

## **ROLE OF MEDIA IN STRENGTHENING OF PAKISTANI SOCIETY**

### **ABSTRACT**

1. Owing to the geostrategic location of Pakistan, it is dragged into conflicts due to dynamics far beyond its control and choice. Challenges in neighborhood and war in Afghanistan pre/post 9 / 11 have affected both external and internal fronts. The most dangerous besides numerous others have been polarization, regression, and weaponization of a segment of Pakistani society. Various instruments of national power are being employed to reverse this trend but the desired objective can only be achieved if all pillars of society play an effective and well-coordinated role to counter this menace.
2. Pakistani Media has grown rapidly because of media liberalization policies during Musharraf's era, especially electronic; however Pakistani media due to lack of comprehensive and well-coordinated direction on part of the state has not yet been able to play the desired positive role i.e. strengthening the inner front of the state and bringing a positive change in society. There is the utmost need on part of all state pillars to come up with a comprehensive policy plan for media.
3. To have a subjective analysis of the media role in strengthening society, there is a need to have in-depth knowledge of societal issues and intricacies of media.
4. Vastness of subject warranted to resort selectiveness to the essentials and an approach having futuristic outlook. Eventually, this paper attempts to address an otherwise highly complex and difficult phenomenon.

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**SECTION I**  
**INTRODUCTION**

5. Pakistan is undergoing yet another but very difficult phase of its existence. The geostrategic location of Pakistan offers challenges and opportunities; however, conflicts in its neighbor especially impacted the society. Pakistan shares its border with a much bigger hegemonic neighbor, India. Since independence, it was forced to fight four wars with India over the unresolved dispute of Kashmir. Pakistan is hosting more than 3 million Afghan refugees since the Russian invasion. Pakistan played an instrumental and key role in the expulsion of the Soviet Union from Afghanistan and once again after 9/11, it has become a front line state in the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT). The GWOT has adversely affected both its external and internal fronts. The most dangerous and adverse impact besides numerous others has been the polarization, regression, and weaponization of a segment of Pakistani society. Although a vast segment of the society has so far shown resistance to these trends, yet, these undesirable trends need to be checked. The state's institutions have so far failed to deliver to the society it deserves. The absence of good governance and supremacy of law, inadequacies of social services and economic inequality are strengthening the force of this minority. On the external front, these are the global players whose dual standards and militaristic approach have radicalized a section of Pakistani society. Various instruments of national power are being employed to reverse this trend but the desired objective can only be achieved if all pillars of society play an effective and well-coordinated role to counter this menace. Media, the fourth pillar, also needs to join the other pillars and instruments of the state in this national effort to fight this internal threat of very grave magnitude. There are forces operative both from within and outside the country to further proliferate these harmful tendencies in the society to weaken and destabilize Pakistan internally.

6. There has been a mushroom growth of media because of media liberalization policies in the early part of the 21st century. The role of Pakistani media in strengthening the inner front of the state and bringing about a positive change in the society is not as desired till now. One cannot hold media alone responsible for this failure but it is also necessary to take stock of the state's policies in this direction. If the state's policies for media are scanned through, it seems that the other three pillars of the state have so far not given proper attention to strengthen this fourth and the most important pillar of the state. There is utmost need on the part of the other three pillars of the state to come up with a comprehensive policy plan for the media. Such a plan should have a consensus of all actors involved. So the media in Pakistan is still in the phase of infancy and has to mature with the patronage of positive and comprehensive state policies.

7. The present Pakistani media is critical, aggressive, competitive and more sensational. Pakistani media only discusses and further amplifies the various societal problems and hesitates in suggesting their solutions. Instead of acting as a shield against the onslaught of neighborly and Western media, it at times joins them in further widening the existing or perceived divisions in the society. The present prevalent trends among the society, if not properly addressed will have far-reaching negative effects on national cohesion and stability.

8. **Statement of the Problem.** This study aims to explore the role and potential of media in the transformation of societies in general and Pakistani society in particular. The study focuses on the role that the media can play in strengthening Pakistani society. What are its weaknesses and how can be they addressed? State policies needing changes for media, so that it can contribute to societal development? To this end, the study will attempt to find answers to the following questions:

- a. How has Pakistani society developed over the decades and what are the driving forces of the prevailing trends in Pakistani society?
- b. What are the negative social trends and to what extent Pakistani media is responsible? Is only media responsible or can it be attributed to other pillars of the state?
- c. What is the role of media in developed societies?
- d. How do global media cross national boundaries and affect the national styles and behaviors of different societies, especially developing countries?
- e. How can Pakistani media contribute to making society moderate, enlightened, dynamic and progressive?

