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### ABSTRACT

Kashmir issue has been the bone of contention between India and Pakistan since their independence. However, abrogation of article 370 on Aug 05, 2019, in Indian Occupied Kashmir by the Indian government to revoke its' special status has escalated the conflict to an extreme level. This paper is an attempt to examine the portrayal of the Kashmir issue in the editorial cartoons of English dailies of India and Pakistan published in August 2019 (just after the abrogation of article 370) in the light of Framing theory and Barthes's model of connotation and denotation. The main objective of this research is to examine the signs, symbols, and metaphors used by Pakistani and Indian cartoonists to highlight the Kashmir issue. The study concludes both Pakistani and Indian newspapers frame the Kashmir issue in their way representing their perception, newspaper's policy, and ideology. Cartoons published in Indian newspapers depict Pakistan as a confused and baffled state whereas Pakistani newspapers highlight the barbarianism of the Indian army in Indian Occupied Kashmir.

**Keywords:** Kashmir Issue, Newspaper policy, Ideology, Editorial Cartoons, Pakistani Newspaper, Framing

## Introduction

Kashmir issue has its roots deep in the independence of India and Pakistan from British rule. In Mountbatten's last plan of independence, Kashmir was given a choice to join either India or Pakistan or remain independent (Singh, 2021, para. 6). However, the issue of this state remained unresolved since 1947 and the Kashmiri people are living in continual tension between two nuclear powers facing off each other on this very small but heavenly beautiful piece of land. The situation is frightening because there have been three major wars between the protagonists in the previous seven decades and there are still no chances of reaching stability of diplomatic conclusiveness for the resolution of this dispute (Carter, 2003, p. 2).

Initiatives have been taken by governments of both countries to resolve the issue but they are unable to reach any common ground yet. Along with governmental level initiatives, United Nations and some other multilateral non-governmental organizations have also tried to make several attempts for resolution and de-escalation of the Kashmir issue. Apart from all these factors trying to influence the conflict for betterment, media is also playing its role as a significant factor. Now, governments cannot monopolize information because communication technologies are advancing very fast making many non-state actors become partners in different international disputes (Zia & Sayedah, 2015, p. 162).

Therefore, media is a very important tool of advocacy and conflict resolution. Especially print media is making many serious efforts for creating awareness among the masses about the Kashmir issue. Columns, features, news, and editorials are written to highlight the sensitivity of this longstanding dispute. Along with verbal communication, visual communication especially in form of editorial cartoons is also playing a pivotal role in highlighting this conflict on various national and international forums (Jimoh, 2010, p. 7).

Unlike other genres of cartoons like comic strips and animated cartoons, editorial cartoons have a specific purpose to serve as they are supposed to do commentary on different societal issues by the use of stereotypes. Moreover, editorial cartoons have two distinguished and necessary elements in their making i.e. cynicism and satire (Al-Momani, Badarneh & Migdadi, 2016). Therefore, it is very important to analyze and interpret editorial cartoons published on conflicting issues like Kashmir as they help people to better understand the contemporary social, political and economic environment.

### **Abrogation of Article 370 and its impact on Kashmiri Muslims**

The government of India revoked the special status given in its constitution to Indian-administered Kashmir, the most far-reaching political development in nearly 70 years in the disputed region. On August 5, 2019, a presidential decree revoked Article 370 of the Constitution of India, which granted the Muslim majority state special privileges, including the right to its constitution and autonomy to make laws on all matters except security, communications, and foreign relations (Al-Jazeera, 2019).

India sent thousands of additional troops to the disputed area in the lead-up to the move, placed a debilitating curfew, shut down telecommunications and the internet, and detained political leaders. The move has escalated the already heightened tensions with neighboring Pakistan, which

has deteriorated its diplomatic relations with India. Two of their three battles over the disputed territories have been waged by the nuclear-armed neighbors. The problem of Kashmir is always the bone of contention between Pakistan and India. Article 370 of the Indian Constitution confers a special status on the State of Kashmir as, since 1947, it has been an area of dispute between Pakistan and India (Goel, 2019).

