

A Critical Study of Press Freedom on Foreign Policy and Indo-Pak Relations in Pakistan

Haroon Elahi^{*}, Farish Ullah^{**} and Aslam Dogar^{***}

Abstract

In Pakistan, freedom of press has long been a subject of intense debate. Both the political and non-political governments adopted various legal and constitutional means to regulate the press in the milieu of public debate and criticism. With this view, the current study aims to measure the extent to which the press enjoyed freedom in Pakistan over strategic issues like foreign policy and Indo-Pak relations during civil and military governments. Based on the theoretical framework of agenda-setting coupled with framing, the study also examines the ways and means by which the print media influence the public opinion on foreign policy and Indo-Pak relations. It also takes into account how media agenda transforms into public agenda. The results of the study depict a mixed trend for press freedom. However, one thing remains common that the press enjoyed freedom when new governments commenced whether it was headed by civil leadership or military and this freedom would gradually curtail towards the end of their tenure.

Keywords: Freedom of Press, Editorials, Strategic Issues, Political and Non-political Governments, Indo-Pak Relations.

Introduction

Freedom of the press has been a subject of great scholastic and professional debate as well as a cherished objective in the modern era across the globe. In conformity with other countries, the journalist fraternity in Pakistan has always upheld the right to freedom of speech. The Pakistan Press Foundation quotes a precept from a speech of the

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founder of Pakistan, Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah stating, “I believe that the press and media must be free of fear.” But unfortunately, the press¹ in Pakistan remained to achieve this objective. It either faced political victimisation or has been used as a tool for political benefits. Under various civil and military governments, this practice continued which not only affected the neutrality of the press but also hindered its struggle towards achieving freedom in true sense.

In Pakistan, civil and military governments both have been adopting several legal and constitutional means in their own favour to curb the press freedom when it comes to objectively debating the strategic issues. The successive governments inflicted the press with violence, threats and economic and social penalties as pressure tactics for their political gains. Although, both the civil and military rulers claimed to uphold and ensure the freedom of press in Pakistan but the long-cherished dream of true press freedom remained unfulfilled. From 2002 to 2013, the press had been claimed to be facilitated and there was much hype regarding free and vibrant media. However, the situation remained entirely opposite for issues related to strategic nature. During the tenure of General Musharraf, Pakistani media was handled with ambivalence. Although Article-19 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan endorses freedom of speech and expression but it also imposes a few restrictions:

“Every citizen shall have the right to freedom of speech and expression, and there shall be freedom of the press, subject to any reasonable restrictions imposed by law in the interest of the glory of Islam or the integrity, security or defence of Pakistan or any part thereof, friendly relations with foreign states, public order, decency or morality, or in relation to contempt of court, [commission of] or incitement to an offence.”²

Any debate that aims at studying strategic issues of Pakistan cannot rule out the relations with its neighbouring India. Since their independence in 1947, both Islamabad and New Delhi remained unable to develop a congenial relationship. A seething sense of “mutual distrust” widened the communication gap between the two neighbouring countries, resulting into never-ending enmity and led to four full-scale wars. The diplomatic ties

¹ Here the word ‘Press’ implies two forms of media: print and electronic.

² H.S. Sharif and Jafar Riaz Kataria, “Freedom of Expression and Justiciability in Pakistan,” *South Asian Studies* 34, no. 1 (2020).

between the two countries have always been very critical, especially with respect to national interest. This factor is deemed as a 'given' and the press is always expected to consider it aligned with the official policies while covering any such issues.³

It is true that strategic importance which is assigned to Indo-Pak relations does not alter with the change in governments. However, the press is not a monolithic entity but a vibrant one that does look outside but also keeps watch on the developments inside. One such domestic development is variations and fluctuations in democracy in Pakistan. Since its very inception, Pakistan was made to be a democratic country and media played a crucial role in both progression and regression of democracy in Pakistan. It is a fact though, to empower any democratic process, freedom of the press and access to information and communication flow through media is a must.

Journalists play the role of watchdog particularly to observe checks and balances on institutionalised power vested in the government organs by promoting accountability and transparency and facilitating the voters to make informed choices. The media also plays a substantial role in relation to providing guidance for the policy makers for good governance.⁴ When it comes to Pakistan, the press has to follow a comprehensive mechanism and necessary procedural requirements under different laws and regulations that actually curb its freedom. The official documents required to obtain a permit or certificate to publish a newspaper must be accepted under the Ethical Code of Practice provided in the Schedule of the Press Council of Pakistan Ordinance.⁵

This study is based on the conception that democracy recognises the rights and freedom of an individual. This socio-political ideal cannot be achieved without ensuring freedom of expression and the press.⁶

³ Abdul Sattar, *Pakistan's Foreign Policy, 1947-2005: A Concise History* (Oxford University Press: USA, 2007).

⁴ Omar Mohamed Abdelkhalek. "Democracy in the Arab World," December 3, 2011, <http://213.181.237.115/handle/10526/2532>

⁵ Syeda Saima Shabbir, "Judicial Activism Shaping the Future of Pakistan," *SSRN*, January 30, 2013, https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2209067

⁶ Syed A. Siraj, "Critical Analysis of Press Freedom in Pakistan," *Journal of Media and Communication Studies*, 1 (3) (2009): 043-047.

