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Article:	Peaceful Democratic Transition in Pakistan & Mediated Effects of Panama Leaks Case: A Philosophical Review
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ABSTRACT

Active participation of people and their understanding of the system are the philosophical roots of democracy. In this context, mass media of any society work as the backbone to form the public opinion through its contents. On April 20, 2017 through a landmark decision, the Supreme Court of Pakistan disqualified incumbent Prime Minister of Pakistan Nawaz Sharif from holding his public office for life on the Panama Leaks Case. However, the historic decision was proven another example of disqualification of incumbent Prime Ministers of Pakistan. Under the theoretical perspective of cultivation, this study tends to investigate effects of Pakistan's electronic media coverage of Panama Leaks Case on the perceptions of Pakistani youth and how this coverage affected their opinion about peaceful democratic transition.

Keywords: Peaceful Democratic Transition, Political Philosophy, Panama Leaks Case, Public-Opinion

Introduction

As a political system, the philosophical roots of democracy lie in the combined structure of public opinion, politics and government. It also usually compares with legal, economic, behavioral and social classifications of a society (Daily Science 2017). The saga of political rule in Pakistan is historical account of dialectics (Bajwa, Khan, & Bukhari, 2022). Despite having democracy, by negating peaceful democratic transition, the hanging sway of power resulted into continued shifting of civil and military governments in Pakistan (Rizvi, 2012; Ahmed, 2015; Hassan, 2014; Javeria, 2017)

On April 20, 2017, through a landmark decision, the Supreme Court of Pakistan disqualified incumbent Prime Minister of Pakistan Nawaz Sharif from holding his public office for life on the Panama Gate Case. However, the historic decision was proven another example of disqualification of incumbent Prime Ministers of Pakistan. As the political history of Pakistan always swung between democratic and military regimes, this was another shock to democracy (Bajwa, Khan, & Bukhari, 2022; Javeria, 2017). The formation of public opinion is mandatory in a democracy because people have ultimate power of choosing the authoritative body of the country. Moreover, public opinion plays a vital role in empowering people to challenge on the responsibilities of the government officials, it also has right to remove them from their offices. Therefore, in democratic form of government, representatives are more attentive towards the public opinion (Shao & Wang, 2017).

Walter Benjamin commented upon the status of development of public opinion as “It is precisely the purpose of the public opinion generated by the press to make the public incapable of judging, to insinuate into it the attitude of someone irresponsible, uninformed” (Ranker 2017).

In Pakistan, the history of power has been swinging between army and democratic regimes. Factually, democratization has been neglected due to various factors. The most important is that equal and higher wealth distributions among population empower people for economic equality that ultimately urge a desire for participation in politics with equality rights (Ahmed, 2015; Hassan, 2014). Furthermore, educated people are more likely to encourage democratization because they are aware of their responsibilities and rights by considering themselves an important part of the country. Mainly good economies, peace, successful international ties, industrial technology, value of culture and the prosperity of the middle class all have been collectively projected to democratization. However, role and responsibility of media is very helpful for influencing and constituting public opinion.

Media play a vigilant role in shaping and moulding a healthy democracy. However, it is backbone of democracy because it provides platform to the people to present their opinions freely and easily. Additionally, media also provide information about social, political and economic activities to make government more accountable. Further, the media show the transparency in the democratic system that ultimately helps to make government system more responsive, accountable and citizen-friendly (Tucker, Theocharis, Roberts, & Barbera, 2017).

As media has power to promote democracy or dictatorship in the society or country. Pakistan observed her first peaceful democratic transition in 2013 as Voice of America reported,

“Pakistan’s first peaceful democratic transition accomplished on 16th march, 2013 with completion of the 5 years tenure of president Zardari , However, this is the first democratic transition of power, in the history of 66 years of the country, from one democratically elected government to another” (VOA, 2013). Additionally, this has initiated a hope that democratic practice will become regularly in the norm that is discouraging involvements of future military actions that leads to more responsible government practices. Most Pakistanis now hope that democratic practice will become the norm, discouraging future military interventions and ultimately leading to more government accountability. It is found that media is free and liberal in Pakistan but still it’s not that much effective in strengthening the democracy of the country. Whereas, role of media is appreciated as watchdog and facilitator as source of information (Hanan, Saleem, Ali, & Mukhtar, 2016).

