
Media Rhetoric as a Role Player in The Indo Pak Relations

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Abstract

The Earth became a global village just about when mankind understood the importance of becoming a connected and well knit society. What made it possible to achieve that rapid communication was what we know as media, which can be very simply defined as the primary way that people shared information and/or entertained themselves. Whether or not, now the phenomenon remains same, is questionable, but what is evidently clear is how in the world of international relations, information and data have become core factors of determining the image of a nation, specifically because media is so widespread in the forms of broadcast, social, print and digital, wherein it is considered to have a pivotal role in shaping narratives and feeding into mindsets so eloquently, which had never been explored nor exploited by the previous governments as seen now, especially for the ever present Indo Pak relations. The game of hegemonic survival in IR no longer demands the use of traditional defenses but also global isolation drafted as a consequence of specific blackwashing of one another, over different media outlets as highlighted by this paper. While it may appear to have been a battle lost, based on psychological grounds, in reality it has only added to the already existing challenges for nations to now also be vigilante in unexplored media trajectories and in the art of 5th generation warfare finesse.

Keywords: Blackwashing, Indo Pak, Media, Propaganda, Rhetoric, War on Terror (WoT)

1. Introduction

The paper aims to explore how Indian national television media had approached the sensitive topic about spreading propaganda regarding Pakistan's place in the US proxy wars and the War on Terror (WoT). Media, more so print and digital media, in the early 2000s was gauged to be an armor to spread vital information about sources that may project mindsets towards certain ideas. This itself may prove to be a way of ideological engineering done in a manner so subtle, which only the very sharpest of the minds could decipher. The Indian media had always been known to use this armor to spread propaganda against Pakistan's government, and not just from now but from 1951, with the foundation of their national television channel, 'Duredarshan' under the Government of PM Nehru (Awan, et al., 2018)

Regarding conflict, scholars have increasingly discussed the relationship between mobilization of religious sentiments and violent behavior. See, Huntington (1996), Jurgensmeyer (1993), Laustsen et al. (2000), Hansclever and Rittberger (2000) and Jonathan Fox (1997, 1999, 2001, 2004).

There is a vast body of literature that has focused on the rise of Hindu oriented parties and organizations and the bearing these have for politics in India. Scholars have also commented upon and examined the implications of the rise of the Jana Sangh, the BJP and the RSS on India's international relations. For instance, Jurgensmeyer (1993), in his examination of Hindu

nationalism, has cautioned that the merger of nationalism and religion would pose danger for India and her neighbors. Similarly, Malik and Singh (1994), examining the secular and religious national narratives, suggest that the BJP is likely to be more aggressive. As quoted by the Ex prime Minister of Pakistan Imran Khan, in his 2019 UNGA speech, RSS, established in 1925, takes its inspiration from Adolf Hitler regarding its ideas of ethnic cleansing and superior racial culture all down to even the brown shirts they wore as part of their political agenda. He pointed out more than once that current Indian PM Narendra Modi was a permanent member of that organization which proves the earlier statement as to why BJP follows a rather offensive approach as their polity.

Moreover, the paper will specifically deep dive into the effect of the advent of social media and the change in the Indian and Pakistani narratives over the growing course of years and events as the two countries have come face to face with one another on numerous accounts post 9/11, like on the Babri masjid incident, the Lal Masjid incident, the Indian parliament attack, Uri attacks and more such instances where the two nuclear powerheads have tried to steer diplomatic relations so as to maintain a substantial balance of power alongside mutual respect and/or trade as far as possible without blackwashing either of them. The Pakistani media tends to portray a favorable image of Pakistan's anti-terrorism efforts. At the same time, the American and Indian elite press leans towards a more critical view, negatively impacting the country's global reputation. In addition to framing analysis, the study examines recent research methodologies, revealing a prevalent use of quantitative content analysis and surveys coupled with framing and agenda-setting theories.

The paper will shed light on differences between what the two offensive governments know and perceive in contrast to what the masses may have felt and now come to feel from past to present times.

2. Research Questions:

- What role did the Indian media rhetoric play post 9/11 in shaping the image of Pakistan worldwide?
- How far has media propagation laced with malice deteriorated the Indo Pak relations since 9/11 to 2020s.

