

ANALYZING THE IMPACT OF CENSORSHIP ON JOURNALISTIC PRACTICES: THE CASE OF PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

One of the primary challenges facing media outlets in Pakistan is government censorship. The government has traditionally maintained strict control over the media, often using a range of legal and extra-legal measures to stifle criticism and control public discourse. This has included blocking or banning various news websites, harassing journalists, and using legal action to silence dissent. The present study has designed to get the censorship practices and viewpoints of the journalists working in TV news channels. For the purpose, through a convenient sampling techniques, 20 journalists from mainstream TV channels were interviewed on the subject. The censorship theory is applied to get the results. Majority of the journalists viewed the practices of censorship and self-censorship as the hurdle in the way of freedom of press. They further opined that Pakistan media and particularly electronic media is controlled by the government with the help of various techniques they obstruct the free flow of information. According to the journalists, the owners' interference to annex the specific agenda is also one of the major problem in the development and growth of independent media.

Keywords: Censorship, Self-Censorship, TV Channels, Journalists, Government influence, Media Owners.

INTRODUCTION

Media in Pakistan

To interpret the latest form of democracy, it is important to understand fair media. Media is serving the role of an opposing power as far as the criticism of the government's policies and working is concerned (Parveen & Bhatti, 2018a, p.14). This is the same media that has encouraged public opinions in an organized manner and the power & stability of tv shows strengthen the stability of democracy in a state. People have no direct access to information, so that is the reason they depend on the media to provide them with fruitful information (Walter Lipmann, 1922). Media freedom can only be made possible when there is zero intervention by communication and distribution channels. Unfortunately, this country has always faced legislative intolerance (Parveen & Bhatti, 2018b, p.21). With the demise of the father of the nation Mr. Jinnah, the governing body of that time did not protect the nation from ministerial and remunerative anarchy. For 11 years' time, the country went through a series of administrative ups and downs. The political party with a majority of Muslims assumed that they have a political manifesto by which they can govern but they collapsed to deliver. Ultimately due to the failed situation of the country, the military took over the administrative powers in their hands. The takeover by the establishment was not successful, it could not formulate that maturity level (Sinkler, 2005).

With the creation of new transmissions, every person was able to access it. In the early 2000, advanced frequency modulation sites were formed, with the passage of time they have become popular, the reason as they are derivation for information as well as enjoyment, purposes, like films, melody, political, communal, ethnic, theological along with other games which played important role in constructing the base (Chitkara, 1996). This is an astonishing fact that free electronic media was introduced by Military Ruler General Musharraf, the media boom got the hype along with the privatization of various mediums, and today media is fashionable as well as up to date globally. The structure that supported cables in 2004 went through renovation along with expansion

throughout Pakistan. Around 30 out of 90 private cable channels are working to enlighten the public about government policies and social movements etc. Over the span of time media has been targeted and the main entity who suffered in this regard are journalists.

According to Cheema in New York Times in 2008, journalists are killed, like animals in Pakistan because their killers sit in higher positions. Though journalists are trying to fight back it is difficult to protect themselves when the state itself is discussing such heinous actions. In recent years, officials of government security agencies have been directly part of media censorship, gatekeeping and media management. Actions that are taken by the state involve filtering the fight against militant groups, protesting blasphemous content as well as safeguarding national interest sometimes in favour of armed forces and political elite class. Journalists themselves do self-censorship and filter the content which they think can be dangerous for their job, family and life security. This approach allows them to sell the concept of censorship to the masses. This is how Pakistani media have seen censorship as a policy to get popular acceptance in society and the gradual spread of controlled political discourse. This proves that ethical laws take priority over constitutional provisions and certain human rights, such as freedom of speech and expression.

Pakistani Journalists opined that now they are no more being targeted rather their organization's life is put at stake (Ricchiardi, 2012). They opined that, we as a nation need to recognize our importance and our role in providing the public with authentic news, at the same time their families go through a lot. Where there are some reporters who execute the art of censorship in their reporting, on the other hand, the country's issues are being presented in privatized news articles & journals. The media avenues which have their own country-wide range are controlled by the executive class of the country (Ricchiardi, 2012). In the past years, the operation of private radio channels in some major cities is being experienced but few are censored from broadcasting news programming.

