

CONFLICT, CONSTITUTIONAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL NEWS IN PRINT: HOW DOES THE PRESS IN GILGIT-BALTISTAN TREAT THEM?

**Dr. Zafar Iqbal*

Abstract

Media and journalism in the Gilgit-Baltistan are operating under some of the worst conditions in the world. Government control of media, illiteracy, and lack of access to information as well as financial and social constraints are some of the issues limiting the populations' access to truth and complete information. The main objective of this study is to investigate the local newspapers' coverage on constitutional status of Gilgit-Baltistan, development news coverage and conflicts coverage especially sectarian conflicts' coverage in local newspapers of Gilgit-Baltistan. The method of content analysis has been adopted to study the questions.

Introduction

The Gilgit-Baltistan of Pakistan is the Northern most region of the territory under the control of Pakistan. It is recently named as Gilgit-Baltistan through an act of the parliament. This area is constitutionally under a Legal Frame Work Order (LFO) and is governed from Islamabad through the Northern Areas Legislative Council. India does not recognize it as part of Pakistan and calls its part of 'Pakistani administered Kashmir' (Aman, 1998, pp.30-46).

The story of the Gilgit-Baltistan is the story of the people who are struggling for their rights since a long time. To declare the Northern Areas as fifth province of the Pakistan has been the long standing demand of the people. Political parties were also demanding that if not possible to make it fifth province under the United Nations Resolution on Kashmir, then government, at least, should give Northern Areas the same constitutional status as being enjoyed by Pakistani Kashmir. On this pretext, the Government of Pakistan People's Party issued Gilgit-Baltistan Empowerment and Self-Governance Order 2009 on September 07, 2009 to bring the area at par with Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

Earlier, some residents of northern areas filed writ petition in the high court of the Pakistan administered Kashmir under the section 44 of its interim constitution claiming they were the subjects of the Pakistan administrated Kashmir .The high court decided that the Northern Areas are the part of Pakistani Kashmir. However, the Supreme Court said that

** Assistant Professor, Department of Media and Communication Studies, International Islamic University, Islamabad, Pakistan*

the High Court had no jurisdiction to issue such verdict (Dani, 2003, p.24).

There is no industry in Gilgit-Baltistan except tourism, which suffered badly in the wake of 9/11 incident. The area has very low literacy rate - 14 percent among men and 3.5 percent among women. According to a survey, conducted by Aga Khan Foundation, there were 674 educational institutions in public sector in 1988. According to another survey, there were 522 primary schools, 337 for boys and 185 for girls, in 2002. There were some 38,000 students enrolled in these schools while there were 1,300 teachers in these primary schools. There were 86 middle schools, 57 high schools, 49 for boys and 8 for girls, 26,978 students and only 690 teachers. There are hundreds of villages which don't have even a primary school while the existing schools suffer from severe infrastructural problems.

There is a shortage of teachers in hundreds of schools - about 20 per cent of schools are without teachers. Hundreds of schools do not have furniture and other sources, buildings are in very poor conditions. There are only 7 intermediate colleges, 2 degree colleges and only one university which is recently established with the name of Karakoram International University. It is very strange that there is no medical or engineering college in Northern Areas. As compared to this, there were 2 universities and 75 colleges in the Pakistani-administered Kashmir (Rana et al., pp.7-8).

Geo-strategically, Gilgit-Baltistan has great significance. To its north is China, towards the north-west is situated Tajikistan, in the west lies Afghanistan whereas Pakistan administered Kashmir lies to its east. In the past, Russia and Great Britain competed to gain control of these areas. Now this area is completely under the control of Pakistan although India still keeps an eye on these areas. The United States of America, too, is taking serious interest in the area owing to its designs to monitor and block this route for China.

There are eight major ethnic groups; viz, Baltis, Sheens, Yashkuns, Moghals, Kashmiris, Pathans, Ladakhis and Turkish speaking. The four major Muslim sects include the Shias, Sunni, Ismailies and Nourbakhshies who have been living there since centuries in an environment of tolerance and harmony though over the past two decades there have been frequent causes of sectarian violence.

In the south of Brushal was the civilization of Dardistan, which absorbed part of Broshal. In the fifth century, Balawaristan, which consisted of Ladakh and Baltistan took over Dardistan. The capital of Dardistan was in Kohistan, while that of Balawaristan was Skardu. In the later centuries, the kingdom of Balawaristan started disintegrating into small states; they also coincided with the entrance of Islam in the region.

