

# NEWS DISCOURSE AND POLITICS AN ANALYSIS OF DAWN TELEVISION NEWS ON COVERAGE OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR

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**Abstract:** The paper is an attempt to develop a multidisciplinary approach to study news discourse qualitatively using Critical Discourse Analysis as a methodology. The paper extensively studies elements of discourse like access, setting, news frames, in order to understand dichotomy of media-politics cycle and how news media maintains power and dominance by working in close tandem with political elites there by acting as secondary sources of news. A prime time programme of Dawn news broadcasted on the eve of Kashmir solidarity day on 5<sup>th</sup> February has been critically analysed television news media and its sub ordinate relation with powerful dominant sources of news further shifts the political wave towards a particular direction and media acting as a principal apparatus for such kind of shifts.

**Keywords:** Dawn News, Critical Discourse Analysis, Frame, Media-politics, Television

## 1.0 Introduction:

Kashmir has been in dispute between India and Pakistan since the birth of Pakistan with the independence of India in 1947. All the princely states were given option by Lord Mountbatten, the first and last British Governor General of free India, to accede with either country or remain free (Snedden, 2015). However, Maharajah Hari Singh remained neutral and did not accede to either dominion. As a result, Pukhtoons backed by Pakistan invaded Kashmir Province on 22 October 1947. The tribal invasion from Pakistan made the Maharaja to seek help from India. India's viceroy Mountbatten promised him militarily help and in return Maharaja signed the formal 'Instrument of Accession' to India (Bose, 2009) which was criticised by Pakistan (Bhatt, 2003).

After the accession India sent its troops to Kashmir to drive out the invaders, sparking off the first war between the two countries. However could not regain the entire region. With the interference of United Nations on appeal of India, ceasefire broke on 1 January 1949, resulting in end of the fighting in J&K. However Jammu and Kashmir got divided into two parts. Almost half of the state- comprising the Punjabi speaking areas of Poonch, Mirpur, and Muzaffarabad, along with Gilgit and Baltistan were kept by Pakistan. The other half including the large Jammu region, the entire Kashmir Valley and Ladakh were retained by India. At that point, Kashmir became root cause of conflict between the two dominions (Tremblay, 1997).

The two countries have fought almost three wars, two of them over Kashmir. The first one was during the partition of India and the second war was over Siachen glacier in 1999 in Kargil. India blames Pakistan for using various conservative foreign policy tools to attempt to acquire Jammu and Kashmir, including warfare, international organizations, political processes, diplomacy and propaganda, and foreign aid (Prabha, 2000). Apart from the wars, there is information war (Webster, 2003) going on between the two countries where each country justify their claim over existence and position in the Kashmir dispute (Sultan, 2000).

Pakistan media mainly PTV National (News) Geo TV, Dawn News and Radio Pakistan are very popular and widely accessed in Kashmir (Behera, 2012). Concerning about the anti-India campaign in Pakistan media over internal matters including Jammu and Kashmir, the government of India banned the channels in the state in 2008 (Press Trust of India, 2006). However with the popular pressure from the people in Valley the government couldn't continue with the ban (Indo-Asian News Service, 2008). In order to explore the news discourse on Jammu and Kashmir in Pakistan television news media a critical discourse analysis of dawn news has been conducted.

## 2.0 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are:

1. To critically analyse the discourse of Dawn Television News of Pakistan on coverage of Jammu and Kashmir.
2. To critically analyse the power and dominance in Pakistan television news broadcast.

## 3.0 Literature Review

The theoretical framework of the study is based on Critical Discourse Analysis. CDA emerging from critical linguistics, critical semiotics and study of language, discourse and communication in socio-political context has become the general label for a special approach to the study of text and talk. CDA studies dimensions of grammar, style, rhetoric, speech acts, pragmatic strategies and interaction (Van Dijk, 1995). The other dimensions of communication CDA studies semiotics- pictures, film, sound, music, gesture etc. (Bentele 1981). A similar study by Hartley (2013), examines visual and language dimension of news and the media.

A series of critical studies were conducted by Glasgow University of Media Group (1976, 1980, 1985), on coverage of bad news on various issues, disputes, the Falklands war and media coverage of AIDS in Television reporting. The most prominent studies applying the theory of news discourse were conducted by Van Dijk in series of Critical studies on international news, and racism in the press (Van Dijk, 2015).

A study conducted by Hallora, Elliott & Murdock (1970), critically analysed the news coverage of demonstrations in UK against the presence of the United States in Vietnam and found that news media portrayed the peaceful protest as violent. In a similar study Downing (1980) demonstrates that news media pays more attention to industrial disputes than to industrial accidents and negative actions against women including rape. The findings of the Downing describes selective articulation of news, frames as well as discourse. There is a similar kind of selective articulation of issues as well frames in reportage of Jammu and Kashmir in news media of India and Pakistan (Ali. 2007). Sethi (1999) argues that the media of both the countries instead of working for conflict resolution reinforces bias prejudices and creates hostilities whereby in most programs of Pakistan television according to Rehman (2005), Kashmir is describes as the jugular vein of Pakistan.

