

An Analysis of Viewers' Perception Regarding Role of News Media in Promoting Peace
Between Pakistan and India

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Abstract

The relations of Pakistan and India have always been critical since the partition due to unresolved issues. Although both have tried to find mutual ground and reap the benefits of peace through bilateral dialogues and agreements but a state of the cold war has always been a reality. This research paper highlights the role of Pakistani news media as perceived by the public. The role of media is very important in highlighting the issues and make public perception (Wanta et al., 2004). This study investigates whether and to what extent Pakistani news media play its role in promoting friendly relationships. The major objective of this study is to compare the role of private News media regarding Pak-India relationship through coverage of issues like Sports, Water, Kashmir, Line of control, Trade, Showbiz, and Terrorism etc. For that purpose, three foremost watching Pakistani news channels were selected i.e. Geo News, ARY News and Dunya News and perception of their audience has been analyzed. A methodology based on survey has been used for this study by taking a sample of 300 respondents. The convenience sampling technique has been applied to collect respondents' views. Finding illustrates that viewers were gratified with the coverage of Geo news over other channels and its role in de-escalating ties between Pak-India. The study also elaborates that media has been doing great discussion on terrorism, sports and showbiz. The audience thinks that both media and dialogues are important factors for promoting peace and friendly relationship between India and Pakistan.

Key Words: Escalate, De-escalate, Perception, Relationship, Coverage, Kashmir.

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Between Pakistan and India

Introduction

Both Pakistan and India are the two largest states of South Asia and constantly in a war condition from the day of partition. Unfortunately, the history of these countries is full of conflicts and they spend a huge budget on their defense. Both Pakistan and India are inherent of the two richest cultures and civilization of the world but separated with the stressed amount of historical issues (Badri-Maharaj, 2000). It is a tragedy of these countries' bitterness pledges them into four major wars and both countries have suffered widespread losses in terms of life (Paul & Paul, 2005; Tavares, 2008).

Although there are several disputes between Pak-India i.e, Kashmir conflict, terrorism, water issue, border hostility, the disagreement was started between these two countries right from the first day of the separation (Lyon, 2008; ul Haq, 2003). The Kashmir conflict one of the major bones of contention flanked by these countries. To crush the hostility between two nuclear-armed states of Pakistan and India, Kashmir as definite "the most uncertain place on earth". So, it needs to resolve this problem and fetch back the peace and Kashmir prosperity (Ganguly, Smetana, Abdullah, & Karmazin, 2019).

In 1960 Indus water contract between Pakistan and India have intensive wars of 1965, 1971 and 1999 which means a lot of disturbance, confrontations and border anger during (Alam, 2011; Badrul Alam, 2016). India did not agree to fulfil any promise of Indus water treaty. So, this situation gives the impression of no solution to this conflict (Miner, Patankar, Gamkhar, & Eaton, 2009). Furthermore, India blamed Pakistan for Mumbai terrorist attacks in 2001 on Indian Parliament. So that Indian government set up its armed forces along the Pakistani border for revenge of Mumbai attacks. Contrarily, Pakistan answered the Indian action and pull together in the same way that causes another conflict (Joshi, 2010; Mustafa, 2003).

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Other conflicts are, such as Siachen and Sir Creek, Failure to resolve these issues. Although this conflicted situation does not remain the same, many times there was an increase in high profile cease-fire across the border regularly and relations of both countries become sour (Sajjad, Hafeez, & Firdous, 2010). Despite this, sometimes both countries encompass rail and road links started again; artistes, journalist and sportsmen were being swapped, the ban on each other's TV channels was pick up, patients were moving for treatments across the border, and the visits of the foreign secretaries, foreign ministers to each other's terrestrial for switching peace assert between Pak-India (Akhtar & Tariq, 2010).

However, Both Pakistan and India understand that the two countries initiative focusing on people to people gratified, such as cooperation on tourism, ethnic and heritage services, cultural exchanging, music, drama, film, can help exchange attitude in both countries, include more flexible visa system parliamentarian meetings for greater contact or increased medical service sector (Saleem & Hanan, 2014). Furthermore, Pakistan and India can carry on challenges to each other's power on the game's ground i.e Football, Cricket, Hockey and Kabaddi would provide adequately occasions for responsive rivalry and contest (M. Ali, Mujahid, & ur Rehman, 2015). Also, some powerful investors also properly act as a team with a media campaign like "Aman ki Asha" for promoting peaceful relations between two conflicted countries (Khalid, 2014).