During the middle ages, the Northern Areas were divided into small city or valley-states, which were ruled by small chieftains until the beginning of the 19th century. Like elsewhere, they were in constant conflict. The internal conflicts weakened them. In the view of this, the Sikhs of Punjab unsuccessfully tried to occupy the part of Gilgit-Baltistan on several occasion. The middle ages came to an end and the modern era began with the British colonialism in the subcontinent. The modern history of Gilgit-Baltistan is the history of the Sikh and later British struggle to subjugate Gilgit-Baltistan, first through the maharaja of the state of the Jammu and Kashmir and, later directly.

The political agency of Gligit was established in 1877 under the supervision of British agent. It was withdrawn a couple of years later. The princely states of Hunza, Nagar and small principalities of Yasin, Punyal, Ishkoman and Gupis were made to pledge allegiance to the British agent leaving them nominally independent. In 1935, the British acquired the Gilgit wazarat on lease for a 60 years period from the maharaja of Kashmir. However; the British cancelled their lease on the eve of their departure from the subcontinent. Assistant political agent at Chilas administered Diamer district. He had to travel a long distance by sea, road and on horse back as well as on foot before reaching Chilas where the arduous journey ended after months of travel. The British continued to invade and subjugate or annex territories beyond Gilgit-Baltistan. The people and the rulers of the Gilgit-Baltistan had been constantly struggling for freedom from the Dogra and the British rulers in the 19th century. Their struggle was not aimed at only fighting the aggressors but also to keep their Islamic identity.

Geography of Gilgit-Baltistan

The area of Gilgit-Baltistan is spread over 72,496 square kilometers and populated by a little over 1.5 million people (census 1991)¹ indicating population density of over 20 persons per sq kilometer. The Northern Regions are as fascinating as its southern regions. Amidst towering snow-clad peaks with height varying from 1,000 meters to over 8,000 meters, the regions of Gilgit, Hunza and Baltistan are also called as Shangri-la. Nowhere in the world is such great concentration of high mountains, peaks, glaciers and passes except Pakistan.

Five of the eight peaks (over 8,000 meters above sea-level) of the world are in Gilgit-Baltistan. There are several high altitude lakes in Gilgit-Baltistan; Sheosar lake in Deosai plains, Sadpara and Shangirila lakes in Skardu, Borith lake in upper Hunza, and Rama lake near Astore.

In the northwest, it borders Afghanistan's Wakhan Strip; in the northeast, it borders China's Xinjiang. In the southeast, it borders the Indian administered state of Jammu and Kashmir. It borders Pakistan's NWFP in the west. Gilgit-Baltistan comprises six districts in two regions: the two Balti districts of Skardu and Ghanche, and the four Gilgit districts of Diamer, Ghizer, Gilgit and Astore. The main political centers are the towns of Gilgit and Skardu.

In past various political regimes ignored the development of Gilgit-Baltistan. However, when Parveez Musharrf came in to the power the developmental activities started with full speed.

Though the Government of PPP claims to have increased the annual budgetary allocations for Gilgit-Baltistan from Rs.600 million to one billion, the area continues to be in a state of negligence, with three-fourths of the population estimated to be below the poverty line. It provides water for Punjab's agriculture, but there are no adequate irrigation facilities for its own agriculture. There is always an acute shortage of electricity and only China has been helping in the construction of some small power stations. Apart from the Karakoram Highway (1284 km) constructed by the Chinese in return for Pakistan's transfer of some of the territory in Gilgit-Baltistan to Xinjiang, no new road construction has been undertaken due to the difficulty of the

¹ This can be accessed from <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/%5Cpapers35%5Cpaper3405.html> retrieved on April 30, 2010.

engineering works involved, particularly for the construction of tunnels. The North Korean Army has offered assistance for the construction of tunnels and in 2001 a North Korean team of military engineers had visited the area for studying the feasibility. The work is yet to be started. In the absence of any development, the principal means of livelihood for the local people were employment in the armed forces and in the tourism industry. However, the tourism industry has been severely affected by 9/11 catastrophe, and subsequently 'war on terror'.

