

Representation of Religious Minorities in Pakistani Print Media: a study of Daily Dawn, the News and the Nation

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Introduction

This study aims to “Representation of religious minorities in Pakistani Print media 2009 to 2011”. Minorities are very important part of a society. And without the collaboration of all members of society a society cannot work properly (Jalal U Din, 2011).

A group numerically inferior to the rest of the population of a state, in a non-dominant position, whose members being nationals of the state possess religious characteristics differing from those of the rest of the state and show, if only implicitly, a sense of solidarity, directed towards preserving their religion and its associated cultural and linguistic norms (Conode, 1999, pp. 89-90).

According to Oxford Dictionary minority is smaller group in a community, nation etc differing from other in role, religion, language (Oxford Advance Learner’s Dictionary. 1992, p. 570). International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences defines same society by race, nationally religion or language who both think themselves as a differentiated group and are thought of by the others as differentiated group with negative connections “contemporary sociologists generally describes that minorities are relatively lacking in power and hence, are subjected to certain exclusions, discrimination, and other differential treatment (International Encyclopedia of Social Science.1968, p.365).

Minorities are playing effective role in all walks of life. They are rendering meritorious services for the development and prosperity of country. They are renowned teachers, judges, civil servants, journalists, and businessmen. Webster’s dictionary defines minority as the lesser as smaller less than half number of total, religion national or political group smaller than and differing from the layer controlling group of which it is a part (Simon & Schuster, 1979, p.1146).

Minorities are considered significant part of any society. They play an important role in the society. Minorities are also very important part of Pakistani society. They stand by the Muslim in every situation. One can assume the importance of minorities from the white part of our national flag. White color represents them. Minorities played a very important role in the movement of Pakistan. But over all minorities are happy with the Muslims. Minorities are very important in any society (Ahmad, 2002, p.2). Contemporary sociologists generally describe that minorities are relatively lacking in power and hence, are subjected to certain exclusion, discrimination and other differential treatments. (International Encyclopedia of Social Science.1968, p.368).

In the present era of information technology, no one can deny with the power and potential of media in image building and creating attitudes. Media is an indisputable fact. A good or bad image can be created or distorted on media. Media is an important mean of communication through which the picture of world is projected. Its role is very important and it is called the mirror of society.

Objectives

The objectives of the study are following:

- To study how minorities issue are represented in daily Dawn, the Nation and the News.
- To examine how pictures depict minorities in Pakistani print media.
- To study the policy of daily dawn, the Nation and the News regarding minorities issues.
- To compare coverage of minority issue in Pakistani print media

Literature Review

A literature review is a critical and in depth evaluation of previous research. It is a summary and synopsis of a particular area of research, allowing anybody reading the paper to establish why you are pursuing this particular research program. A good literature review expands upon the reasons behind selecting a particular research question (Martyn, 2009).

Researcher divides the literature review into two sections.

- a- Representation of minorities in Pakistani media
- b- Representation of minorities in International media

Gregory. R .Shaun and Simon R. Valentine (2009) analyzed in their research “Pakistan the Situation of Religious minorities” that Pakistan is a country of approximately 172 million people, of whom around 95-96 percent are Muslims, comprising roughly 80 percent Sunni and 20 percent Shia. The remaining 4-5 percent are Pakistan’s religious minorities, the most important of which, in descending order of their number of adherents, are Christians, Hindus (including Jains), Zikris, the Ahmadiyya, Sikhs, the Baha’i, Buddhists, Zoroastrians (Parsis), the Mehdi Foundation and Jews. Notwithstanding that some manage to achieve positions of wealth or power in Pakistan, the vast majority of members of religious minorities are highly vulnerable to intimidation, oppression, sexual assault (including rape), violence and even murder at the hands of their Muslim neighbors, often with the collusion or indifference of law enforcement bodies or the legal profession. Part of the explanation for this lies in a widespread religious and cultural antipathy towards other faiths, reinforced over decades by schools’ curricula that inculcate stereotypes of Islamic superiority and the difference and inferiority of non-Muslims

Farooqi (2011) found in her research “A Question of Faith, A Report on the status on religious minorities in Pakistan” that The year 2010 ended with violent protests over amendments to the controversial blasphemy laws, and 2011 opened with the brutal target killing of Punjab’s Governor SalmaanTaseer, a staunch advocate of minority rights.

Gregory (2008) found in his research “The Christen Minorities in Pakistan Issues and Option” that It is clear from the foregoing, the main arguments of which need not be restated, that the majority of Christians in Pakistan experience life as dhimmi in all but name, are de facto second-class citizens subject to violence, repression and intimidation and are almost powerless to do anything about their circumstances.

Ali (1999) described in his research article “Media and Minorities”, Exclusion, Distortion and Stereotype that The minorities are often stereotyped as ‘fanatical’ and ‘fundamentalists’, and acts of few individuals belonging to the community are seen as approved by the entire community.