A 2014 Freedom House report found that the state of the freedom of the press was deplorable since the journalists in Pakistan faced stress, fear and threats.⁷ The report also observed that journalists were bound by certain limitations under national security rules and regulations in force during 2013. The politicians, army and intelligence agencies constantly criticised the media for its ‘irresponsible’ reporting on critical issues and attempted to limit the right to freedom of speech.

On the other hand, some journalists observed self-censorship on strategic issues which are generally termed as matters of ‘national interests.’⁸ The report further stated that a number of international websites like *YouTube*, *Facebook* and *Wikipedia* were temporarily banned. Once they were restored, these sites are continuously monitored by the government for any type of ‘offensive’ material. In 2012, the Ministry of Information Technology demanded to strengthen the monitoring system.⁹ The Official Secrets Act in Pakistan also authorises the government to restrict and the freedom of speech on critical issues related to armed forces, religion and judiciary.

The current study aims to explore the degree of press freedom enjoyed by the journalists in Pakistan on strategic issues of foreign policy, particularly its relations with India. It also attempts to explore how foreign policy, particularly Pakistan’s relations with India, and other vital issues of strategic importance have been framed by the English and Urdu press in Pakistan. This study analysed the newspaper editorials on strategic issues and its time frame is confined to the civil and military governments from 1999-2013, 1999-2008 and 2008-13.

To investigate the factors and major incidents that could curb freedom of the press under the umbrella of ‘national interest,’ media coverage on strategic issues like foreign policy and Pakistan-India relations were analysed. Agenda-setting and Framing, which are two common approaches

⁷ Justin D. Martin, Dalia Abbas and Ralph J. Martins, “The Validity of Global Press Ratings: Freedom House and Reporters sans Frontières, 2002-2014,” *Journalism Practice* 10, no. 1 (2016): 93-108.

⁸ Sherry Ricchiardi, *Challenges for Independent News Media in Pakistan*. (Washington DC: Center for International Media Assistance, 2012).

⁹ Jahanzaib Haque, “Pakistan’s Internet Landscape 2013,” Report, *Bytes for All, Pakistan*.

in the Effect Paradigm of Communication research have been applied as a theoretical approach in this study. The editorials of the leading Urdu newspaper, Daily *Jang* and leading English newspaper, Daily *Dawn* were taken as sample of the study. The content analysis as an optimal research design was used to investigate the phenomenon of press freedom during civil and military rule by using following mentioned frames:

- a) Positive/Favourable/Supportive
- b) Negative/Unfavourable/Unsupportive
- c) Neutral/Balanced/Mixed

Literature Review

Gregory Bateson a psychologist and Erving Goffman who was a sociologist, first floated the idea of Media Framing. Goffman said that “The frames are a way of organising that help a person to discover, recognise, observe and label an apparently countless number of tangible occurrences defined in its limits.”

Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights fosters the assertion of freedom of expression by emphasising that it is the right of every person to have freedom to form opinions and expressions. This includes freedom to hold any opinion, exclusive of intervention and to obtain, collect and communicate information and beliefs through any media irrespective of any boundaries. It is a universal human right to enjoy the freedom of expression and it is a privilege not limited to the public representatives or media persons only. The journalists employ the right to free speech for everyone in the community.¹⁰

The study explains that because of the media’s established role of dealing with people’s perception, various attempts have regularly been made to control the media mainly in order to build a positive image of the country and its political system.¹¹ This characteristic is not unique to Pakistan: The elite in power across the world have consistently been

¹⁰ Marina Guseva et al., “Press Freedom and Development,” Report (2008), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).

¹¹ Syed A. Siraj, “Critical Analysis of Press Freedom in Pakistan,” *Journal of Media and Communication Studies*, 1(3) (2009): 043-047.

making efforts to control and manage news to demonstrate a favourable image of their nation and their actions.

However, it is the legitimate right of the public to know the activities of their government and, in order to remain informed, the instrument which they use is the press (media). In the countries where political systems are not yet as democratic as of those of the developed ones, the journalists and civil society struggle for media freedom. Depreciation in the freedom of the press touched its lowest for 16 years, across the globe, due to unpredictable threats to the press reporters and media stations in main democratic regions, extensive clampdowns on free press and moves by the Chinese and Russian governments to enhance their impact across the boundaries.¹²

The 2006 Press Foundation report observes that state's approach to deal with the media and journalists has been positively associated to the political system in Pakistan, and that non-political governments have treated the press more adversely compared to elected civilian governments.¹³ A journalist is considered to be socially responsible to provide a correct, inclusive and intellectual account of the events in a meaningful way. Unjustifiable, maladroit and manipulated material should not be published and it is only free press that can ensure limitations of mass media in a society. Democracies are expected to have free media whereas the autocracies are perceived to have controlled media. Irrespective of this, the scenario is, at times, an otherwise and the mismatch requires academic examination.¹⁴

Findings

Pakistan faced turmoil in relation to its foreign policy formulation and its implementation during the period of October 1999-October 2002 since it was characterised by regional and global developments, including a downturn in Indo-Pak relations in the aftermath of the 1999 Kargil war and the 9/11 attacks in the United States (US). In view of this and to signify

¹² Jerome A. Barron, "The Pentagon Papers Case and the Wikileaks Controversy: National Security and the First Amendment," *Wake Forest JL & Pol'y* 1 (2011): 49.

