



Analyzing the Role of Peace Journalism to Sustain Social Cohesion: Case Study of TLP protest in Pakistan

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Article Info	Abstract
<p>Article History:</p> <p>Received: April 30, 2022</p> <p>Revised: June 21, 2022</p> <p>Accepted: June 22, 2022</p> <p>Keywords: Controlled Media, Gatekeeping Theory, Perception Building, Media, Peace Journalism, Social Cohesion, Social Responsibility and Narrative Building, TLP</p>	<p><i>Media, the fourth pillar of the state, plays a significant role in shaping the society and perception building of individuals and communities. Though media rapidly grew in Pakistan in Musharraf's era, therefore a room of legislation, well-articulated policies and structured strategies were lacking. These shortcomings have an inclination towards peace and stability of social cohesion. The comprehensive policy plan of media in collaboration with the rest of the three pillars of state remained questionable. This impediment of policy boosted the chaos with any upcoming conflict or movement. Subsequently, the persistent movement of Tahreek e Labaik Pakistan (TLP) in Pakistan hampered the fabric of social cohesion and dully impaired by the exaggerated reporting through media. For an in-depth analysis of the role of media in strengthening society, a dire need to have comprehensive knowledge of internal and external issues of Pakistan, the complexities of media and finding out its relevance with Gatekeeping theory of communication studies. The immensity of the subject necessitates to select and compare news reported on TLP through top-rated news channels of Pakistan (PTV News, Geo TV and SAMAA News) to have concrete evidences of peace journalism and its impact on social cohesion. Finally, this paper endeavors to address the multifaceted and challenging phenomenon of peace journalism and establish a linkage to prosperous social cohesion and draw lessons from the role of Government in limiting and controlling media during the protest of TLP in recent years. Furthermore, the social responsibility of media makes all broadcasting channels accountable for any mislead or misperception among the masses through the narrative building.</i></p>

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Introduction

Since the inception of information warfare, media remained a lynchpin between information and perception. The history of information commenced with paper travelled through radio and accessed at every doorstep through electronic networking. Social media and social applications are the additional offshoots of new media. Every viewer has its perspective regarding any incident or conflict; however, the media amicably creates a new perception through exaggerating the incident and making it curious through analysis. The art of making and breaking the perception has a direct connotation toward social cohesion and national stability. The role of electronic media controlled under the mandate of watchdog and regulatory policies by the state are of utmost importance. The responsibility of all news channels would be based upon the self-accountability based on the basic tenants of Social Responsibility of Communication Theory. The advent of modern science and expertise has exposed the new vista in navigating masses, manipulating mobs with less information and generating anarchy in reduced time. Considering the uncensored, malign agenda and deleterious evidence broadcasted through any modes of media remained a jigsaw puzzle for social sciences researchers and scholars. Gadi Wolfsfeld¹ defines peace journalism as a “*fundamental contradiction between the nature of a peace process and news values; the media often play a destructive role in attempts at making peace.*” Researchers and theorists consciously accentuated what, when and whom to transmit? The material, time and viewers are the three basic tools in media. The role of the State in censorship, spreading inadequate information and conveying a resilient narrative sustains the situation and augments social cohesion.

The paper would entail the role and responsibilities of the state in sustaining social cohesion in Pakistan while provisioning the legitimate right to all media reporters. The role of peace journalism and its impact on social cohesion will be carried out on the comparative, analytical and narrative analysis based on the journalists and analysts of PTV News, SAMAA TV and Geo News channels. The rationale behind the selection of 03 channels is based on the rating and number of viewers. The role of journalism and reporting on the protest of *Tahreek e Labaik Pakistan* (TLP) against blasphemy would be the area of concern. From 2005-2012, *Jamaat ud Dawat* was banned as it organized religious groups under the banner of the *Tehreek-i-Tahaffuz-i-Hurmat-i-Rasool* and launched a huge protest over the blasphemous images of the Prophet (PBUH) published in different European countries. Many *Barelvi* Sunni Muslims supported *Jamat ud Dawat* during the remonstrations. During this catastrophe, *Jamat-i-Islami* lost its significance in the dissertation because of its other political primacies and *Jamat ud Dawat* leadership was blamed on terror-financing charges. After the legal and prohibited charges on both the

¹ Wolfsfeld, G. “*Media and the path to peace,*” (Cambridge, University Press, 2004).

religiopolitical parties, a vacuum was created for new emerging groups. The foundation of *Thareek-e-Labaik Ya Rasool Allah* (SAW) Pakistan [TLP] under the leadership of late Allama Khadim Hussain Rizvi was made over the protest and demonstration of Muslims over the court orders to hang Mumtaz Qadri for killing Governor of Punjab, Mr Salmaan Taseer at Islamabad in 2011. The charismatic personality of Khadim Rizvi, with a strong narrative and motivational speaks, made him the gallant religious leader with the authority to decide the justice for blasphemy. In 2016, Mumtaz Qadri was sentenced to death, and a massive mob choked all the major cities of Pakistan under the leadership of Khadim Husain Rizvi (TLP).