Coverage of international content is also experienced censorship excluding Hindustani content. As a matter of fact, journalists are not bound to be the public watchdogs of governmental institutions even when it puts their lives at risk, the reason is that they are not guaranteed security for their lives and this negligence is the responsibility of governmental institutions themselves. When they sense that the media is going against them, this results in threats to the lives of journalists, according to a senior Pakistani journalist, there were 148 reported threats against journalists in Pakistan in the time from May 2020 to April 2021. They include six murder case, seven assassinations, five misplacing, 25 arrests of journalists, 15 assaults & 27 cases that were categorized as legal.

Problem statement

Several reports by the international organizations working on media freedom have documented that media in Pakistan is controlled by the government and with the help of various techniques they obstruct the free flow of information. So, this study is designed to investigate how the government and other stakeholders are curbing media freedom in Pakistan.

Significance of the study

The constitution of Pakistan allows media freedom in the country but in the past 74 years of history, many researchers have investigated that different regimes have restricted media freedom for their political purposes. The governments have resorted to different techniques and measures to curb media freedom in Pakistan. Therefore, this study is formulated to examine and evaluate how and to what extent Pakistani media is constrained by the government and other stakeholders. The following study objectives are framed to explore:

1. To find those causes that are responsible for censorship in Pakistan
2. To know how the Journalists in Pakistan view the phenomena of censorship
3. To recognize those techniques applied by the government to limit media freedom in Pakistan

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Self-censorship has become an integral part of every society, it begins from an individual level, goes ahead to the Intra-organizational level, and builds up to the Intra-social level. (Bar-Tal, 2017). There are several reasons that individuals do not show their information. Individuals always carry a fear of revealing their personal identity, relatives and acquaintances, colleagues, and coworkers that work together in institutions, controllers, and communities. They believe that showing information will return with a heavy price that they will have to pay, if one talks about societal cases, one will come to know that self-censored information contributes to the better and refined performance of the society. (Foucault, 1950). French soldiers were involved in torturing several North Africans, most of them including guiltless troopers. French soldiers during the war used to torture Algerian Nationalists. This torture carried for many years, not only it was carried for many years, but it was also

carried out on a large scale. French Forces & Troops covered almost all parts of Algeria. Violence was a normal routine and lacked the attention of the outside or foreign world. Despite the fact, torture was forbidden by the Law, the French Soldiers continued torturing them even after many years of the war until the 1990s.

The French Army took help from their state to hide this terrible incident by censoring it on their media. This major torture incident was censored by French society in every dimension. To the extent that this act of violence was neglected by every writer. Writers were scared and said no to this theme, film directors were also reluctant and afraid of creating films on such issues. In this situation, self-censorship played an important role in being the barrier for their society. Constructive and goal-oriented process of improving society was neglected through the aid of self-censorship. In the literature, censorship is also explained in a psychological way, it also investigated the covert motivational baseline of self-censorship, then further differentiated the gatekeeping process by the Socio-psychological notion, which includes consonance along with deference. Literature also discussed matters of measurement and spotted light on the Intractable Israeli-Palestinian Conflict. Another important points for a free community are independence to express itself. That is to provide society with a smooth and free flow of information, this kind of knowledge links with non-state actors which present liberated thinking. (Friedman, 1987). It is seen that the societies where the free flow of information is not appreciated, those societies ultimately diminish. It also highlights having your thoughts that don't miss to differentiate news, also by the present medium without any hurdles. The rulers are the ones who rule and create the future for everyone; it must be practised for the sake of people's betterment (Bar-Tal, 2013).

The fact that the two opposite societal needs should be balanced, a liberated assertion, the second one smoothly circulated news, and when it comes to the sound working of community. Those who act as a single entity or individuals or even as group members also restrict news circulation even when they are not bound by any formal rule or even obstacles. As an example, those people would bind themselves to assume pressure from other people, therefore won't express themselves and will hide their opinion. Alternatively, they may simply follow what authorities say. News self-analyzing is the process by which one deliberately restricts news by reaching to masses without a proper chain (Van, 2007, pp-4).