3. Research Methodology:

3.1 Purpose of Research: To explore the growing changes in public beliefs about neighborhood and regional harmony in times when the Indian media rhetoric is intricately intertwined with the mindset of her nation and has considerable power to make or break the image of Pakistan from the 2000s. Post 2020, highlighting the necessity to exist in cooperation and harmony have been stressed on different platforms by different spokespersons from one or both the countries but only to have been reduced to verbal attempts because as per neorealism, the governments have far more confidential objectives at play and idealism has taken a rather backseat in the process.

3.2 Research Design: The following paper is a qualitative study examining the theories of constructivism and neorealism, shedding light on how the theories of idealism do not fit and appear mundane if used to explain the changing course of rapport between the two nations.

This is why the paper will focus on secondary data collection from numerous media outlets (print, digital and social) from both countries so that the pattern of the rhetoric can be explained with greater overview.

3.3 Philosophy: The paper used an interpretivist research philosophy which can be simply described as it is a qualitative method used to analyze data related to human actions in sociology.

It involves interpreting the phenomenon of the construction of reality that is fundamentally shaped by language, culture, norms, values and identity. Identity in particular, understood primarily in terms of distinction between the self and other, has come to influence the work of several scholars. It is argued that state interests and hence actions are embedded in identity. Thus in order to understand why states do what they do, we must examine their conceptions of self, and in the modern context such conceptions usually cohere around a national self. See Weldes (1999), Hopf (1998, 2002), Neumann (1999), Wendt (1999), Kublakova et al. (1998, 2001).

It is also vital to mention here that the theoretical perspective of John Mearsheimer can also be analyzed when we look at the speeches (taken as samples) of the different Indian and Pakistani Government officials at public forums, local and international. Mearsheimer's ideas starting out like that of Waltz's, imply that in neorealism, nations do not stop at any point with regards to their efforts to establish hegemony in the region. They differ however, at the point where one believes in defensive realism and the other believes in offensive realism. Mearsheimer concludes that 'states will ceaselessly pursue power' while Waltz emphasizes how the balance-of-power constrains power maximizing behavior and makes states content once they have enough power to be secure. Mearsheimer's theory will then be applied to the rise of India and this paper argues that the Indian media has played a role to make that happen in offensive mannerisms.

This paper may also lead to conclusions that Pakistani media on the other hand have maintained a more defensive standpoint when and as needed to counter any claims made against her competency from cross border and in counter dialogue.

3.4 Time Horizon: This exploratory cross-sectional study evaluates the evolution of media and the use of it in forming first governmental as well as public rhetoric, building approaches and strategies along the way as the recent history events in international relations have taken place.

3.5 Data Sample: A total of five public statements have been chosen to be assessed as the secondary information to shed light on how media plays a pivotal role in changing the rhetoric for a nation. They have been categorised for descriptive analysis chronologically so as to enhance the effect of choice of words in each of them. This tactic also sets the narrative on path regarding what I have tried to raise as my research question that each such attempt paints the counter country in a certain light and may either enhance or taint their global image and/or position. This could also have been done, as described below, in a seemingly unharmed or subtle manner, but does not miss its target and settles doubt and/or queries into the hearts and minds of the people watching and consuming this content, whether on national television or through the lens of social media.

Those five statements are as follows:

1. 2017- Mr. Shashi Tharoor's (Indian chairman of foreign affairs parliament) interviewed by Journalist Mehdi in the program Upfront for Al Jazeera Television Network.
2. Feb. 2019- Indian Pilot Abhinandhan captured and its video released by Pakistani television outlet- DunyaTV
3. May 2019- Indian PM N. Modi's interview to Indian National TV
4. Sept. 2019- PM Imran Khan's speech at United Nations Organisation General Assembly UNGA
5. May 2024- UNGA speech by Pakistani Representative of Envoy: Munir Akram and reply by Indian Representative of Envoy: Ruchira Kamboj.

