

# **INDIAN PRESS PROPAGANDA AGAINST PAKISTAN: AN ANALYSIS OF PULWAMA ATTACK AND BALAKOT AIRSTRIKE**

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## **Abstract**

The Pulwama attack and Balakot Airstrike were two major issues that affected Pak India relations in 2019 and both countries indulged in these issues. The present study is conducted to examine Indian press propaganda against Pakistan on these selected incidents. The study aimed to analyze the nature of propaganda of the Indian press to highlight the selected issues. Two national Indian newspapers are selected to conduct this study, The Times of India and The Telegraph, from February 2019 to July 2019. Application of Under Propaganda, Agenda and Framing theory, content analysis is used as a research methodology. The results showed that Indian media used black propaganda to influence their audience negatively and create hate among the people for Pakistan. Indian media and the Indian government always seek a chance to speak against Pakistan, showing India's abominable face and crooked government. India's Indian press and press misguided the Pulwama attack and Balakot Airstrike failed in hybrid warfare (Media War) against Pakistan. The government policies strongly affect the newspaper's policy and ultimately, it's creating hate against Pakistan among their public.

**Keywords:** Pulwama attack, Balakot Airstrike, Print Media, Propaganda

## **Introduction**

In today's world, media has gained so much importance of becoming the fourth pillar of the state's existing political system. It also has a great influence on decision-making about form public opinion. Media only orientates the minds of the public towards a specific issue and, through the effecting visualization, makes it more prominent. Media provides platforms for the public to reveal their views about any issue, including political issues, any incident, or any issue occurring at any place of the world. Media keeps peoples, governments, and businesses alert about the present situation of their relevant problems (Albertazzi, 2005). People seek information from the media according to their needs. People use media to gratify their needs (Blumer & Katz 1974). Modern media has many different shapes like print media: books, journals, novels, newspapers and magazines, broadcast or social media including games, billboards, internet, mobile computing, internet of things and advertisements. All these kinds of media have their content and device to deliver this content. A large number of people are employed in the communication industry (Feldman, 2005). In the form of mass media, print media conveys information to the public through publications, newspapers, and magazines. Print media is the oldest and widespread type of mass media because, as opposed to electronic media, it does not require an elaborate technical infrastructure on the part of the user (Ilyas, 2017). Newspapers are associated with information and show an emphasis on political issues and current issues. They are valued as the backbone of the democratic public sphere because they enable comprehensive public discourse. The media are not toys; they should not be in Mother Goose and Peter Pan executives (McLuhan, 1911-1980).

Media transfers and stores information and creates influence, memory, and knowledge. Events like wars and revolutions gain publicity through media (Carruthers, 2002). Chomsky explained that propaganda is the basic and main source to control the minds of people through media. Only wealthy and powerful individuals and organizations can conduct propaganda campaigns, but their effect is on the general public (Herman & Chomsky, 1988). Propaganda is presenting information so that it affects the way people think or act (Abbas, Khan & Ahmad, 2019). The Propagandist was an artist who sensed the secret vibrations of the people. Many were still with Hitler right until the end of the war (Nicholas, 2016).

**Pulwama attack** is one of the deadliest terror attacks in Jammu and Kashmir in which 40 Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel have died. The Pulwama attack happened on 14 February 2019, when a Jaish suicide bomber rammed a vehicle carrying over 100 kg of explosives into their bus in Pulwama district. The attack also left many critically wounded.

**Balakot airstrike** was conducted by India in the early morning hours of 26 February 2019 when Indian warplanes crossed the de facto border in the disputed region of Kashmir and dropped bombs in the vicinity of the town of Balakot in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province in Pakistan. The first to announce the Airstrike on 26 February, Pakistan's military described the Indian planes as dropping their payload in an uninhabited wooded hilltop area near Balakot.

Later the same day, India, confirming the Airstrike later the same day, characterized it to be a preemptive strike directed against a terrorist training camp and causing the deaths of a "large number" of terrorists. The following day, 27 February, in a tit-for-tat airstrike, Pakistan, causing an Indian warplane to be shot down and its pilot to be taken prisoner by the Pakistan military before being returned on 1 March.