## 4.0 Methodology:

“Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context.” (Van Dijk, 2001, p. 95-120)

Critical Discourse Analysis has been employed to critically analyse the prime time television news program broadcasted Dawn News Pakistan at the eve of Kashmir solidarity on 5<sup>th</sup> of February 2014. The news program Khabar Se Khabar” which is a live program hosted by Fareed Raees was recorded and subjected to Critical Discourse Analysis on grounds of news discourse, news setting, news frames, sources of news, visuals, headlines, news ticker, text and context. The guests has been coded as speakers where Khurshid Kasuri is speaker 1, Fareed Paracha is speaker 2 and Mirwaiz Umar Farooq is Speaker 3.

## 5.0 Critical Discourse Analysis of the Programme

**News Channel:** Dawn News

**About the Channel:** Dawn News is a Pakistan's 24-hour Urdu news channel based in Karachi, the channel is a subsidiary of Pakistan Herald Publications Limited (PHPL), Pakistan's largest English-language media group

**Name of the Show:** Khabar se Khabar

**Date of the Show:** 5 February 2014 (Pakistan observes 5 February each year Kashmir Solitary Day in support of and unity with the people of Jammu and Kashmir)

**Anchor:** Fareed Raees

**Issue of Broadcast:** Kashmir Masley par Musharraf ka Formulla  
(Formulla of Musharraf on Kashmir Issue)

**Guests:** Khurshid Kasuri (former Foreign Affairs Minister of Pakistan)  
Fareed Paracha (Jamet-e-Islami Pakistan)  
Mirwaiz Umar Farooq (J&K Hurriyat Conference Chairman)

**5.1 Show Opening:**

The program starts with the anchor discussing the gross human right violations in Kashmir and describes the notion of Kashmir being a jugular vein of Pakistan with parallel visuals of protests and demonstration showing Indian para military firing on protesters. The visuals depict the victimhood narrative where Indian authorities are projected demonised and the Kashmiris as victims of the oppression at the hands of authorities (Rehman, 2005). The use of such kind of visuals are used to create a mediated construction of reality among the audiences both in Pakistan as well as in Jammu and Kashmir as Sontag (2003) argues in his book 'Regarding the Pain of Others' that such kind of visuals create a cry for revenge and awareness about such kind of terrible happenings. Such visuals are used to stimulate sympathy and favourable support toward the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

**5.2 Access**

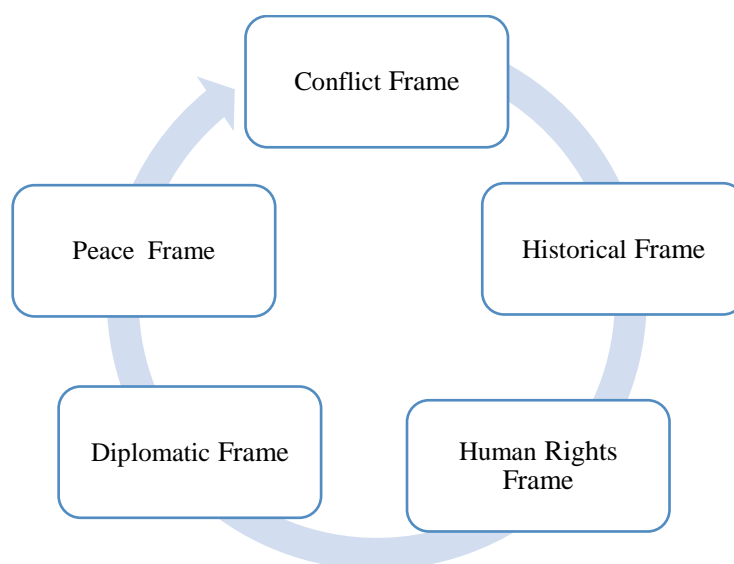
Access of elite news sources in order to create a dominant discourse three accredited news sources have been called to discuss the formula of Musharraf for Kashmir resolution. Hall et al. argued that the media provide access to the accredited sources of news who enjoy institutional power as well as representative standing. All the three members belong to either political parties (Khurshid Kasuri), or interest group (Fareed Paracha, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq). This structured relationship between media and the powerful sources questions the ideological role of media and creates a structural bias where the powerful sources sets the news discourse acting as primary definers of news. The news broadcast has carefully avoided any kind of conflictual discourse by interviewing all the three sources of news separately despite having a similar stand on Kashmir.

**5.3 News Setting**

The discourse over resolution of Kashmir on the occasion of 5<sup>th</sup> of April which is observed as solidarity day to show support for Kashmir has severed the purpose of both Pakistan and 'All Jammu and Kashmir Hurriyat Conference' which further gave legitimacy to claim of Pakistan. The setting is determined by the placement of discourse where Dawn News has provided a prime time news slot to the political elites on such an important day so as to communicate a particular kind of ideology to the audiences of Pakistan and Kashmir thereby serving the purpose of all the sources and also of the news channel.

**6.0 Frame Analysis**

Framing involves selection and salience. To frame is to make some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text (Entman, 1993). The entire programme revolves around use of five types of frames in a cyclic manner as describes in below figure.