Media plays a considerable role to inform their audience on any issue or conflict. In this way, media helps to shape the people perception through news, current affairs programs or in forms of entertainment programmes. Without news and information about the world, no one would ever know what is happening around them. In the same way, we learn many things about different disciplines i.e. Politics, religious, sports, terrorism and a lot more (Robinson, 2008). According to McCombs (2002), This is vibrant that news media is vastly influential in

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managing public opinion and validates the assessment of people in some precise way so that people can start thinking as media wants to (Katz & Blumler, 1974).

In the case of Pakistan and India relationships news media has always played a very important tool accelerate or de-accelerate the ties (Z. Ali & Ajaz, 2014). Scholars argue that Pakistani media has played a positive role in creating mutual relations between Pakistan and India and form a favorable atmosphere to the normalization of relations between these two countries (Khan, Adnan, Tariq, & Jabeen, 2015). In this way, Aman ki Asha is a positive sign for peace holding by the media of both countries (Behuria, 2010; Rid, 2019). So this study helps to find the viewers response on the contribution of Pakistani media while escalating and de-escalating ties between Pak-India. For that purpose, three private TV news channels were selected on the basis of widely famous among the public (Fatima & Mumtaz, 2018). These are Dunya News, Geo News and ARY News. The purpose of this study to check how these channels can help to formulate a public opinion regarding Pakistan and India relationship.

Objective of the Study

- To determine the viewers' perception about role of news media in promoting friendly relations between Pakistan and India.
- To find out the factors helpful in promoting positive relations between Pakistan and India.

Literature Review

Indurthy (2003) examine that news media is a central pillar which can help to promote the bilateral relations within or with other countries. It works as a tool of public diplomacy. According to Semetko, Brzinski, Weaver, and Willnat (1992) TV is more important than newspapers for influencing public opinion about foreign countries. Regarding the coverage on Pak-India issue in Pakistani press of both Urdu and English dailies, results indicates very less positive coverage has been given on all selected issues i.e Kashmir Issue, Terrorism,

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Water crises, cross border insurgency over Sports, Trade and Showbiz (Yousef, 2013). Moreover, Qaiser, Madni, Hassan, and Amin (2014) views that majority of respondents frequently watch private news channels and majority were more satisfied with the role of media coverage given to issues related to Showbiz and Sport. Besova and Cooley (2009) stated that adverse coverage has more effects than neutral and positive coverage and definitely media exposure and public opinion about foreign issues totally interdependent.

According to (Muin, 2011) role of media regarding public opinion found a strong relationship between media agenda and public agenda. Sabir and Rasul (2011) demonstrates that the Pakistani press is interested in a peaceful resolution of the conflict between both of these countries over Kashmir conflict. According to Adnan, Islam, and Khan (2019) India and Pakistan have greater opportunities for trade and development in both countries. Raza, Jan, Sultan, and Aziz (2012) argued that the peace process allowed the two nations to converse all issues as well as Kashmir, at once. According to him Peace and Safety including assurance building measures Jammu and Kashmir, Siachen, Wullar Barrage, Commercial and Marketable Collaboration, and Elevation of Friendly Interactions must be needed in several fields.

Sajjad et al. (2010) explained that news media and entertaining industries are projecting traditional efforts at peace-building that formerly counted in “cricket diplomacy” and Amna ki Asha to build good relation. It was therefore concluded that the media should play an effective role by adopting a multi-dimensional approach in educating the public about conflict and its resolution (Ronald, 2017).

This study covers the area of all issues/factors that are the root cause between Pak_India that bump into a war between both of these countries. The major aim of this study to investigate the viewer's satisfaction in terms of coverage, affecting factors, issues, and

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media role in escalating and de-escalating ties, which helps in understanding the role that media is playing in this scenario to overcome the conflict.

Theoretical Framework

The following theory has been selected as a theoretical framework for this study.

Uses and Gratification theory

This study aimed at finding audience perception and gratification level after watching news contents related to Pakistan and India issues. Because of their rivalry from the independence of Pakistan, what people of Pakistan perceive that media is tackling these issues. Either media play a positive role or negative to resolve the conflicting situation between both of these countries. This theory aims to highlight the different use made by different people. This theory addresses the concerns of why people use particular media (Blumler, 1979).