This article under section 3 provides significant autonomy to Kashmir hence making it an autonomous state. This article provides special privileges and rights to Kashmiris, their identity, power to make laws, and their citizenship. But on August 05, 2019, this article was abrogated by the government and the minister Amit Shah with the assistance of Modi Sarkar. After that, Jammu and Kashmir came under the direct control of Delhi (Al-Jazeera, 2019). This study is an effort to analyze the portrayal of Muslims of Kashmir after the abrogation of article 370 of the Indian constitution in editorial cartoons of English dailies. Both Pakistani and Indian newspapers are selected for this purpose because the researcher wants to do a comparative analysis of both the papers regarding what to analyze the portrayal of Kashmiris in these cartoons.

### **Framing as a Theoretical Thirst**

According to Tuchman (1978), News is a window that connects our view of truth by concentrating on a certain part of it and concealing the other elements of the story. He also described the framework as an organization's ideologies that control its behavior and specific context. The framing theory is also characterized by these principles of Tuchman as in this theory it is assumed that media selects and gives meaning to certain aspects of fact to describe a problem and to propose its solution. Framing theory suggests that through the use of multiple outlets, the media socially create social phenomena. A notion is conceived in framing, either to endorse or oppose something (Entman, 1993).

The birth of the framing technique was the effort of George Bateson and Erving Goffman. Bateson firstly described the framing concept in 1955 but a clear description of this concept is given by him in his book "Steps to an Ecology of Mind." According to him, every communicative move can be understood from its communicative message. He pointed out that frames are built based on context and culture. On the other hand, Goffman (1974) argued that people use social cues to make logic of everyday life. He also believed that people learn these cues through interaction and from observing their usage in media content (Baran & Davis, 2011).

Later Goffman also related this theory to media and explain how the media are influencing the development of frames. He specifically worked on the influence of advertisements on the perception of people about the opposite sex. According to him, advertisements are designed to highlight only the most meaningful actions. The Goffman theory explains that media offer motivation and setting for reporting any story, inducing how audiences will comprehend or assess it. Media experts used this technique to inspire the view of the masses. They construct the message in such a way that it will influence the audience by encompassing emotional strategies (Goffman, 1974).

Some of the later scholars relate this concept of framing to the second order of agenda-setting theory. As in the words of McComb (1997), "Framing is the selection of a restricted number of thematically related attributes for inclusion on the media agenda when a particular object is discussed." But few scholars oppose this point of view and argue that it is a different concept than agenda-setting. For the past few years, the communication scholars are agreed on a point that although the concept of agenda-setting and framing are connected they both are different from each other in every perspective. Agenda setting deals with the amount of attention that is given to an event by the media and its exposure to the individual while framing theory is concerned with the frames that how the event is presented to the audience by the media (Ardèvol-Abreu, 2015).

Framing is a mechanism by which the news highlights an issue. Media incorporates frames that offer a particular news story with limitations. Media controls problems and advises its viewers about a problem's worthwhileness. The news is framed according to the journalist's preference. Framing thus refers to the technique by which the material is handled by the media and its gatekeepers and the topic they cover is addressed. In his paper, Entman (2007) also confirmed that the media is biased and frames the problems according to their viewpoint and controls the distribution of power.

Therefore, the current study comes under the umbrella of framing theory as it is based on the notion that editorial cartoons designed by popular Pakistan and Indian English newspapers are framing leaders of their country as positive and leaders belonging to opposite countries as negative. They are framing the politician's and other stakeholders' image according to their newspaper policy, perception, and ideology.

### **Semiotics: Connotation and Denotation to Understand the Portrayal of Kashmir Issue in Editorial Cartoons**

Semiotics is a technique that analyses the world from the sign and symbol system. Semiotics deals with the development and perception of meaning. Rose (2001) described semiotics as "it offers a very full box of analytical tools for taking an image apart and tracing how it works with broader systems of meaning" (p. 69).