The chaos blocked the transport of the country and created turmoil in the capital of Pakistan, becomes an economic and security hazard.² TLP was objecting and raising their voices against the proposed amendments in the bill against blasphemy during 2017. The overall struggle and strive of Khadim Hussain Rizvi and their party motive made them heroes, and they secured 03 seats in provincial elections in 2018.³ The study would also highlight the journalists' and media house's limitations, impediments and barriers while reporting and broadcasting news. Keeping freedom of speech, peace journalism, social responsibility and the role of the State, a policy guideline may be devised to limit electronic media in reporting, analyzing and generating debates against national narrative by the application of communication theory and promoting social cohesion under the supervisory role of watchdog in broadcasting agencies.

Context and Conceptual Framework

British politician Edmund Burke declared media as the fourth pillar of state and the rest of the three pillars, executive, legislature and judiciary, that ensures law and order.⁴ The basic functions of media are infotainment and education. Other than these cadres, media is also responsible for “shaping the society through perception, influencer and reflecting political and economic ideology”.⁵ Since its inception, Pakistani society is facing both internal and external challenges. A tag of ‘*security state*’, internal and external security

² “Red Zone sit-in by pro-Qadri demonstrators ends after successful negotiations,” *Dawn*, 30 March 2016, [Red Zone sit-in by pro-Qadri demonstrators ends after successful negotiations - PAKISTAN - DAWN.COM](https://www.dawn.com/news/1244444) (Accessed on 23 Nov, 2021).

³ Niloufer Siddiqui, “What’s behind the Islamist Protests in Pakistan?” *Washington Post*, 08 Dec 2017, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkeycage/wp/2017/12/08/whats-behind-the-islamist-protests-in-pakistan/> (Accessed on 13 Dec, 2021).

⁴ Safire, William, “The one-man fourth estate,” *The New York Times*, 6 June 1982. <https://www.nytimes.com/1982/06/06/books/the-one-man-fourth-estate.html> (Accessed on 28 Dec, 2021).

⁵ Alexander, Alison, and Jarice Hanson, “*Taking sides. Mass media and society*,” (New York: Dushkin Publication Group, 1999), p-73.

threats, Ethnic and sectarian conflicts, poverty, unemployment, water scarcity, illiteracy, corruption and discrimination are the glaring fault lines of Pakistan. Internationally, the media has maligned the sanctity of Pakistan through false campaigns⁶ like violations of human rights, minority and women's rights, drug trafficking, child labor, and the neglected role of law enforcement agencies. Moreover, the Talibanization factor and lethal information operations have caused serious inferences⁷ for Pakistan as a “quicksand”, and “withering state,” but Rubina Saigol has professed a “form of psychic violence⁸” in which religion has never discriminated against the people on the biases of identity, language, culture, ethnicity and other social differences.

The role of the State in censorship⁹, transmitting limited information and delivering a strong narrative in collaboration with the key responsibility of watchdogs¹⁰ to maintain the community moderate and reduces the vicious protests. The intervention of foreign media and response of influenced Pakistani media had successfully shaped the act of violence into extremism for international rating and accruing more profit in the press as well as in media.¹¹ Freedom and expansion of media in Pakistan were initiated by General Pervez Musharraf in 2002¹², which was an enormous leap in the advancement of TV channels.

The legitimization of freedom of speech and media regulations, the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA), was set up in March 2002.¹³ The implication of PEMRA rules and policy guidelines by the Ministry of Information & Technology are still not enough to ensure the social responsibility of media. The paper would highlight the role of the Government of Pakistan in regulating and limiting the electronic media,

⁶ Javed Jabbar, “Facing a media world war,” *Dawn Islamabad*, 22 March 2004. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1065755> (Accessed on 21 Dec, 2021).

⁷ Sreedhar and Nilesh Bhagat, “Pakistan – A Withering State,” (New Delhi: Wordsmiths, 1999), p-168.

⁸ Bilal Zahoor and Raza Rumi, edited “Rethinking Pakistan: A 21st century perspective,” (Folio Books, 2019), p-104.