According to Rubin (2009) pointed that gratification concerned with social and psychological origins needs which generate expectations mass media or other sources, which lead to differential patterns of media exposure and resulting in needs gratification. From literature, they recorded 35 needs on the basis of social and psychological functions of mass media and put them into four major categories. These are 1) Diversion, 2) Personal Relationships, 3) Personal Identity and 4) Surveillance. So, this theory is helpful to know what kind of need is fulfilled with news channels on Pak-India issue.

Social Responsibility Theory

This theory is an extension of libertarian theory in that media should recognize its responsibility to resolve conflict and promote public opinion through discussion. According to this theory, the press has an obligation to be responsible for the public as well as for society. This theory allows the media to perform independently without any censorship. Also, media contents should be discussed in a public panel or professionally for the welfare of the public (Omenugha, Omenugha, & Uzuegbunam, 2013). The main objective of this theory to

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create professionalism in media by setting a high level of truth, accurate and balanced information. According to Smith, Hadfield, and Dunne (2016) views that the media has the right to criticize government and institutions but, it has also a responsibility to preserve democracy by properly inform the public according to social needs and interest. This theory helps to understand what kind of role media is playing on the issue of Pak-India and which news channel gave responsible coverage to resolve the conflict.

Research Question

- Whether and to what extent sample news channels are playing their role in promoting friendly relationships between Pakistan and India?
- Which factors are important to promoting positive relations between Pakistan and India?

Research Methodology

In this research, Survey technique was used and the self-administered questionnaire was allocated for data collection from respondents. Respondents were selected from the University of Sargodha. On the basis of stratum (Age, Gender and Education) convenience sampling method was used for data collection from the target population and collect response from 300 students which are viewers of selected channels habitually. After that process data was entered into SPSS and several statistical analysis tests have been applied. In the end, data was presented in the form of bar graphics and tables.

Results

The private news channels provide up-to-date and adequate information regarding issues of public interest and concern. The viewers rely on these news channels for getting information due to their reach and credibility. This claim has been supported by the recorded responses of the viewers. However, Findings showed that the respondents' views are variate for all selected channels and did not give equal importance to all channels at the same price.

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Results about watching habits of selected channels exposed that Geo news (71) significantly preferred by viewers over the other two selected channels (ARY News and Dunya News).

Table 1 Viewers habits of frequently Watching private TV News Channels

| | Overall | Male | Female | 25 or below | 26 or above | Graduate or below | Masters or above |
|-------------------|---------|------|--------|-------------|-------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Geo News | | | | | | | |
| Frequently | 71* | 71 | 72 | 71 | 73 | 72 | 70 |
| Somewhat | 16 | 16 | 16 | 16 | 15 | 17 | 15 |
| Rarely | 13 | 13 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 11 | 15 |
| ARY News | | | | | | | |
| Frequently | 45 | 41 | 50 | 43 | 51 | 44 | 46 |
| Somewhat | 32 | 29 | 35 | 32 | 32 | 35 | 29 |
| Rarely | 23 | 30 | 15 | 24 | 17 | 21 | 25 |
| Dunya News | | | | | | | |
| Frequently | 41 | 41 | 41 | 39 | 46 | 39 | 43 |
| Somewhat | 27 | 28 | 26 | 29 | 21 | 29 | 24 |
| Rarely | 32 | 31 | 33 | 32 | 33 | 32 | 33 |

*: Figures show frequencies

Watching habits of private news channels indicated through comparison of gender-wise analysis that, both the male and female respondents preferred to watch Geo News frequently (71 & 72) over ARY News (41 & 50) and Dunya News (41 & 41). Similarly, Geo News portray a significant variance in the age-wise comparison of the watching of private TV news channels over ARY News and Dunya News, the comparison of viewers acquiring age frequently watch Geo News over ARY News followed by Dunya News. In the education-wise classification of viewers, the above same trend was further supported by the viewers of selected news channels.

