The Media and the North-South Divide:

How Asymmetries Impact the Media Narratives in India

Ritambhara Malaviya

Abstract

This paper examines the impact of the North-South asymmetries on the media of the Global South through a study of the newspapers in India. For this purpose, the paper undertakes an extensive study of six popular English and Hindi newspapers in India. The study is based on the analysis of the discourse of these newspapers on terrorism in India after 9/11 and compares it to the narrative of the Global War on Terrorism emanating from the countries of the Global North. Finally, the paper points towards the need of an independent media as a responsible actor in conflict scenario, encouraging creative solutions for building and sustaining peace.

Keywords: *Media, Global South, Discourse, Asymmetries, Terrorism.*

The global media landscape has been marked by asymmetries. The media of the countries of the Global North have vast resources at their disposal and are therefore unrivalled in terms of their reach and networks. The disproportionate power of the media of the Global North is reflected in their impact on the news narratives across the world. It could be noted that inequalities of wealth and resources

translate into soft power for the countries of the Global North, whereby they keep on influencing the policies and priorities of the countries of the Global South through various means. The global media plays a crucial role in this pattern of information imperialism. This paper therefore tries to map the development of the discourse on terrorism in India after 9/11 and the role that the newspapers played in popularizing this discourse.

For understanding the impact of the international discourse on the newspapers in India, the paper undertakes an analysis of the news after the terrorist attacks on the Parliament (13 December 2001) and the Mumbai attacks (26 November 2008) in six popular English and Hindi newspapers. The study undertakes an analysis of the Mumbai edition of *The Times of India*, the Delhi edition of *Hindustan Times*, the Chennai edition of *The Hindu*, the Allahabad edition of *Dainik Jagran* and *Amar Ujala* and the Bhopal edition of *Dainik Bhaskar*. The terrorists targeted the Indian Parliament on December 13, 2001 while the terror attacks in Mumbai on the 26th of November, 2008 took place at several places like the Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus, the Oberoi Trident, the Taj Mahal Palace, Leopold Cafe, Cama Hospital and the Nariman House. These two incidents were the first two big incidents of terrorism after 9/11 in India and therefore are crucial for understanding the discourse that emerged thereafter. A study of the selected newspapers for a month from the day after the incident has been undertaken, focusing on the front page, the national news and editorial and op-ed pages. The study analyses the major themes, which emerged, the issues that were raised, the way headlines were framed and the language that was used in these newspapers.

This paper studies the impact of 9/11 on the news narratives in India and tries to shed light on how the newspapers in India reflect the language of the discourse emanating from the countries, which are

driving the "global war on terror". It might be noted that 9/11 is considered a watershed in the way terrorism was seen in the world and for the global discourse that emerged on terrorism. One can begin by examining the diverse ways in which the global media influences the discourse of newspapers. An examination of the linkages that the Indian media has developed with foreign capital for further expansion can yield interesting observations. For a long time after independence, foreign investment was debarred in print media in India, but the post-liberalization era has seen almost all the newspapers trying to raise capital for their expansion and diversification drive. It was in 2002 that the policy on foreign investment was revised in favour of allowing foreign investment in the news related print media up to 26 percent. Further liberalization took place in 2005. A recent feature in many of the newspapers, especially in English is to develop tie-ups with the foreign media, and publishing articles borrowed from newspapers like the *New York Times* and the *Economist*. This also becomes the easy route through which the news and views of the countries of the Global North comes to the Indian readers. It is to be noted that the global media, which are famously called "missionaries of corporate capital" by Herman and McChesney (1997) have been immensely influential in propagating the ideology and perspectives of the Global North.