4. Literature Review:

Olmstead (2014) discusses that India and Pakistan were parted through a bloody process and this developed hostility towards each other, and resultantly both have waged four wars (1947, 1965,

1971, 1999) since partition. Moreover, due to having a hegemonic design, India never maintains good relations with other small neighboring countries in South Asia. Since the partition, Pakistan and India have had a hostile attitude towards each other on various grounds. Both Pakistan and India are nuclear countries and this hostility makes the situation more alarming because if any war occurs between these two then it can affect the whole world. Johnson (2005) argues that due to nuclear tests there came some equilibrium of power in the region which led to settlement of the Kargil crisis of 1999, but the hostile emotions are still intact on both the sides. The situation becomes even worse by analyzing that the public also has strong negative emotions for each other and they are more inclined towards war, instead of peaceful coexistence. The apparent reason for this favor seems to be the war rhetoric used by the politicians and military personnel, which influences the public in a way that, the public neither cares much about extra spending on the defense budget, nor it is concerned about the destruction of war. Both Pakistani and Indian leaders use pro-war rhetoric to build pro-war sentiments in their public, resultantly, the public is always ready to have war with each other at any cost, and all is done through the war rhetoric.

The methodical core of Aristotle's Rhetoric, which is the theorem that there are three 'technical' persuaders' or 'means of persuasion'. Persuasion comes about either through the character (ethos) of the speaker, the emotional state (pathos) of the hearer, or the argument (logos) itself. Both Pakistani and Indian state representatives have always used either of them, or maybe even all three at different intervals to lure the populations into believing the narratives that are systematically fed to them. This article shall also base its findings on all these three tactics in different interviews as explained more elaborately in the discussion and analysis.

It can be believed that since post 9/11, the Pakistani image has been fragile in the media with local, government funded outlets persistent on the minisiculy of issues here and in contrast the Indian (and even American) media houses in blaring the threat that the very existence of Pakistan poses to the entire world according to Safwan and Razzaq (2023) in their qualitative content analysis reviewing nearly 39 previous studies based on data from 2001 to 2008.

Likewise, three newspapers including daily Jang, daily Nawa-I-Waqt, and daily Pakistan, considered to be representatives of the Urdu-language elite press of Pakistan, were selected for this study. The method used to measure the phenomenon is called framing where contents of the selected dailies were measured both quantitatively and qualitatively. Data was collected through a systematic sampling method, while a coding sheet was used as a tool for data collection. Unsigned main editorials of the selected newspapers were analyzed to examine the nature of relationship existed between the two entities i.e. the Urdu-language elite press, and the dictatorial government of Gen Pervez Musharraf, on the issue of 'WoT' in Pakistan. The results revealed that the selected elite newspapers, in general, remained critical to the dictatorial regime on the issue of 'WoT'. The findings also revealed that daily Nawa-I-Waqt remained highly critical to the government as compared to its other contemporaries i.e. daily Jang, and daily Pakistan. It was also revealed that the Urdu-language elite press while framing the 'War on Terror' remained somewhat supportive and rarely neutral to the dictatorial regime on its policy on 'WoT' all according to the article by Nadeem F. Paracha published in 2019.

5. Discussion:

As explained above in the research methodology, a specific sample size of public statements or hurls issued by both governments and/or their representatives have been sampled here so as to explain Aristotle phenomenon with the help of interpretivist theory, constructing groundwork and

building it up to understand how subtle psychological rhetoric building is also at play very actively with the choice of words these politicians use on public platforms which may either woo their potential voter or listener, or may plummet their agenda into failure. This is so because the media today is a weaponiser which can either make or break conflicts in today's cut throat world of global politics. In the words of Yaswant Sinah, India's former External Affairs Minister; 'Journalists become co-conspirators in the task of living behind the

baggage of hatred, suspicion and violence (Hussein, N. , 2009) This is so because they hide behind the words of each other and sometimes even go beyond twisting them to depict an otherwise completely new meaning. This trend is also possible to be seen post 2002 when private channels first became airing news other than the strictly government scrutinised media outlets like the national television and the national news both under the control of incumbent Pakistan and Indian Governments. Hence the mass media's role cannot be underestimated in any capacity whatsoever.

From 2001, it can be seen, after Pakistani President and COAS Pervez Musharraf's attempt in the Agra Summit to try and find the solution to the ever pending Kashmir issue, we see that he used media propagation excessively, alongwith the inclusion of world powers, in an understandably mature approach to bring attention to the unresolved issue. Even at the time of 12th SAARC summit in 2004, nearly now 2 decades ago, when Absar Alam wrote a newspaper article to cover the news of arrival of the Indian Prime Minister Mr. Atal Bihari Vajpayee in Islamabad, the capital city of Pakistan, he quoted, ' The Ego has landed,'- Ego word used in context of the Indian PM suggesting a hint of satisfaction to view India driving the move towards Diplomatic talks and plausible normalization with Pakistan. Thus, the discussion proceeds below:

The specific reason behind choosing the following five public statements and/or media statements is for a certain given fact. This can be accredited to the arrival of Narendra Modi's government post 2016. This government for the first time had challenged to change and alter the previously very inclusive and secular political setup in the Indian parliament, now leaning more towards the age-old, Chanakya influenced movement of spread of Hindutva.