International Media Support (2009) conducted a research on “Between radicalization and democratization in an unfolding conflict: Media in Pakistan”. In this research it is mentioned that Pakistan has a vibrant media landscape, which in spite of political pressure and direct bans that they are sometimes subject to from the state, the media enjoys independence to a large extent. After having been liberalised in 2002, the television sector experienced a media boom.

Mesti (2011) investigated in his research “Hindu Minority in Pakistan” that the stereotypic concepts generated against Hindu minority in the discourse of Pakistani government schools textbooks. An attempt has been made to conduct a multidimensional research based investigation by using critical approach to discourse.

Nazeer (2011) explained in his research “Rights of Christen Minority and Blasphemy Law in Pakistan” that Persecution of religious minorities is structurally and institutionally embedded in Pakistan. With every passing decade the situation has turned even worse

Malik (2002) explained in his report “Religious minorities in Pakistan” that recent massacres of religious minorities in Pakistan had focused new attention on the predicament of minorities in a country which is generally perceived to be a homogeneous Muslim nation. This report describes Pakistan’s ethnic and religious minorities, and highlights its rich cultural diversity

Munir (2002) explained in his thesis *The Consequence of Fundamentalism in Pakistan Media* that media has fundamentally impact on society. It examines that how religious groups and parties hijacked the national agenda of development and modernization and made roads directly and indirectly, in the media to promote their agenda of jingoism and beliefs.

Rehman and zia (2010) conducted a research on “Impact of educational policies of the religious minorities of Pakistan 1947 to 2010”. The study was envisaged as an archival and as well as consultative research project. The authors consulted all proceedings of major educational conferences and policy documents from 1947 to 2010 and investigated the historical development of transformation from numerical dominance to ideological dominance of majority

Syed (2006) examines in his research article “Representation of Cultural Diversity in Urdu Newspapers in Pakistan” that ethnicity/race and religion as represented by the popular print media in Pakistan with an aim to furthering our understanding of the development of attitudes towards diversity, and to outline the prospects for multicultural policies in Pakistan.

Representation of Minorities in International Media

Jaffery (1998) analyzed in her report “The Portrayal of Muslim Women in Canadian Mainstream Media” that This report, produced by the Afghan Women's Organization, reviews research, local activism and community perspectives on the portrayal of Muslim women in Canadian mainstream media, as well as providing Muslim women's views in the form of focus group discussions.

Dijik (1991) explained in his research “Racism and the Press” that Racism remains one of the most pernicious problems of white society. Though often less blatantly and overtly than in the past, it continues to permeate racial and ethnic relations in Europe, North America and other westernized countries.

Tolley (2011) found in his research “The Color of your Skin and the Content of Your Character” that Race remains one of the most salient and visible markers of identity, but Canadian political science has yet to turn significant attention to its study.

Georgia (2000) described in her research “Mapping Minorities and their Media: The National Context UK Report” that the national social, historical and policy context has a major role for the way people experience identity, ethnicity and diaspora belonging in everyday life

Theoretical Framework

Media has the strong power to effect and hold people’s mind due to its diversity. Researcher have suggested and given several communication theories to describe the diversity of media. This chapter is related to the explanation of different function of media, through description of two communication theories, in the connection with this study.

Agenda setting theory explain how media sets its agenda and manipulate the things and phenomenon. Concept of framing deals with the highlighting different aspect of any issue toward the people in order to resist or limit them, thus media also give the selection of coverage to the issues to grip people’s mind. Seeing in this context, if media give coverage to the solution of the issue, it can play a constructive role for society, for being the part of process of resolving the conflict.

So it can be drawn that mass media has an impact on society and that impact could be significant one. There is also evidence that mass media is shaping people’s views on the major problems facing by the society and the issues emphasized in the media may not be the ones that are dominant in reality.

Research has used assumption that Pakistani print media is giving positive coverage to minority issues and The Nation covers more news stories as compare to Dawn. According to addenda setting and framing media always highlight minority issues according to their own interest and media always frame a particular issue according to their desire. So in this research “Representation of Religious Minorities in Pakistani Print Media 2009-2011” researcher has used Agenda setting and Framing theory. Both of these theories help to analyze the content for this research.

Methodology

Research Design

Content Analysis

The methodology opted for this study is quantitative ‘Content Analyses. “In the social sciences the term methodology applies to how one conduct research. It refers to the process, principal and procedure by which we approach problems issue and trend and seek answers.

Content analysis is a summarizing, quantitative analysis of messages that relies on the scientific method including attention to objectivity, reliability, validity, and hypothesis testing and is not limited as to the types of variables that may be measured or the context in which the messages are created or presented (Neuendorf, Kimberly A, 2002).

Universe

In this research researcher has analyzed The Nation, the News and daily Dawn from January 2009 to December 2011.

Sampling

Sample can be described as the units chosen from the target population. “A sample is a subset of population that is taken to be representative of the entire population” (Wimmer, 1978).

Researcher has used simple random sampling method. Sample size of this study comprises of 432 newspapers. Every Sunday newspaper has been selected randomly as a sample from daily Dawn, The nation and The News from January 2009 to December 2011.