The journalists might claim that they report news objectively, without any pressure. However, they forget that the sources through which they get the news are not unbiased sources, and often influence the point of view of the news. Therefore, scholars have pointed towards "the inequitable structure of global news gathering and distribution" wherein the media of the more powerful countries dominate (Boyd-Barrett 2011, 94). The news agencies are supposed to deliver fair, credible and unbiased news to all the newspapers that subscribe to their service irrespective of their ideological orientations. While the Press Trust of India (PTI), United News of India (UNI), Indo-Asian

News Service (IANS) and Asian News International (ANI) are the major news agencies in India, some foreign news agencies like Reuters (headquarters in London) and AP (headquarters in New York) are important sources of international news for newspapers. The coverage of international news is often dependent on these news agencies or even news channels like the BBC, which carry the official viewpoint of their respective states about international events. It was the call for a New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) in the 1970s and 1980s when studies started observing the heavy dependence of the Indian media on these news agencies and the "information imperialism" associated with it. "The dependence on the big four western news agencies as major sources of foreign news was clear in all the cases… Together these agencies contribute 40-50 per cent of foreign news items in Indian, Japanese, Australian and Nigerian Media systems" (Yadava 1984, xxxii). This trend has not changed much even after globalization and therefore Teun A. van Dijk shows that the media in the third world countries focus less on problems in Asia and Africa and more on news of powerful countries like the US because of the influence of the foreign news agencies (Van Dijk 2013). It is not only the news and reports, but also the opinion expressed in the editorial and op-ed pages, which gets swayed by the impact of knowledge production in the Global North. This can be understood with the help of an analysis by Herman and Chomsky who observe how the states and corporate houses influence the experts who write for newspapers by "… putting them on the payroll as consultants, funding their research, and organizing think tanks that will hire them directly and help disseminate their message" (Herman and Chomsky 2008, 22). The studies carried out by these international think-tanks often influence the discourse of newspapers around the world.

In the backdrop of this analysis of the unequal power of the media in the Global North and the Global South, this paper proceeds to

analyze the media scene in India. It takes the discourse on terrorism for analysis as one of the most pronounced cases of the impact of the Western discourse on the Indian media. It might be pointed out that two kinds of discourses on terrorism can be identified in the media – the mainstream discourse, manufactured, packaged and traded by the strong and powerful states and the alternative discourse, advocated by the scholars and activists from the civil society. Terrorism in the mainstream statist discourse is a problem, which must be dealt with through strong counter-terrorist means. These include measures like cutting-off the source of terrorist finances, massive combing operations and imposition of anti-terror laws, which sometimes restrict civil liberties. This discourse implies that people are required to pay less importance to human rights and more to maintenance of law and order. This securitization of discourse overwhelms the talks of diagnosing the root causes of terrorism, which can sometimes be discovered in a perceived sense of injustice and a feeling of having been wronged and marginalized among certain sections, or structural inequalities in power between states and consequent failure of fragile and poor states in preventing conflicts on access to resources. Further, this discourse, emanating from the countries of the Global North is also seen as a tool for legitimizing their imperialist ambitions and aggression (see Vanaik 2007). Finally, the discourse is criticized for using a strong "us-other" rhetoric based on cultural differences thereby encouraging a language of hate and reprisal. The alternative discourse, on the other hand, points towards the need to understand and transform conflicts for building a society where cultures of peace can be nurtured and sustained. It therefore avers that mere suppression of conflicts might force them to be dormant for some time, but they flare up again from time to time until their root cause is diagnosed and resolved. It calls for a more humane approach in which human rights, civil liberties do not become a casualty, and innocents are not victimized in the process. However, a study of the six selected newspapers shows that that the alternative discourse

remained marginalized and the majority of news and views echoed a statist discourse on terrorism in the Indian newspapers.

Global agenda – Local mimicry

After 9/11, terrorism was no longer considered a localized threat and came to be seen as a global threat. The attack on the World Trade Centre brought terrorism on the radar of the US which then set the ball rolling for all the countries to come together to fight this "global threat" through participation in the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT). The US went about setting an agenda before the international community and all the states, which wanted to be on the right side of the US toed that line. It was the stand taken by Washington and the approach of the President of the US, which then became the discourse of choice for various states. For the Indian state, 9/11 presented itself an opportunity to place its longstanding grievance against cross-border terrorism emanating from Pakistan on the global table and mobilizing the international community in favour of its demands, showing that it had commonalities with the US in being a democratic, plural and tolerant state falling victim to "jehadi terrorism". The domestic policy was also modeled on the lines of the US experience.