Chanakya needs no introduction in the world of International Relations, as he is known utmost as one of the sharpest minds in the Mauryan Empire from 375 BC onwards. He was Prime Minister to the Emperor Chandragupta Maurya and even his son Bindusara and is renowned for his cut throat training and political insight in grooming the next emperor. celebrated in indian culture and Hindu literature as a mastermind and philosopher, it takes no rocket science to understand that the late Indian politician, writer and anti British activist, Vinayak Damoder Savarkar took influence from Chanakya and current Indian PM Narendra Modi took inspiration from V.D.Savarkar to weigh his political decisions and decide strategic moves to make India gain a stronghold in the regional politics since 2016 and before as well. This indirect connection of the three sheds a clear picture for IR enthusiasts to comprehend how and why the politics of South Asia have changed drastically, whether or not adversely, since after 2016, which makes sense as to why this researcher opted to choose major public statements made by both authorities post 2016.

6. Analysis:

Each of the five chosen interview/ statement is separately assessed as follows:

1. Aug. 2017- Mr. Shashi Tharoor's (Indian chairman of foreign affairs parliament) interviewed by Journalist Mehdi for Al Jazeera Television:

This interview was conducted in promotion efforts for Shashi Tharoor's book, 'The Elephant,

the Tiger and the Cell Phone’ and interviewer Mehdi Hasan pointed out certain reservation that he had had, at the start of the interview regarding the subtitle of the book proclaiming India to be the new 21st century predictable super power, to which Mr. Shashi Tharoor humorously responded that he disagreed with the American publicist induced subtitle but it was too late before it caught his attention. As the interview progressed further, we can see that the choice of words by both the men were nonvolatile and not distasteful. upon further line of questioning, Hasan pointed out that with Mr. Modi winning the said previous elections (of 2016), there has been a rise in the hindutva movement and questions were asked about a Muslim man in Uttar Pradesh state of India murdered due to lynching my enraged Hindu mob for allegedly having beef as a food preference. To reply to the same, Mr. Tharoor clarified that his political party, sitting in opposition showed deep remorse at different public platforms and sympathy with the affectees with their Vice President Mr. Rahul Gandhi even paid a formal physical visit to that Muslim family.

In this way, Mr. Tharoor hopes to appease to the demand of a satisfactory response against the anti Muslim rhetoric that interviewer Mr. Hasan is discreetly trying to point into the direction of. When pushed in the same direction, Tharoor, with his expert public speaking skill, does come to admit that although he might not be out on the street protesting against the Modi government as he feels that the PM with his silence has not been able to condone the unruly acts towards the second largest majority population of India, that is, the Muslims. Tharoor was also in he same interview accused by Hasan to have been called out by late Mrs. Tharoor of having an affair with a Pakistani female journalist which Mr. Tharoor denied his wife having illnesses that may have led her to tweet such accusations. He also clarified that she passed away shortly after that tweet as well. This led the conversation diverted towards Pakistan and Mr. Shashi’s perspective about the existing IndoPak relations as he had served as Ex Foreign Minister for India as well. When questioned if ever India would have to apologize Kashmiris in future if there was ever a chance of being liberated, like Tharoor demanded from British parliament regarding the atrocities they committed in India prior to 1947, he expertly diverted the question towards a strictly economic aspect of the answer and the need to apology instead of trying to justify the political nature of the argument with which Hasan was interrogating. upon further perusal to involve a third party to interfere and maybe broker a peace deal between the Indo Pak rivalry extending to a 68 year long period , then, so Tharoor tactfully replied that the need is not of the third party interference but instead of the need to end the terrorist activities supported by Pakistan against India and the nature of Pakistan politics to quote: ‘prefer to bleeding India to death by a thousand cuts whereas India in turn has managed to resist terror by not resorting to nuclear arms nor war. It is not a happy situation.’