Unit of Analysis

In this research unit of analysis consist of following items

- News
- Editorials
- Pictures

Categories

In the present study directions of the content were measured separately with regard to the coverage of minorities issue to determine the directions of the contents of the media. Data was marked on a three point scale named positive, negative, neutral labeled ‘+’, ‘-’, ‘0’ respectively.

Conceptual definitions of the Keywords

Religious

Religious mean devoted to religion pious. (The Australian Concise Oxford dictionary ,2004,p.1193).

Minorities

The Australian Concise Oxford dictionary (2004), minorities means the smaller number or part, especially a number or part representing less than half of the whole only a minority of properties are rented, those who acknowledge his influence are in the minority.(cosine Oxford Dictionary 2004, p .893).

Representation

The action of speaking or acting on behalf of someone or the state of being so represented: you may qualify for free legal representation.(Cosine Oxford Dictionary 2004, p. 1123)

Media

According to The Australian Cosine Oxford Dictionary (2004) the main means of mass communication (television, radio, and newspapers) regarded collectively: their demands were publicized by the media. (p.871).

Operational definitions of key words

Religious

In this research religious means different religions instead of Islam like christen, Sikh, Hindu etc. in Pakistan.

Minorities

In this research minorities mean people who have different religion rather than Islam in Pakistan.

Represent

By the mean of Represent is how media is giving coverage to minorities issues.

Media

In this research media means only print media in which newspaper Dawn, The News and Nation are include.

Research Question

The research is based on following research questions.

1. Either print media is giving positive or negative coverage to minority issue?
2. Is there any bias in Pakistani print media while representing?
3. What sorts of issues are highlighted by media related to minorities?
4. Is print media (daily Dawn, the News and The Nation) giving equal coverage to minority issues?

Hypothesis

H1: media is giving positive coverage to minority issues.

H2: The Nation is giving more positive coverage to minority issues as compare to daily Dawn.

Findings and Results

This study had evaluated the print media coverage of Religious Minorities in Pakistani Print Media; in this regard researcher had analyzed and explores the already selected dailies Dawn, The Nation and The News through simple random sampling. The researcher observed that print media has tremendous power to influence public opinion and due to its immense capacity, it can assist in resolving various issues through giving proper coverage to these issues related to minorities. The researcher had examined the news items, pictures and editorials or sub editorials of selected dailies, about the coverage of religious minorities and scrutinized the content about minority issues. After analyzing the whole content the researcher has represented the data in graphs to make convenient for other to observe representation of religious minorities in Pakistani print media.

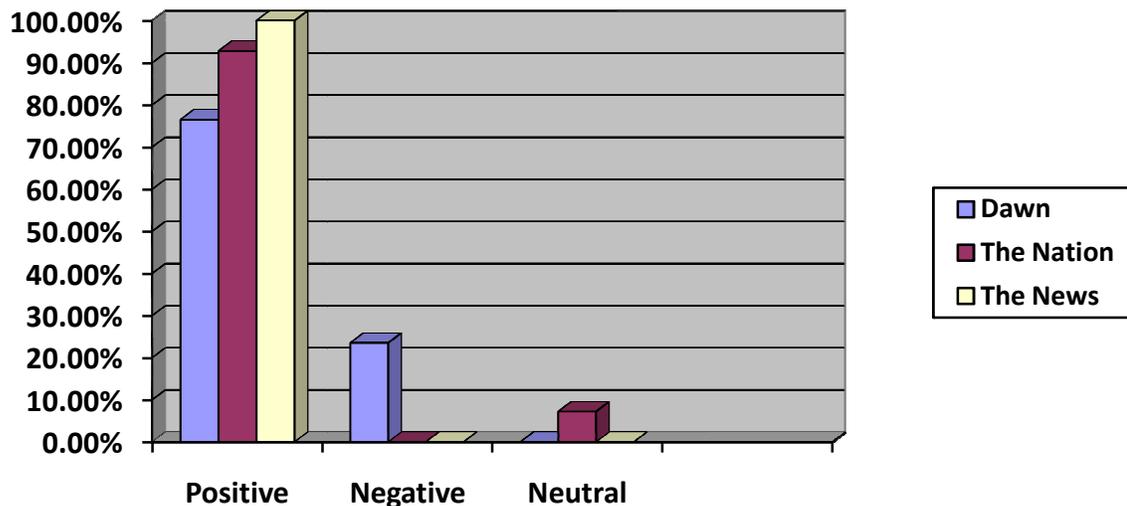


Figure 6.1: News Items Published in Dawn, the Nation and the News, Time during January 2009 to December 2009 Regarding Minority Issues.

During January 2009 to December 2009, the percentage of news items published in Dawn, in which Religious minorities issues were positively covered were 76.5%, percentage of news items that portrayed the issue negatively were 23.5% and there is no neutral news regarding minorities issues. The percentage of news items published in The Nation, in which religious minorities issues are represented positively were 92.8%, there is no negative news, the percentage of neutral news regarding religious minorities issues were 7.2%. The percentage of news items in The News which positively covered minorities issue were 100% and there is no negative and neutral news related to minorities issues.