An analysis of the news after the terrorist attacks on the Parliament and the Mumbai attacks in the six selected newspapers revealed some themes, which appeared regularly in these newspapers. Parallels were immediately drawn between 9/11 and these attacks and the measures proposed to respond were on the lines of the US like covert operations, war and precision strikes on terrorist camps. Many US based think tanks, which came up with various reports and studies constantly filled this international lexicon with new terms and concepts. Terms like "soft state", "failed state", "Global War on Terrorism", "hot pursuit" were popularized and spread from one state

to the other thus becoming part of the discourse across different states. This paper attempts to track how the newspapers mirrored this language emanating from the US experience and how the debate on domestic scenario was also shaped by the US example.

The jargon in India after terrorist attacks resembles the global agenda largely. For understanding this, this section begins with an analysis of the speeches of President George W. Bush, who initially set the statist agenda on terrorism before the global community. George Bush in his 9/11 address to the nation emphasized that the terrorist attacks were attacks on the way of life and freedom of the United States of America. The president was quick to emphasize that the terrorists had failed in their dastardly design to frighten the US and emphasized that the US as a nation was strong and united against such act (Bush 2001a). In a speech, (Address to Joint Session of Congress Following 9/11 Attacks, delivered on September 20, 2001) President Bush (2001b) asserted that the terrorists had committed an act of war against the nation. He underscored that the terrorists hated the US for the values it cherished like freedom, democracy, pluralism, tolerance and justice. He also outlined the steps to be undertaken to thwart the designs of the terrorists like "dramatic strikes", "covert operations" and starving terrorists of funding, thereby announcing that the states which are giving refuge to terrorists would be dealt with firmly. He also called upon all the states to join the US in the fight against terrorism. It is to be noted that similar concerns and language found their way in the Indian media. This section therefore discusses the coverage by the Indian newspapers in detail.

Mirroring the US experience – Comparison with 9/11: The 9/11 metaphor was repeated several times in the newspapers after terrorist strikes, drawing parallels with not only the incident but also the response of the US to it. The Parliament attack is one of those

incidents in the history of terrorist attacks in the country that saw the effect of the international discourse on terrorism spread right across all newspapers in India. Newspapers had a number of stories, which repeatedly carried references to 9/11. The very first day *The Times of India* reported, "In a strong statement which seemed consciously deigned to echo the tough language US President George W. Bush had used after the September 11 attacks, the Union cabinet on Thursday vowed to 'liquidate the terrorists and their sponsors wherever they are, whoever they are'" (*The Times of India* 2001a). In *Hindustan Times* Poonam Saxena wrote, "The world watched, stunned, when terrorists struck the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon, American symbols of prosperity and power, on 11 September. And India watched stunned, when terrorists struck Parliament, the most evocative symbol of Indian democracy, on unlucky 13 December" (Saxena 2001). The editorials and opinion columns in the newspapers were also full of such terminology. The very title of one of the editorials was, "9/11 and 12/13" (*The Times of India* 2001b). Editorials interpreted the Parliament attacks as the next phase of aggression after 9/11 or even as more terrible than 9/11 (*Amar Ujala* 2001a).

Strategic emulation-The newspapers also carried references to the strategies of the US, Israel and the UK against terrorism. After 9/11 the perception of Israel as a state changed in the Indian state to one in which Israel is seen as a victim of terrorism and therefore synergies have to be developed with it in order to get its help in the defence sector for uprooting terrorism. There has been a major shift in Indian policy, a transition from opposition to the US and Israel and their policies to emulation of their policies, and the newspapers played a role in winning a support for this shift. The newspapers reflected this changed priority of the Indian state in the form of news and columns in different newspapers, which suggested, with remarkable continuity, that actions like those taken by the US and Israel against

Palestine and Yasser Arafat could be taken by India against Pakistan (Lokmitra 2001; *Hindustan Times* 2001c; Rajiv Sachan 2001). The language remained aggressive – "संयम छोड़िये, साहस दिखाइये" ("Abandon Restraint, Display Courage") (Rajiv Sachan 2001). One can take the example of editorial as well, for instance the editorial of *Amar Ujala* on December 17, 2001 reiterated the argument that the army ought to take stern action against cross border terrorism. The editor gave the example of the US and Israel and how they tackled terrorism with an iron hand (*Amar Ujala* 2001c).