9. **Literature review.**

- a. **Civil society: The Critical History of an Idea**, 1999, John Ehrenberg[1], helps to understand the evolution of modern society from a different perspective.
- b. **Pakistani Society**, by Iqbal Chaudhry[2] in 1984 and **Pakistani Society - Islam, ethnicity, and leadership in South Asia**, 1988 - by Akbar S Ahmed[3] reveals the determinants of Pakistani society from individual to national level. They also talk about various social problems that Pakistani society is facing. Although these two books do not mention the impact of media on society, they provide an overview of the main components of Pakistani society.
- c. **Class and Society**, 1969, by Kurt B. Mayer and Walter Buckley[4], helps to understand social differentiation and social stratification in society and to

understand how social mobility occurs from one sector to another. It also helps to understand attitudes, behaviors, and struggles between different classes of society.

- d. **New media technology: Cultural and commercial perspectives**, 1996, John V. Pavlik[5] is dedicated to the systematic study of the economic and cultural impacts of a changing environment by new media. The book focuses not only on systematic and critical forms of technologies for themselves but also on how it affects the way of life, work and communication by people. However, the book does not answer the questions raised in this study because it mainly deals with schemes and parameters of new media and the communication industry, thus contributing only to understanding the technological development of media.
- e. **Media and Democracy in Africa**, 2002 Goran Hyden[6] offers an evaluation of media role in the democratization of sub-Saharan Africa.
- f. **Mass Media in Revolution and National Development - The Romanian Laboratory**, by Peter Gross[7] 1996, focuses on a case study of Romania in transition and draws lessons from experience it.
- g. **Media and politics in Latin America**, 1988, by Elizabeth Fox[8], develops an understanding of political and economic actors, alliances and agreements and debates and policies on modern media, especially in audiovisual media, in Chile, Peru, Mexico, Colombia, El. Salvador, Argentina, Uruguay, and Bolivia.
- h. **The People, Press, and Politics of Croatia**, 2001 by Stjepan Malovic and Gary W. Selnow[9] gives a media perspective in a country in transition in Eastern Europe.
- i. **The Global Media: New missionaries of global capitalism**, 1997, Edward S. Herman and Robert W. McChesney[10] describe the recent rapid growth and cross-border linkages of the industry with large international conglomerates. The book partly helps to understand and define the impact of global media on national societies. It assesses the importance of the global unification of several media giants and how they began to dominate the "public waves that no longer serve the public but defend the commercial interests of media owners. This resulted in strong opposition at a local, national and global level.
- j. **Media Making: Mass Media in popular culture**, 1998 by Lawrence Grossberg, Ellen Wartella and D. Charles Whitney[11], examines how media production integrates with our social life. It examines the different relationships between the

media and the social value system and the social differences that organize power in today's society. This book was very useful for understanding how media influence, configure and affect people's behavior and broader questions about the relationship between media and society.

- k. **Democracy and the Media: A Comparative Perspective**, 2000 by Richard Gunther and Anthony Mughan[12] analyze the impact of media and politics in authoritarian, transitional and democratic regimes in Russia, Spain, Hungary, Chile, Italy, United Kingdom, Germany, Japan, Netherlands and United States thus helps in comparison with other countries.
- l. **Mass Media - systems and their effects**, 1977, W. Phillips Davison, James Boylan and Frederick TC YU[13], offers an overview of the history, work, and impact of the media in the United States, and a brief comparison of the United States media system with others. The book ends with a reflection on decisions that must be taken after the development of media both in private and in society. Book contributes in some way to develop a better understanding of the role of media.

10. **Importance of research.** From the global trend of the late 1980s to democratization, many studies have been conducted in societies that have transformed the media. The importance of this study lies in the fact that the media tool, which is partly responsible for the negative trends in Pakistani society at the same time, can play a crucial and vital role in bringing positive change by having the right direction to develop a progressive and tolerant society. The enormous potential of the media on this issue has not yet been understood and exploited by those responsible for state and media policies. Media can give a new and positive direction to society and also serve as a shield against the negative effects of international/hostile media. Therefore, Pakistan should not administer and control media in a way that eliminates negative trends in a very small part of society, to strengthen Pakistani society and transform it into a society that is moderate, enlighten, effervescent and progressive. Therefore, the objective of this study is to analyze all these aspects to provide valuable suggestions to achieve the desired objective.

11. **Methodology.** During the study, an analytical and descriptive method was used. Efforts have been made to integrate all relevant and important dimensions and characteristics of the media, society and their impacts. The study is mainly based on national and international books, newspapers and magazines and articles on various aspects of the subject. Similarly, the Internet has been used extensively and generously to identify the perspectives of people with different backgrounds on various sources and documents on the subject.

12. **Work organization** The research divided into four sections in addition to the conclusion and recommendations. The first part is dedicated to the introduction of research and the second part is dedicated to the development and dynamics of Pakistani society. Third section deals with the development and role of the media in different societies. An analysis of the role of Pakistani media is the subject of chapter four. Finally, the research concludes and makes recommendations.

## SECTION II

### EVOLUTION OF SOCIETY

"The free expression of the hopes and aspirations of people is the greatest and only safety in a sane society."

