious minorities in India. The demolition of Babri mosque in 1992, Gujrat riots, Ram Janmabhoomi attack in 2005 in Ayodhya, Jama Masjid explosions in 2006, and the terrorist attack on Mumbai Train in July 2006 have been blamed to create chaos situation between both countries. There were other incidents as well that started Hindu-Muslim riots (Amon, 2006).

Media is responsible in creating image in a bad or good manner as it has been considered as an important tool in projecting image of the world to the people. The influential power of mass media cannot be denied in building attitudes, perceptions and beliefs about others. Minorities are essential part of a society (Ali, 2010). The participatory role of minorities cannot be ignored. As minorities are serving in every field of life and putting forward their efforts to enhance the image of their country by bravely participating in development procedures (Ambreen, 2012). They have stepped in various professions like judges, journalists, teachers and businessmen. Salim, D'souza & Isuzā (2006) highlighted the role of minority groups in the development and progress of country as they have contributed a lot towards the success of the nation.

Pakistan and India share historical background which left common cultural legacy to both the countries. As well as, the relations between Pakistan and India have been quite disturbing over the decades which resulted in wars and sometimes diplomatic affairs. Here this research study is of importance to point out the media treatment towards the religious minorities and specially with the investigation of media representation of religious minorities in the context of Pakistan and India relations. The era of 90s and first decade of new millennium was very important due to the prominence of issues raised about the religious minorities in both Pakistan and India. Secondly, the up and down relations between the two countries in these decades created many conflict and many agreement were signed to improve relations between India and Pakistan.

Literature Review

Representation of Religious Minorities in Pakistani Media

Gregory and Valentine (2009) explained that some minorities have maintained their positions in a majority and exercise power living in Pakistan. A rough analysis reported that majority of the minorities are facing problem due to discrimination, unequal rights, unequal representation, bad distribution of jobs, uncertain violence and oppression as well. Faruqi (2011) analyzed the conditions and circumstances of minorities in Pakistan and reported that there were violent

protests regarding amendments in the controversial blasphemy laws in 2010. Similarly, Gregory (2008) argued that many Christians living in Pakistan experience marginalization in every sphere of life. They have been treated at lower level and as second class natives of Pakistan and always faced violence, discrimination, regression and were kept powerless. Ali (2010) put forward that people see minorities in similar ways as presented by media. They have been seen as a fanatic and fundamentalists and their image have already been created in the society. The study examined the media distortion of facts related to minorities. Mesti (2011) considers books as a mean of developing beliefs. Mesti investigated about the stereotypical concepts created in schools textbooks against Hindu minority. Malik's (2002) report narrated different facts that show challenges to the minorities. There are many people who belong to different sects and religion. These include Christians, Hindu, Sikhs, Ahmediyya and others. It has been gained that minorities are in under continuous threats and cannot live their lives easily. They are victims of biased form of doings and incidents. Pakistan has not provided basic rights to Christians and Ahmediyya in a society. Due to Pakistan India disputes, Hindu families in Pakistan face many issues and being depressed by social economic setbacks, their women suffer from moral harassments.

Describing the effects of religious extremism on media Munir (2002) highlighted that religious groups have tried to dominate the system and national agenda of the country due to which its progress is restricted and no modernization is carried out. Khan (2010) stated there are different ideological views related to the representation of minorities in media and in the world. Gregory (2012) explained the context to the murders of Taseer and Bhatti and to understand why these violent acts received such widespread national support. These murders highlighted the worsening situation for Christians (and other religious minorities) in Pakistan. Syed (2006) analyzed the ethnicity and religious difficulties and their coverage in Pakistani print media and concluded that minorities lack cultural representation and face discrimination.

Representation of Minorities in Indian Media

Khan (2009) in his ethnographic study explored the role of Indian media regarding the youth living in the Muslim community of New Delhi. The study showed that how Indian media changed since 1991, portraying the lives of Muslim community in the Jamia Enclave. The findings further have elucidated that Muslims are taken as isolated and resistant of modernization processes whereas the youth living in Jamia has denied this attitude of old generation. Media has played an important role in this regard, women have gain knowledge and have been motivated through ambitious and careers outside their community. Furthermore, while discussing about the management of Muslim communities in India, Kutty (1997) highlighted the role of Muslim leadership in rebuilding of Muslim community after the destruction of Babri Masjid and portrayed Hindu ideology the "us" versus "them" psyche. Kutty has suggested Muslim leaders to promote the rights of Muslims for their betterment and has also put light on main

issues of both religions. Ahmed(2010) has addressed the role of Indian media regarding the image building of Muslims. He stated multiple reasons of biases representation of minorities, mainly the relations of journalists with BJP. Addressing the relationship of religious beliefs and minority status Sahu (2010) investigated the reproductive behavior of Muslims and Hindus. The author described that in Indian and Bangladeshi cases, the normative order informs the women regarding Islam's stand on reproductive matters specifically the use of contraception and induced abortion.