Historical Background of Press in Gilgit-Baltistan

Press in Gilgit-Baltistan has a century old background. Basically, it was started by some Britishers in 1907 that came as agents of British rule in sub-continent. They started a pamphlet-magazine "*Spinker*" which is considered the first print medium in the region. In those days many newspapers and magazines were brought to Gilgit from Kashmir by post while the Kashmir-Gilgit road often remained uncertain on account of extremely variable weather conditions. Owing to those news materials, reached here after a couple of weeks, people of the region fulfilled their curiosity of information by reading these out dated materials (Barcha, 2003, p.11).

With the passage of time, in the development continuum of journalism, the *Karakuram*, a periodical literary magazine was introduced in 1970 by Federal Government Degree College Skardu under the editorship of Ghulam Hussain on yearly basis. With this, the first printing press was also established in the region in 1970 with the name of Hunza Printing Press. Publishing of other periodical magazines started from Gilgit-Baltistan after the popularity of the aforesaid magazine. Up till 1987, only periodical magazines had been published. But in January 1988, a weekly newspaper named *Nawa-i-Gilgit* started its publication under the editorship of Mushtaq Ahmad Advocate. After the publishing of *Nawa-i-Gilgit*, a series of newspapers and magazines started their publications one after another.

Recent Developments in the Field of Press

With the increase in literacy, a great number of of daily and weekly newspapers started publication in English and Urdu from Gilgit-Baltistan and Islamabad. Apart from many obstacles and pressures, these papers are playing their due role. However, no private television channel has yet been launched due to a relatively smaller market. Above all, two radio

stations established in Gilgit and Skardu with the frequency of 1512 kHz are also playing a vital role in creating awareness among the masses on local, national and international affairs.

Following are some of the details of daily and weekly publications from Gilgit-Baltistan area:

- *Daily Muhasib* the first ever weekly newspaper being published from Gilgit city.
- *Daily K2* started publication in May 1996 and being published from Islamabad.
- *Weekly Naqara* printing at Islamabad started publication in Jan, 2007.
- *Weekly Waddi* printing at Islamabad started publication in Sep, 2000.
- *Weekly Siachin* printing at Skardu started publication in Nov 1988.
- *Weekly Mountain Times* printing at Islamabad started publication in May, 2007.
- *Weekly Sada-i-Gilgit* printing at Islamabad started publication in Nov, 2004.
- *Weekly Badi-i-Shmal* printing at Islamabad started publication in June, 1999.
- *Weekly Chatan* printing at Islamabad started publication in June, 2004.
- *Weekly Azan* printing at Islamabad started publication in Sep, 2006.
- *Weekly Bang-i-Sahar* printing at Islamabad started publication in July, 2004.
- *Weekly Gilgit Today* printing at Islamabad started publication in March, 2007.

Research Question

The purpose of this study was to investigate the coverage of local newspapers on major issues of Gilgit-Baltistan, especially developmental news coverage, news coverage on conflicts, and coverage of local newspapers on the constitutional status of the area.

This research addressed the following questions:

- What is the proportion of the developmental news in three local newspapers?
- Do the local newspapers give high proportion of space to sectarian conflicts?

- Do the local newspapers provide higher proportion of space for the development news?
- What is the proportion of conflicts, specially sectarian, political and ethnic in local newspapers?
- Do the local newspapers provide higher proportion of space to the constitutional status of the area and the constitutional rights of the people?

Literature Review

This paper undertakes ‘development journalism’ paradigm as a perspective to evaluate the contents of newspapers from Gilgit-Baltistan. This perspective advocates that the media has the potential to play the role of development facilitator and foster change in the society in an organized fashion (Xu, 2008). This phenomenon is more prevalent in developing and under-developed nations where it is assumed that the government needs discipline more than the democracy.

‘Development journalism’ has since long been practiced in parts of Asia and delivered enviable results (Chen, 1991; Latif, 1998; Maslog, 1985; Shah, 1989; Verghese, 1976; Vilanilam, 1975, 1984; Xu, 2005). It was one of the most celebrated tool of development in 1960s, when media focused on the conditions of developing nations and attempted to uncover the ways to improve them.

Development is a complex phenomenon and development communication is systematic use of communication for national development (Lent, 1979). As Signal & Rogers (2001) mention:

Development is widely participatory process of directed social change in society, intended to bring about both social and material advancement (including greater quality of freedom, and other valued qualities) for the majority of people through their gaining greater control over their environment (p.33).