**Emma Goldman**

13. **Society.** A society is a human population characterized by patterns of relationships between individuals who share a particular culture and / or institution. In general, a society is an economic, social and industrial infrastructure with diverse people. Sociology is the scientific or academic study of society and human behavior. In political science, the term is often used to refer to the integrity of human relationships i.e concepts of all-natural relationships and institutions between man and man[\[14\]](#), generally in contrast to the state.
14. **Evolution of Societies.** Over time, some cultures became more complex forms of organization and control. Hunter-gatherer tribes settled around seasonal food reserves and became peasant villages. The towns became cities. Cities became city-states and nation state[\[15\]](#).
15. According to sociologist Richard Jenkins, the term society addresses several important existential issues facing people;[\[16\]](#)
  - a. How humans think and exchange information; the sensory world makes up only a fraction of human experience.
  - b. Many phenomena cannot be reduced to individual behavior.
  - c. Collectives often endure beyond the lifespan of individual members and the human condition has always meant going beyond the evidence of our senses; every aspect of our lives is tied to the collective.
16. According to anthropologist Maurice Godelier, one critical novelty in human society, in contrast to humanity's closest biological relatives; chimpanzees, is the parental role assumed by the males, something unknown among these primates.[\[17\]](#) The sociologist Gerhard Lenski distinguishes societies in terms of hunters and gatherers, simple agriculture, advanced agriculture, industry and now virtually[\[18\]](#) according to their technical, communicative and economic levels. Virtual Society is an online community based on the identity that evolves in the information age.
17. **Societal Characteristics**
  - a. **Social networks.** Social networks are maps of relationships between people. Structural characteristics such as proximity, frequency of contact and type of

relationship, for example, parents, friends, and colleagues, define different social networks.[\[19\]](#)

- b. **Organization of Society.** Human societies are usually organized according to basic livelihoods. Sociologists describe hunter-gatherer societies, nomadic pastoralist societies, simple horticultural or agricultural societies, as well as dense agricultural societies, also called civilization. A common theme for societies is to help people in times of crisis. When a person needs help, members of that community traditionally gather others to help. Instead, members of a society can also eliminate community members who violate their rules or turn them into scapegoats. Social evolution as a phenomenon has some elements that can be harmful to members of society.[\[20\]](#)
- c. **Common belief or common purpose.** People of many nations united by common cultural or political traditions or beliefs are sometimes called societies such as Western, Chinese, Indian, Christian and Muslim societies.

18. **Civil Society.** It refers to the arena of un-coerced collective action around shared interests, purposes and values. Civil society often includes a large number of spaces, actors and institutional forms that differ in autonomy and power.[\[21\]](#) According to Collin Powel, 'civil society is one whose members care about each other and the well being of the community as a whole'.[\[22\]](#) For a long time, social scientists have believed in a world of two sectors, market or economy, on the one hand, state or government on the other. The notion that there is a "third sector" between the two sectors disappeared in some way in the worldview of the two sectors.

19. **Media and society.**[\[23\]](#) State and media authorities design and implement policies that drive operations in societies. The basic role of the media i.e means of control, public opinion influencers, ideological borders, and national security are part of every society. Media do not develop in a vacuum but directly affected by the evolutionary process of society. Media is considered relevant because it serves to preserve and reflect the political and economic ideology of a particular society.

20. **Pakistani Society Evolution.** Pakistan was created on August 14, 1947, but in a society dominated by Hindus, the saints, and reformers who had preserved the identity of Muslims had retained their distinct identity over centuries. Pakistanis are descendants of Indus valley civilization and invaders of Central Asia, Persia, and the Arabian Peninsula, who ruled India for centuries. However, 200 years of British rule was a period of decline for Muslims materially and intellectually. Failure of War of Independence in 1857 pushed back Muslims and created



divisions within society, in proponent of western/modern education and others declaring it unIslamic.[24] Shariah was replaced by the British with English law.[25]

21. During dismay British rule, religious leaders and reformers made individual and collective efforts to preserve the spirit of Islam, which formed the basis of “**Two Nations Theory**” and Pakistan. Ideology is based on the instinct to preserve the individuality of the Muslim community in South Asia. Muslims in South Asia believe that Islam and Hinduism are not just two religions, but two social orders and two different cultures.

22. Pro-Islamic scholars saw Islam as the basis of Pakistani ideology. As per Allama Iqbal, if religion is separated from politics, there remains tyranny and aggression.[26] the Second level of leadership of the Muslim League was generally secular. According to Keith Collard, “The background of the men who organized the campaign was not theology and Islamic law but politics and the common law, not Deoband but Cambridge and the Inn of Court.”[27] The struggle for freedom that preceded the creation of Pakistan was based on Islamic ideology and constitutional/legal.

23. **Role of Media in Struggle for Independence.** The press played a central role in the subcontinent for independence struggle and thousands of young people became part of it. Newspapers developed awareness and the need for independence from the British.