Representation of Minorities in Western Media

Representations of minorities in media had been a long debated issue in West. Many studies focused on the depiction of minorities in media and also on the influences of media images on the perceptions about minorities groups. Jaferi(1998) investigated the community views regarding the coverage of Muslim women in main stream media of Canada. This study emphasized on the importance of creating awareness in the society and to change negative approaches. This study pointed about the negative image of Islam as a major reason in making such images of Muslims. Tolley (2011) concluded that race is still the least important factor of identity but the politics of Canada is not paying attention to this discourse. The evidences showed that there is lack of minority's participation in the elected bodies and the media is also not playing its role in connecting these minorities representation to the voters. Georgia (2000) argued that historical, social, political and national context plays a role in creating the mind sets of people and the way people share identity and ethnicity in daily life.

There have been different trends of investigations about minorities in media. d'Haenens,& El Sghiar (2010) studied the deviation in research on minorities and media in Netherlands during last two decades. Hussian (2000) examined the role of Dutch media in promoting intolerance against minorities. The study concluded that there was no proper interaction between majority and minority population and majority was influenced by the media. Peach and Glebe (1995) narrated in that Muslims in Western Europe have grown up since 1950s. There are now more diversified believes of Muslims. This article investigated about the position, ranking and the number of relevant minorities in different countries. Marranci (2011) argued that the Muslims living in Singapore and UK face different problems but the most important problem was their image building that how they have been perceived in these two countries of modernization. Further the study revealed that Muslims had no idea how to get identified by other people of same state. Review of literature concluded that minorities are being discriminated and marginalized due to certain reasons. Although the media is diversified and pluralist in Pakistan and India but still there is unequal and biased representation of religious minorities. It is being hypothesized that the representation of Christians is higher in Pakistani print media as compared to

other religious minorities (H1) and the representation of Muslims is higher in Indian print media as compared to other religious minorities (H2).

Media Hegemony as Theoretical Framework

Antonio Gramsci contends that mass media assumes a critical part in the formation of qualities and convictions that are to be trailed by the overall population. Political force is gotten from the ethical and erudite administration, power, or consensus that emerges from this 'false awareness'. Hegemony in mass media lies in the way it makes the decision belief system appear common, diverts the masses from their mistreatment, and upgrades the social steadiness (Block, 2013). It is the predominance and subordination that exists inside individuals' handy and un-unsure familiarity with the world, an existed arrangement of implications, a pretty much brought together good request, which is affirmed and nuanced in experience to build an individual's feeling of reality and character. Administration is the "social premise of the lowly tyranny". The media has a central part in this speculation and the demonstration of the procedure has wound up additional to the fore in examination of the way the ideological media are at within the fight for buyers' brains and central points of view. Inside the current hypothetical atmosphere, the hypothesis has been adjusted to incorporate the hypothesis of 'assent'. The hypothesis exists to attempt and clarify the route in which Pakistani and Indian media strategies are made and authorized.

As in hegemony, Gramsci's claimed that dominant groups maintain their dominance without any cohesion same is spot on the representation of minorities in present media. It is theorized that the dominant mass media do not maintain its dominance by force but through winning consent of minority groups. The nature of treatment and identities presented for the religious minority groups appear so natural and taken for granted to them that there is no question and resistance to media. This is not only in case of majority minority relationship but within the religious minority groups the media maintains its dominance by unequal treatment of various minority groups in the form of over representation or under representation.

Material and Method

The study opted quantitative methodology and applied *content analysis* to analyze the media texts on minorities. The universe for this study comprised of Pakistani and Indian main stream print media from 1990 to 2010. Purposive sampling method has been selected based on the arguments of highest circulations and widely read newspapers both in Pakistan and India. So the sample is comprised of Daily Dawn and the Nation from Pakistani print media and Hindustan Times and Times of India from Indian print media in the selected time period (1990 – 2010). The sample has been collected both online and manually from libraries. Online data has been collected through Factiva database and available online archives of newspapers. The rest of data has been collected through libraries

whose online archives were not available. The *units of analysis* include news and editorial. Categories for Pakistani print media were developed as Christians, Hindus, Sikh, Ahmadis and others, however were further divided into positive, negative, and neutral subcategories. Similarly, categories for Indian print media were developed as Christians, Muslims, Sikh and others and further sub divided into positive, negative, and neutral.