Analysis of open-source satellite imagery by the Atlantic Council's Digital Forensics Laboratory, San Francisco-based Planet Labs, European Space Imaging, and the Australian Strategic Policy Institute has concluded that India did not hit any targets significance on the Jaba hilltop site in the vicinity of Balakot. On 10 April 2019, some international journalists, who were taken to the Jaba hilltop in a tightly controlled trip arranged by the Pakistani government, found the site's largest building to show no evidence of damage or recent rebuilding. So, it is very important how the Indian press covered these two clashes to know its peace sustainability role.

South Asia is an important region of the world as it embraces 20% of the world's population. Pakistan and India are the two largest independent states in South Asia with nuclear power and other historic rivals. The relations of these two countries influence the whole South Asia region (South Asian Studies 2013). The conflicting relationship between Pakistan and India started with the partition of the subcontinent in 1947. The partition causes the largest human migration is ever seen and sparks riots and violence across the region. About 3.5 million people migrated from Pakistan towards India, and almost 5 million people migrated from India towards Pakistan on a religious basis. During that mass migration, many people had lost their lives that cause a bitter relationship between Pakistan and India. From 1947 to 2020, many rulers ruled Pakistan and India, but they all have different approaches towards Pak-India relations. The conflicting issues among the countries are increasing day by day. Both countries signed many peace agreements and disputes on a lot of issues. The main conflicting issue between Pakistan and India is Kashmir than water issue, Sir Creek issue, Siachen issue, many military conflicts, LoC, terrorism, etc. Still, after vast destruction of lives, economy, bilateral relations, etc., between Pakistan and India, both are fighting and accusing. Both countries try to find ways and chances to speak against each other (Shabir& Khan, 2008).

When we talk about Pakistan and India's media, media in both countries have become intrusive and partisan, and its coverage of relations is often dictated by nationalism than factual reposting. Indian media tried its best to link terror attacks with Pakistan, but their hurried approach embarrassed them on many occasions (Riaz, 2010). Every other day when a television anchor in India is bored and wants to stir things up, they decide to do a program on India and Pakistan that generally consists of a retired general, political leader, or terrorism. Whenever a terror attack occurs or an incident occurs, Indian media throwing sobriety to the wind. They were all out there advocating war and revenge in different ways. Indian media kept on shouting for revenge for the crime Pakistan had not committed. Indian media always stretches the truth (Wing Commander Abhinandan, 2019).

### **Objectives**

- To review the level of propaganda against Pakistan in the selected period.
- To evaluate the type of Propaganda (Black, White, Grey) of the Indian press during the Pulwama attack and Balakot Airstrike.
- To measure the content (Pro Pakistan- Anti Pakistan) of Indian newspapers (The Times of India and Indian Express).
- To find out Indian media Frames (favorable, unfavorable, balance) to the Pak-India relations and peace process.

### **Literature Review:**

Indian press adopted a cautious editorial policy; it hardened its tone and followed the schedule of the Indian foreign office to propagate against Pakistan. The elite newspapers claimed that terrorism springs out from Pakistan. Muslims in the world and especially in India suffered. Indian press used war frames to symbolize Muslims as terrorists and Pakistan as a terrorist state (Rasool, 2014). Indian print media have given less coverage to the peace process as Pakistani print media highlighted more and have given more coverage to the peace process to better the bilateral relations of South Asia's nuclear-armed countries (Batool, Yasin&Khurshid, 2015). It is noticed that the Indian mindset is more communally charged and views Pakistan with a specific security lens. At the same time, Pakistani media reflects a conciliatory policy, which India rejects. Recently, it has begun to counter Indian propaganda in the mass media. Every time Pakistan offered India cooperation in probing the terror incidents, India heavily criticized and framed Pakistan as responsible for terrorist attacks (Awan, Khan & Ahmad, 2019). Pakistan media supported government policy towards Kashmir and emphasized

on Kashmir issue according to the UN resolution. Pakistan print media always tries to lessen tensions in the region and condemn terrorism. Pakistani media focused on negotiation for solutions (Shabir, Khan, Adnan & Safdar, 2014).