Many countries justify government control over the media in the name of national security, religious and cultural harmony and the name of systematic use of the media to promote governmental agenda for development. As McDaniel (1986) has pointed out, politicians in developing countries “wish to be seen as champions of development issues” and warned “it might undermine development as a responsibility

of the whole population, picturing it instead as an activity of the influential and politically powerful” (p. 170).

Both the government and privately owned media in developing countries present a higher proportion of development news. However, newspapers have different views about which aspect of development deserves their primary attention and how the news should be presented. Social welfare and national and international economics were most emphasized and official sources were most often quoted in the Indian dailies (Shah, 1990), whereas rural Georgian weekly newspapers devoted less space to development news, emphasized physical facilities development and rarely quoted government sources (Griswold & Swenson, 1992).

Development news should examine development plans, critically evaluate and point out disparities between the original plan and actual implementation (Aggarwala, 1979). Studies on media ownership and proportion of development news coverage showed that conglomerate-controlled newspapers cover more governmental news than development news in comparison to independent newspapers (Vilonia, 1979b).

Second variable of present study focuses the conflict and issues regarding Gilgit-Baltistan. Conflict has definitions in the conflict resolution literature that range from bad thoughts to genocide. Conflict is present when two or more parties perceive that their interests are incompatible, express hostile attitudes, or take or pursue their interests through actions that damage the other parties. These parties may be individuals, small or large groups, or countries.

Interests can diverge in many ways: over resources, territory, money, energy resources, food and how they should be distributed. Over power, how control and participation in political decision-making are allocated. Over identity, concerning the cultural, social and political communities to which people feel tied. Over status, whether people believe they are treated with respect and dignity and whether their traditions and social position are respected. Over values, particularly those embodied in systems of government, religion, or ideology. Incompatibilities can be seen in changes in objective circumstances a lower standard of living; demographic changes or population movements; technological changes that alter communications, material capacities, weaponry and relative power. Subjective changes can also

generate conflict through, for instance, newly felt social resentments or a rising new nationalist ideology; these subjectively felt changes can arise whether or not objective changes have occurred. The parties' emotional states and mental outlooks influence conflict. Time is a factor as well: observers note that with time, a conflict's subjective content gains importance as its objective basis is obscured. A group or nation's objective circumstances do not themselves cause violent conflicts. Conflicts only arise out of those conditions or changes in them when it is perceived that interests are threatened by some other party (Burton, 1993, pp.54-44).

It has become common to describe conflicts as passing through a series of phases. The potential for conflict exists whenever people have different needs, values, or interests; this is the "latent" conflict stage. The conflict may not become apparent until a "triggering event" leads to the emergence (or beginning) of the obvious conflict. Emergence may be followed quickly by settlement or resolution, or it may be followed by escalation, which can become very destructive¹.

A sectarian conflict usually refers to violent conflict on religious and political lines such as the conflicts between Shias and Sunnies in Pakistan. It may also refer to general philosophical, political or armed conflict between different schools of thought. Non-sectarians espouse that free association and tolerance of different beliefs are the cornerstone to successful / peaceful human interaction. They espouse political and religious pluralism.

Sectarianism is present in all parts of the world. Wherever religious sects compete, religious sectarianism is the net outcome.

These conflicts arise, according to arguments of Bakker (as quoted in Szarka 1998), because the majority or dominant national government wants to establish the same conditions in regions where the majority population belongs to a minority as in other regions of that state. Subsequently, he defines a minority conflict "... as a form of active antagonism between the government of a state and representatives of a minority over the extent of opportunities of minorities to influence the

¹ This can be viewed on www.beyondintractability.org/essay/conflict_stages/?nid=1068 retrieved on September, 2003.

use and organization of the (sub-state) territories they inhabit"¹ (Szarka, Lazlo. 1998).

Hypothesis

Following hypotheses were constructed to study the problem in question:

- H₁: Newspapers from Gilgit-Baltistan are not relatively giving enough coverage to the issues concerning the constitutional status of the area.
- H₂: Developmental coverage is seldom seen in local newspapers of Gilgit-Baltistan.
- H₃: Development news receive more front-page coverage in Daily K-2 and *Weekly Naqara* than *Weekly Azan*.
- H₄: Local newspapers provide high proportion of space to the conflicts especially that of sectarian nature.
- H₅: All the three newspapers giving high proportion of space on conflicts as compared to developmental news coverage.