¹³ Journalism in Pakistan — An Overview, *Pakistan Press Foundation*, <https://pakpressfoundation.wordpress.com/2006/05/05/pakistan-press-foundation/>

¹⁴ Jenifer Whitten-Woodring, "Watchdog or Lapdog? Media Freedom, Regime Type, and Government Respect for Human Rights," *International Studies Quarterly*, 53(3) (2009):595-625.

quality results, data on press freedom with respect to foreign policy and Indo-Pak relations was collected from October 13, 1999 to April 12, 2000 first six months and April 11, 2002 to October 10, 2002 last six months of the military rule by General Musharaf. The rationale behind selection of the mentioned time period was that after this time period, although Musharaf remained in power as president, the reins of government were shifted to politically elected set-up.

To maintain data conformity, data was also selected for the government of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) starting with the first six months i.e. September 9, 2008 to March 8, 2009 and the last six months of the politically elected Government i.e. September 25, 2012 to March 24, 2013.

The findings of the analysis of the editorial content of the elite Urdu and English press regarding freedom enjoyed by the press in Pakistan in relation to strategic issues like foreign policy and Indo-Pak bilateral ties during the above selected time slots of the political and non-political government are as follows, also data has been divided into two parts for clarity:

Foreign Policy Framing in Editorials During Military Government

The study selected 60 editorials as sample from newspaper editions published during military rule on foreign policy. Daily *Dawn* and *Jang* published 32 and 28 editorials on foreign policy respectively. The phenomenon of press freedom and openness of military government to it may be well understood from the results that show 26 editorials being critical of the government while 12 fell in the neutral category. A total of 22 editorials in both publications, however, were supportive of the non-political rule on account of foreign policy.

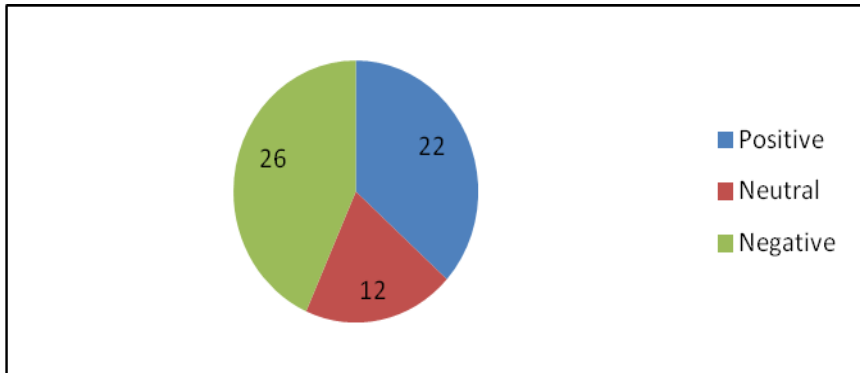
Table No. 1

**Framing Analysis of the Editorials
(Oct 13, 1999 to Apr 12, 2000)**

	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Total
Dawn	9	6	17	32
Jang	13	6	9	28
Total	22	12	26	60

Chart No. 1

**Foreign Policy Framing During Military Government
(Oct 13, 1999 to Apr 12, 2000)**



During the last six months of Musharraf's government, the publication of 64 editorials on foreign policy issues indicates importance of the subject in the eyes of the press. The figures below convey that 33 out of 64 editorials were critical of military government whereas 20 items supported it with respect to its policies on foreign affairs. On the other hand, 11 out of 64 editorials from both newspapers were termed as balanced in opinion.

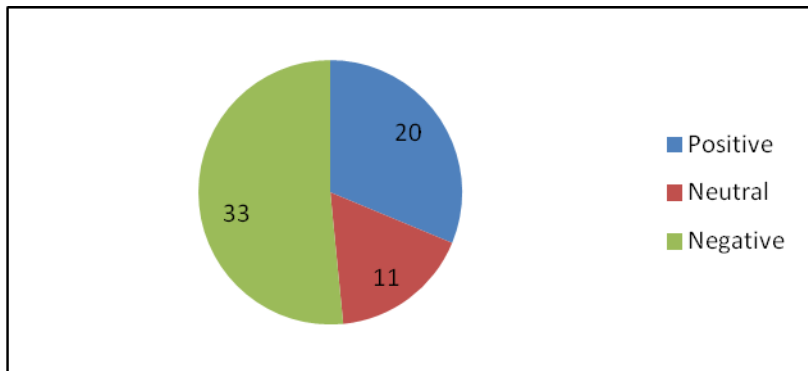
Table No. 2

**Framing Analysis of the Editorials
(Apr 11, 2002 to Oct 10, 2002)**

	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Total
Dawn	7	6	21	34
Jang	13	5	12	30
Total	20	11	33	64

Chart No. 2

**Foreign Policy Framing During Military Government
(Apr 11, 2002 to Oct 10, 2002)**



A Critical Study of Press Freedom

The following chart and table depicts positive scenario, and overall assessment of press freedom with respect to foreign policy during Musharraf's rule. Out of 124 published editorials on the subject, 59 were critical, 42 were supportive and 23 remained balanced and/or neutral. This data indicates that newspapers were not under any pressure while giving their editorial judgments on government policies on foreign relations.