The Perspective of Social Scientists on Censorship

Social Scientists have also researched the topic of censorship. For example, domains that cover societies, related fraternities and experiences while something which safeguards secrets, also family experts have discussed it in detail in their books. Adamska discussed the theme related to institutions. The question is how this chain of self-censorship breaks the information.

Self-censorship carries a strong connection with formal rules. If one talks about the merits of self-censorship, one will come to know that when individuals think that there is a blockage in sharing information, there is no such thing. The problem is that individuals think that there exist various types of formal censorship. In Europe, people tried to stop the information to protect their identity and personal issues as religion and groups for example ethnic groups like Jews in Poland, and Muslims in Bosnia. This specific kind of behavioural pattern is either shown by individuals or it can also be shown by authorities or groups. The reason for withholding the information can always differ from person to person. Research has shown that most of those occurrences when an individual receives different news carrying the mindset which talks about information that can have negative results, and this could be the root which forces them to withhold the news. Revealing information may also have some odd repercussions.

Examining censorship through case studies

Pettigrew (1972) presented the actual definition of gatekeepers. He said, "they are the ones who sit at the junction of several communication channels, they hold the position to regulate the flow of order and control the outcome of decisions that are being made. Sometimes ordinary individuals come face to face with such information that they feel can be of some importance for other people or groups, but the only fear that they face is in dissemination" (Pettigrew, 1972). Then there is another level of information that includes new against old news. The unmediated message is either received through individuals or by their peculiar adventures which involves participation through any occasion. It can also be subjected directly to books or original documents. On the other hand, filtered news can be received via bypass subjection or along some other person or source. It is also acquired by hearing or reading. So, one can draw a hypothesis which shows that hiding news can be derived by stopping clear, honest, crystal-clear facts. On the other hand, the second one's credibility should be held accountable. Self-censorship in socio-psychological terms and its nature involves the neuropsychological processes (Cook & Heilmann, 2013). They discussed how individuals decode the information, buy the depth of the content, become fully knowledgeable of its meaning and fact and after then they take the step to whether to reveal it or not.

Harber and Cohen (2005) researched that there are worldwide, influential motives behind individuals through which they express whatever they see that includes big events etc. Harber and Cohen worked on the concept that the reason behind this motive is to enhance group and self-survival. Pennbaker (1990) came up with various points for a person's capacity through which they can communicate about major events, scholars proposed the points which mentioned feelings into it.

Elbaz and Bar-Tal (2014) researched journalists and gatekeepers. They found that when one talks about gatekeepers, it is referred to journalists because they are obliged to their governmental source points. They also investigated incentives and their follow-up through phobia & found that countering the disclosure can become a source of receiving positive reinforcement, such as acknowledgement from society, benefits, and solid rewards and even to the extent of satisfaction of oneself. Elbaz and Bar-Tal also researched leaders that block information with the goal that it has a negative implication for them and that is the reason they are motivated and satisfied in not revealing the information. The theorist presented an example about Israel in which some of the soldiers who had carried out or were eyewitnesses to the brutality that occurred with Palestinians, removed all sorts of reports to gain the confidence of loved ones.

Antilla (2010) researched the Amirian newspaper and its operationalization of editing news, but not much was revealed about methodological facts. The reason for that was because the American press was aware of the exploitation that was being created by a group of deniers of climate change, plus these entities were taking help from the media to exploit this issue. Another important point that needs to be understood is that self-censorship can potentially be used to safeguard a third party, the reason for that may be care, interests or it can be other various points as well. Scholars Sande, Goethals, Ferrari & Worth. (1989) researched individuals and how they apply various calibres at the same time inspecting homogeneous traits from among colony members in comparison to another. They also saw the behaviour of the in-group and found that they are viewed assertively while the second category is assumed negatively. They called that scale SCO (self-censorship orientation). The assumption they extracted out of it included all individuals who are in favour of hiding news, they most commonly will implement and operationalize. Scholars also found that self-censorship factors were not positive at all in comparison and validation of grounded authoritative codes and conduct, along with backing communitarian norms. Antagonistically, it resulted in being negative with associated assurance, unrealistic following along with the supported mass argument. (Bar-Tal, 2017).