The Indian print media and authorities raised voices against Pakistan's terror intentions and symbolized Pakistan as the epicenter of terrorism. India blamed Lashkar e Taiba working from Pakistan against Indian nationals (Javaid & Kamal, 2013). The coverage of Indian newspapers was found grossly war-oriented, with only penny coverage to peace content. At the same time, Kashmiris portrayed as mere passive victims. On the other side, Pakistani media found more peace-oriented and never highlights a thing that can enhance both countries' relations towards war (Khan & Khan, 2020). Indian print media showed less sympathy towards Kashmiri people and usually framed their demands as illegal and unjust.

Moreover, they framed Burhan Wani as a terrorist in all of its news reports and never called him a freedom fighter who fought for Kashmiri people's rights and raised Kashmiri people's voice. Pakistani media called him a freedom fighter. Indian news media provided conflict reporting and said that news related to conflict and war spread faster and generates greater revenue than peace-oriented news reports (Munawar, Hussain & Ahmed, 2018).

Indian media is always searching for a chance to speak against Pakistan and never keep on standing while conducting negotiations. Indian print media gave more unfavorable coverage to the issues related to border and terrorism against Pakistan. It can lead both countries towards a war-like situation. The negative coverage was higher in Indian print media and strongly criticized the Muslims, especially Pakistan's Muslims. The water and Kashmir issue raised by the Pakistani print media and Indian media raised terrorism issues from the perspective of Indian foreign policy (Adnan, Islam & Khan, 2019). Terrorist attacks have never been on the news as they happened. Indian print distorts reality and publishes it according to their will. Most of the time, Indian print media is highly affected by their government policies and top officials' authorities. These are things that can increase tensions between South Asian nuclear states. Indian media, without any probing on the incidents, spoke against Pakistan and framed Muslims as terrorists and spread hate against Muslims.

**H1:** Indian media used black propaganda while covering the Pulwama attack and Balakot Airstrike.

**H2:** The degree of negative coverage given to the selected issues will be significantly greater than positive coverage in both newspapers.

### **Theoretical Framework**

A theoretical framework guides your research, determining what you will measure and what statistical relationships you will look for. Propaganda, Agenda and Framing theory is used to provide a theoretical base for the research. Propaganda is used for information, ideas or rumors intentionally spread widely to help or harm a person, group, movement, institution, or nation. Ideas are spread creatively through media to present a strong government message. Through **Propaganda theory**, Indian news that was published on these events was analyzed. The study emphasized what type of propaganda was adopted by Indian press on the Pulwama attack and Balakot Airstrike.

Agenda setting is the creation of public awareness and concern of salient issues by the news media. As well, agenda-setting describes how media attempts to influence viewers and establish a hierarchy of news prevalence and how media can create a silent issue into the current issue. This **Agenda setting theory** is appropriate to see the agenda of Indian newspapers on these issues that how much attention was given to the issues. This theory elaborates the policy agenda of Indian newspapers on the issues.

Framing is how the media show a specific piece of information to the audience and how it is organized or structured. Frame influences people's mindset and impacts their decision-making on the topic, which is changed by media. The changing of perception can be taken as the second level of agenda-setting (Goffman 1974). Agenda setting theory tells what to think about, but framing theory tells how to think about the information. Under the lenses of **framing theory**, the study analyzed headlines and sub-headlines that what kind of frames the Indian press used to highlight Pulwama and Balakot Airstrike.

### **Methodology**

Content analysis is a method of analysis of the text. The content analysis utilizes as a research method. The universe contains Indian print media from 13 February to 13 July 2019. The time is important as the events occurred in this period. "The Times of India" and "The Telegraph" have been selected through purposive sampling to meet objectives. Front-page, headlines and sub-headlines are selected as the unit of analysis. Categories for each unit of analysis are Pulwama attacks, Balakot Airstrike and Kashmir issues. Directions to analyze these categories have been developed as favorable, unfavorable and balance.

#### **Operationalization of Directions/frames for Categories**

The content of headlines and sub-headlines is considered favorable when it shows Pakistan's positivity and does not create hatred against its public and military. Moreover, emphasize bilateral relations and the peace process. The content is considered unfavorable when it shows negativity towards Pakistan, its public, and the military.

The content is considered balanced when it gives balanced news and does not create hype and sensationalism and remain neutral in its coverage.