The meaning is interpreted about this method by the consumption of acts and objects which, concerning other signs, function as 'signs.' It is an ancient approach; its early roots are based on the contribution of F. de Saussure and C.S. Peirce. Ronald Barthes later presented a new notion that is connected to existing science. He wrote a book called *Mythologies* in 1972 in which he provided the idea of connotation and denotation. He argued that according to their cultural beliefs, people perceive the significance of signs and symbols. (Berger, 2011).

In the current analysis, the Barthes connotation and denotation model is used to explain the secret significance of the political cartoons published in the Kashmir question in the Pakistani and Indian English newspapers. To examine the portrayal of Kashmiri Muslims in the editorial cartoons of English dailies of Pakistan and India through signs and symbols qualitative research method known as semiotics is used. For this purpose two Pakistani and two Indian newspapers of August 2019 *Dawn*, *The Hindu*, *Express Tribune*, and *Times of India* are selected due to the below-mentioned reasons.

1. All the papers belong to Pakistan and India's mainstream English newspapers.
2. Both in India and Pakistan, the cartoonist sketching these cartoons has more than 25 years of experience in the field of political cartooning.

### **Findings and Interpretations**

This portion of the paper explores the results and interpretation of the selected Kashmir editorial cartoons published in mainstream English newspapers of Pakistan and India, respectively. The results of semiotics are interpreted by thematic study. As editorial cartoons of four English dailies, two from Pakistan and two from India, are selected based on purposive sampling. Editorial cartoons on the Kashmir issue are selected from *Dawn*, *The Express Tribune* from Pakistan, and *The Hindu* and *Times of India* from India. Cartoons of August 2019 are analyzed from these four newspapers.

From the results, it is concluded that there are 23 editorial cartoons related to the Kashmir issue, and Kashmiris are printed in the designated papers. By defining the major signifiers in all selected editorial cartoons, several subsequent themes for the presentation of Kashmiris are extracted. In the following discussion, the most prototypical examples focused on the representation of the problem of Kashmir about the abrogation of Article 370 of the Indian Constitution from a collection of 23 political cartoons are discussed in the light of the signification model of Barthes. Only those cartoons that framed the Kashmir issue and Kashmiris for August 2019 were selected for the Barthes connotation and denotation model.

### **The real sufferer is Kashmir**

The foremost theme that was primarily portrayed in the cartoons of selected newspapers is 'Kashmir is bleeding' and the people of Kashmir are real sufferers; Because Kashmiris are facing terror, brutalities, and suppression of the Indian government and its army on daily basis. For instance, *Dawn* published a cartoon on August 7, 2019, in which a woman is standing with a telephone and a caption is written above her head "is anyone listening?" while one kid, a woman, a man with a baby in his lap and pot by his side, is sitting on the ground under a lantern and black smoke is surrounding all of them. Another caption "Occupied Kashmir" is placed on the right side of the cartoon. Apart from that, a person from the window is staring at them (Sample A1).

The caption of "occupied Kashmir" is pointing that all these individuals are Kashmiris. All the above-mentioned signs and symbols indicate that the family inside the house is confined & is restricted as seen by their facial expressions which also shows that they are very confused, scared, and tense. This tension is confirmed by the man who is staring at them from the window, who is referred to as an Indian soldier keeping an eye on them and is not letting them come outside of their house.

On the other hand, one woman is calling someone and the caption above her denotes that no one is listening to her and here cartoonist is highlighting the blockage of communication devices and gadgets in Indian occupied Kashmir. Black smoke is representing the depressed environment

of Kashmir while lanterns and pots are referring to power blockage and the poor economic condition of the house.



Sample A1: *Published in Dawn on 7<sup>th</sup> Aug 2019*

Similarly, another editorial cartoon that denotes that Kashmir is bleeding is published in *Dawn* on August 6, 2019, in which Kashmir is written while smoke particles, bloodstains, and destroyed land with rockets and bullet holes are shown in the cartoon (Sample A2). All these signs and symbols are indicating Indian brutalities in Kashmir. After the abrogation of article 370, Kashmir is facing such brutalities and cruelties of the Indian army. And most of the cartoons published depicted these images of Kashmir and Kashmiris in which they are facing mental distress, pellet gun injuries, physical injuries the pain of losing lives, and losing their loved ones as shown in samples A3 and A4 also.