Self-censorship is described as two-faced, it often advances towards publicized negligence, puts an end to societal debates, injures lucidity, and aggravates in the destruction of morals. State of decisiveness is lost, hinders in growth coupled with regeneration that focuses on cognitive thoughts which could result in damage to the community. Where there is a dark side, it also carries with it some bright side, it enhances the retention of positive self-collective images of oneself and in some cases, solidarity was made powerful, and bonding was developed. Moreover, it was formulated that self-censorship is important for the security and maintenance of individuals in communal settings, besides Klar & Baram 2016 researched the same contagious effects which highlighted the yardstick that discussed firm reported scale. This evaluates criteria which are put forward by various beings towards safeguarding one's group's documented ideology keeping in consideration the common-interest pool. Conventionally, and analytically along with compassionately these viewpoints taught about Wars and peace).

As per as media self-censorship is concerned, it is taught in those countries which are dominant in the world, that they hold a good grip over their media's regulation and press freedom, (Gessen, 2009). When these scholars investigated modern forms of governments, it was found that print media practised editing of news that had various purposes, not only for fear of retaliatory measures but also for the protection of the nation's security. This kind of approach gave birth to a new theory which was called "Censorship Theory", whose foundation was constructed upon Foucault. Furthermore, this theory gave power for understanding out of conventional box opposing powers among independent viewpoints along with information controlling (Bunn, 2015). In the light of this new Theory "Censorship Theory" it varies somewhat in its implications and rules in comparison with "authoritative social actors". As this theory is not able to come on the same level as one sees in second class as being extrinsic to the communication process, (Bunn, 2015).

To analyze censorship in a natural way it is important to trace it back to a historical perspective. Despite the law setting rules for what should be published and what not, the news media is still confused about choosing content. And that was the reason they gave coverage to those subjects which are not needed in a detailed manner, for example, the coverage of terror and terrorism. In the year 2017, Jungblut and Hoxha researched the area that includes media self-censorship in liberal democracies. They were of the view that media- self-censorship is a concern of media decency and media ethics, as it was seen that terrorists not only were improving to cope with

the new advancement in communication, but they were also adopting the new dimensions in the field of media, that included the use of news logics, criteria, news timings and cycles. Rothenberger (2016) discussed the weak areas of news media, he said that rather than media playing a mature role, media fall into the militants' trap. Media played a vital role in giving them oxygen to breathe. The media provided them with the spotlight that they were looking for, as well as the media getting involved in promoting sensationalism.

Research Questions

RQ-1. What are the methods employed by the Pakistani government to control or limit the content in the media?

RQ-2. What are the causes responsible for media censorship in Pakistan?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this study, researchers worked with the help of censorship theory, this theory is in fact a derivation of Michael's experimentation, it also carries a preexisting conceptual framework along with independent discourse. Censorship theory has contributed to the working and boosting of the overall research process. The study focuses on the evaluation of theory alongside assessing the link it has with allied classes. The researchers have also shown doubts about theoretical roots and have also explained the missing link with reference to exclusivity for the dominant group. In terms of the theory's shortcomings, one thing is seen, it doesn't divide strong and weak power into different categories, instead, it lacks commenting about proper boundaries. Talking about its strength, it with the help of prehistoric ideas has paved the way for collaboration with contemporary theories.

In recent times, the disagreement over the mainstream way to cover this topic has focused mainly on organizational aspects. This approach has been harmful in getting to know this theory. For this reason, scientists discovered traditional interpretation, mainly directed at outer silence for someone, that was translated by scholars as independent. In this theory, hyper thinking involvement refers to platform post-speech or self-talk. This theory focuses on censorious intervention by the state. Kuhn (1994) discussed this theory by focusing on censorship by the state on its media, and how the state manipulates and uses its media to build its image. In March 2018, Russia annexed the Ukrainian region which resulted in regulations that redefined the media domain. Earlier, it was seen that TV from Ukraine had been shuffled by channels that were owned by Russia. Researcher Zeveleva (2020) explained that participants and NGOs reported multiple examples that included press violence; at the start of the year, military soldiers came to take charge of the media. Russian media outlets were shuffled; the latest channels came into being across the country (p.46).