⁹ Naveed Ahmad, and Muhammad Ejaz Malik, “Freedom of speech and expression in the contemporary world: A case study of Pakistan and limitations of article 19 of the constitution of Pakistan, 1973,” *Journal of the Punjab University Historical Society*, No. 02, Volume: 33, (January 2020).

¹⁰ Sadia Jamil, “The monitored watchdogs: Journalists surveillance and its repercussions for their professional and personal lives in Pakistan,” *Journalism Studies*, No 22, VII, (29 Mar 2021), 878-895, DOI:10.1080/1461670X.2021.1904272.

¹¹ Nazam Maqbool, “The electronic media economy in Pakistan: Issues and challenges,” *PIDE Knowledge Brief*, No 2021:35, (August 13, 2021).

¹² Pervaiz Musharraf, “*In the Line of Fire: A Memoir*,” (London: Simon & Schuster, 2006).

¹³ Nazir Hussain, “The role of media in Pakistan,” *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies*, 35 (March 2012).

impediments in journalism reporting, narrative and perception building by episodic and thematic reporting, followed by the policy recommendations to streamline the system for prospering prospects of journalism and peaceful society.¹⁴

Research Methodology

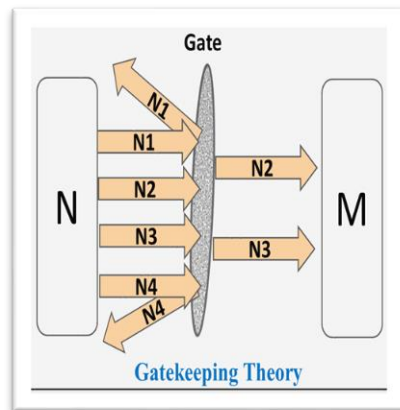
The research design is based on a case study of Pakistan media covering the last six years. The events and incidents reported by the most viewed news channels based on their rating, including PTV News, Geo and SAMAA news, are accounted for in the comparative analysis. The data collected from these channels is deduced to analyze its effects on social cohesion. The narrative analysis is materialized to understand the effect of the watchdog role of the state, social responsibility and unbiased reporting of all three channels. The deductive approach is used to find out the theoretical implication of the generic results of the research. Data collection is carried out through primary and secondary sources. In primary sources, in-person interviews were conducted with media houses, analysts, journalists, PEMRA representatives and the Ministry of information and technology. However, journals, books, research articles, and published and unpublished dissertations are consulted as secondary sources.

Theoretical Framework

The context is abundant with a plethora of academic and intellectual exploration; however, the influence of Pakistan’s institutions in flourishing social cohesion by peace journalism through various modes of broadcasting and transmission has not been examined by the application of Gatekeeping theory of communication. Moreover, the theory of social responsibility in Media also highlights the shortcomings in perception making of news channels during coverage of any dispute or protest.

Gatekeeping Theory

The foundation of this theory was presented by Kurt Lewis in 1951¹⁵, however with the dawn of new media, Pamela Shoemaker and Boris Johnson describes the gatekeeping theory as the *“Process of culling and crafting countless bits of information into the limited number of messages that reach people every day, and it is the center*



¹⁴ Hawkes and Jon, “The fourth pillar of sustainability: Culture’s essential role in public planning,” *Common Ground*. (Australia :books, 2001) DOI: 1 86335 049 7.

¹⁵ Stacks, D, W and Salwen, M, B, eds., *“An integrated approach to communication theory and research,”* (New York: Routledge, 2009).

of the media's role in modern public life. This process determines not only which information is selected, but also what the content and nature of the messages, such as news, will be".

The suitable information is transmitted for perception, and inappropriate information is rejected.

- N – Source of News Details
- M – Audience
- N1,2,3,4 – News Items
- N2,3 – Selected Items
- N1,4 – Rejected Item

Perceptions are made on the news, which is viewed frequently and thus enable the masses to alter their mindset. Application of gatekeeping theory would weigh the efficacy of peace journalism, the role of watchdog, sustenance of social cohesion and more evidently highlights the role of regulatory, social responsibility and controlled media. Similarly, its impacts and role of journalists specifically in covering the TLP campaign during 2018-2021.

Parameters for sustaining social cohesion

"The free expression of the hopes and aspirations of people is the greatest and only safety in a sane society." ([Emma Goldman](#)).