Table 2 Coverage Given to Pak-India Relations by Private News Channel

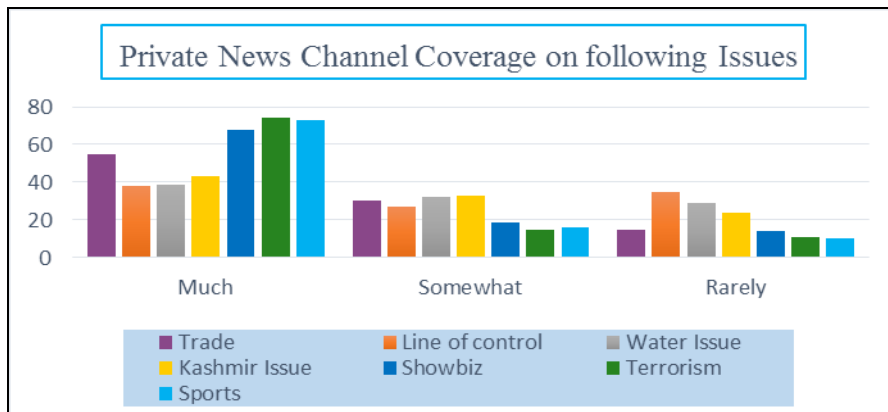
| | Much | Somewhat | Rarely |
|------------|------|----------|--------|
| Geo News | 62* | 28 | 10 |
| ARY News | 63 | 32 | 27 |
| Dunya News | 29 | 36 | 35 |

*: Figures show frequencies

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Keeping in view the interest of the public, have given healthy coverage to the issue by bringing it in news, current affairs and other genres by the selected Pakistani News channels. The empirical evidence of the study portrayed that selected private channels gave a fair amount of coverage to the selected issues of Pak-India relations. The result shows that ARY News and Geo News gave equal coverage on issues related to Pak-India. However, the significant variance was seen in the coverage of Dunya News of the certain issue over ARY and Geo News channels.

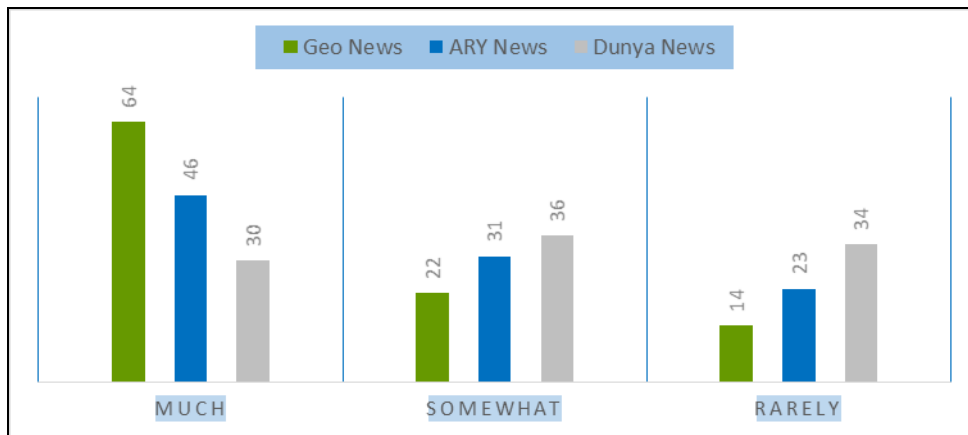
Fig. 3 Private News Channel give Coverage on the following Issues



Media is an excessive stimulus to shape the public mind by generous coverage to any particular issue. The empirical evidence of the study portrayed that the private news channels gave a fair amount of coverage to the selected issue of Pak-India relations. The findings showed that (Fig. 3) the selected channels have given a significant coverage on terrorism (74) and sports (73) over showbiz (68), trade (55), Kashmir issue (43), water (39), and LOC (38).