Of war on terror and "Global Jehad"- At the time of the Mumbai attacks, the idea of "Global War on Terror" had become the most important term in the lexicon of counterterrorism. Thus, the newspapers in India were full of such vocabulary after the Mumbai attacks. "Global War on Terror" was a coinage, emanating from the US after 9/11, which placed terrorism as the main enemy of the world, and gave a call to all countries to join the war against it. India, after the Mumbai attacks, was seen as a victim of global terrorism and by implication entitled to launch a similar war on terror. An analysis of the newspapers reveals that after the Mumbai attacks the term "war on terror" overshadowed much of the analysis. News items reiterated the term several times, until it became common sense. Expressions like "maintaining the tempo of the war on terror" (*The Times of India* 2008b) and "a new phase in the terrorist war against India" (Mundle 2008) were scattered across the media coverage in all newspapers. The term "global jihad" was also picked up by the Indian newspapers from global think-tanks, for instance an analysis in *The Times of India* cited Bruce Riedel from Brookings Institution of Washington DC, that the Mumbai attack was a "seminal event in the history of international terrorism, and particularly in the history of global jihad" (*The Times of India* 2008d). Similarly, various reports served the same purpose of rendering these ideas in an easily palatable and interesting format, for example, Pramit Pal Chaudhuri

discussed four states of terrorism and labelled period from 1990s-2001 as the "Rise of spectacular global jihad" (Chaudhuri 2008). *Hindustan Times* announced, "It is time to understand that fearsome, global jihad has come to India" (*Hindustan Times* 2008b). Thus, the mainstream discourse of the newspapers highlighted that this war on terror was against global jihad and it was implied that emergency measures were required for protecting freedom and democracy.

Democracy under attack- President Bush had raised a question in his speech, "Americans are asking, why do they hate us?" (Bush 2001b) and he replied to the question by asserting that the attacks were on the values that the US cherished like freedom and democracy. Suketu Mehta adopted an identical language in "Why they Hate Mumbai" when he wrote, "My poor great bleeding heart of a city. Why do they go after Mumbai? There's something about this island-state that appalls religious extremists, Hindus and Muslims alike" (Mehta 2008).

The language in which newspapers break the news on the first day sets the tone for further discussions in these newspapers and is designed to give a particular take on the issue to the readers. The newspapers on the first day of the attack had the keynote focused on how these attacks were an attack on democracy. *Hindustan Times* had headline titled "Democracy Attacked" which highlighted that "PM vows do-or die battle against terror" (*Hindustan Times* 2001a). This theme was also iterated in the newspapers through several statements by the political leaders after the Parliament attack as well as the Mumbai attacks. One can notice the willingness to join the US attempt to form a coalition of democracies in the war against terror. For instance, after the Mumbai attacks the then PM Manmohan Singh was reported as saying, "Democratic forces should join hands in fight against terror" (Venkatesan 2008), emulating the vocabulary of the American mission to spread democracy. A study into the kind of