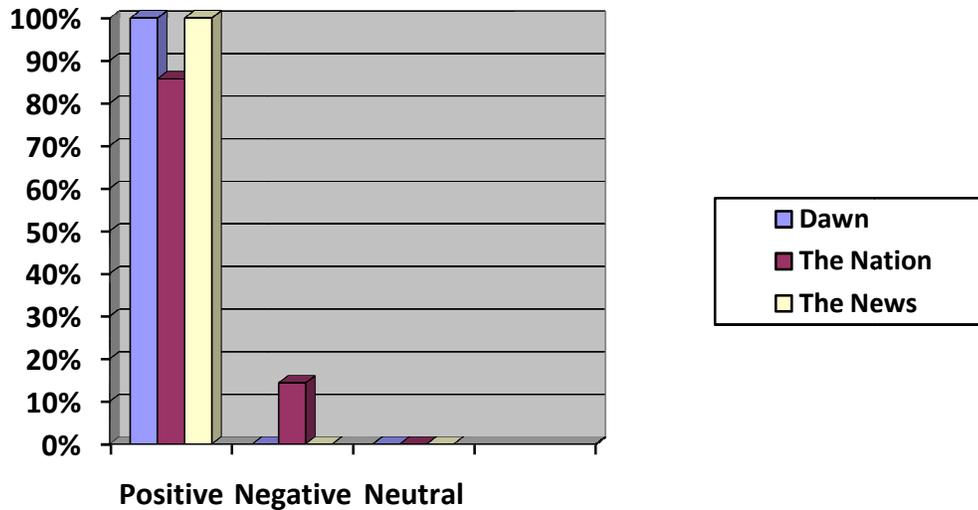


Figure 6.2: Pictures Published in Dawn, The Nation and The News, Time during January 2009 to December 2009 Regarding Minority Issues.

During January 2009 to December 2009, the percentages of pictures published in Dawn, in which Religious minorities issues were positively covered were 100%, there is no negative neutral pictures regarding minority's issues. The percentage of pictures published in The Nation, in which religious minorities issues are represented positively were 85.7%, there is no neutral pictures, the percentage of negative pictures regarding religious minorities issues were 14.3%. The percentage of pictures published in The News which positively covered minorities issue were 100% and there is no negative and neutral picture related to minorities issues.

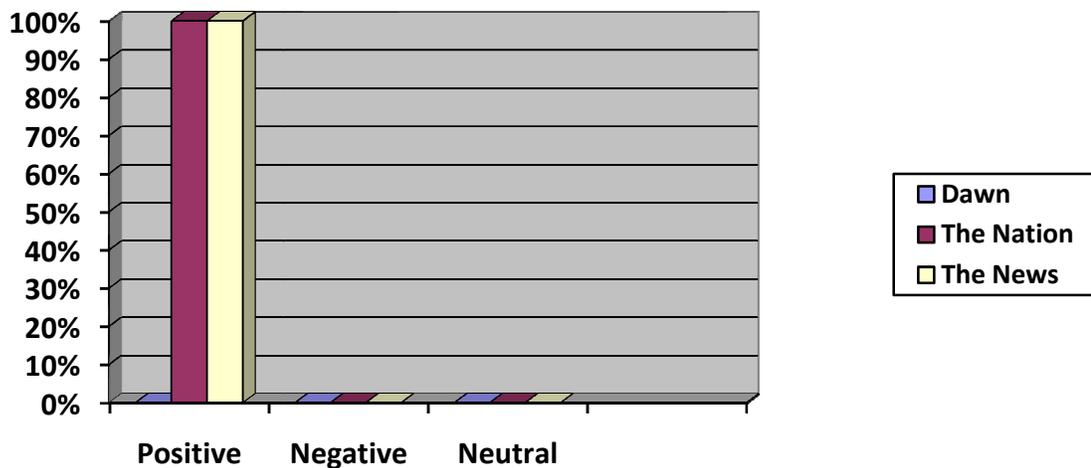


Figure 6.3: Editorials or Sub Editorials Published in Dawn, the Nation and the News, Time during January 2009 to December 2009 Regarding Minority Issues.

Dawn did not publish any editorials related to minorities during January 2009 to December 2009. During January 2009 to December 2009 the percentage of editorials in The News in which minorities are represented positively were 100%, there is not negative or positive editorials or sub editorials regarding minority issues. The percentage of positive editorials or sub editorials which publish in The Nation is 100%, there is no positive and negative editorial or sub editorial.