**Findings**

Table1: The overall observation regarding unit of analysis in The Times of India

Newspaper	Unit of analysis	Frequency	Percent
The Times of India	Headlines	40	52.6
	Sub headlines	36	47.4
	Total	76	100.0

Table 1 outlines the overall findings of The Times of India for Headlines and Sub headlines. The Times of India published 40 (52.6%) headlines and 36 (47.4%) sub-headlines on Pulwama, Balakot airstrikes, and Kashmir.

Table 2: Directions used for Pulwama Attack in The Times of India

Directions	Frequency	Percent
Favorable	1	1.3
Unfavorable	29	38.2
Balance	11	14.5
Total	41	53.9

Table 2 describes favorable, unfavorable and balance Directions for the Pulwama attack in the Times of India. 1 (1.3%) favorable, 29 (38.2%) unfavorable and 11 (14.5%) were balance. The result shows that more unfavorable Directions were used in the newspaper to demonstrate the Pulwama attack.

Table 3: Directions used for Balakot airstrike

Directions	Frequency	Percent
Favorable	(0)	(0)
Unfavorable	14	18.4
Balance	10	13.2
Total	24	31.6

Table 3 describes favorable, unfavorable and balance Directions for the Balakot airstrike in the Times of India. 0 (0%) favorable, 14 (18.4%) unfavorable and 10 (13.2%) were balance. The result shows that there is no news favorable to the Balakot airstrike.

Table 4: Directions used for Kashmir issue

Directions	Frequency	Percent
Favorable	(0)	(0)
Unfavorable	18	23.7
Balance	25	32.9
Total	43	56.6

Table 4 describes favorable, unfavorable and balance Directions used for the Kashmir issue in The Times of India. 0 (0%) favorable, 18 (23.7%) unfavorable and 25 (56.6%) were balance. The result shows that more balance directions are used for Kashmir-related issues in the headlines and sub-headlines.

Table 5: The overall observation regarding unit of analysis in The Telegraph

Newspaper	Unit of analysis	Frequency	Percent
The Telegraph	Headlines	29	58.0
	Sub headlines	21	42.0
	Total	50	100

Table 5 describes the overall finding of The Telegraph for headlines and sub-headlines. The Telegraph published 29 (58%) headlines and 21 (42.0%) sub-headlines on Pulwama, Balakot airstrikes, and Kashmir.

Table 6: Directions used for Pulwama attack in The Telegraph

Directions	Frequency	Percent
Favorable	(0)	(0)

Unfavorable	13	26.0
Balance	9	18.0
Total	22	44.0

Table 6 describes different Directions used for Pulwama attack in The Telegraph. 0 (0%) favorable, 13 (26.0%) unfavorable and 9 (18.0%) were balance. The result shows that more unfavorable directions were used for the Pulwama attack in the Telegraph. Moreover, there was no favorable direction used for the Pulwama attack.

Table 7: Directions used for Balakot airstrike in the Telegraph

Directions	Frequency	Percent
Favorable	(0)	(0)
Unfavorable	15	30.0
Balance	5	10.0
Total	20	40.0

Table 7 describes different Directions used for Balakot airstrike in The Telegraph. 0 (0%), 15 (30.0%) unfavorable and 5 (10.0%) were balance. The result shows that more unfavorable directions were used for the Balakot airstrike.

Table 8: Directions used for Kashmir issue in The Telegraph

Directions	Frequency	Percent
Favorable	(0)	(0)
Unfavorable	7	14.0
Balance	24	48.0
Total	31	62.0

Table 8 describes different Directions for Kashmir issue in The Telegraph. 0(0%) favorable, 7(14.0%) unfavorable and 24 (48.0%) were balance. As a result, shows that The Telegraph used more balanced directions when it comes to the Kashmir issue.

Table 9: Chi squares analysis for measuring the differences in coverage to Pulwama attacks, Balakot airstrike, and Kashmir.