coverage which appeared immediately after the Parliament attack can also be useful. In *The Hindu*, the editorial reiterated the observation of then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee that the Parliament attack was an attack on India's democracy, "The bloody siege of Parliament represents an attack on the citadel or the very symbol of India's democracy" (*The Hindu* 2001). The editorial in *Hindustan Times* elaborated on the note set by the PM commenting, "… terrorists have struck at the heart of India's democracy…" (*Hindustan Times* 2001b); and the editorial of *Dainik Bhaskar also* affirmed, "आतंक से नहीं डोलेगा लोकतंत्र" ("The Democracy Shall Not be Shaken by Terrorism") (*Dainik Bhaskar* 2001). However, the emphasis was not on steps to strengthen democracy and democratic institutions but on launching a "war on terrorism", even if it meant curtailing democracy at home. The American war on terror, it might be noted, has been critiqued by scholars as a war for protecting the American interests in the world that sanctioned the use of undemocratic means while blatantly flouting the international norms (see Vanaik 2007). The question that how far could a "war on terror" sustain and nurture democratic practices at home and abroad can be examined further by studying some of the counterterror measures advocated in the newspapers.

Domestic underpinnings

This section would discuss the influence of the international discourse through a study of the debate on India's policy response and the lexicon on counterterrorism that evolved after the attacks. There were elaborate news and opinion pieces suggesting hard measures to avoid the tag of a "soft state" and the debate on domestic policies was increasingly directed towards following a security doctrine, which is much more stringent, mimicking the US to a large extent. This is discussed in greater detail in this section.

India as a soft State- The newspapers went on to popularize a discourse which was much more bellicose and tolerant of aggressive action and which dismissed pacifism as weakness. It is overlooked that such a language can be detrimental to the idea of peace, human rights and international law. After the Parliament attack, many newspapers had reports, which iterated the demand from India for a hard stance on terrorism, comparable to the US. In *Amar Ujala* a report on various newspaper editorials like the *Hindustan Times* and *Tribune* was entitled "मीडिया का फैसला: भारत नरम देश, भारतीय नेता मिट्टी के बने" ("Media's Decision: Bharat a Soft State, Indian Leaders Made of Clay") (*Amar Ujala* 2001b). Columnists also wrote on these lines, for instance, analysts like Brahma Chellaney (Chellaney 2001) and Vir Sanghvi (Sanghvi 2001) blamed India's image of being a soft state as responsible for the attack. The trend continued even after the Mumbai attacks, as the newspapers continued to harp on expressions like "soft state". A *Hindustan Times*-C Fore survey interviewed people on "Is India soft on terrorism" with a majority agreeing to this (*Hindustan Times* 2008c). However, it might be pointed out that such surveys that draw on the prevalent vocabulary can also serve the purpose of setting certain agendas for the people to think and debate.

The narrative was that the US is the example of a strong state that does not tolerate the death of its people, and therefore takes stern steps against those who are a threat, the way it did in Afghanistan. In comparison, India is often regarded as a soft state as it fails to take similar action against violators. In keeping with this narrative, the editor of *Amar Ujala* proffered the example of the US, "आतंकवाद को अमेरिका या ब्रिटेन या इजराइल काबू कर पाए, तो इसलिए कि उन्होंने इसे जीरो टॉलरेंस यानी एकदम असह्य की श्रेणी में रखा है. इसलिए भारत को सॉफ्ट स्टेट कहा जाता है, जहां आदमी की ज़िंदगी की कोई कीमत नहीं है" ("America, Britain or Israel were able to rein in terrorism because they had kept

it in the category of zero tolerance which means total unacceptability. That is why India is called a soft state, where the life of man is not valued at all") (*Amar Ujala* 2008a). Some editorial pieces were emotionally charged, challenging the Indian state to action with poems summoned for the purpose, "दिनकर जी ने बहुत पहले कहा था, क्षमा शोभती उस भुजंग को, जिसके पास गरल हो. न हमारे पास गरल है, न हम डंक मार पाते हैं. ऐसे में हम क्षमाशील सॉफ्ट स्टेट होने का दंभ भरते हैं, तो यह हमारा राजनीतिक दोमुंहापन ही है" ("Dinkar ji[1] had said it long back that mercy is befitting only on a snake which has venom. Neither do we have the venom nor the sting. Even after this when we boast of being a merciful soft state then this is only our political hypocrisy" (*Amar Ujala* 2008b). Articles juxtaposed the approach of a strong state to the discourse of human rights advocates and called for strong anti-terror laws (Singh, Prakash 2008). Kalpesh Yagnik in his piece in *Dainik Bhaskar* remarked that to counter extraordinary attacks, one must take extraordinary risks – the courage for which is lacking in the Prime Minister or most political parties. He even declared that George Bush had the caliber to face the endless blame put on the US for the Afghan and Iraq war and that is why no one dared attack the US thereafter, ".... जॉर्ज बुश को अफगान और इराक युद्ध के लिए इतना कोसा गया है की कोई अंत नहीं, किंतु ... उस कलंक को लेने का माद्दा दिखाने के कारण ही अमेरिका में आतंक की फिर कोई घटना नहीं घटी". He went on to suggest that this war could be won only through, "militant nationalism" – "प्रखर राष्ट्रवाद से ही जीता जा सकेगा ऐसा अँधा विश्व युद्ध" (Yagnik 2008).