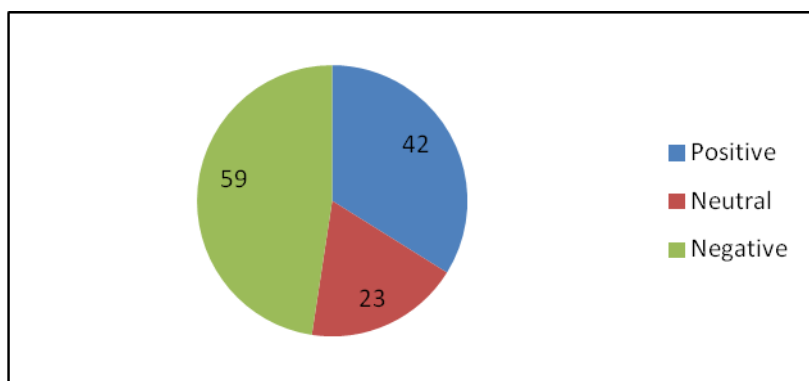
Table No. 3

Framing of Foreign Policy in Editorials During Military Government

	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Total
1st 6 months (Oct 13, 1999 to 12 Apr, 2000)	22	12	26	60
Last 6 months (April 11, 2002-Oct 10, 2002)	20	11	33	64
Total	42	23	59	124

Chart No. 3

Framing of Foreign Policy in Editorials During Military Government



Indo-Pak Relations Framing in Editorials During Military Government

The study finds that 62 editorials were published during the first six months of the military government. The figure depicts the press as not being neutral and as being pro-Pakistan with 30 positive and negative frames and two as neutral, mainly because of wider national interest.

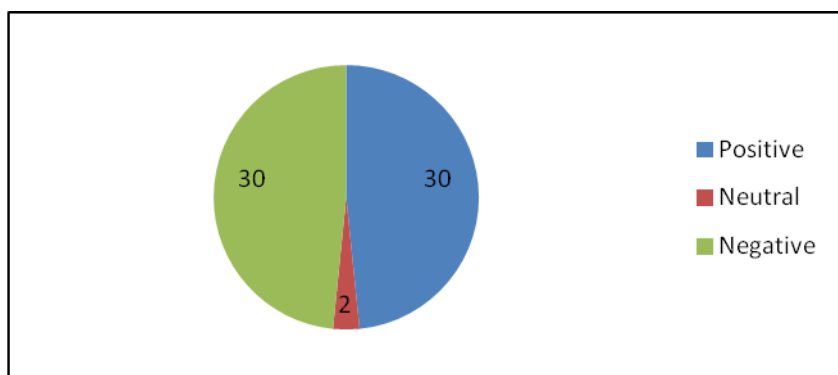
Table No. 4

**Framing Analysis of the Editorials
(Oct 13, 1999 to Apr 12, 2000)**

	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Total
Dawn	16	2	11	29
Jang	14	0	19	33
Total	30	2	30	62

Chart No. 4

**Framing of Indo-Pak Relations During Military Government
(Oct 13, 1999 to Apr 12, 2000)**



Both the newspapers published 36 editorials during the last six months of military government, out of which 24 editorials were supportive and nine were critical whereas opinion of the three could be described as balanced in view of government policies. The trend was suggestive of the fact that the press enjoyed lesser freedom during the

last six months of military government. The reason which could be accounted for this factor is nature of Indo-Pak relations which generally remains almost unchanged whether it is military or civilian government.

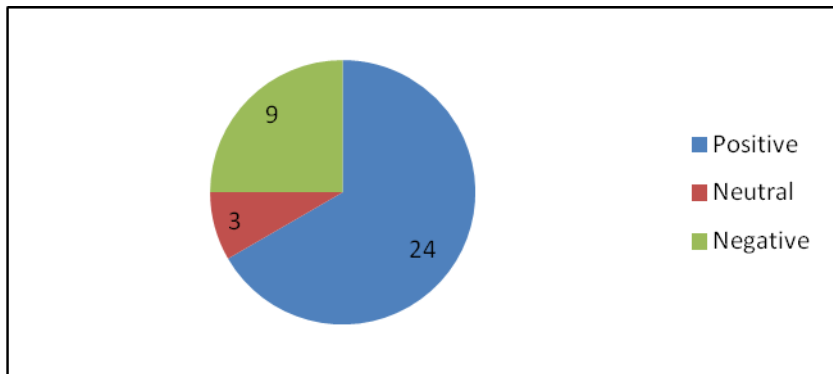
Table No. 5

**Framing Analysis of the Editorials
(Apr 11, 2002 to Oct 10, 2002)**

	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Total
Dawn	9	2	6	17
Jang	15	1	3	19
Total	24	3	9	36

Chart No. 5

**Framing of Indo-Pak Relations During Military Government
(Apr 11, 2002 to Oct 10, 2002)**



Out of 98 editorials of the selected sample during specified time frame of the non-political government, 54 editorials indicate the positive trend of the editorial coverage of the government policies on issues related to Pakistan-India relations. Another 39 editorials were critical of policies related to Indo-Pak ties whereas only five could be considered as balanced/neutral on the subject.