Objectives

To investigate the effect of media exposure on perceptions of Pakistani youth about peaceful democratic transition

Research Questions

How did the media coverage given to PLC effect the public opinion about Political Democratic Transition?

- I. How did the Panama leaks case coverage effect the perception of Pakistani youth about PDT?
- II. What were the perceptions of youth about role of media before and after the disqualifying of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif?
- III. What role Pakistani media played regarding PDT in the opinion of youth?
- IV. Did media work as a watch dog of government policies in the opinion of youth?

Hypotheses

H1: There is a strong relationship between exposure to Panama leaks case’s E- Media Coverage, and negative perception of Pakistani youth about peaceful democratic transition.

H2: The exposure to Panama leaks case coverage is related with positive perceptions of Pakistani youth about disqualification of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.

H3: The exposure to coverage of Panama Leaks case is related with perception in youth about watchdog role of media regarding government policies

H4: In the opinion of youth, E-Media has played negative role in giving political guidance to masses.

Literature Review

The democratic method is overall institutional arrangement that accomplish political decision to provide individual gain of power to decide through competitive struggle for the people’s vote. Boudreaux & Holcombe (2017) added, democratization is a complex, political, social and cultural process with shaped differently in various regions that gives its path to gain democracy. According to Mellado & Van Dalen (2017) democratization is a progress that could facilitate society to transform from authoritarianism to minimalist democracy that ends into substantive democracy, this all procedure can never be direct, horizontal and free of hazards. Wanyande (1996) added another important point which exposed that mass media is majorly element of civil society and termed as the government associations that guard the interests and support different civil institutions considering the space available for the politics. Contrarily,

some contradictions also examined exhibited by the society which are applicable as well as valid on the functional operations of mass media. Additionally, media is not homogeneous entity as it is comprised of various groups with own distinctive interest that leads to some contradictions in dissemination of information. Additionally, further research conducted by Hanan, Saleem, Ali, & Mukhtar (2016) added another point to show correlation between mass media and the term democracy. Media as a mirror develops vibrant and true picture of society to disclose prominent issues towards justice to eliminate the complications faced by the society. Moreover, political leader directly influences public opinion through dominant media role to strengthen democratic system in the country. Likewise, media took pressure through numerous features of institutions that includes owners' policies, conditions and finance sponsors who contribute substantial role in the media firms.

Exposure to Panama Leaks Case (PLC) E-Media coverage

Rettig (2016) added in the dimension towards exposure to Panama Leaks Case (PLC) E-Media coverage. This research study explored Panama Papers link up directly the offshore holdings and bring into account the leaders and public official about what they have done. Moreover, keeping an eye on the ownership of the ruling classes around 140 leaders holding were questioned and funds flow was observed, and the fraudulent attempt are brought into the public account. In addition, lists were brought to public included the billionaires of the world including spies', existing leaders, previous leaders, politicians, and other official. Additionally, ICIJ (2016) explored that journalists have been working up to 25 languages that trace the secrets behind any dealings. After receiving adequate information, they share the information with people and get data from the corporate filings, property records, along with the financial information that they disclose in front of the public (ICIJ, 2016).

Anwar & Jan (2010) argued, media has always tried to play its role in conveying proper information and relevant news to people which is expected by media houses to create political awareness in any country is not a new thing for media. However, political parties now a day are specially focused on creating better links with media houses to create a positive image of their political party in front of public. Media houses are not about just conveying information, also act as a tool for people to recognize which political party is working best for interest of country while others are focusing on having profit of their own. Moreover, FOP (2015) shed light upon the fact, in the recent years the political condition of Pakistan has faced many troubles and hurdles. Along with it, media houses also had to face many issues as such Hamid Mir and Raza Rumi survived assassination, all these have been linked to the role of media in promoting political awareness among the citizens of Pakistan. According to Siddiqi (2013), media is no doubt playing its positive role in conveying proper information but also targeting political parties and linked public with politics according to its own likeness or hatred. However, news channels and media programs instead of conveying what is happening in the country start to portray the picture of they think about the situation that is totally the opposite of what media is supposed to do.