This all-created ambiguity between media persons. Prior to 2014, Crimean media was strong, it had its own several outlets, and among those were its own owners with seven most influential outlets, by the time 2017 approached, only one media outlet was privately owned, rest eight were of the top category, that one which was independent was running its own shows and programs for the audience. The state played a straightforward approach and direct involvement was observed by them by circulating all the funds and money between journalists in the region. When people see censorship, they are forced to compensate for better access. On the other hand, subtler censorship such as hiding search results or introducing distracting news and information on the web, is more influential because users are less exposed to this kind of tactic. Friedman (1987) challenged the traditional wisdom that protects censorship. If we compare both the censorship in China and the way information is changed in the United States, it will be seen how censorship's porous nature is manipulated to divide the public. It is also revealed that the way the state censors its media is enough to know about the integrity of that state.

METHODOLOGY

Thematic Analysis

Sivakumar (2017) cited Barun and Clarke (2006) that Thematic Analysis (TA) is a method to examine and find specific particulars useful in understanding which theme is more accurate to explain different processes which are being examined. Its output is utilized to culminate the most significant series of meanings which are under observation. For instance, when someone examines how censorship takes place in Pakistan, the process of TA with a selected set of defined journalists plays a vital role to produce expected results. This in turn, would also aid them to appreciate what factors handle censorship. TA is related to various themes; the concept of a theme must be precisely and keenly checked. A theme specifies a specific design of comprehension that is there in the data. It carries clear specimens that are head-on researchable which include different aspects of research in the data collection process.

On the other hand, it carries those undiscovered areas, which include credentials that are part of the record, that clearly connotes behaviours, which are inclined towards both categories. Usually, it is recognized

as an established scheme that directs an unexplored dimension of learning. On the other hand, if one doesn't feel like drawing things in an organic manner so themes play the role of being the evidence. This process uses both entities when researchers reach for planned out classes that are extracted out of different hypotheses, though it is welcoming towards various dimensions. The approach towards every input should be formed based on past literature reviews. For instance, if the investigator desires to extract those results which are not to his findings, it can be revisited and corrected. Therefore, more refined data can be examined in the research. In recent times, the data examination process has secured popularity. Earlier it accommodated medical science, which lacked the boundary. Like other qualitative methods, TA helps to understand groups that serve the essential baseline that register the latest representation that focuses on cognitive working processes in humans along with their behaviour. Furthermore, this process is the finest way of buying research data. The fact that it carries universality, makes it more credible and trusted to cover the whole of the data. It also provides an implied foundation for its researcher, along with this, supplies a structured way of work. The present study is exploratory and employed a qualitative method of in-depth interviews for investigating the research questions. Interrogation provides a better understanding of the story behind respondents" happening.

Table 1 List of Interviewees

S#	Name of Journalist	Designation	Affiliation
1	Fakhar Yousafzai	Anchor	
2	Shahzada Zulfiqar	Bureau Chief	Sama TV
3	Shabir Shakir	Anchor	ARY News
4	Afzal Butt	Reporter	Daily Jang
5	Matiullah Jan	Anchor	PTV/Waqt News
6	Wusut Ullah Khan	Desk Incharge	Dawn News
7	Nasrullah Malik	Anchor	New News
8	Talat Hussain	Anchor	Dunya News
9	Mubashar Zaidi	Reporter	Dawn News
10	Razi ud Din Razi	Reporter	APP
11	Rizwan Razi	Sub Editor	Din News
12	Afshan Masab	Reporter	
13	Owais Tauheed	Analyst	Dunya, ARY News
14	Kamran Hussain	Columnist	Dawn News
15	Asma Shirazi	Anchor	Aaj News
16	Fareed khan	Anchor	Waqt News
17	Muhammad Ziauddin	Anchor	Public News
18	Murtaza Solangi	Host	Capital TV
19	Raza Rumi	Host, Expert	92 News
20	Saddaf Chaudhry	Reporter	Freelance