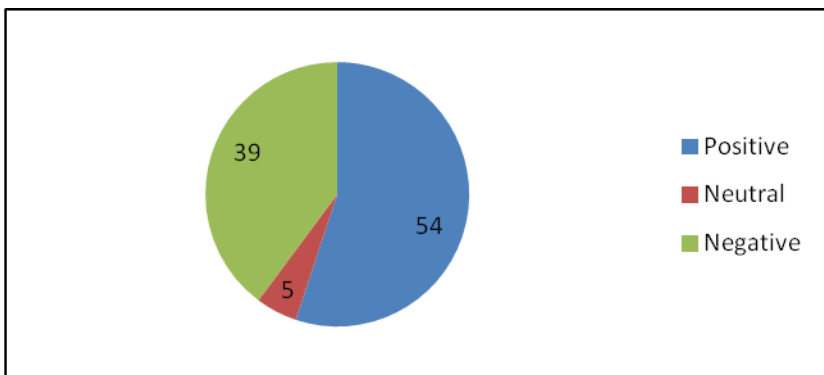
Table No. 6

Framing of Indo-Pak Relations in Editorials During Military Government

	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Total
1st 6 months (Oct 13, 1999 to 12 Apr, 2000)	30	2	30	62
Last 6 months (Apr 11, 2002-Oct 10, 2002)	24	3	9	36
Complete year	54	5	39	98

Chart No. 6

Framing of Indo-Pak Relations in Editorials During Military Government



Foreign Policy Framing in Editorials During Civilian Government

Statistics below show that 48 editorials were published by *Dawn* and *Jang* on the subject of foreign policy, mostly about bilateral ties with the global and regional powers. A total of 23 editorials depicted the government's foreign policy as a failure whereas 16 out of 48 editorials supported government's policies. Nine editorials could be categorised as relatively balanced.

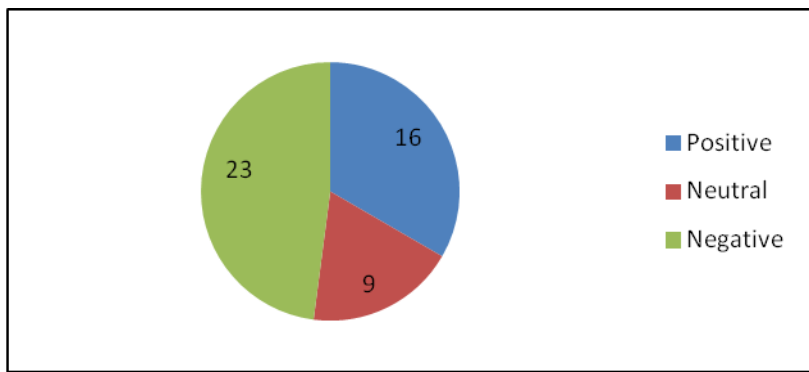
Table No.7

**Framing Analysis of the Editorials
(Sep 9, 2008 to Mar 8, 2009)**

	Positive	Neutral	Negative	1st 6 month
Dawn	13	3	11	27
Jang	3	6	12	21
Total	16	9	23	48

Chart No. 7

**Framing of Foreign Policy in Editorials During Civilian Government
(Sep 9, 2008 to Mar 8, 2009)**



The results suggested that 32 out of 51 published editorials criticised the government’s policies on foreign affairs whereas 11 were supportive. Eight editorials could be considered as impartial, adopting a balanced approach towards the foreign policy matters.

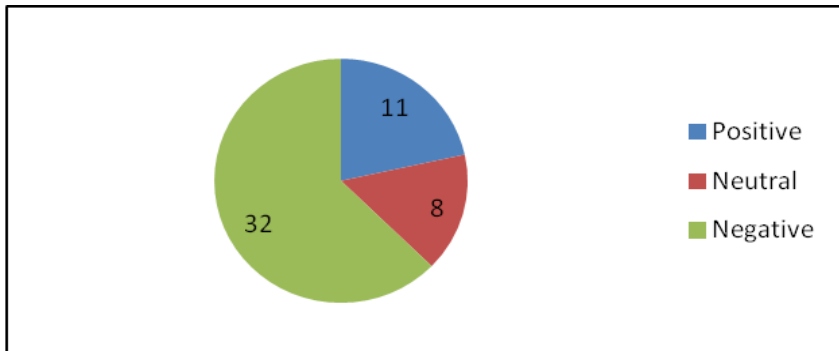
Table No. 8

**Framing Analysis of the Editorials
(Sep 25, 2012 to Mar 24, 2013)**

	Positive	Neutral	Negative	1st 6 month
Dawn	6	3	16	25
Jang	5	5	16	26
Total	11	8	32	51