As pointed earlier, the choice of words by both men, showed a very mature way of handling criticism and also an applaudible attempt to portray a soft image of the far right hindutva BJP party led by Mr. N. Modi. This type of media talks may have paved way for further negotiations to be undergone had it continued in future also. but the following interviews change that plausibility.

2. Feb. 2019- Indian Pilot Abhinandhan captured and its video released by Pakistani television outlet- Dunya TV News:

After the surprise attack of the Indian Army on the green signal of their then Prime Minister Mr. Modi, pilot Abhinandan entered Pakistani airspace on 27th Feb. 2019. To the horror of the Pakistani public, it appeared as if Indian forces had informally called on war with Pakistan. However, due to the fact that the Saudi royal Prince Mohammed Bin Salman was on a state visit to Pakistan, Islamabad that very week, the then Prime Minister of Pakistan chose not to issue any statement publically regarding an earlier leaked footage of Indian pilot Abhinandan’s crash landing

and live capture by Pakistani people and then handing over of the same to the Pakistani Army authorities. Later, only after the departure of SAUDI royal Prince MBS, did the then Prime Minister Pakistan Imran Khan issued a very diplomatic and a rather mature statement publically, wherein he announced that this was a rather childish approach of PM modi from India to try and sabotage the plausibility of better Pak-saudi trade and political relations to which he did not wish to give more air and attention to unnecessarily. He also, in an unexpected turn of events, proclaimed that the Pakistani Government had decided to release the captured Indian pilot as a goodwill gesture which completely threw off guard not just the indian authorities but also the worldwide international community as none, and certainly not the Modi government had anticipated the Pakistani Government to play such an off card bordering on smart diplomacy and humanitarianism.

However, post the entire episode, the Pakistan Army, then deemed to be saviours of Pakistan's military image and solidarity, held a formal press conference and event of a sort to engage and inform world wide authorities about their much applaudable efforts. This event was broadcasted by the Dunya TV network on official rights. The words used in this press statement by the army spokesperson of Pakistan Army to justify their own one day later counter attack on Indian grounds after briefly penetrating Indian airspace deliberately, was that it was their duty, their obligation to counter attack to set an example for any other nation who make choose to think that they can take Pakistan Army for granted and impregnate Pakistani airspace with hostile intentions. As for the Indian Air Force, the speaking Pakistani Air Force official showed borderline contempt and distaste like, 'bringing 20 planes and only four able to drop bombs speaks of an unprofessional air force.' and for Pakistan Air Force, words like 'capable and professional Air Force, so that the world and Indian analysts can know that they cannot take Pakistan Air Force non seriously and we were fully capable of hitting our targets but we intentionally did not hit so as not to cause civilian loss.' He also provided proof further where and how they had targeted six areas in counter attack to Indian targets of four, two more, to one up Pakistan's score. He stressed further that these all were fully legitimate targets for us as the Indian Army had directed the attacks on Pakistan's sanctity. Sharing the target imagery and the actual footage, they also were ready with proof to support their claims that their attacks were merely only to settle the score and leave a lasting message to Pakistan's rivalries while also maintaining the sanctity of the area and the civilians around it but yet we achieved our targets according to our political objectives.

The question answer session post his statements, were also curated in a fashion which would had humour and sarcasm in responses hurled towards the Indian Air Force, which in the heat of that time and moment did appeal to the audience watching in Pakistan, but as a student of IR, I understand how these hurls and insults may tend to hurt sentiments and cause misunderstandings across border. A strong man may not need to shout from the mountain tops of the strength that he may possess, his stature and presence may quietly prove to do that, but if the Pakistan Air force felt the need to arrange an event and invite numerous air force marshals from all over the world sitting with their interpreter earphones plugged to their ears to understand all the tall claims that he was making, then by all means it was a media rhetoric being deliberately fed to the masses to take notice and keep applauding the Pakistan Army for their efforts with little regard to how this event could have been used to build up further CBMs with the cross border Modi government. It is to note that some of these statements had partial truth to them, for instance the fact that the Indian Air Force has falsely claimed that an F-16 jet of Pakistan had been destroyed by their pilot Abhinandan before he was captured. The Pakistani Air marshal shared the footage of the Indian pilot's wreckage and the claim that no F-16 had been harmed on Pakistan's soil as it was also

backed by the USA company who flew in to weigh the truth of Indian claims as they took pride in the military machine they sold to Pakistan. They recounted the number of sold and used F-16s in Pakistan and it coincided with the previous numbers, thereby proving that the Indian claims were entirely false about jet wreckage.