24. The Muslim press emerged in 1836 with the first publication of "Urdu Akbar" and expanding to Journal of Scientific Society 1866, 1870 Urdu "Tehzibul Aklaq". The Muslim interests were reflected in many Muslim newspapers such as, "Comrade", "Hamdard", "Urdu-i-Moalla", "Al-Hilal". "Al Balagh" and "Zamindar". The struggle for freedom was led intellectually by hundreds of newspapers.[28]

25. Muhammad Ali Jinnah (Founder of Pakistan) was a strong advocate for press freedom. In 1941, he helped the establishment of “Dawn English Newspaper” Dawn was the official body of the Muslim League.[29]

26. **Dynamics of Pakistani society.** Pakistani society is ethnically diverse and yet predominantly Muslim. The family union still has priority as the strongest association in Pakistan. Tribal relationships are also strong and important. Having lived with Hindus for centuries, it also has imprints of Hindu culture and traditions. An increase in population with limited resources, social and economic inequalities leads to an increase in social unrest[30]. Sociologists talk about the trend of loss of social contract, with personal and family interest precedes the common good.

27. **Drivers of Pakistani society.** The main drivers of Pakistani society include:-

- a. Weak political system and lack of direction in society.
- b. Identity crisis; Muslim State or Islamic State, Pakistan first or Islam first.
- c. Failure of governments to guarantee social and economic justice.
- d. Sovereignty of a small elite group, completely ignoring human aspirations;
- e. Priority in terms of security concerns over social needs.
- f. Lack of rule of law, accountability, political maturity and tolerance.
- g. Doubts sowed in the context of the "Two Nations Theory" after 1971.
- h. Sectarian militancy after the Iranian revolution.[\[31\]](#)
- i. Invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union, followed by US proxy war.
- j. Role of Pakistan as a leading State in the global war on terror.
- k. Non-resolution of core disputes with India.
- l. Growing materialism and weakening of the family system. **These factors strongly influenced the shaping of today's Pakistani society.**

## 28. Challenges for Pakistani society

- a. Pakistani society faces internal challenges:-
  - (1) Ethnic and sectarian conflicts due to non-compliance with certain ethnic demands and the inclusion of certain neighboring countries.
  - (2) Lack of education, population explosion, social injustice, widespread trends, poverty, Corruption, and inappropriate leadership.
  - (3) Bad legal and regulatory situation.
  - (4) Disagreement between states and states.
  - (5) The Talibanization factor and the armed and radicalized society of the United States.
- b. At the regional and international level media-enabled adversaries to launch information operations against Pakistan for widening the fault lines and maligning. It has used such innuendos for Pakistan as "quicksand", a "withering state" and "Cambodia syndrome".[\[32\]](#) The main narrative floated through media are:
  - (1) Label Pakistan "Islamic fundamentalist" and "religion intolerant," state.
  - (2) Blurring Pakistan's image as a terrorist state, despite sacrifices.
  - (3) Promoting internal disputes exploiting diversity in Pakistan.
  - (4) Question the "Two Nations Theory" in Pakistani society.

- (5) Blame Pakistan for high defense spending to the detriment of social development.
- (6) Define Pakistan as a non-democratic country, by highlighting long periods of military government.
- (7) Project Pakistan as an irresponsible state involved in the proliferation of nuclear weapons
- (8) Erosion of Pakistani society through cultural films and programs.
- (9) At the international media level vested interest campaigns negatively[\[33\]](#) for violations of human rights, women and minority rights, child labor, bonded labor, drug trafficking and poor law enforcement and so on.

29. Pakistani society faces many challenges that pose a threat to the state and society. These challenges can become opportunities by developing and implementing strong and dynamic policies. The role of the media on this issue is most important as it can counter baseless narratives to safeguard society from negative tendencies, whereas it can contribute positively by bringing solutions for genuine fissures, issues, and development of society. The next section is about media development, especially in Pakistan and generally in the West.

**SECTION III**  
**MEDIA EVOLUTION**

*“The American mass media have achieved what American political might could not: World domination”.*

**Akbar S. Ahmed**

30. Media is a powerful force in modern societies and has profoundly shaped cultures and societies. It is also an indispensable tool for the growth and prosperity of a society. As an actor of socio-political, economic and cultural change, the media can stabilize or destroy society. It can decisively support the socio-political development and stability of a country[34]. Public participation in the socio-economic development process is only possible if the masses are aware that policy, a program, and a government have an answer to a problem. Effective means are the only source that can create and guarantee this awareness in a particular society.

31. Media is defined as a means of communication for masses. Marshal McLuhan while commenting on the process of communication opines that the “media are the message”. [35] According to V.K Rao, “mass media and information resources are considered part and parcel of a nation’s power potential”. [36] Electronic communication is revolutionizing mass communication and is spreading to remote areas regularly. Media determine the reasons to grow or decay of society.

32. To understand the importance of media in modern societies, it is necessary to understand a brief history of the evolution of the media that will help to understand its role in the transformation of societies and eliminate negative trends and bring positive changes. Therefore, it is important to have an overview of the evolution of media before discussing its role.