Sample A2: *Published in Dawn on 6<sup>th</sup> Aug 2019*



Sample A3: *Published in Dawn on 25<sup>th</sup> Aug 2019*

Sample A3 shows the cruelty, outrage, and barbarianism that the people of Kashmir, the Kashmiri Muslims are facing. As the cartoon denotes the scenario as "Normal" but inside it nothing is normal. As people are losing their eyes and are wounded. There is a huge crowd also with the flags of Kashmir and Pakistan denoting that they didn't want the Indian flag there because they want freedom from India. As the Tear gas shells, smoke particles and clouds denotes that the Indian army loaded with arms standing is shelling tear gas on the protestors who just have stones in their hands for their self-defense and the fence around shows crippling curfew is imposed.

Moreover, A4 shows the injured condition of Kashmir shown by the Indian newspaper in which Kashmir becomes a puppet in the hand of the state powers and they are playing with it. As the lips are sealed which denotes that the voice of Kashmiris are zipped and they are just like a puppet whose threads are in the hand of the state and they are controlling them. The needles are embedded in the puppet denotes the pain and control of the state powers on Kashmiris



Sample A4: Published in The Hindu on 8<sup>th</sup> Aug 2019

#### Article 370 and the Rule of Law

It was observed that most of the cartoons published in Indian English Newspapers are targeting Article 370 of the Indian Constitution. Most of the cartoons published in The Hindu were based on the repeal or revocation of the article, which gave the state of Jammu and Kashmir special status. There are several cartoons where article 370 is eradicated by Modi, the Indian prime minister, or the Indian government set aside the rule of law for Kashmiris. For instance, in figure C5 the chain of Article 370 has taken off from the people of Jammu and Kashmir, and their lips are sealed by a person who is most probably Amit Shah their minister. The cartoon depicts that Article 370 has been taken off from Jammu and Kashmir as J&K is written on the shirt of the person representing Kashmir. And their voices are marginalized and they are not allowed to speak as a hand is placed on the mouth of J&K symbolizes that their freedom of speech and Expression is suppressed as they are not allowed to speak for their rights after the abrogation of article 370.

Similarly, in C6 the justice is blind as the eyes of the women are covered with the caption we will wait and watch denoting that the law is silent at the moment and just watching the situation. It is holding the Justice Scale in its hand having Kashmiris on the lighter side while the security and essentials on the heavier side which denotes the high level of security and threats to Kashmiris.



Sample C5: Published in The Hindu on 6<sup>th</sup> Aug 2019 on 16<sup>th</sup> Aug 2019



Sample C6: Published in The Hindu



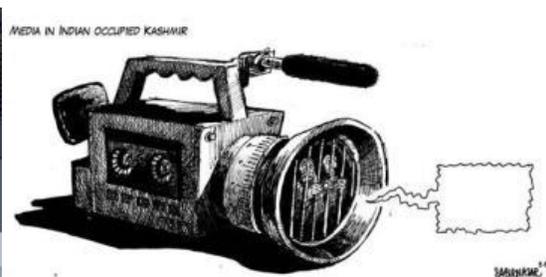
Sample C7: Published in The Hindu on 7<sup>th</sup> Aug 2019 Tribune

Sample C8: Published in Express

Cartoons C7 and C8 depicted the role of Modi and Amit Shah, Indian leadership, in negating Article 370 of the Indian constitution as they are trying their best to eradicate it and are major players in the abrogation of article 370. As Amit Shah, minister of home affairs of India has removed the tag of article 370 from a Kashmiri as he is drowning in the river and the caption denotes that he is offering him to come and join him. While in C8 Modi is cutting the tree of article 370 denotes that he wants to remove it radically. His facial expressions are serious and furious confirming his anger towards article 370.