In today's world, common person is sole to rely on either media houses or elites to convince him to vote for any political party. In the recent years, the trends have started to change for Pakistan as media here has started to play its role in conveying proper and detailed information to people about all the political parties working in Pakistan. With the establishment of media tools in Pakistan, it has become much easier for people to get information about any

political party or its contributions towards Pakistan very easily (Jan, Riaz Raza, Siddiq, & Saleem, 2013). Another Scholar Hassan (2014) supported this argument; media has played its role in making people aware about all the information that needs to be given to them for their own sake. Although, excessive use of media in Pakistan somehow manageable to change people's perceptions towards their favourite political party. However, media is not only broadcasting the real faces of political parties but also trying to make people aware about the consequences of voting for the wrong political party and what damages it may bring to the country if wrong people are elected. . In context to level of patriotism, Urooj, Basit, Khan, & Ain (2013) argued about concept of nationalism also arises with this reference and nationalism is somehow an opposite word to patriotism. However, nationalism is a defensive and destructive thinking that supports thoughts of oneself superiority. Additionally, this concept focuses more on unveiling the level of patriotism of one towards his country as his loyalties are measured based on his favours towards his country (Urooj, Basit, Khan, & Ain, 2013). Another Scholar contributed in this dimension, Sherrod (2007) found in Pakistan, over the recent past few years the level of patriotism of youth towards the country may seem to decline. The level of attachment of citizens towards the government or political parties working should not be confused with the level of patriotism one has with his country as both these things are way too different from each other. However, affiliation of one with any political party has nothing to do with their patriotism towards the country (Sherrod, 2007). Moreover, Kugelman (2012) explored, due to the current scenarios and political condition of Pakistan, the citizens may seem to have lack of patriotism towards their country as many people including the youth and the middle-aged population of Pakistan is more concerned about talking about the poverty level and the condition of people living here in the country. Meanwhile, media has made people so much aware about happenings around the country which made people more concerned about getting their needs satisfied and in all this situation many of the times the patriotism towards the country is neglected.

Level of Public Satisfaction from government performance is viewed under perspective of many researchers. As Kim (2014) found, over past few years especially after the emergence of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf in Pakistan, people have become more conscious about the political situation and political decisions going around the country. Many public surveys and interviews are conducted to measure the level of satisfaction of Pakistani citizens regarding the performance of the governmental agencies. Consequently, it is seen with the passage of time as the information about the governmental doings have started being available for public, it has made public to become more aware about the efforts being done at governmental level (Kim, 2014). According to OECD (2013), many political parties specially working at the governmental level have understood the importance of being able to satisfy the public and getting public votes based on their performance in the future. Therefore, many governments now also use the method of survey to understand the needs of their citizens this not only gets the information necessary for understanding the needs of the public but also helps in understanding what they perceive about the public government in general (OECD, 2013). Another research study found that public satisfaction towards the government not only arises at the state level but on the smaller units it must be the same too. The smaller units include the MNA's and MPAs at city or district level who are in majority cases direct in contact with the public, these governmental servants can attract public by helping them in their need and by

being present for them at the time of need. Additionally, the local government has the more authority of being able to cater more public in favour of their political party as well as creating a high satisfaction level of the public (Khan, Rehman, Shah, & Khan, 2009). Different Scholars presented their research work on level of trust on government Institute. According to Yosuf & Nauman (2015), possess trust in one's government is a sure way to measure the performance and progress of the government in that country. When people have trust in their government, it builds trust that the decisions taken by the government are for the betterment of the people and country it means the government has been successful in gaining the trust of the citizens of that country and the government is working just fine for the country. Whereas, trust built up on the citizens allows the government to make progressive steps towards the development of the country

The research study of Gallup (2015) added in this discussion, In Pakistan the people had issues with the government from a very long time; the governments seem to have lack of trust from the public as people do not believe them or have the thought that government is corrupt or is no good for the country. Further Asghar (2013) argued under the perspective of level of trust, Pakistan is far behind than many governments that are working in the world and the Pakistani government lacks the ability to properly govern the country and this situation has been reported by many world reports based on the performances of the governments. Pakistan seems to have a lack of public trust in governmental decisions because many of the times the role of government portrayed by the media is exaggerated especially if they have done anything wrong. Due to the exaggeration public loses its trust and other than this the government is most of the time interested in just gaining more money out of it instead of really working for the country which has made public against the government (Asghar, 2013). According to Ahmed (2015), media has played a major role in reforming the political conditions all around the globe but despite being a good support for the public, media has also proved to be a worse enemy for many governments. However, the freedom of media in the current era is many times misinterpreted by many news channels and they tend to become offensive for government instead of being the pathway of conveying information from the government to the public. In the recent times media has evolved a lot and the media which was once considered to be a reliable source of information is often considered to be doubtful as many of the times the only thing that media channels do is to portray the wrong image of government to the public.