This further highlights what the research question asks, media rhetoric becomes the guiding principle to the population's narrative and induces ideas and influences their perceptions and that's just what the Pakistani and Indian media have been doing repetitively over the course of years.

3. May 2019- Indian PM N. Modi's interview to Indian National TV:

This interview was conducted by the Indian national television to showcase a more humane side of the 16th to-be PM of the country, Mr. Narendra Modi as an accountable person of conscience, standing in front of his people on Live television, accountable for all that he had done in the past five years of his government. These were all A game populist tactics by his campaign office to make sure that he would be able to win the next upcoming elections in India as well and they did prove to take him beyond and earn him office eventually more than not once, but twice. He appeared during the interview, aired specifically on a Saturday night to a quite a pro Modi population who received him on stage upon his introduction, with a standing ovation and overwhelming welcome, when he entered centre stage in their national dress, a pajama and kameez, an attempt of earlier mention of Ethos and Pathos to relate to the watching crowd. He was also all smiles throughout the interviews and especially as the conversation turned towards the relations with Pakistan next door and his plans to sort relations with the ever present and ever threatening neighbour Pakistan, inflicting himself upon his listeners as a genuine do-gooder even for the Pakistanis themselves, when he narrated an anecdote about having stopped over in Lahore on a sudden and cordial invitation by the then PM of Pakistan Nawaz Sharif to his nephew's wedding. PM Modi recalled having consulted his security head and then taking a risk, (projecting him as a risk taker yet a responsible neighbour) and stopped over while flying back to India from Kabul for a few hours and depicted this gesture as a quite by-the-way decision taken so as to infuse spontaneous and virtuous relatability with his audience which shows his populist nature of polity. However, as a student of International Relations and diplomacy, I analyzed his choice of words and specific narrations which were bound to influence his potential voters' decision taking. A few of them are sampled below:

- a. Half hour in to the interview feeling the need to connect his achievements with convincing and bringing China to table relating to trade pacts by downplaying Pakistan's stance on Kashmir Issue by saying, quote, 'previously alone Russia stood for the past

four decades with India on Kashmir's stance and the whole world thought Pakistan was a victim, and now, (he meant to credit his Prime Ministership with it) since about a the past five years alone China stands with Pakistan on their stance while the world sympathises with India.'

- b. He then chooses to narrate the story of being spontaneously invited as a goodwill gesture by the Pakistan PM Nawaz Sharif to Lahore on the wedding of his nephew. He decided to go ahead and land in Lahore after a merger phone call of consultation to his Foreign Minister of External Affairs Ms. Sushma Swaraj, making it sound as if he was a man of heart and 'feels' the need to accept Mr. Sharif's invitation and tagged along without any convincing security plan thought beforehand. This coupled with the fact that he acted as he was THE brave PM that India needs when he sat without any feeling of repercussions in

Sharif's helicopter. He insisted how he was able to send a nonverbal message to the entire population to Pakistan that Mr. Modi is a really pure soul who actually wants to do good by the Pakistani population and government.

- c. Then he gave a reference to pathan attacks in a week following that visit and conveniently pointing the finger at Pakistan that India did give out an olive branch but it was Pakistan's agencies who refuse to take a hint, thereby the world got a live example of how Pakistan is the problem creator and India being the problem shooter.
- d. Highlighting Pulwama and Uri attacks and the fact that India had been right all along- rather Modi's govt.'s takes being right all along- also thereby pulling a gig of being superior in his diplomatic efforts as compared to his opposition parties with a more neutral and leftist approach, like that of Congress.
- e. Playing to the audience's humour by appealing to them the irony of the kind of weird enemy (PM Sharif and Pakistan) he's faced with, hence mocking his own tragedy and earning the naive listeners' respect.