Operational Definitions of Categories and Key Terms

Positive: The news story and editorials related to development and progress in social, political, cultural and economic sectors of religious minority groups are operationalized as positive. Furthermore it also incorporates promotion of democratic values, peace and harmony, celebrations of religious rituals and events related to minorities, religious tolerance, solidarity, support for pilgrims, educational empowerment, welfare, better health conditions, and employment opportunities and uplift in the life standards of various religious minorities. In addition the statements of leaders whether of minority or majority party for minorities' rights and statements of leaders of minority group in the favor of government and majority that show harmony and cooperation are also included. The media support for the voices and protests of religious minorities to make amendments in blasphemy law is also considered as positive.

Negative: Negative news stories and editorials are operationalized as depicting corruption, blasphemy, anarchy, violent protests of religious minority group. It also includes political, economic and social and religious conflicts related to minorities groups.

Neutral: Such news stories and editorial that do not support or against and the religious minorities fall in neutral category.

Religious minorities: In the present research religious minorities are operationalized as the groups of people having different religious beliefs as compared to the majority of the people of the country and are committed to their own religious practices. The religion of the majority is Islam in Pakistan so religious minorities are Christians, Sikh, Hindu, Ahmadis and others. Whereas the religion of majority is Hinduism in India so religious minorities are Muslims, Christians, Sikhs and others.

Results and Discussion

Table 1

Patterns of Minority representation in Pakistani print media from 1990 - 2010

Minority	Christians		Hindus		Sikh		Ahmadis		Others		Total
Positive	919	63.5%	180	75%	229	73.9%	45	35.2%	528	80.6%	1901
Row %		48.3%		9.5%		12%		2.4%		27.8%	100%
Negative	176	12.2%	40	16.7%	17	5.5%	57	44.5%	44	6.7%	334

Row%	52.7%	12%	5%	17%	13.2%	100%					
Neutral	351	24.3%	20	8.3%	64	20.6%	26	20.3%	83	12.7%	544
Row%	64.5%	3.7%	11.8%	4.8%	15.2%	100%					
Total	1446	240	100%	310	100%	128	100%	655	100%	2779	
Total %	52%	8.6%	11.2%	4.6%	23.6%	100%					

Table 1 shows the overall pattern of representation of religious minorities in Pakistani print media. According to the table Christians were given 63.5% positive, 12.2% negative, and 24.3% neutral coverage. Hindus were given 75% positive, 16.7% negative and 8.3% neutral coverage. Sikh were represented as 73.9% positive, 5.5% negative, and 20.6% neutral. Ahmadis were given 35.2% positive, 44.5% negative and 20.3% neutral coverage in media. In addition, other religious minorities were given 80.6% positive, 6.7% negative and 12.7% negative representation. Analyzing patterns of representation Christians have highest, 48.3, whereas Ahmadis have lowest, 2.4%, positive representation. Christians have given highest 52.7% whereas Sikh have given lowest 5% negative representation. Christians have given highest 64.5% whereas Hindus have given lowest 3.7% neutral representation.

Table 2

Patterns of Minority representation in Pakistani print media from 1990 - 2010

Minority	Christians	Hindus	Sikh	Ahmadis	Others	Total
Positive	919	180	229	45	528	1901
Total %	33%	6.5%	8.3%	1.6%	19%	68.4%
Negative	176	40	17	57	44	334
Total %	6.3%	1.4%	0.6%	2.1%	1.6%	12%
Neutral	351	20	64	26	83	544
Total %	12.7%	0.7%	2.3%	0.9%	3%	19.6%
Total	1446	240	310	128	655	2779
Total %	52%	8.5%	11.2%	4.6%	23.6%	100%

Table 2 shows the overall patterns of representation of religious minorities in Pakistani print media. It determines that Christians have highest media representation, 52%, other religious minorities 23.6%, Sikh 11.2%, Hindus 8.5% whereas Ahmadis have lowest media representation 4.6%.

Table 3

Patterns of Minority representation in Indian print media from 1990 - 2010

Minority	Christians	Sikh	Muslim	Others	Total				
Positive	37	45.7%	35	51.4%	92	29.3%	13	76.4%	177
Row %	20.9%	19.8%	52%	7.3%	100%				
Negative	14	17.3%	17	25%	179	57%	1	5.9%	211
Row %	6.6%	8%	84.9%	0.5%	100%				
Neutral	30	37%	16	23.6%	43	13.7%	3	17.7%	92
Row %	32.6%	17.4%	46.7%	3.3%	100%				

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Total	81	100%	68	100%	314	100%	17	100%	480
Total %		16.9%		14.2%		65.4%		3.5%	100%

Table 3 shows the overall pattern of representation of religious minorities in Indian print media. According to the table Christians were given 45.7% positive, 17.3%negative, and 37%neutral coverage. Sikh were given 51.4%positive, 25%negative and 23.6% neutral coverage. Muslims were represented as 29.3%positive, 57%negative, and 13.7%neutral. In addition, other religious minorities were given 76.4%positive, 5.9% negative and 17.7% negative representation.