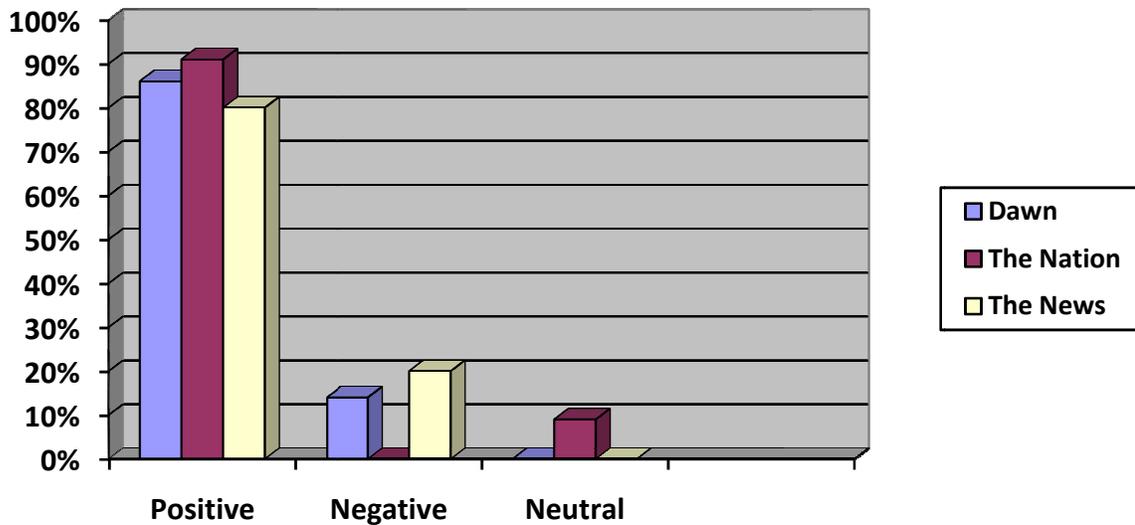


Figure 6.4: Total News Items Published in Dawn, the Nation and the News, Time during January 2010 to December 2010 Regarding Minority Issues

During January 2010 to December 2010, the percentage of news items published in Dawn, in which Religious minorities issues were positively covered were 84%, percentage of news items that portrayed the issue negatively were 14% and there is no neutral news regarding minorities issues. The percentage of news items published in The Nation, in which religious minorities issues are represented positively were 91%, there is no negative news, the percentage of neutral news regarding religious minorities issues were 9%. The percentage of news items in The News which positively covered minorities issue were 80% percentage of negative news is 20%, and neutral news related to minorities issues.

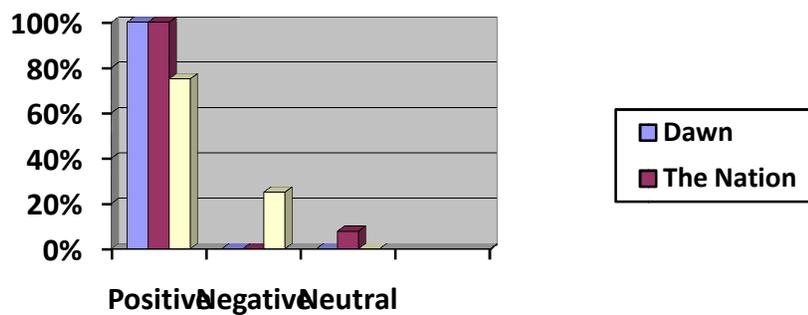


Figure 6.5: Pictures Published in Dawn, the Nation and the News, Time during January 2010 to December 2010 Regarding Minority Issues.

During January 2010 to December 2010, the percentages of pictures published in Dawn, in which Religious minorities issues were positively covered were 100%, there is no negative neutral pictures regarding minority's issues. The percentage of pictures published in The Nation, in which religious minorities issues are represented positively were 100%, there is no negative and neutral pictures, regarding religious minorities issues. The percentage of pictures published in The News which positively covered minorities issue were 75%, percentage of negative pictures in The News regarding minorities are 25% and there is no neutral picture related to minorities issues.

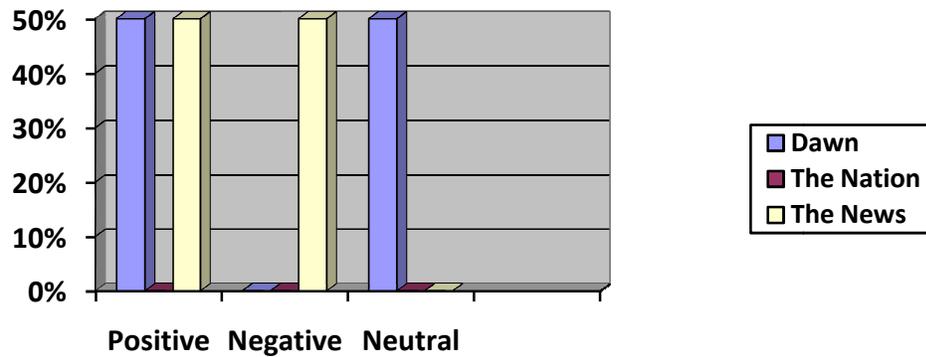


Figure 6.6: Editorials Published in Dawn, the Nation and the News, Time during January 2010 to December 2010 Regarding Minority Issues.