Data Collection

Knowing your sample and interviewing them is an important part of the study design. Interviews will help to know the perspective of journalists about media censorship in more detail. Convenient sampling was used for selecting the respondents as a result 20 journalists working for the mainstream television channels from Islamabad gave their opinions for the interviews. The criteria for selecting the journalists included direct field experience in covering conflicts related to news issues. Two questions were developed for conducting the interviews and investigating the research questions. The interviews were conducted in face-to-face interaction mostly at the offices of journalists, some interviews were also conducted on telephone calls as the journalists were out of town for some professional assignments. The identification information of the respondents was not mentioned to protect the identity of the respondents. The audio files were recorded, and notes were also taken during the interviews. The interviews took place between 15th Sep to 15th December 2022. The audio files were recorded, and notes were also taken during the interviews. The important points from the interview were found and completed through consensus among the authors. While most of the journalists had indistinguishable views on major issues, some of them gave different opinions. The key arguments from the interview transcripts were found and decided through consensus among the journalists. While most of the journalists had similar views on major issues, some of them gave different opinions. Below follows a discussion on the main points that were

shared by the journalists about the gravity of censorship in Pakistan's electronic media and its repercussions on journalists.

FINDINGS

RQ-1. What are the methods employed by the Pakistani government to control or limit the content in the media?
Answer: The journalists were able to find different techniques that are practised by the government to censor media in Pakistan that includes 1) Threats to the life of Journalists 2) Shutdown of TV channels 3) Sponsoring Pro-government voices in media 4) Legal action against Journalists. Almost all the journalists were of the view that a state that lacks authority of those who are in power, can become prey to rebellions and illegal groups to overpower. The rapid increase of terror groups, militant forces, groups that promote sectarian disparity, and groups that promote ethnicity. Journalists cannot work independently and peacefully, the reason behind this is those forces which are politically powerful. The state is also creating difficulties for media practitioners, taking up an investigative story normally results in unfavourable conditions and at times violence on the parties being investigated and journalists are being affected one way or the other. A senior journalist (8) said that Journalists are continuously being targeted due to the scarcity of professional editors in media news channels. No decision is being taken and implemented inside the newsroom rather it is regularized by an owner who is not even present in the newsroom. Furthermore, editors always try to pressurize their reporters and at the same time these editors are also clueless about the situation their team is working in, zero trust is there on both sides, which could help their team to enhance greater professionalism and security of their journalists. These major issues define the fragile situation of Pakistani media. Another journalist (16) was of the view that Pakistan has become the 9th most dangerous country for journalists. Another Journalist (13) gave reference to a report that was published by the International Federation of Journalists, which mentioned that 38 journalists had been brutally killed in Pakistan since 1990. Journalist (13) also shared an example of a study that was conducted by the Pakistan Press Foundation, it was estimated that 91 incidents of crime against journalists were reported from May 2019 to April 2020.

According to Journalists, Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) handles the downfall of the media, they also said that it is solely responsible for enforcing the government's political agenda. According to journalists, PEMRA has always tried to shut down those TV channels which report against the state, it has also taken notice of those live shows which carry anti-state narratives in them, along with this PEMRA has also been active in cancelling the license of cable operators who aired critical programs. Journalists said that the cable operators are forced to accept the government's request to censor content that is politically sensitive, and they are pressurized to promote a softer and cleaner image of the government, along with this they also promote dramas and operas that are government-sponsored which will help to win the hearts of Pakistani television audiences.

The majority of the journalists were of the view that the government is also practising its covert power over the media channels and over cyberspace as well. The only shortcoming in this space is that virtual debates mostly stay unfiltered. Some of the journalists also mentioned that Pakistani authorities have put in efforts to control and censor online content as well. Journalist (9) said that these issues are sent to various channels through the means of phone calls and emails. The code of conduct of PEMRA includes various hurdles and restrictions for journalists, that cover facilities that whether the program is to be aired or not. Journalists were of the view that PEMRA is also responsible for censoring those entities which criticize powerful state institutions that includes criticism against establishment and judiciary, the process of censoring these entities and TV channels in the form of heavy fines and taking down their shows from being on-air. One journalist (12) said that the code also has several restrictions on advertising as well as avoiding the promotion of violence and censoring of historical facts.