4. Sept. 2019- PM Imran Khan's speech at United Nations Organisation General Assembly UNGA

Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan on Friday, 27 September, devoted a significant part of his maiden address to the UN General Assembly to the Kashmir issue, demanding that India must lift the "inhuman curfew" in Kashmir and release all "political prisoners". The following points were worthy to notice that highlight again the choice of words, ethos, pathos and logos to interpret how the then Prime Minister Imran Khan knew would reach across miles and millions to convey his message and inspire globally. These points were as follows:

- a. Body language to approach the speaker podium, bold and confident, taking up space and walking with purpose, coupled with the deliberate choice of national dress to represent peace of Islam and Pakistan's standing at the UNGA in 2019
- b. Over fifty minute speech on five important pointers clearly defined for the audience to understand the agenda with which Imran Khan's government planned to take Pakistan forward.
- c. Highlighted Modi as a permanent member of RSS, who was inspired by Ex- German autocrat and military leader during WWII, Hitler. Even to the extent that they wore brown shirts which symbolically tied them to the becoming a far right political party, the BJP, who like the Germans in 1925, believed in racial superiority. Mr. Imran Khan went on to point out that the BJP also deemed Hindus to be an aerial race, believed in ethnic cleansing of Muslims, and even some Christians in India- this ideology of hate that murdered the great M. Gandhi (under the invisible mentorship and legacy left behind of Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, as explained in the literature above) propagating terrorism in prejudice towards only the Muslim Kashmiris killing over a 100,000 of them in the years of his power, 11000 women raped backed by UN reports.
- d. The Gujarat Massacre of 2002 highlighted how the then PM Modi of India was anti Pakistan openly regardless of all the tall claims he might have made on the national television network back then or now even.
- e. Special mention of Modi government to disregard Geneva Convention and Simla Accord of 1972, signed between Bhutto and Gandhi Governments earlier (to honour the Kashmiris and grant them a special status until a just decision could be taken involving and satisfying both sides). The Indian PM, as pointed out by Mr. Khan, failed to keep up with humanity and civil relations between the two governments when he decidedly removed article 370 off from Kashmir which gave it a special status by the UN, and then deadlocked the

population there in isolation from the world. Eight million people in a curfew- locked in as animals in a zoo, almost making it one of the world's largest open air prisons, was indeed a very unthoughtful decision.

- f. The abrogation of Article 370 removed Kashmir's ability to determine its own property and settlement laws and ended their autonomy almost with immediate effect. This was deemed to be a massive injustice by the Pakistanis but also a grave jeopardy for the Kashmiris themselves. The removal of Article 370 proved that the Modi government was severe, aggressive and hell bent on integrating Kashmir to India through a doctrine of Hindu nationalist approach.
- g. Khan also pointed out that the total number of security forces then reached a staggering 900,000 imposed in Kashmir.
- h. Adding shame to the world standing quiet and watching as India is a huge potential market so no one bats an eye. He is keen to notify the speaker of UNGA and the listeners present and virtual, that the capitalist nature of the world makes it inhuman enough to stay unbothered by the ever present Kashmir Issue.
- i. To add to the misery of ethnic cleansing, there is also a sought through campaign of genocide where approximately 13000 boys had been abducted and even Indian politicians who were pro Kashmiri found themselves at the whims of the Hindutva implementing Modi fascists (which can be proven by the earlier quoted interview between Hasan and Tharoor as to how he lost his position when being too vocal about Kashmiri issues and also having wed a Kashmiri girl)
- j. Khan tactfully, if not happily also points that looking at all the above course of action of the Indian authorities it may no doubt lead to another Pulwama-like assault, that may be in the works, and then conveniently, they would blame Pakistan, like they have earlier, and shall in future as well.
- k. Khan ends his note on an intelligent yet hypothetical question, that with so much radicalization on the way and Pakistan snubbed with it at every chance gotten by the Indian government, it is almost pertinent to ask if Muslims were the children of a lesser God?

5. May 2024- UNGA speech by Pakistani Representative of Envoy: Munir Akram and reply by Indian Representative of Envoy: Ruchira Kamboj:

Munir Akram's stance and speech showed a controlled usage of mediocre words and delivery method to not unnecessarily hype the moment, despite him quoting a very stern sentence used by the then PM Modi in his speech shortly back home in India, in which he quoted, 'This is new India who will come into your home and kill you,' to respond to Pakistan's so called state backed para military and non-government assaults on Indian soil. He also stressed on hindutva facism, RSS policy , genocide of muslim fraternity in India and all it leading to South Asian regional standing and joining it all to a connection to gaza genocide. Also quoted facts without sugar coating BJP's standing on spread of hinduism with commendable and subtle influence of mindset. He concluded his statements by calling India as a 'dangerous entity, providing insecurity to the region'.