**The Paradise, Kashmir Valley is locked**

Another theme depicts the status of beautiful valley Kashmir as the locked one where curfew is imposed and the Kashmir has no connection with the outer world. For instance, C9 denotes that paradise is locked with fences all around. As the telephone and internet services were suspended and regional political leaders were put under house arrest in Kashmir, there is no one but the munitions and weapons. In C10 Sabir Nazir, Express Tribune, depicted the status of media in the valley as there is a camera with a caption that denotes the role of media in occupied Kashmir as the lens of the camera is locked which denoted that the media is also under control in the valley and is locked and is not allowed to capture the actual and real status and scenario of the valley.



Sample C9: Published in The Hindu on 5<sup>th</sup> Aug 2019  
Tribune

Sample C10: Published in Express

### Involvement of International Powers on Kashmir Issue

One of the major issues highlighted by these cartoons is the role of international powers on the Kashmir issue and their stance. Many cartoons are highlighting Donald Trump and his role in the whole scenario. One of the major images of Donald Trump built in these cartoons is as a Pro-Indian mediator for the Kashmir issue between India and Pakistan. The cartoons published both in the Indian and Pakistani newspapers portrayed him as a Pro-Indian mediator, the one who acts like a mediator apparently but he is on the Modi side or stands with Modi, the prime minister of India because he is promoting the Indian stance. For instance, in the C11 Trump is tearing the Kashmir bubble made by Imran Khan, the Prime Minister of Pakistan, and Modi is standing beside Trump and they both are laughing which symbolizes that they both are on the same page regarding Kashmir Issue. Similarly in C12 and C13 Donald Trump is standing beside Modi denoting his agreement with him. As in C12, there is a wrestling circle where Modi and Imran Khan are competitors and Trump is standing with Modi denotes that his sympathies are with Modi as the caption suggests that Trump wants to remove the tension between India and Pakistan so he is acting as a referee apparently but standing with Modi denotes his sympathies and agreement with Modi stance. Also in C13, the non-serious and taunting attitude of Trump is denoted by the way he is standing again with Modi and is laughing. There are other international leaders including Britain's Prime Minister in the cartoon and they all are giving a non-serious gesture as the caption denotes "hehe", to Imran Khan who is raising his voice on article 370 against democracy. As it is seen that Imran Khan is raising his voice against the act of Modi which is also against democracy but all other leaders are supporting Modi and are not taking Imran seriously.



Sample C11: Published in The Hindu on 23<sup>rd</sup> Aug 2019  
Express Tribune



Sample C12: Published in



Sample C13: Published in Express Tribune

The role of china as an international power regarding the Kashmir issue is portrayed by both Indian and Pakistani newspapers as a neutralizer for the Kashmir issue. As China is a good friend of Pakistan these cartoons depicted him as a diplomat or a neutralizer. For instance, in C14 china is holding the card of Save Kashmir with Imran Khan in one hand but in another hand, he is holding a hot frying pan having Uighur Muslims in it denoting his dual policy regarding Muslims. In C15, Sabir Nazir portrayed the stance of international leadership on the Kashmir issue as many influential international leaders are sitting in a jeep including the Chinese leader and Trump, the Chinese President is trying to give his hand to Imran Khan to help him to get on the jeep but apparently. In reality, Imran khan is left behind and all leaders are sitting and going on their way denoting that they all are with Modi on their way while Imran Khan is left behind.



Sample C14: Published in Times of India on 17<sup>th</sup> Aug 2019



Sample C15: Published in

**Bajwa is a powerful and sturdy dictator**

It is observed that Indian newspapers specifically the Times of India depicted the image of Pakistani Chief of Army Staff General Qamar Bajwa as a powerful and sturdy dictator on the Kashmir issue who sees war as the only solution for the issue. For example, sample C16 depicts

Bajwa as a dictator to Imran Khan, the Prime Minister of Pakistan. As it can be denoted that the cartoon shows he is omitting the name of America from the Pakistani flag and the caption denotes that according to Modi Kashmir is a bilateral issue and Trump agrees on this so Bajwa denotes that AA is better than AAA as AA represents Allah, the Almighty Lord, and army so according to him they both can handle Kashmir issue. C17 also depicted Bajwa as a warrior who wants war as the caption denotes that "Kashmir Banega Pakistan", the famous slogan of Kashmiris and the flag of India can be seen in the picture denoting Pakistan.