33. **Evolution of Media.** The word media is derived from the word medium. [37] As per Chambers's dictionary, media is defined as a "means of communication to reach masses and mold norms, ideals and objectives of people. Media is a reaction to changes in society that create a media culture. There are different types of media:- [38]

- a. **By Geography or Social Relations.** Interpersonal media, mass media and networks.
- b. **Communication channels.** Print and electronic.
- c. **Sensory Experience.** Visual, acoustic, demonstrative and mixed.
- d. **Institutions.** Television/newspaper, network, and cable.
- e. **Area of interest / Influence.** Local, regional, national and global.
- f. **According to the content.** Entertainment, news, and announcements.

g. Ownership. Government or privately-owned media.

34. **Media Transformation.** The evolution of media from oral to electronic culture took place in four stages, each revolutionizing its style. Four stages of media evolution started with the pre-literacy era of oral or acoustic culture replaced in 3000 BC by writing culture, printing in 2nd century AD and the emergence of electronic culture in the mid 20th century.[\[39\]](#)

35. **Emergence of Media in the West.**[\[40\]](#) History of Western media goes back to the publication of newspapers in Venice, Italy, in the 16th century every week. Britain and France published their first newspaper in 1621 and 1631 and 1690 in Boston, the USA first published private newspaper later all copies destroyed being without government approval. Boston News-Letter, first published in the USA in 1704 and became a regular newspaper. This paved the way for American independence from Great revolutionary articles. It demonstrated the power of media to challenge existing systems. 17th and 18th centuries produced press in Europe and America and magazines became important vectors of social change and control. Print media experienced rapid growth during the French revolution from only four newspapers in 1788 to 355 in 1790. Napoleon turned it into a propaganda tool for his agenda. Over time, Western media matured and demonstrated its vitality for Western societies. At the beginning of the 20th century, media mainly consisted of different newspapers and magazines. In the 1920s, after World War I, radio became a competitive source of information. While the appeal of spoken language attracted the public and advertisers, publishers had to develop their products for profit. Television was able to transmit moving images wirelessly and was first introduced in 1926 combining images and sounds competing for radios. Western media is relatively independent, futuristic and proactive, and plays an important role in shaping its societies along with protecting and supporting national interests.

36. **Pakistani media Evolution**

- a. **Print Media.** In colonial India, there were three main currents of the press: Anglo-Indian press, nationalist press and Muslim press. Muslim press criticized the British regime and its pro-Hindu policy.[\[41\]](#) The first Bengal newspaper by James Augustus Hicky was published in 1780. Later, non-English local newspapers appeared for forty years. Urdu journalism was founded in 1836 by Muhammad Ali Bekar with the publication of Delhi Urdu 'Akhbar'. Newspapers played an important role in the independence struggle.
- b. At times of independence, there were only a few major Muslim newspapers i.e Pakistan Times, Dawn, Zamindar, Nawa-i-Waqt and the Civil and Military

Gazette, all in Lahore. Dawn founded by Quaid-i-Azam was published in 1947 as a daily newspaper capital Karachi. Morning News and other publications such as Jang and Anjam in Urdu shifted to Pakistan. Over time, journalism stabilized, and today there are 540 dailies, 444 weeklies, 55 fortnightlies, and 268 monthlies are published in national, regional and English languages.[42] Print media is published in 11 languages. English and Urdu media perspectives are different, as both groups look at different social classes. Today, almost all newspapers have an Internet edition. The two largest news agencies in Pakistan are the Associated Press of Pakistan and Pakistan Press International.

c. **Electronic Media**

- (1) **Radio.**[43] Origins of transmission in subcontinent date back to July 1927, when Indian state transmission was established in Mumbai. Peshawer was the first regular radio station in 1935, while the Lahore radio station opened in 1937. Radio Pakistani aired 1st transmission on midnight August 14, 1947, on independence. It played a key role in disseminating information and communicating state policies. Radio Pakistan covers 80% of the area and has more than 95.5 million listeners. With media liberalization in the 1990s, Pakistan's electronic media regulatory authority allowed more than 100 private FM radio stations, many of which already operate in major cities.[44]
- (2) **Television.**[45] Pakistan entered the television era in 1964. National television in Pakistan has reached 89% of the population. Pakistan Television has contributed greatly to national economic and social development in the past 55 years. Television in Pakistan entered a new phase of expansion and privatization in the late 1990s, and more than 50 private broadcasters have their programs in English, Urdu and other national languages.
- (3) **Internet.** Pakistan has had access to the Internet since the early 1990s and has more than **71 million (35%)** Internet users in Pakistan as of **30th June 2019.**[46]

- d. **State media control.** Reviewing records reveals that the state controls the content of the communication. The media remained under strict control of many governments and acted as "**Voice of Master.**" It has been actively used to spread

government policy, particularly in the communist bloc. However, media in democracies continued to face more or less significant restrictions. The information technology revolution made it difficult for regimes to hide information about their masses. Freedom of media over all obstacles is emerging order, perhaps more by compulsion than choice. Relative media freedom in Pakistan is a new phenomenon in which all stakeholders want to adapt.

37. **Role of Media in Different Societies.** Before discussing the role of Pakistani media, it is necessary to examine the role of media in other societies.