**Frames used in the Program**

**6.1 Conflict Frame:** The conflict frame basically emphasises conflicts between individuals, nation states and institutions. The frame has been extensively studied by Neuman et al. (1992) while studying US news media and found that conflict was the most widely used frame. The reportage on Jammu and Kashmir in news media of Pakistan heavily employs conflict as a central theme of news frames.

**6.2 Excerpts from the Program**

**Headline 1.** 'What was the Musharraf's formula for the resolution of Jammu and Kashmir'?

**Headline 2.** Pakistan's Jugular Vein Kashmir under Indian Occupation for 67 years.

**Anchor:** will Kashmir be free from clutches of India ever?

**Speaker 1:** We had agreed upon 85 percent of the resolutions till 2007. We also met Kashmiri Hurriyat leaders both officially as well as secretly in different parts of the world. But then 2008 Mumbai attacks happened and the resolution was put into the back burner.

**Analysis:** The headlines used in the beginning of the programme indicates that Kashmir is the root cause of the conflict between the countries and Pakistan claims Kashmir as their Jugular Vein. The formal foreign minister of Pakistan Khurshid Kasuri admits the claim of India that they meet Kashmiri separatist leaders officially and secretly in different parts of the world which otherwise is against the principles of diplomacy. He further admits that 2008 Mumbai attacks hindered and derailed the peace resolution formula of Parvez Musharraf.

**6.3 Historical Frame:** The background visuals in the entire programme supported the use of historical frame where history of Kashmir conflict was constantly displayed in the background.

**Speaker 2:** We observe the Kashmir Solidarity Day in support of Autonomy of Kashmir. Autonomy of Kashmir is our first priority which otherwise has been undermined by Musharraf by subsiding in his Kashmir resolution formula.

**Analysis:** The news channel has expertly interviewed all the three speakers separately to avoid any kind of counter argument in a dominant discourse in order to make sure that no negative evaluations regarding the stand of Pakistan on Jammu and Kashmir be criticised.

#### **6.4 Human Rights Frame:**

Headline 1: Indias tyrant and cruel acts cannot suppress the Kashmiris azadi sentiment

Headline 2: Bleeding and innocent Kashmir Valley –a symbol of courage

**Anchor:** Why Kashmiris are not put on board? There are human right violations and they sacrifice their lives so they must be kept on board.

**Speaker 3:** The proposal of Musharraf was a confidence building measure but the real issues are the removal of AFSPA, check on human rights violations involving innocent killing, rapes, and unidentified graves and to bring Azad Kashmir and Gilgit also on board.

**Anchor:** thank you...thank you ...thank you

**Analysis:** The use of words like tyrant India, cruelty, and bleeding Kashmir in the headlines signifies human rights violations to which the discourse of accredited news source from Kashmir Mirwaiz Umar Farooq lends legitimacy to the claim of Pakistan media. The way the anchor thanks Mirwaiz three times also has connotative meaning to it as it further lends credibility to the kind of discourse on human right violations and points to the fact that how valued Pakistan television channels consider Hurriyat leaders.

#### **6.5 Diplomatic/Peace Frame:**

The other frame that has been used is diplomatic where third party intervention involving United Nations resolution on Kashmir has been framed.

**Anchor:** Why India is adamant on Kashmir?

**Speaker 1:** We have fought five wars including Rann of Kutch but there has been no solution. At the same time we are suffering from internal crisis. The only solution to resolve the dispute through peaceful talks.

**Analysis:** The framing of conflict issues by television news media can have massive impact on the outcome of the conflict resolution. The liberal theorists like Stuart Mill (1986) has agreed that media can play a bridging role in the promotion of peace and harmony if the reportage is based on truth and there news diversity and can also create war mongering with it disinformation and manipulative reporting. The frames used in this news broadcast supported diplomacy and peace but there was no element of diversity with regard to onions being expressed.

The news channel has proficiently created a media-politics cycle as argued by Wolsfeld (1997) where Kashmir conflict has been framed with as a historical narrative supported by the human right violations which in turn makes a strong case for diplomacy and third party interventions with a clever use of peace frames to show the world that Pakistan pledge to have peaceful resolution of Kashmir conflict.

#### **7.0 Conclusion**

The Critical Discourse Analysis of Dawn News establishes the media-politics dichotomy as argued by Hall et al. (1978) that the news media simply does not report a news and also merely transmit the ideology of political

elites. The media do this rather in a conspiratorial manner and in a critical sense the media are not the primary definers of news but in a media politics cycle with such a complex structured relation to power, they merely play a secondary role in the production of news as well as its framing. The Dawn News has provided a narrative structure for the political wave in Pakistan since Pakistan failed in its attempt to siege the Kashmir after several wars and with its growing internal conflicts and crisis and on verge of becoming a failed nation the political narrative has expertly orchestrated into a peace frame with television news media as its major instrument. The paper is concluded with the argument that the Pakistan has lost both the military as well as information wars against India and Kashmir from jugular vein has transformed into a mere holiday on 5<sup>th</sup> February each year which the anchor admits in the program that Pakistanis only remember Kashmir on this particular days only.

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