Emma Goldman

Stephan and Frances distinguished social cohesion into three basic levels¹⁶ (Individual, Institutions and community); these levels recommend the yardstick to measure social cohesion based on the perception building. The project "Promoting social cohesion through the media" was implemented by Search for Common Ground (SFCG) in Madagascar¹⁷, thus highlighting the role of journalists in crisis management through self-censorship and unbiased reporting as one of the fundamental factors in conflict conception, secondly altering the mental perception of two different groups that leads to violence. Deutsch and Coleman define the 04 paradigms of communication and their application in bargain over any conflict.¹⁸ Any lapses in the communication can erupt or dissolve the conflict, resulting in a special emphasis to be made on the mode and theme of communication. The role of media in the Theory of Change for building public attitude also evaluated and

¹⁶ Xavier Fonseca, Stephan Lukosch and Frances Brazier, "Social cohesion revisited: a new definition and how to characterize it, Innovation," *The European Journal of Social Science Research*, (2018), <https://doi.org/10.1080/13511610.2018.1497480> (Accessed on 21 Nov, 2021).

¹⁷ "Using the media to build social cohesion , search for common ground," <http://www.coalitionradios-madagascar.org> (Accessed on 19 Nov, 2021)

¹⁸ M, Deutsch, P, T, Coleman and E, C, Marcus eds., "Communication and conflict," in *the handbook of conflict resolution: Theory and practice*, (Columbia, Wiley Publishing, 2006), 144–157.

analyzed the conflict creation and violence in society.¹⁹ Shahid Hussain envisaged the social responsibility of Pakistani media that is compromised on its financial benefits and also pointed out the lack of ethical and moral values as well as professional journalism being the sore points in disintegrating social cohesion in Pakistan.²⁰

Tenants of Social Responsibility Theory

Social responsibility theory permits a free press without censorship and is advised to inculcate true public opinion by ensuring self-regulations. The social responsibility theory encompasses simple “Objective” reporting (facts reporting) to “Interpretative” reporting (investigative reporting). The theory reflects professionalism in media and a high degree of precision, reality, and facts.²¹ The commission of the press council also



incorporated basic tenants for the social responsibility of media, which starts from the formulation of a code of conduct for the press. It ensures the journalist's interests, improving standards and devising fine on false reporting. The theory agrees with general opinion, community belief and offensive feedback regarding private and social rights. It believes in a consumer action and professional ethics. It appreciates private ownership of media provided the government with better media service. Nevertheless, the media must ensure its social responsibility; otherwise, government or other organizations would interfere to carry out the similar type of task.

Peace Journalism in Pakistan

Sadia Jamil critiqued the role of Pakistan's state institutions' policies regarding surveillance activities of journalists and in regulating the media that may lead to punishment of journalists and life threats compared to the rules

¹⁹ Guidance on evaluating conflict, prevention and peace-building activities: Working draft for application period, *DAC Network on Conflict, Peace and Development Cooperation and DAC Network on Development Evaluation* (2008).

²⁰ Hussain, S., Shukkar, Q., & Shahzad, F, “Social responsibility of media in Pakistan: Exploring the audience perception,” *Global Mass Communication Studies Review*, VI (I), (2021), p- 28-42. [https://doi.org/10.31703/gmcr.2021\(VI-I\).03](https://doi.org/10.31703/gmcr.2021(VI-I).03) (Accessed on 30 Dec, 2021).

²¹ Uzuegbunam, C. E., “Social responsibility theory: a contemporary review,” *Seminar paper*, (2013), https://www.academia.edu/11187397/The_social_responsibility_theory_A_contemporary_review (accessed on 20 Jun, 22).

and regulations implemented in contemporary nations.²² Nadeem Malik, an active analyst and president of SAMAA TV, revealed the role of watchdogs in Pakistan. The journalists and media houses are controlled through economic constrictions²³, sponsorship pressures and convicting specific anchors and analysts. Talking about TLP, Malik further elaborated that distinguishing between protestors, the agenda of TLP and the national narrative seems difficult while live telecasting from the 2021 protest at Jhelum. Peter du Toit also highlighted the conflict-sensitive reporting deals with the psycho-social trait of individuals.²⁴ The brain stimulates the same whatever it listens to or sees. The report identifies the sensitive reporting of terrorism, extremism and violence. The concerns and difficulties of journalists and analysts remain unnoticed in academics and research paradigm.

The contribution of media in driving masses and promoting hatred among societal groups is also explained in the relationship between media and violence.²⁵ Moreover, the rules and regulations of PEMRA and other Government institutions are not designed for controlling media but rather orchestrated for arm twisting. SAMAA journalists also reported the limitations of Government, Military and Judiciary pressures in broadcasting the true picture and narrating the facts on air.²⁶ The relationship between John Galtung (ABC Triangle Model) and communication networks has also proved the effectiveness of positive reporting, and journalism plays a pivotal role in cultural, structural and direct violence.²⁷ In comparison to international media, the vitalized role of the state in monitoring the rating of channels under some pre-defined rules, regulations and policies²⁸, secondly ethical considerations in the aftermath of censorship is not materialized in true and letter and spirit by Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority

²² Sadia Jamil, "The Monitored Watchdogs: Journalists' Surveillance and its repercussions for their professional and personal lives in Pakistan," *Journalism Studies*, (2021), DOI: 10.1080/1461670X.2021.1904272.