- a. **Mass Media Functions.** Media serve as a link between the government and people. According to Harold Lasswell, the main functions of the media are surveillance of environment, correlation of elements of society and transmission of social heritage.<sup>[47]</sup> The monitoring of the environment refers to the journalistic function of media. Media experts examine the environment, interpret the signs and inform the public about their findings. It acts as a sentry and if forewarn in time, it can equip society to counter the danger. Media not only disseminate information but also construe it for society. This correlation function helps people understand a message or event and is essential for a society to function properly. Media also transmit information about society itself: by providing cultural orientations, media can teach its citizens how to live, behave and be responsible to society.
- b. **Achievements of Media.** Over the years, media in developed societies have broadened horizons of their citizens by allowing them to see, hear and understand people and places they could not physically reach. This helped by creating an intellectual climate among the masses to rethink their future practices and expectations contributing to the development of society.<sup>[48]</sup> As traditional society evolved into modernity, it encouraged societies to develop ideas and opportunities for greater good and address serious issues. Media helped to increase the aspirations of masses for a better individual and collective life and work for achieving it. Media play an important role in the development of pluralistic societies. Media is very effective in influencing social attitudes, values or habits. Media helped interpersonal channels and support social norms. Many social norms are disturbing or stressful for people. According to Lazarsfeld and Merton, "Publicity closes the gap between 'private attitudes' and 'public morality'."<sup>[49]</sup> It

also helped integrate education and training using tools for new educational gadgets, such as programmed instructions, language labs, and computers. Media assisted individuals to be projected through well-regarded newspapers and TV.



## SECTION IV

### ANALYSIS OF ROLE OF MEDIA IN PAKISTAN

*"Every citizen shall have the right to freedom of speech and expression, and there shall be freedom of the Press, subject to any reasonable restrictions imposed by law in the interest of the glory of Islam or the integrity, security or defense of Pakistan or any part thereof, friendly relations with foreign states, public order, decency or morality, or in relation to contempt of court, commission of or incitement to an offence".*

#### **Article 19 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan**

38. Media is the mirror of the society in which they operate. Media and society influence and form each other. Media are also directly linked to politics. Today, media have assumed the role of producing king in all democratic societies, because no political party can win elections without its support. Although freedom of expression is guaranteed in constitutions of all states, however, it does impose some restrictions and responsibilities in media.

39. Liberal media policy of the government has provided freedom of expression in a variety of political and social issues, although sometimes it is not fair. This liberalization of media policy has been exploited by media organizers and those with a weak understanding of the philosophy of freedom of expression. Since its inception, Pakistani media have deeply shaped the social structure of Pakistani society. In the last 72 years, Pakistani media have experienced many ups and downs in the form of restrictions, but they have also managed to maintain their place and importance in society.

40. **Media Analysis.** Before analyzing the role of Pakistani media, some facts that are sometimes universal must be taken into account in terms of the media's mindset and peculiarities. Media is a billion-dollar industry, therefore, the main objective is to earn money and not humanize society. Due to intense competition in the media sector, media must be competitive, singular and first. To be unique media look for controversial, sensational and negative information to make headlines. Media persons are humans with a predisposition, generally self-centered and ego-driven thus demand absolute fairness can't be expected out of them. Media assumes that it has the right to interpret what is good and bad for society with its prisms. Media have been the most effective tool to support political-military objectives. However, it has own agenda and has the power to form or break governments. It is being considered the fourth pillar of the state due to the power and role of media. As former President Pervez Musharraf stated: The four pillars of state: judiciary, legislative, executive and media must learn to live together while remaining in their respective fields. "These four pillars must

perform their duties without fear or indifference and coexist with each other".[\[50\]](#) In Pakistan, as in many other developing countries, state pillars often enter areas of other pillars, causing friction and tension among these.

41. **Media's Impact on Pakistani Society.** Pakistani media is sensational, free but not fair, too critical and at times negative in its coverage. It has become another interest group that jealously guards its interests. It is very sensitive to any restrictions that try to limit his freedom. Pakistani media often does not understand the dynamics of conflict situations, violence, internal and external security. The most common mistakes are:-

- a. Media focuses on an irrational approach to ignore causes of unresolved conflicts, polarization and inevitably presents violence, neglecting alternatives.
- b. Focusing on individual acts of violence, while avoiding root causes like poverty, repression, and neglect by government and powerful.
- c. Characterize some as good and demonize others by applying their standards.
- d. Excludes and omits bereaved, thus never explaining why there are acts of revenge and spirals of violence.
- e. Fails to explore reasons for escalation of situation and contribution of media coverage to it.
- f. Do not reveal the motivations of external interventionists, especially powerful.