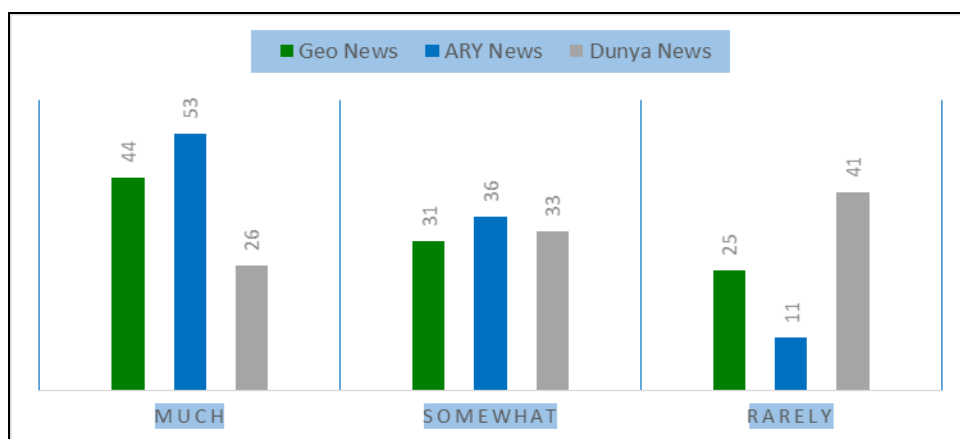
Fig. 4 Role of private News channels role in escalating ties between Pak- India

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Pak-India relations have always been a topic of debate for the public and Media has been used efficiently for varnish the gap between these two countries. Empirical evidence of the study portrayed that Geo News plays many roles (64) in escalating relations over ARY News (46) followed by Dunya News (30). However, a significant difference was observed in the portrayal of Dunya News and Geo News to escalating the ties between both of these countries.

Fig. 5 Role of private News channels in de-escalating ties between Pak- India



Empirical evidence of the study portrayed that role of private News channels in de-escalating the relationship between Pak-India. The result shows that ARY News much (53) play a role in de-escalating ties over Geo News (46) and followed by Dunya News (30). However, a significant difference was observed portrayal of Geo News, Dunya News and ARY News of the selected Private TV channels and their role in building a positive relationship between these countries.

Table 3 Satisfaction level of viewers on the coverage of Pak-India

| | Overall | Male | Female | 25 or below | 26 or above | Graduate or below | Masters or above |
|-------------------|---------|------|--------|-------------|-------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Geo News | | | | | | | |
| Much | 58* | 56 | 59 | 59 | 53 | 60 | 55 |
| Somewhat | 27 | 26 | 29 | 25 | 33 | 26 | 29 |
| Rarely | 15 | 17 | 12 | 15 | 13 | 13 | 16 |
| ARY News | | | | | | | |
| Much | 48 | 46 | 51 | 49 | 45 | 51 | 46 |
| Somewhat | 31 | 30 | 33 | 31 | 33 | 32 | 31 |
| Rarely | 21 | 24 | 17 | 20 | 21 | 17 | 23 |
| Dunya News | | | | | | | |
| Much | 39 | 43 | 36 | 38 | 42 | 36 | 43 |
| Somewhat | 34 | 30 | 36 | 35 | 27 | 36 | 30 |
| Rarely | 27 | 26 | 29 | 26 | 31 | 28 | 27 |

*: Figures show frequencies

In the information field, now private news channels have turned into the basic need of individuals universally. Study results revealed that respondents much gratified with the coverage of Geo News over other news channels. The gender-wise evaluation indicated that female viewers give little more preference to Geo News over male views in terms of coverage. Similarly, the age-wise comparison portrays a significant difference in viewers satisfaction level on given coverage by private TV news channels. However, the comparison between education level also portrays the same results in favour of Geo News in comparison to ARY News and Dunya News.