During January 2010 to December 2010 the percentage of editorials in Dawn in which minorities are represented positively were 50%, there is no negative editorials or sub editorials regarding minority issues, the percentage of neutral editorials or sub editorials in Dawn related to minorities issue is 50%. There is no positive, negative and neutral editorial or sub editorial in The Nation regarding minority issues. The percentage of editorials and sub editorials in The News in which minorities are represented positively were 50%, the percentage of negative editorials related to minority issues is also 50%, and there is no neutral editorial or sub editorial regarding minorities during January 2010 to December 2010.

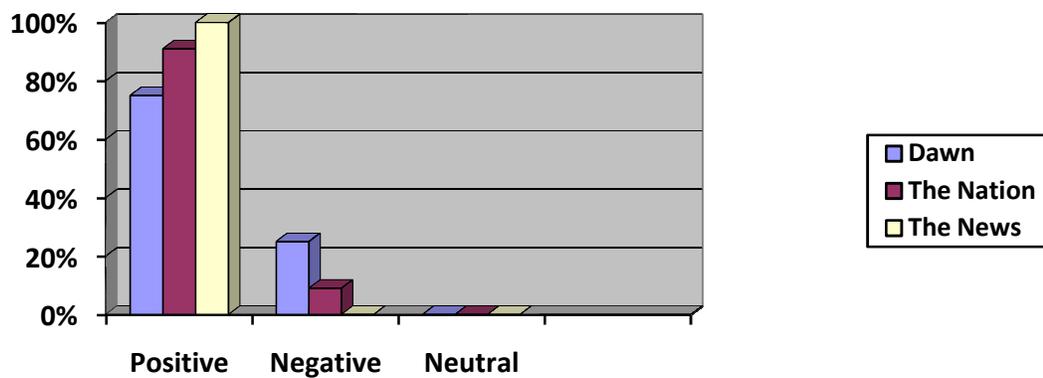


Figure 6.7: Total News Items Published in Dawn, the Nation and the News, Time during January 2011 to December 2011 Regarding Minority Issues.

During January 2011 to December 2011, the percentage of news items published in Dawn, in which religious minorities issues were positively covered were 75%, percentage of news items that portrayed the issue negatively were 25% and there is no neutral news regarding minorities issues. The percentage of news items published in The Nation, in which religious minorities issues are represented positively were 91%, there is no neutral news, the percentage of negative news regarding religious minorities issues were 9%. The percentage of news items in The News which positively covered minorities issue was 100% and there is no negative and neutral news related to minority issues.

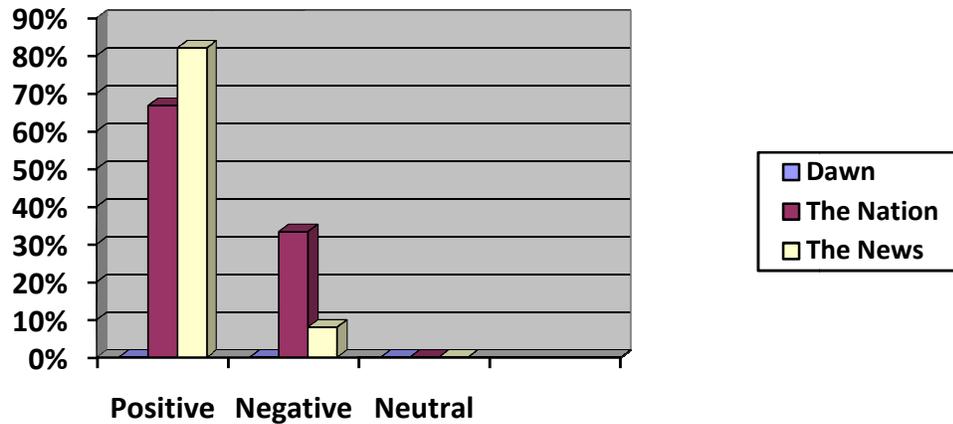


Figure 6.8: Pictures Published in Dawn, the Nation and the News, Time during January 2011 to December 2011 Regarding Minority Issues.

During January 2011 to December 2011, there is no pictures publish in Dawn, in which Religious minorities was represented positively, negatively and neutral. The percentage of pictures published in The Nation, in which religious minorities issues are represented positively were 66.7%, there are no neutral pictures, the percentage of neutral pictures regarding religious minorities issues were 33.3%. The percentage of pictures published in The News which positively covered minorities issue were 82%, percentage of negative news in The News regarding minorities are 8% and there is no neutral picture related to minorities issues.