Chart No. 8

**Framing of Foreign Policy During Civilian Government
(Sep 25, 2012 to Mar 24, 2013)**



An overall assessment of foreign policy framing in *Daily Dawn* and *Jang* suggested that out of a handful of 99 editorials, 55 were non-supportive and critical of the civilian government’s policies loudly speaking about the state of press freedom in the country on the most sensitive and strategic issue of the foreign policy. In addition to it, the results also suggest that the supportive stance of the newspapers on

government's foreign policy decreased with time. However, 27 items were found to be positive on government's policies whereas 11 editorials could be termed as neutral/balanced.

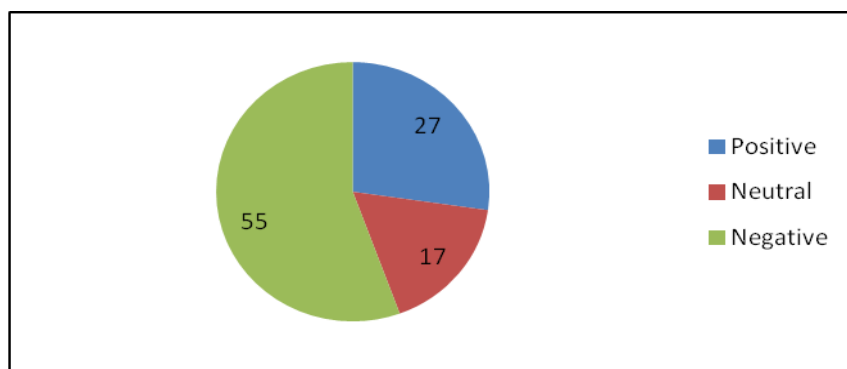
Table No. 9

Framing Analysis of Editorials During Civilian Government

	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Total
1st 6 months (Sep 9, 2008-Mar 8, 2009)	16	9	23	48
Last 6 months Sep 25, 2012-Mar 24, 2013)	11	8	32	51
Complete year	27	17	55	99

Chart No. 9

Framing of Foreign Policy in Editorials During Civilian Government



Indo-Pak Relations Framing in Editorials During Civilian Government

Evaluation of the treatment of Indo-Pak relations by the editorials of the leading press of Pakistan suggests that out of 80 editorials, 44 supported political government whereas 23 were critical of government's policies. The figure below shows that 13 were somewhat neutral in view of

civilian government’s attempts to build positive relations with the neighbouring country.

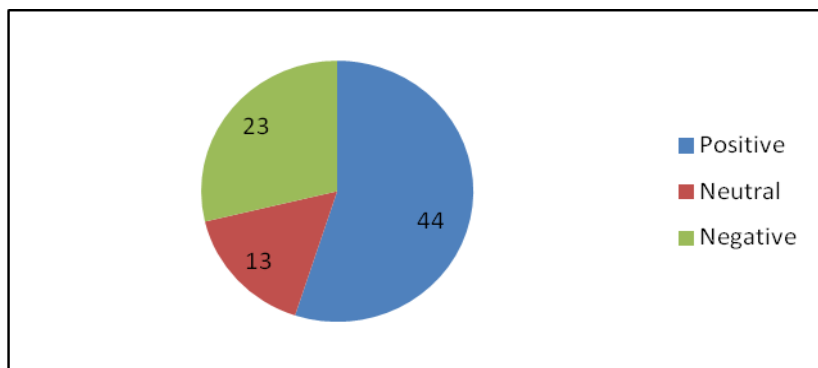
Table No. 10

**Framing Analysis of the Editorials
(Sep 9, 2008 to Mar 8, 2009)**

	Positive	Neutral	Negative	1st 6 month
Dawn	26	8	7	41
Jang	18	5	16	39
Total	44	13	23	80

Chart No. 10

**Framing of Indo-Pak Relations in Editorials During Civilian Government
(Sep 9, 2008-Mar 8, 2009)**



As the figures given below indicate, a total of 44 editorials were published by the sample newspapers under study. 19 out of 44 editorials were non-supportive of the government’s policies towards India, taking the civilian government’s steps as failure towards resolution of various issues. 12, editorials were evaluated neutral whereas 13 others fell in the supportive category. A different image could also be drawn in view of national interest and bilateral ties between two neighbouring nations as portrayed in the elite press of Pakistan.