Table 4 Viewers Response on following issues discussed by Private News channels

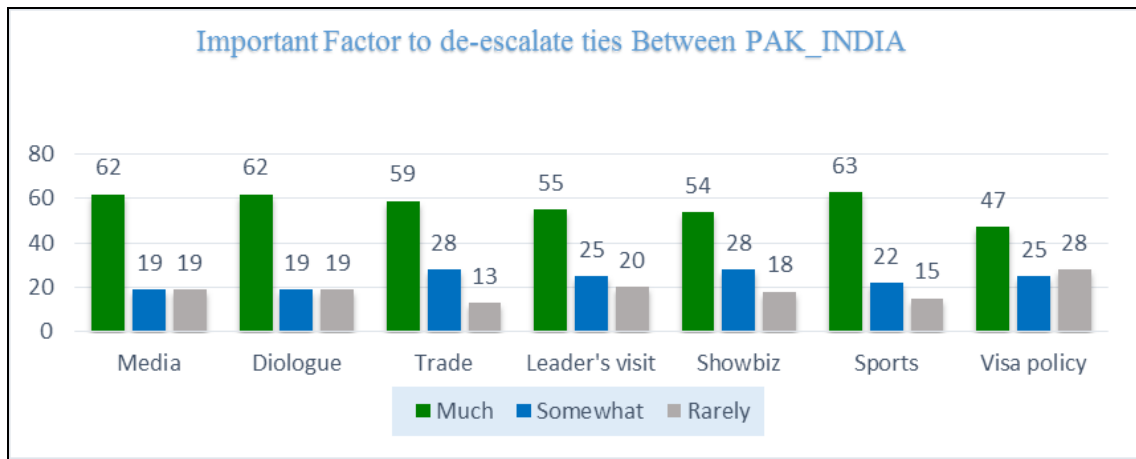
| | Much | Somewhat | Rarely |
|-------------------|------|----------|--------|
| Geo News | | | |
| Kashmir Issue | 45* | 22 | 32 |
| Sport | 72 | 19 | 10 |
| Visa policy | 27 | 27 | 31 |
| Trade | 54 | 29 | 18 |
| Showbiz | 68 | 17 | 16 |
| ARY News | | | |
| Kashmir Issue | 64 | 30 | 24 |
| Sports | 62 | 20 | 18 |
| Visa policy | 34 | 32 | 45 |
| Trade | 45 | 26 | 28 |
| Showbiz | 62 | 18 | 19 |
| Dunya News | | | |
| Kashmir Issue | 54 | 18 | 28 |
| Sports | 58 | 27 | 15 |
| Visa policy | 33 | 33 | 34 |
| Trade | 41 | 30 | 29 |
| Showbiz | 61 | 25 | 18 |

*: Figures show frequencies

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Media is an excessive stimulus to shape the public mind by generous coverage to any particular issue. The discussion on specific issues by private selected channels, stimulate the assessments of viewers and make their considerations according to its desire. The empirical evidence of the study portrayed that Geo news significantly discussed sports between Pak-India relations (72) over showbiz (68) as compared to trade (54), Kashmir issue (45) and visa policy (27). Overall findings revealed that Geo News more discussed sports (72), ARY news more discussed on Kashmir issue (64) with a slight difference of sports and showbiz (62) and Dunya news significantly discussed showbiz related to Pak-India.

Fig. 6 Important Factor to de-escalate ties Between Pak_India



| ANOVA table 6 a | | | | | | |
|---|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|------|------|
| | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| Media is important factor to de-escalating ties Pak-India | Between Groups | .004 | 1 | .004 | .003 | .006 |
| | Within Groups | 266.793 | 298 | .997 | | |
| | Total | 266.797 | 299 | | | |

(Probability level $p \geq .05$)

| ANOVA table 6 b | | | | | | |
|--|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|------|------|
| | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| Dialogue is important factor to de-escalating ties between Pak-India | Between Groups | .004 | 1 | .004 | .004 | .006 |
| | Within Groups | 266.793 | 298 | .997 | | |
| | Total | 266.797 | 299 | | | |

(Probability level $p \geq .05$)

| ANOVA table 6 c | | | | | | |
|-----------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|-----------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|

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| | | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|------|------|
| Trade is important factor to de-escalating ties Pak-India | Between Groups | .563 | 1 | .563 | .607 | .161 |
| | Within Groups | 276.353 | 298 | .927 | | |
| | Total | 276.917 | 299 | | | |

(Probability level $p \geq .05$)

| ANOVA table 6 d | | | | | | |
|---|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|------|
| | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| Leader visit is an important factor to de-escalating ties Pak-India | Between Groups | 1.763 | 1 | 1.763 | 1.547 | .215 |
| | Within Groups | 339.607 | 298 | 1.140 | | |
| | Total | 341.370 | 299 | | | |

(Probability level $p \geq .05$)

| ANOVA table 6 e | | | | | | |
|---|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|------|------|
| | | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| Showbiz is important factor to de-escalating ties between Pak-India | Between Groups | .083 | 1 | .083 | .072 | .342 |
| | Within Groups | 345.313 | 298 | 1.159 | | |
| | Total | 345.397 | 299 | | | |

(Probability level $p \geq .05$)

| ANOVA table 6 f | | | | | | |
|--|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|------|------|
| | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| Sports is important factor to de-escalating ties between Pak-India | Between Groups | .003 | 1 | .003 | .003 | .004 |
| | Within Groups | 256.793 | 298 | .999 | | |
| | Total | 256.797 | 299 | | | |