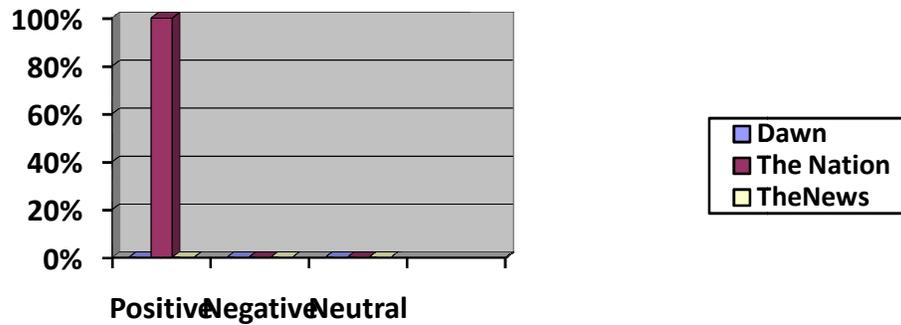


Figure 6.9: Editorials or Sub Editorials Published in Dawn, the Nation and the News, Time during January 2011 to December 2011 Regarding Minority Issues

During January 2011 to December 2011 there is no editorial published in Dawn and The News, the percentage of editorials in The Nation in which minorities are represented positively were 100%, there is no negative and neutral editorials or sub editorials regarding minority issues.

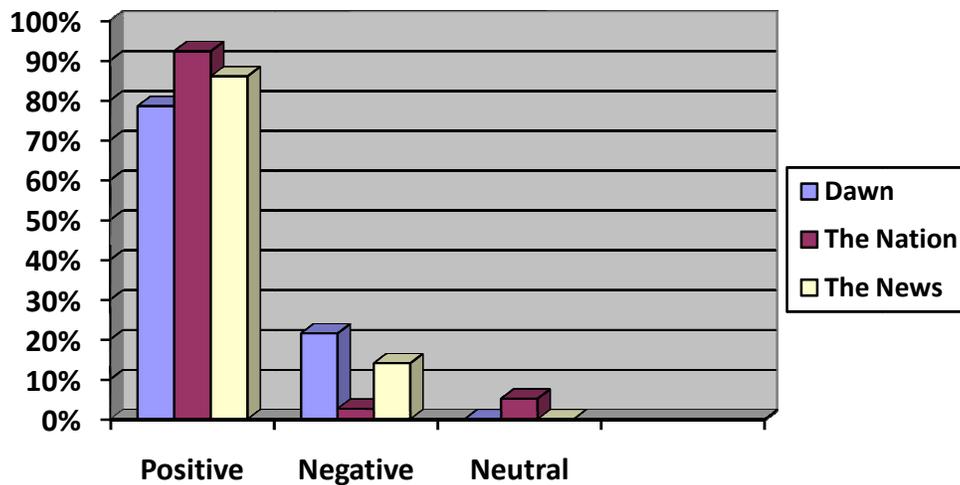


Figure 6.10: News Items Published in Dawn, the Nation and the News, Time during January 2009 to December 2011 Regarding Minority Issues

During the year January 2009 to December 2011, the percentage of news items published in Dawn, in which Religious minorities issues were positively covered were 79%, percentage of news items that portrayed the issue negatively were 21% and no neutral news regarding minorities issues. The percentage of news items published in The Nation, in which religious minorities issues are represented positively were 92.3%, the percentage of negative news regarding religious minorities issues were 2.6% and the percentage of neutral news were 5.1%. The percentage of news items in The News which positively covered minorities issue was 86%, percentage of negative news was 14% and there is no neutral news related to minority issues.

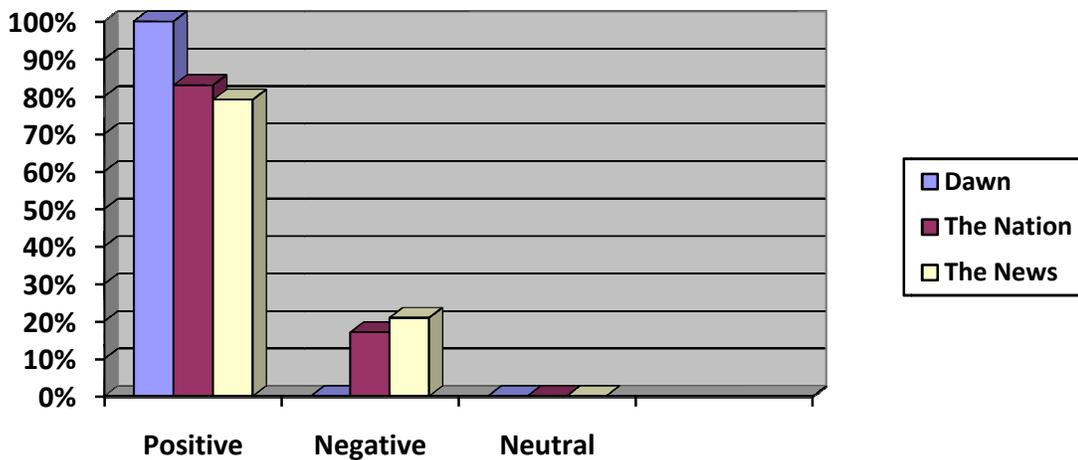


Figure 6.1: Pictures Published in Dawn, the Nation and the News, Time during January 2009 to December 2011 Regarding Minority Issues.