A new lexicon on counterterrorism- An interesting and heavily loaded lexicon on counter-terrorism, often borrowed from the US, emerged in the newspapers through various reports, editorials and opinion pieces. These would be deliberated in this section.

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[1] A famous Hindi poet

i. ***Homeland security, Federal Investigative Agency and anti-terror laws***- After the Mumbai attacks; there was heightened demand for a revamp of homeland security, again a term and concept imported from the US. The US had revamped its security grid and created a department of homeland security to counter terrorism. The Indian newspapers were quick to take this as a model for emulation and news, opinions and editorials tried to acquaint Indian people of this model, and to develop a consensus on that.

This assumed the shape of a campaign in newspapers with articles and reports like, "Plug the Security Holes: For the Federal Investigating Agency, Look at US Example" (Kumar 2008) and "India needs one security agency to spearhead this war, not so many" (Chaudhuri and Tikku 2008). News in newspapers ensured that people were well informed about the new plan on the anvil of the state. In *Dainik Jagran* the front page on the 5th of December had news which informed that the internal security grid would be patterned after the US model, "अमेरिका जैसा बनेगा आतंरिक सुरक्षा ग्रिड" (Singh, Jarnail 2008). The editors also gave a lot of emphasis on the proposed changes, for instance, the editorial in *The Hindu* discussed the challenge of "developing homeland security capabilities that will ensure that terrorists from across the border can never again menace the people of this country or deliver an affront to the Indian state with such ease" (*The Hindu* 2008). *The Times of India* also demanded a revamp in security in its editorial, "A federal agency to deal with terrorism has been suggested by this newspaper and now by the PM" (*The Times of India* 2008a). The entire focus was on campaigning for security infrastructure like that of the US. In an editorial piece the *Hindustan Times* discussed the problem and posed the United States, Israel and Britain as role models for hard anti-terror laws and homeland security (*Hindustan Times* 2008a). Opinion pieces

followed, for instance in *The Times of India*, K. Subrahmanyam also made a case for the emulation of the US in terms of security architecture and homeland security (Subrahmanyam 2008). Kiran Bedi, in *Dainik Bhaskar,* also gave the suggestion of a federal agency to fight terrorism (Bedi 2008).

In addition to the security agency, a stringent anti-terror law was seen as the need of the hour. However, it is to be noted that the newspapers also carried some critique of the anti-terror laws and pointed out how they could be misused and could lead to the victimization of innocents. Nevertheless, the mainstream discourse sidelined these concerns in creating a favorable opinion for the same. In particular, the Hindi newspapers like *Dainik Jagran* aggressively campaigned for them after the Parliament attacks: "**...** आतंकवाद की समस्या का समाधान सामान्य कानूनों के माध्यम से नहीं किया जा सकता" (*Dainik Jagran* 2001), and newspapers like *Amar Ujala* acquiesced in increasing the police power of the state: "लेकिन सहमत हो पाना कठिन है कि युद्ध स्तर की सुरक्षा तैयारी और आतंकवाद के खिलाफ उतनी ही आक्रामकता अपनाए बिना केवल संयम और राजनय के सहारे इस युद्ध को जीता जा सकता है…" (But it is difficult to agree that, without a preparedness of the level of war, and without acquiring that much of aggressiveness against terrorism, this war can be won merely through restraint and diplomacy) (*Amar Ujala* 2001a).