(Probability level $p \geq .05$)

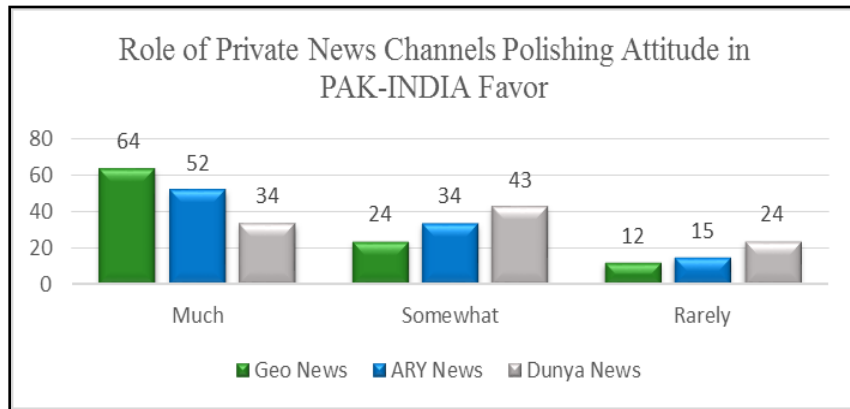
| ANOVA table 6 f | | | | | | |
|--|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|------|
| | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| Visa policy is an important factor to de-escalating ties between Pak-India | Between Groups | 2.803 | 1 | 2.803 | 2.245 | .135 |
| | Within Groups | 372.113 | 298 | 1.249 | | |
| | Total | 374.917 | 299 | | | |

(Probability level $p \geq .05$).

In this study, viewers of selected channels gave significantly preference to media, dialogue and sports (62, 62 & 63), over trade (59), Leader's visits (55), Showbiz (54%), and visa policy (47%) and considered as important factor to de-escalate ties between Pakistan and

India. While, the statistical ANOVA was applied and the significant value found related to i.e Media (.006), Dialogue (.006), as compared to Trade (.161), Leader visit (.215), Showbiz (.342), visa policy (.135), Sports (.004). If the value of p .05 (probability level $p \geq .05$) or equal to this value than results will be significant. The empirical findings reveal that the value of “media”, “Dialogue” and “Sports” is found significant.

Fig. 7 Selected channels role in polishing attitude in favour of Pak-India



Media has been used proficiently for removing the gap between these two countries. These selected issues make viewer perception regarding in favors or against. Empirical evidence of the study portrayed role private News channels polish attitude in favors of Pak-India relations Geo News much (64) play an important role over ARY News (52) and Dunya News (34). However, overall there was a significant difference was observed in the portrayal of polishing attitude in favour of Pak-India relations.

Discussion

The main objective of this research was to examine the viewers gratification level toward news contents of selected private channels regarding Pak-India issue. Survey method was used to collect data by using a questionnaire, to come across the requirement of the study stratum was used under characteristics of (Gender, Age, and Education) and convenience

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sampling technique was adopted for data collection from the sample. SPSS was used to analyze the data.

Different types of the concept were measured i.e. watching frequency, coverage, satisfaction level, polishing attitude and other factors that escalate and de-escalate ties between Pakistan and India. From the findings, related to watching habits revealed that maximum numbers of viewers prefer to watch Geo News over ARY News and followed by Dunya News (see table 1). These Finding also in line with the results of (Fatima & Mumtaz, 2018; Madni, Shahzad, & Abdullah, 2012). Related to the coverage given on Pak-India relations by selected channels, viewer's response that Pakistani media channels give more preference to Terrorism, Sports, and Showbiz related with Pak-India issues over Trade, Kashmir issue, Water conflict and LOC (see fig. 3). The results are also in line with the study of (Yousef, 2013).

Moreover, the exclusive findings between the following factors revealed that media & dialogue is on the priority list of respondents that decrease ties between Pak-India over Sports, Trade, Leader visits, Showbiz, Visa policy. It was observed from empirical findings that Geo News play much important role in viewers attitude polishing in favor of Pak-India relations as compare to others (see fig. 5.8). The findings of the study strongly match with the research of (Bly, 2002). This study will explore the effects of media influence is vibrant to understand how media approaches drive public opinion so that these approaches can be used to a strategic gain at the above condition.

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