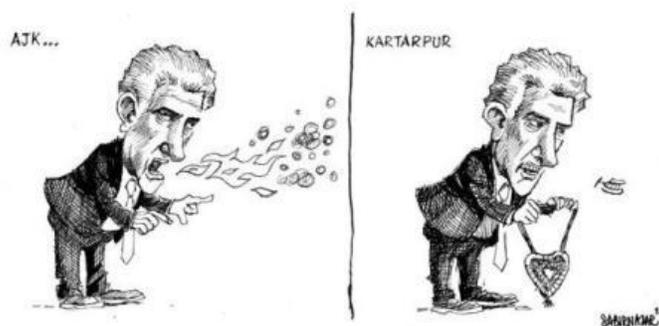
'Kashmir a bilateral issue'



Sample C16: Published in Times of India on 26<sup>th</sup> Aug2019 Sample C17: Published in Times of India on 8<sup>th</sup> Aug 19

**Confused and Baffled State of Pakistan**

Another image built by these newspapers of Pakistan is the confused and baffled state on the Kashmir issue. For instance, Shah Mehmood Quereshi, minister of foreign affairs of Pakistan, is described as giving a friendly gesture on Kartarpur while speaking against India on Jammu and Kashmir portrayed him as a confused and baffled leader who gives two different gestures to India on two different issues.



Sample C18: Published in Express Tribune

Times of India portrays the stance of Pakistani leadership in a very harsh and fiery manner representing the leadership as confused and baffled. For instance, C19 depicted the role of the opposition of Pakistan as poking opposition for Imran Khan as the caption denotes it as poking. The opposition is poking Imran Khan due to which he is bound to speak on Jammu and Kashmir issue as he has a map in his hand and the opposition is continuously poking at his back denoting the pressure of the opposition on Imran Khan regarding the Kashmir issue. Another cartoon C20 portrayed the image of Pakistani mullahs as anti-Indians because they are giving such speeches as the caption denotes. And their hate and fiery speeches invite war and heat from which they are scared also. The caption “Feeling the Heat” denotes that the heat is coming from Pakistan in the form of speeches and anti-Indian gestures.



Sample C19: Published in Times of India on 29<sup>th</sup> Aug2019  
 of India on 30<sup>th</sup> Aug2019

Sample C20: Published in Times

### Conclusion

It is found that all the selected editorial cartoonists represent the Kashmir issue and Kashmiri Muslims in their way. Pakistani English newspapers describe the issues, troubles, and hurdles faced by Kashmiris after the abrogation of article 370. They depicted the miserable condition of Kashmir during the crippling curfew and the role of the ruthless Indian army in the valley. Express Tribune described the role of Modi as the main actor in the abrogation of article 370 and portrays the Indian leadership as stubborn and obstinate on this issue who wants to eradicate article 370.

It is observed from the findings that Indian dailies portrayed the state of Pakistan and their leaders as negative, confused, baffled, perplexed, and focused upon the abrogation of article 370 as compared to Kashmiris or Kashmir. They mostly adopted a taunting way of representing Pakistan regarding the Kashmir issue. Times of India focused on the framing of Pakistani leaders

and framed the COAS of Pakistan as a dictator, tyrannical and oppressive who see war as the only solution to resolve his issue. While The Hindu described the real scenario of Kashmir ad Kashmiris to some extent. Indian newspapers mainly focused on the framing of political leaders state powers and international powers including Trump and China. It is examined that both Pakistani and Indian newspapers framed the Kashmir issue in their way representing their perception, newspaper's policy, and ideology.

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