Journalists were of the view that the process of self-regulation is becoming an obstacle for the Pakistani media, as it is growing rapidly and it is proved to be difficult for various stakeholders' groups in the media industry to reach common ground, particularly over issues that include the building of an effective complaints group. Most of the journalists said that it is difficult to implement self-regulation because media houses have their own internal ethics codes or advisory boards. One Journalist (20) also presented a draft from the Pakistan Press Council (PPC) which showed a code of ethics that included a series of self-regulation rules that promoted the independence of editorial boards and upgraded the scale of accuracy, confidence, and quality work in media houses.

RQ-2. What are the causes responsible for media censorship in Pakistan?

Answer: While answering this question, the journalists supplied various perspectives, which can be broadly presented as 1) Pressure from the military and civil establishment and Government 2) Pressure from Media Owners 3) Pressure from media advertisers 4) Pressure from extremist groups. Almost all the journalists conceded that the pressure from the establishment and government is immense, in the past many years these entities used to carry different agendas and narratives but with the passage of time they both came on the same page as per as agenda is concerned, which is not at all a good indication for the media. One journalist (7) said that his show was permanently taken down from being on-aired all because of speaking about the election in 2018, where he tried to explain the level of rigging in the election.

According to another journalist's (3) point of view, the supporters of rival opposition politicians like former Prime Ministers are also criticized by the establishment alongside the government. Another journalist (1) said that journalists are directed to self-censor criticism and harsh remarks in their reporting on the establishment, otherwise, they can be in troubled waters. The reason behind journalists being sidelined in Pakistan is because of the image that the establishment carries with itself as a protector of the nation and whenever journalists try to raise their voices against them, those journalists are labelled as traitors to the country. Journalists also agreed that speaking against the establishment of Pakistan and the PTI government has caused censorship. For the reason of speaking against higher authorities, several journalists were off-air and even their social media accounts were forcefully deleted. One such example is a journalist (9) who hosted a famous current affair talk show on TV, he faced a total blackout for his show because he did show against the Government. Journalists (1) met heavy criticism from the government. When one analyzes the Pakistani media in a bigger context, one can see that it has always been in hot waters when it comes to building a connection between the government and the electronic media. Journalist (1) said that he was instructed by news officials that they are unable to broadcast his report because the establishment was not happy, and they could also shut down the channel's transmission if he spoke against the establishment. Journalist (1) also said that he was told that his work was politically injurious to the high officials. Another Journalist (2) was caught being directly involved in writing against the political authorities, therefore his stories were censored, and this act of censoring stories also continued with several other journalists as well. The unmediated briefing is delivered to those who are working in the news channels, which includes producers as well as editors, instructions are being sent to them to work according to the guidelines presented to them by the high official, which is in their own favour. Another Journalist (5) was surprised to find his writing had been removed and there was nothing but a blank page.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the phenomena of censorship in Pakistani electronic media in the light of understanding by journalists and factors responsible for the occurrence of censorship, correlating to the involvement of the Government in enforcing censorship. The researchers laid the foundation of the theoretical framework with the help of censorship theory and in the light of existing literature to understand the depth of this study, with the help of existing literature and considering this theory "censorship". The Researchers were able to analyze censorship in a natural way that traced it back into historical contexts, In the light of literature Jungbut and Hoxha worked on the area including media self-censorship in liberal democracies. The researchers were able to find about censorship and question-related about media decency and media ethics, in this study researcher also found that journalists are improving to cope with the new mode of communication that includes Censorship, but they were also adopting the new dimensions in the field of media, that included news logics, criteria, news timings and cycles, (Jungbut & Hoxha, 2017, p.223).

In this study researchers also found scholars who talked about the weak point of the news media, they were of the view that rather than the media playing a mature role, the media fall into the pitfall of Governments' strict policies that work against journalists. Researchers also found in the literature review that Media plays a vital role in building narratives. Further researchers found the most common issues that are encountered by reporters, that comprehend the issues to apply censorship on their own work and to take the editorial board in confidence. It also includes the operationalization of working under vaguely established security concord.