Further Francke (1995) argued, the media has transitioned from conveying news to the public for creating conspiracies against the governmental policies and governmental decisions. Additionally, media is being a watch dog as they always on their tip toes to get any tip about any political decisions taking place in the government. They are all on their toes to get the detailed information about the event and then many of the times instead of just conveying it without any change. Another research study argued, the news and flow of information is not only confined to media news channels or live show programs, but internet is also a source of all such information to the public. With the increase in use of internet, many times people just tend to go to the website of their desired news network and get the news they are searching for as people also know that media is always behind the political parties and they tend to keep an eye on each step they take. With the use of internet, it has become much easier for the people to get latest information and news they are concerned about (Khan & Shahbaz, 2015). By strengthening this argument Mushtaq, Abiodullah, & Akber (2015) found the latest trend of

current affair programs by the media is also playing a great role in making people aware about the happenings in their surroundings. In the past many of the times people were totally unaware about the killings or unlawful events being happening around them but with the passage of time due to this attitude of media people are sometime aware about the incident before it happens, and it tends to be saviour for them. The media is in search of getting information about everything related to the government from what they eat to whom they meet. Sometimes this news may seem to be over as compared to what is expected from the media but many of the times due to such attitude of media people become aware of the harmful incidents around them within no time (Mushtaq, Abiodullah, & Akber, 2015).

Theoretical Framework

Democratic Transition is sensitive issue in the historical context of Pakistan as after 1970 no government except the regime of Asif Ali Zardari has completed its tenure. The Peaceful democratic transition ensures law enforcement and stable political behaviour in a society that facilitates satisfaction about the government actions. After Zardari's regime, Pakistan was expected to have peaceful democratic transition again as PML-N got a distinctive edge in 2013's elections representing satisfied public opinion from the newly elected government. The issue of Panama Leaks Case affected public opinion overall and created lot many confusions in the mind of masses about future of PML-N's government. Moreover, this research study deals at finding out the effect of exposure of panama leaks coverage on the political opinion of youth regarding peaceful democratic transition. The cultivation theory provides understanding that mainstreaming dealing with exposure to constant images or content on different media is responsible for creating shared meanings in a society. Furthermore, overall cultivation theory relates with this research study as more exposure cast prominent effect on the thinking pattern of youth.

Research Methodology

The study is performed by adopting the method of Survey. For the purpose, 50 questionnaires were filled by the respondents as pilot study to gain the fine idea of mind-set of audience as well as clarity of instrument.

Research Tool

The research tool was a questionnaire developed on 5 points Likert scale. However, the questions or statements are generated to find the agreement or disagreement of the respondents on the theme and finally score are evaluated to get the findings.

Population

Population of the study was consisted on all the youth of the Lahore City belonging to the age group of 20 to 30. Exposure to the E-Media coverage of Panama Leaks was also taken as inclusion criterion.

Sampling

A sample of 300 respondents is selected through purposive sampling for survey belonging to different age groups and socio-economic status. The criterion of choosing respondents lies on their exposure to the E-Media coverage of Panama Leaks Case.

Results

For the study, Spearman's rho and Chi square, Goodness for fitness test was applied on collected data.

Correlations

			Exposure to E-Media Coverage	Negative Perception about PDT
Spearman's rho	Exposure to Coverage	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.106
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.004
		N	300	300
	Perception	Correlation Coefficient	.106	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	.
		N	300	300

Correlations

			Positive Perception about disqualification	Exposure to E-Media coverage
Spearman's rho	Perception	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.101
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.040
		N	300	300
	Exposure to E-Media coverage	Correlation Coefficient	.101	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.040	.
		N	300	300

Correlations

			Exposure to E-Media coverage	Watch dog of Govt policies
Spearman's rho	Exposure to coverage	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.111
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.005
		N	300	300
	Watchdog of Government policies	Correlation Coefficient	.111	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	.
		N	300	300

Test Statistics

	Exposure to E-Media coverage	Negative role
Chi-Square	187.967 ^a	165.867 ^a
Df	4	4
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 60.0.