In response to Mr. Munir's allegations, Indian backed websites headlined Rucha's reply as befitting and dynamic, wherein she when came to the podium, her body language showed a practised and mastered skill to deviate real claims of any counterparty so that only emphasis is placed on India not as the problem maker but rather the problem solver, including the choice to wear white and traditional clothing creating a subtle psychological impact while speechmaking. She stressed on the country's ethos, quoting historical inspirations as Vedas and other harmony inducing religious scriptures, banking on to the existing secularism as a means to sustain religious

freedom and cultural diversity in India, making perpendicular claims against Mr. Munir's remarks earlier, blamed the Pakistan delegation, without even so acknowledging the presence nor even taking the name of Pakistan, in an attempt to again downplay her presence in the General Assembly or even in the world itself, choosing to use the words like 'punious' and 'dubious' for Pakistan's authorities and kept referring to the Pakistani delegation as, 'that delegation' immaturely, instead of actually facing the them in the eye to call out what they deem to be incorrectly quoted by Mr. Munir's team.

7. Conclusion:

In 2017, The BBC World Service poll estimated the following statistics:

- Only 5% of Indians view Pakistan's influence positively
- 85% Indians express a negative view
- 11% of Pakistanis view India's influence positively
- 62% Pakistanis express a negative view

It is vital to assess the new statistics as the world became an entirely different place post Covid and 2020, as humanity revived and the humans got to see death from a very close place of inspection. This aroused feelings of mutual understanding and the need to cut the counter party some slack and treat them more humanly.

The Pew Research Centre conducted a poll studies in the early months Jan. to March 2024 (Gabella, Ramones, Aug. 2024) as to how South Asians view other communities around them in the region. It included countries like India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh but were unable to survey in Pakistan. The following sheds a light on the same:

- 61% of Indians viewed Pakistanis as unfavourable
- 12% viewed Pakistanis as favourable
- 27% answered that they were unsure

While the media rhetoric may have been hell bent on attempts to oust Pakistan's genuinity amongst the Indian population upon their authorities' hearsay, we can see that the impact has changed towards positivity, only if very slightly. This may be due to cross border exchange of social media interaction and celebrities interacting with one another, showing respect and courtesy in neutral areas of meetup like the very frequently visited UAE, USA or UK, where celebrity meet and greet culture and open mixing of both communities has brought substantial change, even if merger, in how both of them view one another, less as hostile neighbours and more as potential trade markets and humans principally.

These findings sufficiently conclude for my research questions posed initially,

- What role did the Indian media rhetoric play post 9/11 in shaping the image of Pakistan worldwide?
- How far has media propagation laced with malice deteriorated the Indo Pak relations since 9/11 to 2020s?

The answers to both the above questions though subjective, do shed light that yes, media rhetoric is an often underplayed element in shaping the population's opinion, overlooked and not dauntingly highlighted when strategizing media campaigns of populist leaders or political parties nor even domestic and/or foreign policy of a nation. This is evident in the era of social media and particularly post 2018 when people as a force of a nation have a chance of projecting their perspectives autonomously on the Internet and newspapers and televisions are no longer the only media outlet.

9. Recommendations:

In this day and age, the soft image of a nation and its leader is necessary to counter the attempts of blackwashing a country's more sinister or questionable polity, if there exists one. It is highly imperative that the academia and business community of both the nations come forward, if the governments (one influenced by Hindutva and the other militarised) cannot initiate CBMs, to engage in dialogue and cross border trust building. This is so, because as quoted by one of the leading business men and new televised series 'Shark Tank-India' judges in one of their social media podcasts said rightly, that, for India to become the next rising superpower, it is important that she is surrounded by stable, if not threatening neighbours. If Pakistan's economy continues to stagger like it is currently then it may continue to slide into questionable paramilitary or military tactics and sales which may weaponize the region and spread distrust instead of promotion of better trade and economic activity. Likewise, academia can play a potential role in exchange of students, researchers and teachers alike to assess each other's perspective of history and transnational relations only so that there is better understanding of each other's' intimidations and aspirations.

8. Limitations:

1. To carry out extensive research into numerous forms of media was difficult due to time constraints.
2. The paper only focuses on popular sources of media only and thereby abnormalities and/or unique reports may not have been covered here.
3. There is a lack of research on this topic and hence this paper has tried to fill a research gap with context to how the previously built narratives have brought the general masses to believe as of now about both the governments as of 2024.

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