²³ Nadeem Malik, personal communication, December 21, 2021.

²⁴ Peter du Toit, *Handbook: A conflict sensitive approach to reporting on conflict and violent extremism*, (Conflict sensitive approach to reporting on radicalization, extremism and terrorism, Internews, 2019). [Handbook: A Conflict Sensitive Approach to Reporting on Conflict and Violent Extremism | Information Saves Lives | Internews.](#)

²⁵ Weaver C Kay and Carter Cynthia, eds., "*Critical readings: violence and the media*," (Maidenhead, Open University Press, 2006), p-18.

²⁶ Zulqarnain Iqbal, personal communication, December 21, 2021.

²⁷ Arnfred Bojesen, Julie, "Communication in conflict and peace, Reviewing peace theory in the frames of a network society," (MS diss, Malmö University, 2019).

²⁸ Shafei, Sumera and Ataullah, "R S S Media Rating Conundrum and Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA): An Insight into what drives the media and its policy implications," *International Review of Social Sciences*, Vol. 9, Issue.5, May 2021, www.irss.academyirmbr.com.

(PEMRA). In Guyana (2002-15), the positive role of media and state ensures peacekeeping through UN peacekeepers as exemplary evidence of promoting peace and constructive facet of media reporting.²⁹ Peace journalism academically seems very impressive; however practical implementation becomes a more demanding and cumbersome task. Pakistan is also lacking in professional journalism, which would be one of the most significant reasons for effective peace journalism; reporting TLP protests in Islamabad in recent years are the protruding examples of discriminate between positive and negative reporting. It is further proved through the comparative and narrative analysis of News anchors.

Role of Journalism and new media in steering masses

“The media's the most powerful entity on earth. They have the power to make the innocent guilty and to make the guilty innocent, and that's power. Because they control the minds of the masses” –Malcolm X

Valkenburg and Jessica qualify valid analyses on the effect of media, especially on youth and targeted audiences, that leads them to conflict. The significance of the internet³⁰, ferocious TV series on Netflix, violent online games and channels reporting violence, rape, and murders cause substantial effects on young minds, which ultimately end up in violent behaviors. Relevant examples are also matched through different crime investigation³¹ programs on SAMAA and talk shows on Geo TV that mislead and nourish a wrong perception in youth. Analysis by Francesca Bria³² apprised how social movement organizations acquire legitimacy through a blending of illegitimate actions through social media.

The Pashteen movement broadcasted on all TV channels is the most pertinent and perfect example.³³ Moreover, the breaking news and prime time news at 2100 hours on all Pakistani News channels is the best time to deliver any unpopular movement for its projection. Projection of conflict expedites with the wrong and fake prognosis of incidents and events. Geo TV, most of the time, shapes up an incident of violence with the tag of extremism and

²⁹ United Nations, United Nations conflict prevention and preventive diplomacy in action, “An overview of the role, approach and tools of the United Nations and its partners in preventing violent conflict,” *Department of Political Affairs, Diplomacy, Prevention, Action*, (2006).

³⁰ Patti, M, Valkenburg Jessica and Taylor, Piotrowski,” *Media and Violence*,” in *Plugged in, how media attract and affect youth*, (Yale University Press, London, 2017), p-99.

³¹ Bhadur Ali, Asad and Zaman, “Analysis of various effects of television crime shows on Pakistani youth (a case study of students of government college university Faisalabad),” *Pakistan Journal of Society, Education Language*, Vol- 2, (2016).

³² Francesca Bria, “Social media and their impact on organizations: Building firm celebrity and organizational legitimacy through social media” (PhD diss, Imperial College London, 2013), DOI:10.25560/24944.

³³ Irfan Ul Haque, “Court orders blocking MNA Mohsin Dawar, Manzoor Pashteen’s CNICs,” *SAMAA News*, 19 Feb, 2021.

terrorism, which causes severe repercussions on the fabric of social cohesion. Savera Shami and Ayesha Ashfaq reveal the presence of pressure groups³⁴ in Pakistan that influence the media content according to their political and military interests.