Spearman correlation is applied on the data to explore the relationship between exposure to E-Media coverage and negative perception of youth about peaceful democratic transition and exposure to Panama leaks case coverage with positive perceptions of Pakistani youth about disqualification of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. The relationship between exposure to coverage of Panama Leaks case with perception in youth about watchdog role of media regarding government policies is also investigated. Moreover, a Chi square, Goodness for fitness test is also applied to investigate opinion of youth about E-Media role in giving political guidance to masses. The taken hypotheses are proven on a P value of 0.004, 0.040, 0.005 and P value 0.000 respectively.

Discussion

For this research study, the data is collected from three hundred respondents by applying purposive sampling. Moreover, 151 (50.3 %) respondents were male while 149 (49.7 %) were female who responded to questionnaire. However, the sample size is divided into two age segments i.e. 20-25 and 26-30. Further, the data is collected from respondents of different social status in which household income ranges with minimum of below Rs 50,000 and maximum of 2, 00,000.

By analysing the response of perception of Pakistani youth about Peaceful Democratic Transition (PDT), it is found that 122 (40.7 %) responded more towards agreement and less 12 (4 %) towards strongly disagreement while 87 (29.0 %) respondents answered as neutral. According to ICIJ (2016), the working of journalist is remarkable for exposing the truth for Panama Leaks Case by translating content into 25 languages and exposing truth of panama papers in front of the public. Moreover, (Ashraf & Islam, 2014) in their study strengthened the role of media in providing the instant and reliable information into the society about the culprits in the politics for deceiving their responsibilities. Additionally, in this research study, the impeachment of Nawaz Sharif is justified in opinion of Pakistani youth as 104 (34.7 %) responded as agree, 101 (33.7%) responded neutral while 17 (5.7 %) respondents strongly disagreed with the given statement.

Moreover, role of media is also accountable in formation of public opinion about PDT. In this research study, it is found that, from the taken sample 103 (34.3 %) respondents agrees and 12 (4.0 %) respondents strongly disagreed while 103 (34.3 %) respondents found neutral on the justifying the role of media as fair and positive. Additionally, it is more interesting to know that majority of Pakistani youth as 105 (35.0 %) respondents gave response in neutral while 88 (29.3 %) respondents agreed in response to the statement whether E-Media has been supportive towards policies of government. Ahmed (2015) claimed that media became more challenging

for the government now-a-day in exposing the truth by distorting their good image and stand in front of them to work as a watch dog for their policies and workings.

Conclusion

For analyzing the role of media towards peaceful democratic transition in Pakistan, survey method is used as the study postulates that opinion of Pakistani youth is directly linked with the exposure to E-Media coverage of Panama Leaks case. The researchers applied two statistical tests Pearson and Spearman Test for Correlation and Chi-Square Test for Association. The results indicated that there is significant correlation present among exposure to E-Media coverage and negative perception as more is exposure to PLC E- Media Coverage has affected the perception of Pakistani youth negatively about PDT with P value of 0.04. Moreover, on testing positive perception about role of E-media about the disqualification of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, it is seen that P value of test is 0.040 that is again significant. Spearman coefficient correlation was also found significant in accepting the hypothesis i.e. in the opinion of youth, E-Media has worked as a watch dog of government policies with P value of 0.005.

Chi square test is also applied on data that found the P value 0.000 proving that in the opinion of youth, E-Media has played negative role in giving political guidance to masses.

Since, peaceful democratic transition has been a challenging subject in Pakistani politics; the study investigated mediated effects of Panama Leaks case on public opinion in Pakistan. It is summed up that issue of peaceful democratic transition has been under great turmoil; the country has faced a history of dissolved governments not successful in completing terms. In this scenario, the role of media gets crucial importance and Pakistani E-media would have to consider the possible effects of transmitted contents that is not observed.

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