The Newspapers under Analysis

The present study is a content analysis of local Urdu newspapers from Gilgit Baltistan - the *Weekly Azan* (Gilgit), the *Daily K-2* and the *Weekly Naqara*. Their printed editions are among the highest circulated Urdu daily and weekly newspapers in Gilgit-Baltistan.

Weekly Azan

Weekly Azan started its publication from Islamabad containing four pages in Urdu language from September, 2006 under the editorship of Khushee Muhammad Tariq. Its reporters are present in each district of Gilgit-Baltistan and also in the capital. It is a private enterprise. Its readership is also in Karachi, Islamabad and various other cities of Pakistan where the people of Gilgit-Baltistan dwell. The publication of the newspaper which could appropriately reflect the present political, religious, cultural literary and national aspiration was the long felt need of the people of the area. It catered to the requirements of representation of voices of the people from Gilgit-Baltistan to the ruling class. It has been instrumental in developing the political consciousness of the educated people of the area.

¹ This can be viewed on www.hungarianquarterly.com/no150/130.html retrieved on 1989

The paper is praised for its presentation, effectiveness, accuracy of language by the most learned Urdu writers. Its editorials are well reputed, and are appreciated. This newspaper often loaded the voice for constitutional rights of the people. Advertisement is the main source of the income for the newspaper. Without advertisement, a paper could not continue its publication. Same is true for this paper as well. Advertisement is given to this newspaper by both the government and the private sector. Columnists of these newspapers present views through their journalistic writings.

The main objective of this newspaper is to highlight the constitutional status of the Gilgit-Baltistan and to raise the awareness about the hazards of sectarianism among the people of Gilgit-Baltistan.

Weekly Naqara

Weekly Naqara, being printed at Islamabad, started publication in 2004 under the editorship of a renowned journalist of the region Raja Hussain Khan Maqpoon. The language of this news paper is Urdu. *Weekly Naqara* is also considered effective newspaper of the region. Slogan of this paper is 'Gilgit -Baltistan ke awam ki awaz' (the voice of people of Gilgit-Baltistan). The newspaper claims to have their main objective to focus the real issues of Gilgit-Baltistan, especially developmental issues and constitutional status of the area. Content of this newspaper is based on local news and publishes only editorial and there is no space for columns and letters to the editor. Government and influential personalities also appear in news stories. Circulation of this paper is also very high as compared to other local newspapers. This newspaper sheds light on the socio- religious problems and also writes about rights for the people of the area. The first page contains very important news related to Gilgit-Baltistan and inner page carries less important news.

Both the government and the private sector give advertisements to this newspaper. This newspaper is playing an important role to create political awareness among the people of the region. *Weekly Naqara* has now been merged into Karakoram Publishing Network. Head office is located in Islamabad and regional offices are in Skardu and Gilgit.

Daily K-2

Daily K-2 also started its publication in May 1996 from Islamabad. This newspaper is considered to be the highest in circulation among the

newspapers of Gilgit Baltistan. The slogan of this paper is 'Jabroo-Istehsal K Khilaff Barsar-e-Paikar' (fighting against cruelty and injustice). With the passage of time this newspaper earned a respectable status among local readers because the agenda of the paper was set as 'fight against the social evils'.

Daily K-2 is published under the Karakoram Publishing Network. As compared to other local newspapers, circulation of this newspaper is the highest. The main page of *Daily K-2* carries national news and some news items related to the Gilgit-Baltistan and second page of this paper gives full coverage to Gilgit-Baltistan related news. The title of the second page 'Gilgit Baltistan kay Qaryya Qaryya say' (from all the nooks and corners of Gilgit-Baltistan), which focuses only regional news related to various towns and villages of Gilgit-Baltistan. Copies of this newspaper are sent to various cities of Pakistan including Rawalpindi, Islamabad and Karachi and Azad-Kashmir.

Contents of this paper mostly include local news, related to Gilgit-Baltistan. According to senior management official of *Daily K-2* in Islamabad, the newspapers has been receiving threats from sectarian elements. According to him, each religious establishment demand high proportion of coverage to their news items as compared to other. General perception regarding this paper in public is positive. Due to successful 13 years of publication and highest circulation, now *Weekly K-2* has turned into a daily newspaper and it has been publishing from various cities including Islamabad, Karachi and Azad-Kashmir.

Methodology

This study is based on content analysis – 'a research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description on the manifest content of communication' (Bereleson, 1952, p.18).