Additionally, Nadeem Malik also highlighted the same in his interview. The role of state and security agencies plays an imperative role in flourishing social cohesion and encouraging peace journalism. The role of media on youth behavior's and violence³⁵ was particularized by Ybarra in; "*Linkages between the internet and other media violence with seriously violent behavior by youth*", whereas Weaver developed a relationship between media and violence for better understanding the contribution of media in driving masses and promoting hatred among societal groups.³⁶ Hence, the role of media in sustaining peace and snubbing violence in society has proved academically in numerous studies and research. In Pakistan, the TLP activities during 2017 - 2018 reveal the relationship of media and fan following through motivational and religious speeches of Khadim Rizvi over social media.³⁷ Resultantly, Rizvi gathered thousands of TLP followers through the Internet which allowed TLP to access other than mosques and madrassas to increase its numerical mob.

The aura of Khadim Rizvi, with zealous speeches and activating the sense of responsibility against blasphemy, drive hundreds of people on roads to create manic.³⁸ The TLP utilized social media platforms to mobilize its supporters across Pakistan as their secondary plan for electronic and print media.³⁹ The role of the State and ministry of IT had come across this situation for the first time in the history of Pakistan when the necessity becomes an adversary.

³⁴ Savera Shami and Ayesha Ashfaq, .et, al, "The weight of words and limit to freedom of expression: A journalists' perspective in Pakistan," *A Research Journal of South Asian Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 1, (January – June, 2021), p-119.

³⁵ Ybarra et. al, *PEDIATRICS*, Volume 122, Number 5, (November 2008),doi:10.1542/peds.2007-3377 (Accessed on 22 Nov, 2021).

³⁶ Weaver, C. Kay and Carter Cynthia, eds., " *Critical readings: violence and the media*," (Maidenhead, Open University Press, 2006), p-18.

³⁷ Abdul Basit, "Barelvi political activism and religious mobilization in Pakistan: The case of Tehreek-e-Labaik Pakistan (TLP)," *Politics, Religion & Ideology*, Volume 21, 2020 - Issue 3, (2020), <https://doi.org/10.1080/21567689.2020.1812395> (Accessed on 30 Dec, 2021).

³⁸ Abdullah Niazi, 'Newsmakers 2018: Khadim Hussain Rizvi – Ghauris incoming', *Pakistan Today*, 1 January 2019, <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2019/01/01/newsmakers-2018-khadim-hussain-rizvi-ghauris-incoming/>. (Accessed on 31 Dec, 2021).

³⁹ "Tehreek-e-Labaik using Facebook to incite hatred; social media inaccessible in Pakistan," *Pakistan Today*, 25 November 2017, <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2017/11/25/tehreek-e-labaik-using-facebook-to-incite-hatred-social-mediainaccessible-in-pakistan/>. (Accessed on 3 Dec, 2021).

Relationship between TLP and New Media

Restricting the massive movement of violent protestors and shattering the coherence, Mainstream media blacked out the coverage of TLP's protests. TLP remained successful in blocking Pakistan's major cities. Similarly, during anti-France protests over blasphemous cartoon printing in France in 2020, TLP used all types of media sources and resources to inflict unrest in society. During the campaign, many security officials were injured, violent proprietors were arrested, and valuable loss of service property was filed. Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority barred all television channels and FM radio stations from providing airtime to the party.

TLP has employed social media platforms like Facebook, YouTube and Twitter to propagate its ideological narrative to gather mob.⁴⁰ Anti-France protests over blasphemous cartoon printing in France across the country and demanding the expulsion of the French ambassador from Pakistan was the most prominent movement of TLP in 2020. On 20 Nov 2020, TLP Chief Allama Khadim Hussain Rizvi died on medical grounds and his eldest son Hafiz Saad Hussain Rizvi was chosen to be the next (Ameer) leader of the party.⁴¹ On 17 Feb 2021: Shooraa, led by Saad Rizvi, summoned the workers to march toward Islamabad to launch a new campaign and protest. On 12 April, 2021: government arrested Saad Rizvi for creating unrest and anarchy in the country.

TLP workers marched toward Islamabad and choked all the main highways and city entry/ exit points. The protest continued, and the violent mob killed 02 Policemen⁴²; during the clashes, 340 people were wounded in 48 hours. Despite negotiations offered by Government and continuous rejection by TLPs leadership led, the government to Bann LP on 15 April,

⁴⁰ Zaigham Khan, 'The Day of TLP', *The News*, 5 November 2018, <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/389662-the-day-of-the-tlp> (Accessed on 30 Nov, 2021).

⁴¹ Asim Hussain, "Series of events that led to recent TLP protests," *The News*, April 21, 2021, [Series of events that led to recent TLP protests \(thenews.com.pk\)](https://www.thenews.com.pk) (Accessed on 16 Dec, 2021).