ii. **Counter terrorist doctrine and anti-terrorist force**-Newspapers have also been studied for putting spotlight on some terms emanating from the international jargon on counterterrorism. Many opinion columnists popularized these words. The discussions on counterterrorism brought in the opinion of many experts who popularized the international discourse in India as well. For instance, Brahma Chellaney in *The*

Hindu regretted that India "has no published counter-terror doctrine". His article can be studied for the entire spectrum of measures used in counterterrorism, "hounding, disrupting and smashing their cells, networks and safe havens; destroying their local network; cutting off their funding; and imposing deterrent costs (through overt or covert means) on those that promote, finance or tolerate terrorist activity" (Chellaney 2008). Similarly, Chaitanya Kalbag in *Dainik Bhaskar* asserted the need for a better national security network which would have specially trained units for countering terrorism, "हमें राष्ट्रीय सुरक्षा का ऐसा तंत्र बनाना होगा जिसमे ऐसी टुकड़ियां हों जिन्हें आतंकवाद से निपटने का उच्च-प्रशिक्षण दिया गया हो" (Kalbag 2008). This propaganda in the newspapers, for adopting stern measures for countering terrorism, was considered by the critics as a step in the direction of transforming India into a police state. Critics also point out that such heavy-handed efforts at crushing terrorism hardly attain their objectives as the root causes of terrorism are not addressed, for instance Anand Patwardhan (2008) wrote, "…real security will only come when accompanied by justice and when the principles of democracy are implemented in every part of the country, and when our children grow in an atmosphere of humanity where religious faith is out to the test of reason". However, this alternative view was overshadowed amidst the calls for the use of strong counterterrorist means in the mainstream newspapers.

The way forward

The media landscape in India is clouded by the asymmetries between the developed North and the developing South. This paper tries to show how these asymmetries have affected the media discourse in India. However, a free and fair media is essential for the functioning of a vibrant democracy and an unbiased media can play the role of

peacemaker between countries and communities. Therefore, it is imperative to take some steps to improve the role of the media. A major step could be the democratization of the media space. The Internet provides some hope in this direction. The control of the media industry by big corporates from the developed North has led people to look for alternatives in the form of low cost, available and interactive medium of Internet. The Internet has provided opportunities to civil society for an alternative medium of expression and has provided a low-cost medium for production and exchange of information. Yet, the sheer multiplicity of sources and questions of authenticity are challenges for this medium as well. The digital medium has opened a democratic space for the expression of opinion, and yet it can be used for all sorts of propaganda and misinformation as well. Finally, the lack of access to digital technologies provides a major obstacle to the realization of its full potential in developing countries. However, the space provided by the new media technologies can be utilized creatively to develop their full potential for democratization.

Conclusion

Decades after the call for a New World Information and Communication Order, the media landscape in the world remains unequal. This results in a pattern wherein international news coverage remains dependent on the media of the Global North and therefore heavily borrows its point of view and vocabulary from there. This paper shows this through a study of the impact of the discourse of the countries of the Global North on the coverage of two major terror incidents in the Indian newspapers. The paper shows the congruity in approach of the Indian and the Western media. Not only were the Parliament attack and the Mumbai attacks compared to 9/11, they also brought in the idea of "war on terror" and "global Jihad" to India and the newspapers suggested policy measures modelled on the lines

of the Western experience. The media, that could have played a role in highlighting the structural causes of terrorism and thereby could have pushed in the direction of long-term solutions for building and sustaining peace, was content with the prescriptions borrowed from the powerful countries. The paper, therefore, points towards the need of an independent media that could be a key component of building up an environment for better and creative solutions for the handling conflicts and building sustainable peace.

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Dr. Ritambhara Malviya is Assistant Professor at Kamala Nehru College in the Department of Political Science, University of Delhi.