42. **Radicalization of Society.** Till 2014 Pakistani media glorified radicals and militants not only encouraged radical groups and organizations but also increased the tendency and degree of radicalization of society.[\[51\]](#)

43. **Projecting cause of terrorists.** Radicals' wins media war, first by transmitting its terrifying murders in free media and then communicating its manifesto through politicians and critical analysts.[\[52\]](#)

44. **Lack of objectivity.** Events like Lal Masjid operation; Operation Zarb e Azb objectivity of media in the fight against terrorism remained questioned witnessing intense violence. After the government of the time was criticized for its inaction, their positions changed completely when the security forces finally pushed eliminated armed militants.[\[53\]](#)

45. **Savagery of Society.** Reflection of bloody events on television and media violence brutally affects society. Having long term serious and very negative effects on children and young people. Day by day, his thoughts feed on "violence, laziness, and contradictory behavior."[\[54\]](#)

46. **Sensationalism.** Sensationalism tool is used by press and electronic media without restriction to improve its valuation and public viewing. Important to think is to have social and moral responsibilities and values.[\[55\]](#)
47. **Causing Desperation.** Good news does not get the coverage on Media. Hope is hard to find among nations and media contributes to further desperation. In this context, “we need to develop national cohesion, underplay what can lower the nation’s morale and encourage what can raise it”[\[56\]](#)
48. **Distinction in State and Government.** Media do not distinguish between state and government in their criticisms. Whereas criticism of the government is appropriate, the same could not be justified against the state.
49. **National Interests vs Media Interests.** National interests are often not understood by Media representatives. Clear distinction and keeping a balanced approach between Media and national interest is a missing link in Media policies at National as well as Media level.[\[57\]](#)
50. **Commercialization.** Strong mass Media is driven by commercial interests of sponsors rather than public.[\[58\]](#) The media is following the saying, ‘We have no obligation to make history. We have no obligation to make art. We have no obligation to make a statement. To make money is our only objective’.[\[59\]](#)
51. **Role of women.** Pakistani media reflect women as an object rather than its positive role in society and family. Contributions and importance of women as per our culture are not duly highlighted.[\[60\]](#)
52. **Lack of Objectivity in Media.** Pakistani Media irony is that it has more news channels than entertainment, education, sports and information Talk shows have replaced entertainment and dramas. These do not promote tolerance, respect for different point views and healthy debate. Mostly based on rhetoric and rumors even unauthentic trends/logics on social media are used for opinions Media analysts do not have research on topics and rather than a moderator, they become biased. Most presenters are bitten by "Tim Sebastian Bug" and show aggression in places where they must be professional.
53. **Polarization of Society.** Media in Urdu have a deeper impact on the formation of trends and attitudes of civil society. The concept of social values is in the context of rigidity, intolerance, and conservatism. Unlike the rest of society, a small portion of society can access media in English. Thus, over time, a polarized society developed resulting in class distinction. The gulf between "haves" and "have nots" has increased.

54. **Negative Projection of Country.** All events in Pakistan are not bad. On the contrary, local media do not discuss anything positive. Such reporting is eroding and diminishing contours of our true identity across the globe. Image building in the world is mostly through the soft power of media, which Pakistani Media has yet to understand.

55. **Perception of Building and Biases.** Media is a very strong tool for perception building and management in society. Pakistani media do not reflect the entire society and ignore what people want to hear and see in general. Strong political, cultural, social and ideological prejudices are imposed on masses by different segments of media.

56. **Media criticism.** A free Media against a fair Media is a matter of media morality. However, this debate takes a turn in Third World countries where there is no political stability and interests of states are often in conflict with the interests of masses. Paradoxically, media is developed directly from society and reflects society. **Holding media responsible for all ills prevalent in our society will not be just, though it certainly can be held responsible for further exacerbating the same. The other three pillars of state are also equally responsible for failing to address the ills and needs of society.**

57. **Hope and Positivity.** Pakistani media, which were strictly under state control and whose private media are still in infancy, has played a very constructive role in creating a quantitative change in our society. It is holding power centers accountable; contribute greatly to social justice for masses, emancipated women, exposed corruption, empowered masses, and developed awareness.

58. Role of print, radio and electronic media in the struggle for independence, [\[61\]](#) development of society and educating has been very important. Media played a crucial role during the 1965 war, uniting the country. Media repressed national efforts against dictators and corrupt civil regimes in the country. Pakistani media continued to fully support the cause of Kashmir.

59. The growth of private media, especially electronic media is very challenging and full of opportunities for societal development. Media contributed with patriotism and professionalism in October 2005 earthquake. In the more recent past, it has contributed and supported the national effort against the war on terrorism. During standoffs and issues with India, it acted in a mature, professional, responsible, objective and calculated way than media across the border.

60. An analysis of the role of Pakistani media over the years has shown that, in general, they play a very positive and constructive role in achieving a quantitative change in society. It suffers from some ills which if removed will further enhance and improve its role. **The analysis brings**

**us to the conclusion that media can change the fate of society if suggestions given in the next section are taken implemented with positivity and responsibly by all stakeholders' especially state actors.**

**SECTION V**  
**CONCLUSIONS**

*“Our liberty depends on the freedom of the press, and that cannot be limited without being lost”.*

**Thomas Jefferson**

61. Since the birth of communication, media have been used to communicate information to those who are ready to receive it. Beginning with publications and simple texts to soaring in the twentieth century to radio, television and Internet media have been accessible to people in all aspects of their daily lives. With such a powerful influence on modern society, media managed to shape popular culture and often influence public opinion. However, if used incorrectly power of media can trigger negative trends in society.