⁴² Quarterly Security Report – Q1, 2021, CRSS. <https://crss.pk/quarterly-security-report-q1-2021/> (Accessed on 11 Dec, 2021).

2021 after the issuance of the notification. The detailed activities of blasphemy and important events are depicted in the following table.⁴³

Bridging peace journalism and social cohesion in Pakistan

In comparison with the recent 2017-2018 and 2020 TLP movement and violent discourse, the Government has planned a thorough strategy to reduce chaos and prevent violence.⁴⁴ The most significant player in any conflict and especially perception making is unleashed media. The government controlled the reporting and lived coverage of the TLP protest in different cities and specifically Islamabad initially. Furthermore, the blockade of mobile service was the second remedy to cater for any unforeseen situation. In 2021, TLP protested against arresting TLP Leader⁴⁵; almost all requisite communication theories were implied to achieve expected results.⁴⁶ The plan succeeded in curtailing damage and controlling the masses. The media was harnessed to present the government agenda, not the protester's intents, which falls under the category of Agenda Setting theory. Secondly, the essence of the National narrative and the influential speech of PM Imran Khan in the National

No.	Date	Incident	Allegation
1	October 1, 2011	Murder of former Punjab governor late Salman Taseer	The murder of Taseer on blasphemy charges
2	March 28, 2016	Sit-in in Islamabad's red-zone on Mumtaz Qadri's chehlum	The imposition of Sharia Law
3	January 31, 2017	Murder of a member of the Ahmadi community in Glasgow	Blasphemy accusation
4	November 2017	21-day sit-in that left six people dead and 200 injured	Amendment in the wording of Kahtm-e-Nabuwat oath undertaken by the electorate and members elected to the parliament
5	August 2018	The threat to Dutch Embassy in Islamabad over the blasphemous cartoon competition	The cartoon competition was cancelled
6	November 6, 2018	Blasphemy-accused Christian woman Asia Bibi's release	Locked-down Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Lahore and Karachi
7	November 7, 2018	TLP threatened to kill Dutch Ambassador to Pakistan forcing the closure Dutch embassy	TLP members were angry over blasphemous tweets by the far-right politician Geert Wilders

Security Council (presented on 24 September 2021) was repeatedly telecasted

⁴³ Kamran Chaudhry, "The rise of Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan," *UCANews*, 15 April, 2021,

[The rise of Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan - UCA News](#) (Accessed on 16 Dec, 2021).

⁴⁴ Ahmed Yusuf, "What is behind the sudden rise of TLP?" *Dawn*, 5 August 2018, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1425085> (Accessed on 19 Dec, 2021).

⁴⁵ Zahid Hussain Khan, "Pakistan bans TLP for engaging in terrorism," *UCANews*, 16 April, 2021, [Pakistan bans TLP for engaging in terrorism - UCA News](#) (Accessed on 20 Dec, 2021) (Accessed on 15 Dec, 2021).

⁴⁶ "Pakistan blocks social media platforms amid protest crackdown," *DW News*, 16 April, 2021. [Pakistan blocks social media platforms amid protest crackdown | News | DW | 16.04.2021](#) (Accessed on 16 Dec, 2021).

on all channels of clarifying the National stance on Islam and blasphemy.⁴⁷ Talk shows of religious scholars and national leaders were also on air to reduce the chaos and to ease out the sentiments of all Muslims of Pakistan. These national narratives and religious talks were also part of foreign policy for keeping the sanctity and sacredness of Pakistan in the international community and in Muslim countries. It had a great impact on economic stability and democratic fronts. Therefore, framing theory was also applied in the same context. Lastly, PEMRA and other national agencies ensured the filtered transmission of news to reduce anarchy and unrest in the country, thus justifying the Gatekeeping theory. Blocked Social Media temporarily had long-term results in curbing the issue. And minimizing the street mobs.

Role of Responsible Media

Article 19-A defends the right to information, “*Every citizen shall have the right to have access to information in all matters of public importance subject to regulation and reasonable restrictions imposed by law.*”⁴⁸ Regulating media to ensure peace in society and curbing violence is opposite to the annotation of Article-19-A. Regulating / Blocking social media temporarily is helpful in ceasing the surge of violence and restricting the mass movement. Transmission of National Narrative through all media mediates the conflict and builds pathways for negotiations and conflict resolutions.⁴⁹ Furthermore, this helps in taking the nation in confidence and helps in avoiding less chances of chaos and anarchy in the rest of the country. Framing of news and responsible reporting also have a pronounced bearing to foreign and diplomatic channels.⁵⁰

Gatekeeping theory restricts the non-state actors' malign agenda in deteriorating the peace prospect of Government in resolving conflict. Prolonged blocked Internet and Cellular networks adversely affect economy, network-based daily wagers and multinational companies.