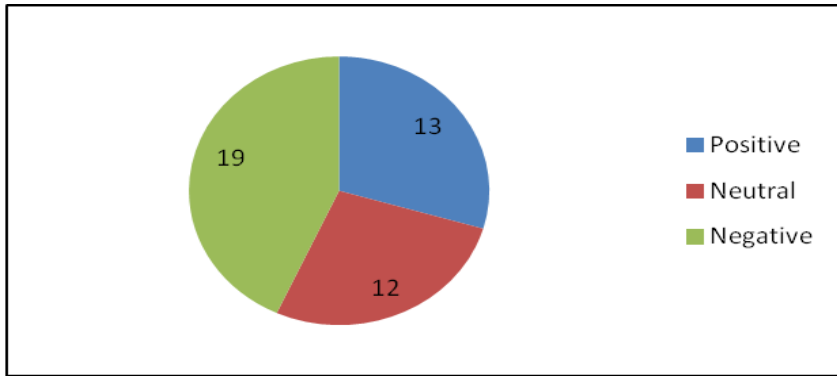
Table No. 11

**Framing Analysis of the Editorials
(Sep 25, 2012 to Mar 24, 2013)**

	Positive	Neutral	Negative	1st 6 month
Dawn	5	8	14	27
Jang	8	4	5	17
Total	13	12	19	44

Chart No. 11

**Framing of Indo-Pak Relations in Editorials During Civilian Government
(Sep 25, 2012 to Mar 24, 2013)**



An overall assessment of editorial treatment given to India-Pakistan ties by selected newspapers of Pakistan shows a very diverse and comprehensive data indicating majority of the editorials as supportive to government. Out of 124 editorials, 57 were supportive, 42 critical and 25 neutral with respect to policies of political setup towards India.

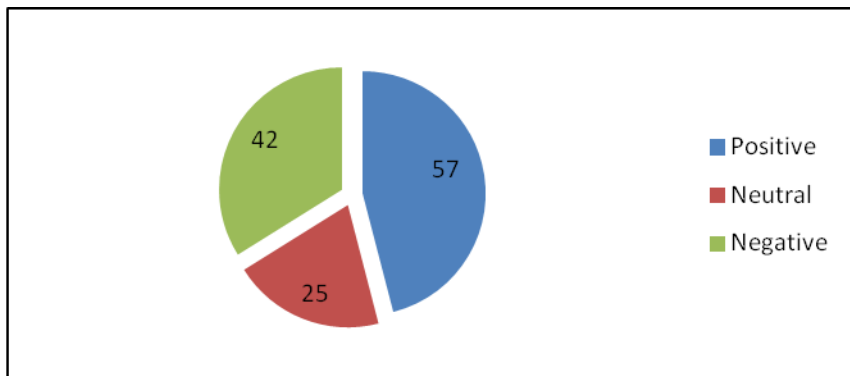
Table No. 12

Framing Analysis of Indo-Pak Relations in Editorials During Civilian Government

	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Total
1st 6 months (Sep 9, 2008 to Mar 8, 2009)	44	13	23	80
Last 6 months (Sep 25, 2012 to Mar 24, 2013)	13	12	19	44
Complete year	57	25	42	124

Chart No. 12

Framing of Indo-Pak Relations in Editorials During Civilian Government



Analysis

Foreign Policy

The results of the study show that military government faced more criticism on foreign policy issues particularly in the beginning and ending tenures.

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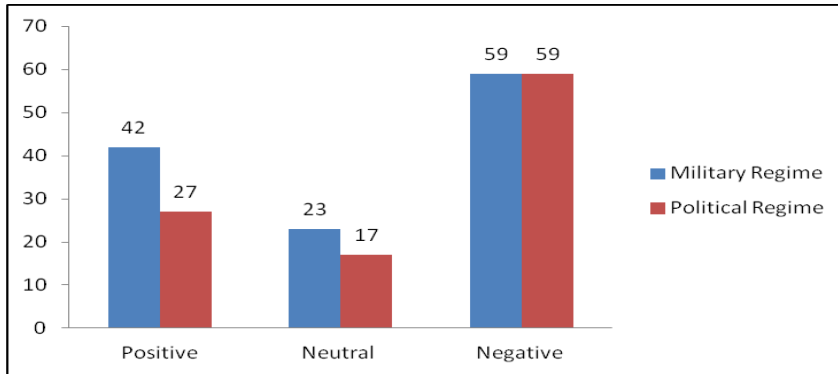
Out of total 227 editorials published on foreign policy during given period of time, 124 were published during military rule and the rest 103 during civilian government. A number of 59 editorials during each government period were non-supportive and critical of the foreign policy agenda: 42 out of 124 editorials were positive and supportive of military government while only 27 of 103 editorials were found in the same category during the Zardari government. A total of 23 out of 124 editorials during non-political governments could be termed as balanced, whereas only 17 of 103 editorials published during political government fall in this category.

A comparison of the above indications suggests that out of 227, 118 were non-supportive and critical to both political and non-political governments. It shows an encouraging state of the press freedom. Furthermore, 69 out of the 227 editorials were supportive ones. It indicates lesser press freedom. On the other hand, only 40 of 227 could be termed as balanced or neutral.