62. Media in Pakistan have suffered many hardships during the past 72 years. It was subjected to strict censorship and regulatory conditions. Media has held for ideal on which Pakistan was created. Media contributions in various national security sectors may receive a mixed resonance, but Pakistani media have certainly played an important and positive role in creating critical problems for society. Media plays a very important role in informing, educating, entertaining and strengthening society, with exceptions to its deficiencies and some shortfalls.

63. Pakistani media is through an evolutionary process and has not yet been fully established. State apparatus should help it to develop and mature. At the same time, the media should be more mature and balanced in reporting. Commercial interests not to be in tangent with national interests and fulfill its social obligations. State and media must be together in a climate of trust and mutual respect, not fear and oppression.

64. Media alone cannot be responsible for all the negative trends and trends of society. Causes should be sought elsewhere as well. It would be a mistake to expect the lead role of media in eradicating societal issues at its own. A role must be assumed by political and religious leaders, intellectuals and other state agencies with media in support. Concurrently, Pakistani media can't stay away from global media trends and drives.

65. Media must be empowered, managed and regulated as an institution by itself. There must be a balance between its commercial interests and obligations to society. A partnership between media stakeholders is created for having a collective approach at the international level taking into account national. Mindset is changed for a free and responsible media can serve better to nation and people. With all-state pillars on board and following their domains, media can certainly contribute to reform Pakistani society.

**Recommendations**

66. Basing on the study some measures are being suggested for enhancing and utilizing media potential for strengthening society.

- a. **Central Position of Media.** Foundations of society are **state, capital market, and civil society**. In the history of many countries, media initially sided close to state, then civil society and recently near capital markets. **Ideally, the media should be closer to civil society.**[\[62\]](#)
- b. **Media Regulations.** Media must be regulated primarily by themselves, their clients, their organizations, their colleagues and society in general. However, in a developing country like Pakistan, legislation is needed to protect the media and people.
- c. **Media control.** Instead of following two traditional approaches to media control, the "Pluralist approach" and "Marxist approach,"[\[63\]](#) media must be controlled and accountable through self-regulation with some legal regulation to ensure minimum standards of democratic order and human rights are respected.[\[64\]](#)
- d. **Code of Ethics / Conduct.** The media should not consider a code of ethics as a violation of their freedom and dignity. While developing a code of conduct consultation between the Ministry of Information, Pakistani electronic media regulatory authority (PEMRA) and other stakeholders. Code of Ethics worked out by Pakistan Journalists Association to form the basis for further elaboration and implementation.[\[65\]](#)
- e. **Maintain Basic Values.** The ideological foundations of Pakistan should not be made controversial. Similarly, the sanctity of all religions and sects must be protected by media. Guarantee of freedom of speech and freedom of expression as given in 1973, to be implemented with due diligence.
- f. **Balanced Reporting.** The media should not take away a sense of hope from people in all circumstances. It should reflect positive events and results and should not be too critical in scope. To find appropriate solutions, problems must be discussed and assist the other three pillars of the state for the performance of their functions.
- g. **State and Media Integration.** In today's changing world, where the state has to take onboard media in the national development process, the media must also

understand the concept of national interest. The media and state must be well integrated in accordance with national goals and objectives.

- h. **Media Dependence on State.** It must be reduced to the bare minimum. Businesses and multimedia networks require government licenses and franchises can continue to be controlled by the state. This legal technical dependency is sometimes used to discipline media and their policies.[\[66\]](#)
- i. **Media as Institution.** To harmonize media activities and use their potential to create positive changes in society, an institutional approach of media is needed. Mass Communication Institute (MCI), must be established. Everyone involved in the process of editing and investigating must be registered members of the MCI. National Media University should be established and made functional at an accelerated pace.
- j. **Media Staff Skills Development.** Public and private media should be encouraged to train and educate journalists/reporters, editors and authorized personnel to improve their skills and competencies. There are very few opportunities to specialize in obtaining the necessary experience and skills, conducting research or writing reports and writing about social problems of different nature and intensity. Universities should conduct an increasing number of media seminars.
- k. **Cross Media Ownership.** Vertical integration and interlocking directorates are a global problem.[\[67\]](#) The result is monopolistic media empires that can manipulate the essence of information. This leads to less competition and should be reviewed. Safest way to ensure diversity of ideas is to diversify media ownership. The relevant PEMRA laws must be strictly followed.
- l. **Establish Regional Media Networks.** The government should encourage the creation of regional and even sub-regional radio and television channels modeled on Al Jazeera to present the true face of Pakistan. It will also help to counter extreme criticism to which Islam is subjected as a religion. Media have a great responsibility to reflect Islam in the real perspective that must be done with insight, wisdom, and determination. Constructive dialogue between religions must be initiated by Pakistani media.



*“All of us who professionally use the mass media are the shapers of society.*

*We can vulgarize that society. We can brutalize it.*

*Or*

*We can help lift it onto a higher level.”*

**William Bernbach**

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