The purpose of this study was to investigate the coverage of local newspapers on major issues of Gilgit-Baltistan, especially developmental news coverage, news coverage on conflicts, and coverage of local newspapers on the constitutional status and constitutional rights of the area.

This research addressed the question such as what is the proportion of the developmental news in three local newspapers. What are the content characteristics of development news? Do the local newspapers provide higher proportion of space to the development news? What is the

proportion of conflicts, specially sectarian, political and ethnic in local newspapers? And finally, do the local newspapers provide higher proportion of space to constitutional status of the area and the constitutional rights of the people?

Sampling and Variables

Guido H. Stempel III (1952) found that increasing 'the sample size beyond 12 does not produce marked differences in the results' (p.33). This study used the criteria suggested by Stempel and the sampling technique used by Vilanilm (1967), with some modifications.

For sampling, the whole year was divided into 52 weeks and 26 weeks were selected using systematic sampling with an alternative interval. All news stories related to variables on front and back pages (except advertisement and supplementary materials) published in each newspaper on the selected weeks were coded and analyzed. The unit of analysis in this study was a news story like; story placement (front page and back page), length of the story, type of the story; i.e., development, conflict or constitutional status.

Operational Definitions

The definition of development news used by John V. Vilanilam (1979a) was adopted as an operational definition for this study. He defined development news as:

News relating to the primary, secondary, and tertiary needs of a developing country. Primary needs are food, clothing, and shelter. Secondary needs are development of agriculture, industry and all economic activity which lead the fulfillment of the primary needs, plus development of education, literacy, health environment, medical research, family planning, employment, labor welfare, social reforms, national integration and rural and urban development. Tertiary needs are development of mass media, transportation, telecommunication, activities (p.34).

Conflict has definitions in the conflict resolution literature that range from bad thoughts to genocide. Conflict is said to exist when two or more parties perceive that their interests are incompatible, express hostile attitudes, or pursue their interests through actions that damage other parties. Sectarianism is bigotry, discrimination or hatred arising from attaching importance to perceived differences between subdivisions

within a group, such as between different denominations of a religion or the factions of a political movement. Ethnicity is also one of the facets of conflict which refers to the behavior and feeling (about oneself and others) that supposedly emanates from membership of an ethnic group. Ethnic conflict has come to mean cleavages between groups based on differentiations in ethnic identities¹ (Hizkias, Assefa, 2006).

Because sectarian, ethnic and political conflict frequently stir up in Gilgit-Baltistan where the population is divided clearly in different sects, ethnic and political groups with different ideologies and thoughts (as discussed in introduction). The ideological underpinnings of attitudes and behaviors labeled as sectarian are extraordinarily varied. Members of a religious or political group may feel that their own salvation, or success of their particular objectives, requires aggressively seeking converts from other groups; adherents of a given faction may believe that for the achievement of their own political or religious project their internal opponents must be purged.

Findings and Discussion

Space Devoted to Constitutional News Coverage in the Newspapers

Table 1 shows that the *Weekly Azan* published highest proportion of space on constitutional status of the area (21%) followed by the *Daily K-2* (18%) and the *Weekly Naqara* (9%). However, the total space of coverage on constitutional issue in all the three newspapers is only (15%), which supports our hypothesis that the local newspapers in Gilgit-Baltistan are not relatively giving enough coverage to the issue concerning the constitutional status of the area. The proportional ratio of constitutional news coverage in all the three news papers has limited to (15%) with 113 news stories.

Table-1: Space Devoted to Constitutional News Coverage

Coverage on Constitutional News	Azan	K-2	Naqara	All three Newspapers
Number of News Items	46	49	18	113
Size of News (cm ²)	3,278.04	2,369.50	1,673.25	7,320.79
Percentage	21%	18%	9%	15%

¹ This can be viewed on www.unu.edu/unupress/unupbooks/uu12ee/uu12ee06.htm retrieved on 2006

Space Devoted to Development News

Table 2 highlights that *Weekly Naqara* provides high proportion of space to the development news (43%) followed by *Weekly Azan* (36%) and *Daily K-2* (31%). Total coverage of all the three newspapers in developmental news is 70%, which indicate that our hypothesis is not supported by the data which says that developmental news coverage is seldom seen in local newspapers. Because, all the newspapers are giving high proportion of space to the development news. The proportional ratio of developmental news coverage in all the three news papers has been (70%) with 428 news items.