Recommendations

During the analysis of the paper and its relevance to the TLP Protest in 2021, the following observations were made, which may lead to better

⁴⁷ “PM-IMRANS-UNGA-Address-on-Sept-24-will-focus-on-kashmir-issue-afghanistan,” *Geo TV*, 24 Sep, 2021, <https://www.geo.tv/latest/371484> (Accessed on 20 Dec, 2021).

⁴⁸ “Regulating broadcast Media: challenges & reforms”, PIPS International Conference Report, *Pak Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS)*, 2016, p-16.

⁴⁹ Muhammad Farooq and Arshad Al, “Agenda Framing of social issues in Pakistani press: A study of daily Dawn and daily Jang,” *Global Social Sciences Review (GSSR)*, Vol. III, No. III, (Summer 2018), Page-15- 26, [https://doi.org/10.31703/gssr.2018\(III-III\).02](https://doi.org/10.31703/gssr.2018(III-III).02) (Accessed on 17 Dec, 2021).

⁵⁰ Samia Manzoor, Aasima Safdar and Ashraf Khan, “Application of Agenda-setting, Framing and Propaganda during news production process,” *Pakistan Social Sciences Review*, Vol. 3, No.2, (December 2019), p-213-228, www.pssr.org.pk (Accessed on 13Dec, 2021).

regulations in order to sustain social solidity and keeping peace and harmony in any upcoming riots.

- By the application of gatekeeping theory, practical manifestation by government and legislation of media, through licensing and setting bars in PEMRA would be more compassionate and productive towards conflict prevention and reconciliation in future.
- Minimum chances of violence can be possible by framing the news, making the perception and showing the reality to viewers. Consideration of behavior, traditional, cultural and religious aspects of society in media reporting are the pre-requisites of peace journalism. The freedom of the press needs to ensure social responsibility by all professional journalists.
- The role of religious scholars needs to be capitalized for unity and synergy among all Muslim community and in unfolding the brutal and radical agenda of the violent crowd in the name of Blasphemy. Campaigning peaceful protest as more influential needs to be adapted in negotiating with government officials and resolving conflict.
- Media literacy is also one of the profound aspects of communicating the efficient political and democratic role of the state and public in society; Moreover, media education develops professional journalists and helps in distinguishing hidden agenda and filtered information to safeguard the national and communal security. It also flourishes the social responsibility among young reporters and journalists.⁵¹
- Media personnel need requisite training under National Cohesion Programme and Policy to deliver self-adequate reporting and professional journalism.
- Professional Journalism is essentially required to revamp the electronic media infrastructure. Secondly, Academic Scholars and Think Tanks are required for discussion and debates on Talk Shows to evaluate and resolve social conflicts rather than dealing with the conflict politically.
- The media needs to replicate the national narrative for perception building.
- Media needs to be harnessed purposefully to perceive the negative impact of Pakistan on International forums. Self-censorship policy based upon social responsibility theory of media and communication for journalists and application of peace journalism is the pre-requisite

⁵¹ Raza, M. R., & Parvez A, "Impact of media literacy and media technology on agenda-setting: A case study of broadcast media in Pakistan," *Pakistan Journal of Distance and Online Learning*, 5(1), (2019), p- 137-154.

Conclusions

Encapsulating the anticipated results by implication of framing theory exclusively in Pakistan had facilitated remarkably in boosting peace, subsequently enhanced social cohesion in society as well as advocating the repute at the international forum. The influence of electronic media in making wrong assessments during violent events assessed for the last five years is evaluated through the scholarly lens, and the results would be more beneficial in the future conflicts and calamity. Prospects of electronic media in relation to perception building for the cohesion of society and connection with the social responsibility of media would be highly dependent upon organized and well-ordered reporting. Conflict prevention and peace building can be possible by just projection and organized media reporting in society. Media can be one of the best tools provided used correctly to keep peace and harmony in the society. Modern countries have adopted communication theories as a policy guideline in orchestrating broadcasting rules and regulations. Anti-state agenda is highly forbidden in developed countries, and such wrong intentions need to be curbed at the earliest through responsible and professional attitude. The conflicts remain everywhere, but good governance protects the masses by exciting and inciting these conflicts through organized and well-ordered reporting. Conflict prevention and social cohesion are possible by the correct projection and well-structured and responsible media reporting in society.