Table No. 13

Comparison of Freedom of Press on Foreign Policy Issues During Civilian and Military Governments in Pakistan

	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Total
Military Government	42	23	59	124
Civilian Government	27	17	59	103
Total	69	40	118	227

Graph No. 1

Indo-Pak Relations

Pakistan and India, the two neighbouring countries, are identified as bitter rivals since their independence and is one of the major reasons of this conflict Kashmir.¹⁵ Because of mutual distrust, the military preparedness in terms of conventional and nuclear ordnance remained unstoppable even during brief times of peace. Since partition, both sides have fought four major wars other than many military skirmishes, confrontations and escalations.¹⁶ Other than this, both the countries have developed an indigenous ‘culture of conflict’ that gives rise to certain views which affect not only the common public but also the policymakers and institutions and media is no exception in this regard. It also provides them with some cultural moralities which guide them to pursue this zero-sum interstate conflict.¹⁷

Keeping this in view, the media personnel and coverage of the related issues often depicts serving the national interest. Statistics on the second variable of the study are also quite revealing in this regard and support the prevailing phenomenon of vast national interest. The changes in affairs at

¹⁵ Musarat Javed Cheema, “Pakistan-India Conflict with Special Reference to Kashmir,” *South Asian Studies* 30, no. 1 (2020).

¹⁶ Jawad Kadir, “Perceiving the Enemy Differently: A Psycho-cultural Analysis of Pakistan-India Conflict,” *Journal of Asian Security and International Affairs* 6, no. 2 (2019): 189-216.

¹⁷ AnamIftikhar, Muhammad Ibrarr Ahmed Robine Shoebi, “Pakistan-India Peace Process: A Critical Appreciation,” *JPUHS*, vol.27, no.1 (January-June, 2014): 10-18.

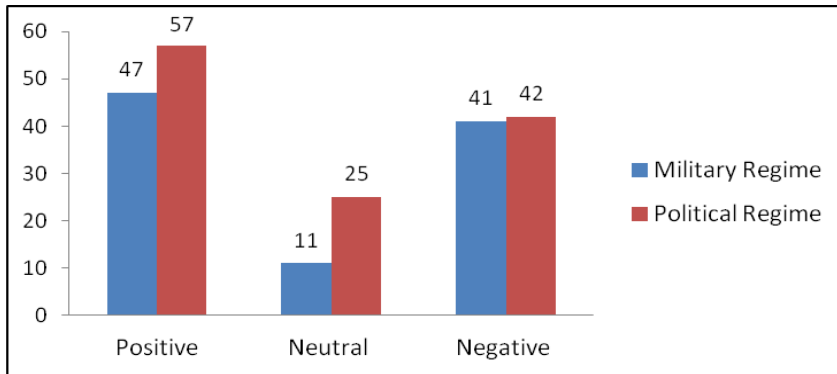
the policy level in view of Indo-Pak relations and the content analysis of editorials depicted the press as being supportive to both political setup and non-political government. Out of 223 published editorials by the selected newspapers, 104 were supportive and positive (47/99 during non-political government and 57/124 during civilian government).

Although many of the critics were describing policies of both governments as non-effective, a noticeable number of editorials showed hope and supported both the governments in order to build good terms with India. Apart from the above, 36 editorials provided a neutral and balanced opinion on Pakistan-India relations. Likewise, 83 of the total 223 editorials were critical of the governments with respect to their policies towards India. However, 37.22 per cent of the published editorials were critical of both political and non-political governments, depicting somewhat press freedom.

Table No. 14

Comparison of Freedom of Press with Respect to Indo-Pak Relations During Civilian and Military Governments in Pakistan

	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Total
Military Government	47	11	41	99
Civilian Government	57	25	42	124
Total	104	36	83	223

Graph No. 2

Conclusion

Press freedom has always been an area of great concern and debate in Pakistan. It is evident that both the military and civilian governments used various means to hinder and control public debate and criticism generated through media. Various governments made significant claims about ensuring press freedom but often practiced the opposite. During General Musharraf's tenure and the then civilian government of Asif Ali Zardari, President of the country (2008-2013), the trends of press regulations were mixed.

Freedom of the press in Pakistan, particularly with respect to matters of strategic importance was hindered during Musharraf government. The journalists were often intimidated and, at times, harassed, too. On numerous occasions, the press was barred from reporting on the matters related to the opposition parties, corruption and abuses of power by the public servants and grim situation in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) where the security forces were engaged in kinetic operations against terrorists.

The rationale of the study was that without the right to freedom of expression, democracy cannot be nurtured in its true spirit. In modern civilised societies, media's role as an instrument of information and education cannot be denied. It plays a pivotal role in changing public opinion across the globe. Theoretical foundation for the study was derived from the Agenda-setting and Framing theories whereas the content analysis

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was adopted as a methodology with two main variables i.e., foreign policy and Indo-Pak Relations.

The results of the study illustrate that General Pervez Musharraf's military rule made exaggerated claims of making efforts to restore democracy as well as protecting and promoting press freedom. On the other hand, civilian governments also claimed to remain committed to promotion of freedom of the press. During the early stages, both the governments acknowledged the role of media but got offended by the same media when they were criticised. The findings also conclude that the state of press freedom during first six months of the civilian government was encouraging. The press was free to write the content according to its own opinion. The analysis of the media coverage during the final months of the military government suggested clear voices against the government policies and the press was strongly criticised by the government officials.

The study also concludes that during both the governments the state of press freedom was mixed, more favourable for press freedom at the beginning and fading away with the passage of time.