During January 2009 to December 2011, the percentage of positive picture published in Dawn regarding minorities issues were 100% there is not negative or neutral picture related to minorities. The percentage of pictures published in The Nation, in which religious minorities issues are represented positively were 83%, there are no neutral pictures, the percentage of negative pictures regarding religious minorities issues were 17%. The percentage of pictures published in The News which positively covered minorities issue were 79.1%, percentage of negative news in The News regarding minorities are 20.9% and there is no neutral picture related to minorities issues.

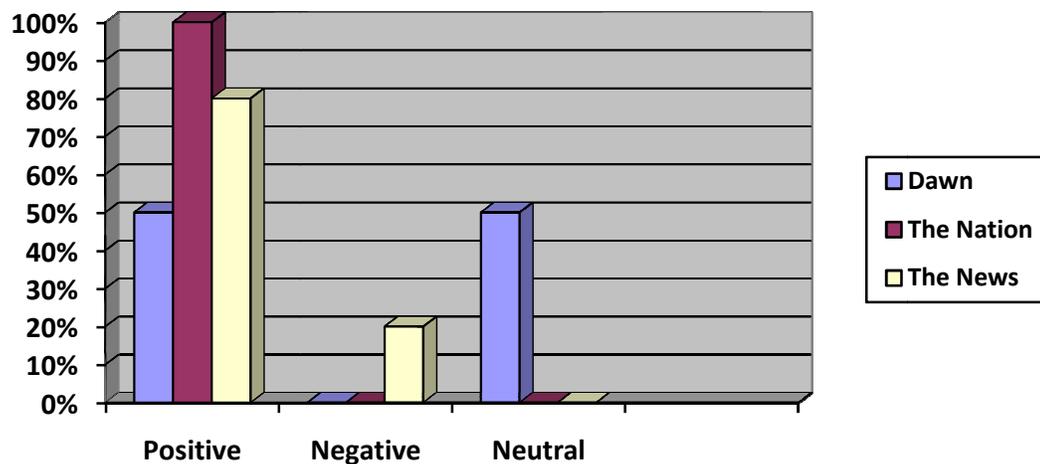


Figure 6.12: Editorials or Sub Editorials Published in Dawn, the Nation and the News, Time during January 2009 to December 2011 Regarding Minority Issues.

During January 2009 to December 2011 the percentage of positive editorials published in Dawn related to minorities issues were 50%, there is no negative editorial, the percentage of neutral editorials regarding minority issues were 50%. The percentage of editorials in The Nation in which minorities are represented positively were 100%, there is no negative and neutral editorials or sub editorials regarding minority issues. The percentage of positive editorials published in The News related to minorities issues were 80%, the percentage of negative editorials regarding minority issues were 20% and there is no neutral editorial regarding minorities issues.

Discussion and Analysis

Present research had investigated the “Representation of religious minorities in Pakistani print media (Dawn, The Nation and The News) 2009 to 2011. Researcher applied quantitative content analysis to analyzed the data. The study generates the considerable amount of information about the role of print media regarding minority issues. Researcher has used Dawn, The Nation and the News because these three newspapers have high circulation and read by elite, educated class. Policy and law makers also prefer these newspapers.

Hypothesis of this research was media is giving positive coverage to minority issues. The Nation is giving more positive coverage to minority issues as compare to daily Dawn. After sampling and data collection these two hypotheses are approved that media is giving positive coverage to minority issues and The Nation is giving more positive news as compare to Dawn.

The study proves its hypothesis by analyzing the data collected with the point of reference to the research questions of the study. To investigate the print media coverage to minority issues, the present study applied agenda setting theory, which states that media sets particular agenda on any particular issue for the public. According to agenda setting theory particular coverage given to the issue by the media can highlight that issue and specific angles highlighted by media directly affects the issue either in positive or negative sense.

All three newspapers had covered the minority issues under the specific agenda. It depends upon the media agenda that how it cover any issue, positively or negatively. Media can be an effective platform from where the opinions of people are made. The findings of the study confirm that media had covered minority issues under specific agenda. Media highlighted religious and controversial issues related to minorities.

Conclusion

The basic target of this research is “Representation of Religious Minorities in Pakistani Print Media 2009-2011”. For this research researcher has analyzed Dawn, The Nation and The News, because these three newspapers has good circulation. The press tries to inform its readers about what is happening in their community, country and the world at large. Findings of the previous researcher to conclude that print media plays an important role in nation’s life. These factors are based on conclusion drawn after reviewing the relevant literature at most of studies was of the view that the media coverage of minority issues is positive. In this research first objective is to study how minority issues are represented in Dawn, The Nation and The News. After analyzing all data it is concluded that all three newspapers Dawn, The Nation and The News give positive coverage to minority issues.

Second objective is to examine how pictures depict minority in Pakistani print media. Data shows that in these newspapers representation of religious minorities is positive. Data shows that print media of Pakistan give coverage to minority issue and mostly it covers minorities positively. But media only high light the controversial or religious issues of minorities. Social issues of minority are ignored in Pakistani print media. Data shows that Pakistani Print media Dawn, The Nation and The News give positive coverage to minority issues.

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