Table-2: Proportion of Development News in Selected Newspapers

Coverage on Developmental News	Azan	K-2	Naqara	All three Newspapers
Number of News Items	132	141	155	428
Size of News (cm ²)	57,432.20	4,065.50	8,031.56	69,529.26
Percentage	36%	31%	43%	70%

Development News coverage on Front Page of the Newspapers

Table 3 shows that the *Daily K-2* published high proportion of development news (37%) on front page, followed by *Weekly Naqara* (36%) and *Weekly Azan* (27%). *Daily K-2* published 77 news items on front page, *Naqara* published 70 and *Azan* published 57 news items on front page. These findings support our hypothesis which predicted that *Daily K-2* and *Weekly Naqara* giving high proportion of space to the development news on front page then *Weekly Azan*.

Table-3: Front Page Coverage of Development News

Front Page Coverage on Developmental News	Azan	Naqara	K-2	All three Newspapers
Number of News Items	57	70	77	204
Size of News (cm ²)	3,037.30	4,041.79	4,065.50	11,144.59
Percentage	27%	36%	37%	31%

Local Newspapers Coverage of Conflicts

Table 4 indicates that *Daily K-2* gives high proportion of space to conflicts especially that of sectarian nature. *Daily K-2* published total 121 news items of conflicts, out of which 63 (50%) news stories relate to sectarian conflicts, 24(35%) news items to political conflict and 15 (15%) news items to ethnic conflicts. *Weekly Azan* published 137 news items on conflicts, of which 48% on sectarian conflicts, 34% on political

conflicts and 18% on ethnic conflicts. *Weekly Naqara* published 132 news items on conflicts, of which 38% on sectarian, 37% on political and 25% on ethnic. All the three newspapers published 392 stories on conflicts, out of which 173(45%) news stories on sectarian conflicts, 146(35%) on political conflicts and 73 (20%) on ethnic conflicts. Findings support our hypothesis which predicted that the local newspapers giving high proportion of space on the conflicts especially sectarian nature.

Table-4: Coverage of Conflict Comparison with Sectarian Issues

Coverage on / Conflicts News	Azan			K-2			Naqara		
	Sect	Pol	Eth	Sect	Pol	Eth	Sect	Pol	Eth
Number of News	62	50	27	63	43	15	48	53	31
Size of News (cm ²)	3,284	2,329	1,237	3,323	2,298	1,018	3,438	3,381	2,280
Percentage	48%	34%	18%	50%	35%	15%	38%	37%	25%

All Three Newspapers		
Sect	Pol	Eth
173	146	73
1,044	8,007	4,535
45%	35%	20%

Comparison

Table 5 shows that the *Daily K-2* has given 51% space to conflicts and 31% space to the developmental news. *Weekly Azan* has devoted 43% space for conflicts and 36% for developmental news. *Weekly Naqara* has given 48% space to conflicts and 43% to developmental news. All the three newspapers have given high proportion of space which is 47% to conflicts – slightly higher than to development news (38%).

These findings support our hypothesis that all the newspapers have given high proportion of space to conflict news as compared to developmental news coverage. These findings can be justified on the number of stories given on the subjects as well. All three newspapers have published 392 stories on conflicts and 365 stories on developmental news.

Table-5: Comparison of Developmental and Conflict Issues

Coverage on / Conflicts News	Azan		K-2		Naqara		All Three Newspapers	
	Dev	Conf	Dev	Conf	Dev	Conf	Dev	Conf
Number of News	132	139	77	121	156	132	365	392
Size of News (cm ²)	5,743	6,849	4,065	6,638	8,032	9,099	1,784	2,258
Percentage	36%	43%	31%	51%	43%	48%	38%	47%

Conclusion

Based on the results and findings discussed above, the present study supports four out of five hypotheses regarding conflicts, constitutional and developmental news coverage in local newspapers of Gilgit-Baltistan. One hypothesis that developmental news coverage is seldom seen in local newspapers has proven to be false because the local newspapers not only cover such issues rather devote sufficient space.