Newspapers		Pulwama attacks	Balakot Airstrike	Kashmir Issue
The Times of India	Chi-Square	29.463	0.667	1.140
	Df	2	1	1
	Asymp. Sig.	0.000	0.414	0.286
The Telegraph	Chi-Square	0.727f	5.000g	9.323h
	Df	1	1	1
	Asymp. Sig.	0.394	0.025	0.002

Table 9 showed Chi-Square analysis for measuring the differences in coverage to Pulwama attack and Balakot airstrike and Kashmir Issue. Pulwama attack is significant in The Times of India as the value of p (.000) is less than the alpha (a) value (0.05). The Balkot Airstrike is not significant in The Times of India as the value of p (.414) is not less than the alpha (a) value (0.05). Kashmir issue is also not significant in The Times of India as the value of p (.286) is not less than the alpha (a) value (0.05).

Pulwama attack is not significant in The Telegraph as the value of p (.394) is not less than the alpha (a) value (0.05). The Balkot Airstrike is not significant in The Telegraph as the value of p (.025) is not less than the alpha (a) value (0.05). Kashmir issue is significant in The Telegraph as the value of p (.002) is less than the alpha (a) value (0.05).

**Hypothesis Testing**

Findings showed that H1, H2 have statistically proved.

**H1**, findings revealed that it is proved that Indian media used black propaganda. The Pulwama attacks happened because of their government and their low-level intelligence and security forces, but they blamed Pakistan, and Pakistan denied every allegation. According, to the findings, it is proved that Indian media always search for a chance to speak against Pakistan. They need an incident in which Pakistan comes, then they mold it according to their will and spread wrong statements, news and information against Pakistan and make the relations worse

**H2**, Indian newspapers give more negative coverage to the selected issues than positive coverage. While they need to cover the issues positively, it can't affect the Pak-India relations and didn't make the bilateral relations worse. It has been proved, as findings show it. The degree of coverage of Indian newspapers was more negative than positive to influence their people negatively and propagate the wrong information around the world.

**Discussion**

Indian print media coverage is not on the peace process during critical situations while creating a conflicting situation between two nuclear states. The outcomes demonstrate the agenda of the Indian newspapers. According to the findings, The Balakot Airstrike and Pulwama attack of Indian newspapers was against Pakistan and created a war situation. They just convert the truth into their situation and publish it as they want it to influence the audience and create hate for Pakistan. Black propaganda is used in their coverage against Pakistan and 99% of the content is anti-Pakistan.

Pulwama attack was the deadliest terrorist incident in Kashmir. Before any investigation was conducted, Indian media, political leadership and the Indian military started jingoistic propaganda against Pakistan, asserting that Pakistan was responsible for the attack. Indian media, through its electronic, print, and social channels, tried its best to create a war atmosphere by adopting war-mongering aggression against Pakistan and thus brought the diplomatic relations between India and Pakistan to their lowest ebb (Thakur & Malhotra 2010). One of the documentary filmmakers commented on the Pulwama attack: "Every time an incident like this happens, before a government can respond, before the military responds, the media immediately jumps the gun asking for war." After the Pulwama attack, a famously aggressive Indian news anchorperson Arnab Goswami said the day after the attack, "we want revenge, not condemnation... it's time for blood, the enemy's blood (Aljazeera 2019).

Pakistan and India are two nuclear states fighting from the day of independence for their peace and disputes. The research finds out that the Indian media gave less coverage to the Pak-Indo relations and peace process. Indian media covered the conflicting issues mostly instead of covering the peace process to bring peace and harmony between the two nuclear states. But Indian media gives more coverage to the conflicting issues that make the relations worse and bring the two nuclear states at war ended. The findings showed that Indian media negatively covered Pakistan and published that Pakistan is the main cause that makes the bilateral relations worse. In contrast, these statements are based on lies and mythical.

The news is based on lies and wrong statements published in the press. They just mold the issues according to their will and negatively influence the people and spread false information. The government policies and selected newspaper coverage regarding the Pak-India relations were worse and not good. The policies badly affect Pak-India relations and make them worse than ever, instead of covering the peace process and stability.

**Conclusion**

The Indian media create instability and war-like situation and make the two nuclear states' relations worst. Instead of creating stability and promoting peace, they tried to make it worse and spread terrorism around the world. Indian media directly blamed Pakistan for the attacks without any research and investigation. The attacks caused a lot of people deaths and injured. Indian never admit that this all because of our negligence in the intelligence and poor level security measure. Instead of this, they blamed Pakistan, and Pakistan denied allegations made by India. The truth will never stop or be composed by some liars, but it reveals one day.

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