Analyzing patterns of representation Muslims have highest, 52%, whereas other religious minorities have lowest, 7.3%, positive representation. Muslims have given highest 84.9% whereas other minorities have given lowest 0.5% negative representation. Muslims have given highest 46.7% whereas other minorities have given lowest 3.3% neutral representation.

Table 4
Patterns of Minority representation in Indian print media from 1990 - 2010

Minority	Christians	Sikh	Muslim	Others	Total
Positive	37	35	92	13	177
Total %	7.7%	7.3%	19.2%	2.7%	36.9%
Negative	14	17	179	1	211
Total %	2.9%	3.5%	37.3%	0.2%	43.9%
Neutral	30	16	43	3	92
Total %	6.3%	3.3%	8.9%	0.6%	19.1%
Total	81	68	314	17	480
Total %	16.9%	14.2%	65.4%	3.5%	100%

Table 4 shows the patterns of representation of religious minorities in Indian print media. It shows that Muslims have highest media representation, 65.4%, Christians 16.9%, Sikh 14.2% whereas other religious minorities including Bhuddhists and Jains have 3.5% media representation.

Table 5
Chi square test for measuring the differences among representation of religious minorities in Pakistani print media

	Minority		
	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Christian	1446	555.8	890.2
Hindus	240	555.8	-315.8
Sikh	310	555.8	-245.8
Ahmadis	128	555.8	-427.8
Others	655	555.8	99.2
Total	2779		

Test Statistics	
	Minority
Chi-Square	2060.915
Df	4
Asymp. Sig.	.000

Here p value (0.000) is less than alpha value (0.05) that means Ho is rejected. The research findings supports research hypothesis so H1 is accepted.

Table 6
Chi square test for measuring the differences among representation of religious minorities in Indian print media

Minority			
	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Christian	81	120.0	-39.0
Sikh	68	120.0	-52.0
Muslims	314	120.0	194.0
Others	17	120.0	-103.0
Total	480		

Test Statistics	
	Minority
Chi-Square	437.250
Df	3
Asymp. Sig.	.000

Here p value(0.000) is less than alpha value (0.05) that means Ho is rejected. The research findings supports research hypothesis so H2 is accepted.

There is unequal representation of religious minorities in Pakistani print media that shows the biases for minorities. There is *overrepresentation* of Christians and *underrepresentation* of Hindus in Pakistani print media among all other religious minorities. There is unequal representation of religious minorities in Indian print media that shows the biases for minorities. There is *overrepresentation of Christians and Sikhs, underrepresentation of other religious minorities* in Indian print media and almost *balanced media representation of minority Muslims*. Pakistani print media has been more silent with regard to Pakistani Hindus whereas Indian print media has given more negative representation to Indian Muslims.

The more and more inclusion of issues related to particular minority makes that group to dominate in the available discourses of minority. The treatment of media by giving importance and emphasizing the issues of one religious group and exclusion of others from the main domain creates inequalities among religious groups. Media being a social institution is source of inequalities thus can create the

domination of one group. Media forms and builds the identities of minorities in society and makes those identities common and taken for granted, *hegemony*.

Conclusion

The study concluded that there is an unequal and biased representation of religious minorities in Pakistani print media and as there is overrepresentation of Christians and underrepresentation of Hindus in Pakistani print media among all other religious minorities. There is an unequal and biased representation of religious minorities in Indian print media as well as there is overrepresentation of Christians and Sikhs, underrepresentation of other religious minorities and almost balanced media representation of Muslims. Pakistani print media has been more silent with regard to Pakistani Hindus whereas Indian print media has given more negative representation to Indian Muslims. The treatment of media by giving importance and emphasizing the issues of one religious group and exclusion of others from the main domain creates inequalities among religious groups so media being a social institution is a source of inequalities. Media forms and builds the identities of minorities in society and makes those identities common and taken for granted, *hegemony*. However, the underrepresentation and exclusion of Hindu minority in Pakistani print media, although being the largest religious minority of Pakistan and more negative representation of Indian Muslims is considerably notable.

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