Practising independent journalism in Pakistan has become extremely challenging in the current times when the journalists are stuck between the state and anti-state actors along with gratifying the commercial interests of the media owners. Researchers applied the method and employed a qualitative method of in-depth interviews for investigating the research questions. It is seen that interviews aid in grasping the narrative that is built on respondents' experiences. Researchers also found out that Interviews are most likely to aid where there is little knowledge about the subject and extensive examination is required from the interviewers. Convenient sampling was used for selecting the respondents because of which 20 journalists working for the mainstream

television channels from Islamabad gave their concerns for the interviews. The criteria for selecting the journalists included direct field experience in covering conflicts related to Islamabad. Two questions were developed for conducting the interviews and investigating the research questions. The interviews were conducted in face-to-face interaction mostly at the offices of journalists, some interviews were also conducted on telephone calls as the journalists were out of town for some professional assignments.

The audio files were recorded, and notes were also taken during the interviews. The interviews took place between 15th July to 15 August 2021. All those interviews have been carried out in Urdu and afterwards transcribed into the British language. Two research questions had been formulated by researchers, one question highlighted the causes that are responsible in Pakistan for censorship and the second question highlighted those techniques that are used by the government to censor media in Pakistan. The researchers also found that this study is aligned with the earlier scholarship, further, he found that Pakistani media has got high ratio censorship, which is playing the role of a termite for Pakistani journalism, at all levels it is affecting, whether it is on an individual level as a journalist or at the larger level the complete media house. It was also found that the Job security of journalists in Pakistan needs to be governed by effective labour laws along with improving the state of available safety protocols where they can freely and openly express themselves.

Furthermore, it was also investigated how censorship has made things difficult for journalists, as now they have to remain more cautious in terms of reporting and covering any story, it was also found how journalists go through different gates in order for them to finally deliver the news to the audience, as now they are being checked by the state as well as by their own media owners who have been constantly pressuring them to change their narrative and to present that news or story which is in favour of the state and National interest. In this study it was also found how journalists compromise in terms of cutting the truth from their story, the process of self-censorship has made it highly risky for journalists to select careful words that are state-friendly. If in case, they go against the will of the state's narrative their lives are threatened and they are off-air. Many journalists in the interview opined that objectivity in journalism is fading away as censorship is increasing in the country, Media has now changed its narrative of presenting the truth in an objective manner, but now it seems like the media has got its own stance which shapes the National policy. Researchers also found that the findings of this study were not unexpected as the existing literature on media treatment about censorship has also documented many instances in different regions of the world.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Under the study that took place on the topic “Analyzing the Impact of Censorship on Journalistic Opinion.: The Case of Pakistan” the below-mentioned recommendations can be considered to minimize the loopholes in Pakistan’s electronic media and way forward for journalists to work in a media-secure environment: There is a dire need for defining the rights of a journalist in Pakistan. Rights which advocate freedom of speech, freedom to live a carefree life, and right to life security. The government needs to tone down in terms of imposing censorship on media, as it affects journalists’ lives in a drastic manner. There must be more balanced coverage of journalists’ issues. More coverage should be given to such censorship issues by media channels and journalists themselves. The regulatory part of the media should be drawn in an actual spirit. Television should keep a good balance between imposing, framing and censoring news. Journalists should be given the right to present their narratives without getting pressurized by the government. The study on censorship needs to narrow down in terms of researching and investigating, as it is a vast topic, and it becomes difficult for the researchers to gage boundaries for evaluating the result. The concept of censorship and self-censorship needs to unify for better understanding, as for now it was felt that these two are two different domains which don’t have a clear-cut link with each other. There is also a dire need for re-evaluating censorship theory as it lacks a definite origin and base. Furthermore, it is recommended that TV channels need to show factual, relevant, and clear information by avoiding misinterpretation specifically in terrorist-related events, as it affects the jobs of journalists. To eradicate this element of panic, the media must shun extreme viewpoints by using soft language. Media can task as an instrument of public diplomacy instead of a tool of propaganda. With a clear counter-narrative, so that anti-state accounts can be denied, and extremists’ views can be refuted.

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