This study proves that local newspapers give sufficient coverage to the issues of conflicts especially sectarian which is quite sensitive in Gilgit-Baltistan. However, it is required to be essentially studied as how these news items are covering the issue and what kind of discourses do the reporters make in their news stories. It is also found that constitutional issues are not on priorities for the local press, as only 7% space has been devoted by all the three newspapers. The selected three newspapers have given high proportion of space to the developmental issues and activities which is a good sign for the regional developmental activities like education, infrastructural development, health, agriculture & food, environment, transportation, telecommunication and water.

Based on the findings, the present study supports that the local newspapers of Gilgit-Baltistan have given high proportion of space to conflict issues especially sectarian, indicating that the press is aware of the sensitivity of the problem. However, it is considered vital that an analysis of the news item should be made to evaluate as what aspect(s) of the issue are covered significantly. Coverage of local newspapers on development news is quite satisfactory and coverage on constitutional status of the area less than 15% which indicates negligence on part of the local press towards the major issue.

References

- Aggarwala, N.K. (1978). 'News with third world perspective: A practical suggestion' in Horton, P.C. (1978). *The Third World and Press Freedom* (97-209). New York: Sage Publications.
- Amanullah, K. (1998). *Gilgit-Baltistan: A Disputed Territory or a Fossil of Intrigues?* Lahore: Royal Books.
- Berelson, B. (1952). *Content Analysis in Communication Research*. Glencoe III: The Free Press.

- Bracha, S. (2003). *Evolution of Press in Northern Areas*. Gilgit: Star Printing Press.
- Chen, L. (1991). 'The Door Opens to a Thousand Blossoms: A Preliminary Study of Communication and Rural Development in China (1979-88)'. *Asian Journal of Communication*, 1(2), 103-21.
- Dani, A.H. (2003). *History of the Northern Areas of Pakistan*. Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publication.
- Griswold, W.F. & Swenson, J.D. (1992). 'Development News in Rural Georgia Newspapers: A Comparison with Media in Developing Nations'. *Journalism Quarterly*, Vol. 69(3): 580-590
- Hussain, M. (1999, 2000). *Kargil International Monthly*. Gilgit: Star Press.
- Johan, B. (1993). *Conflict Resolution as Political Theory*. New York: Manchester University Press.
- Latif, A. (1998). The Press in Asia: Taking a Stand. In A. Latif (Ed.), *Walking the Tightrope: Press Freedom and Professional Standards in Asia* (pp. 3-15). Singapore: Asian Media Information and Communication Centre.
- Lent, J. A. (1979a). 'The Evolution of Development News: A Brief History' in Lent, J. A. & Vilanilam, J. V. (Eds.), *The Use of Development News: Case Studies in India, Malaysia, Ghana, and Thailand*. Singapore: Asian Mass Communication Research and Information Center.
- Maslog, C.C. (1985). 'Case studies of four successful Asian community newspapers'. *Media Asia*, 12 (3), 123-130.
- McDaniel, D. (1986). 'Development news in two Asian nations'. *Journalism Quarterly*, Vol. 63(4): 167-170.
- Rana, M. A. & Rathore, M. (2007). *Northern Areas Crisis and Prospect*. Islamabad: Pak Institute of Peace and Studies.
- Shah, H. (1988). 'Development News on All India Radio: Assessment of Quantity and Quality'. *Journalism Quarterly*. Vol. 65 (2): 425-430.
- Shah, H. (1990). 'Factors Influencing Development News Production at Three Indian Dailies'. *Journalism Quarterly*. Vol. 67 (4): 1034-1041.
- Singhal, A. & Rogers, E. M. (2001). *Indian's Communication Revolution: From Bullock Carts to Cyber Marts*. New Delhi: Sage.

- Singhal, A. & Sthapitanonda, P. (1996). The Role of Communication in Development: Lessons Learned from a Critique of the Dominant, Dependency, and Alternative Paradigms. *The Journal of Development Communication*. Vol. 7 (1): 10-25.
- Stempel, G.H. (1952). 'Sample Size for Classifying Subject Matter in Dailies'. *Journalism Quarterly*. 39/150,
- Vilanilam, J. V. (1975). 'Developmental News in Two Leading Indian Newspapers'. *Media Asia*, 2(1), 37-40.
- Xu, X. (2005). *Demystifying Asian Values in Journalism*. Singapore: Marshall Cavendish Academic.
- Xu, X. (2008). 'Development Journalism'. In K. Wahl-Jorgensen & T. Hanitzsch (Eds.). *Handbook of Journalism Studies* (pp. 357-370). Lawrence: Erlbaum Associates.