

Evaluating Role of International News Media Discourses on China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)

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Abstract

Pakistan China's diplomatic ties and the joint venture of the new Silk Road project by China is first great step of diplomacy, and free trade route, which has been prominent in the media from around the world. China and Pakistan trade and industry passage seemed to be the basic in cooperation regarding environment. China-Pakistan Economic Corridor CPEC had been turning into a new chapter in the history of diplomacy friendship. This research explains content analysis to obtain information related to the role of media in forming public perception. The content of the editorials of four international newspapers had been taken. The researcher brought out themes from these editorials and compared its language and discussions made by the authors. These newspapers consisted of daily Dawn from Pakistani print media, "The Times of India" a highly read newspaper from India, The New York Times a renowned newspaper from USA and China Daily editorials were selected for examining the connotations of the message conveyed to the public. The data obtained by the said sources and evidence were taken from the editorials and then it were framed in the content analysis. The findings presented issues relating to the entire pact because of the political scenario. The research recommends using more strategically sound monitoring of the mass media in these countries so that the involvement of the public opinion may be implemented for the plan at a broader scale.

Keywords: China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), Silk Road, Diplomacy, Bilateral cooperation.

Introduction

The said issue of China Pakistan Economic Corridor alias (CPEC) is an enlargement scheme contracted between two friendly nations that are Republic of China and Islamic Republic of Pakistan. The pact between these two nations seemed to be a "game changer" on commercial and geo-strategic scale between two nations Pakistan and China. It seemed to bring prosperity, industrial revolution, economic strength and stability in Asia. This project seemed to open a new page in the history of the region by

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inculcating peace, prosperity and by addressing the challenges of world such as; unemployment and under-development" CPEC contained two sided elements, the first it seemed to act as foreign policy successes for the Republic of China (an expansion of great China in the South China Sea to the Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea). Secondly this project seemed to help Pakistan in attaining economic settlement and supremacy in Pakistan and Subcontinent. Whatever benefits and advantages might be attained; major beneficiary in this game plan seemed to be Pakistan.

This economic corridor plan spins all over the place in Pakistan due to it's length and breadth. It connects Gwadar, in the Pakistan's southwest, to China's north-western province of Xinjiang and involves several grand-projects along the way (Mushtaq, 2017). China and Pakistan established radical and military ties (Singh, 2007). These fifty year political military ties had now been emerged in business relations. This new format had been termed as CPEC which represents a new economic dimension to their relationship(Kumar, 2007).

CPEC had been an exclusive project to fulfill economical needs and desire of both the countries but still this project had to face lots of hindrances. These difficulties are mostly connected with; a) instability in Pakistan due to terrorism. This major threat had been exaggerated by Western media and Indian media in the form of hype. They are portraying it in a wrong way and sabotaging the entire project. Media groups in these countries are forcing to proclaim that militants in Pakistan are working under the auspices of government Of Pakistan. The Government of Pakistan patronized these militant groups as they quote that Baluchistan Liberation Army (BLA), had previously attacked on Chinese workers near Gawadar port(Javaid, 2016). It is obvious that much of CPEC achievement hinge on how *good* Pakistani civil and military leadership can manage those threats.

In the present scenario, route of new silk roads seemed to deepen continuing opposition between two rivals China and India. The pressure of this opposition seemed low in case of US and China. This financial and economic investment of China seemed to alarm to US.

Present study is qualitative in its design. The researcher made close reading of the articles published during the period of 2010 till present to identify Indian, Pakistani, Chinese and European newspapers views regarding CPEC in news discourse. Present research is descriptive qualitative research. It is a type of research that does not include any calculation or enumerating (Syamsudin, 2002).

Syamsudin maintains that qualitative method is concerned with providing descriptions of phenomena that occur naturally. This method attempts to present the data from the perspective of the observed subject.

Literature Review

The Islamic Republic of Pakistan is an agro-industrial country of South Asia with multi-structured economy and relatively average level of economic development (volume PPP GDP in 2014 amounted to \$ 882.3 billion or 0.8% of global GDP). This project seemed to develop geographical connectivity with improvised transportation system which seemed to bring collaborative chapter in region (Alam, Li, & Baig, 2019). This connection of nation obviously brings economic activities to develop trade among nations and due to its geopolitical importance Pakistan seemed to occupy a pivot position in this project (Sahir & Qureshi, 2007). Due to its important geopolitical location the neighboring country India seemed to portray different figure of Pakistan and China relations. This situation is evident from the Indian mass media houses. It is an undeniable fact that mass media in present age acts as an agent in policy making and developing opinion of the masses. International framework context the news media acts as a harbinger of a nation through the flow of news. So it may be concluded that constitution of social reality largely depends upon news media (Park, 2003).

It is quite evident that the mass media is said to be the major source of information in the globalization age where masses get firsthand information about foreign relationship of nations and which develops image of a country (MCNelly & Izcaray, 2016, p.546). Opinions displayed in the news media shares information bulk as well as help in the opinion making of people. Navasky very rightly quoted in Saleem (2017) that Journalistic approach towards specific region, culture or country seemed to be the mind maker of nations (Yang, 2013). Pakistan is surrounded by Iran, India, Afghanistan and China as its neighboring countries. These neighbors share mutual foreign relation in the context of their interests such as; monetary associations, administrative location and culture likewise philosophical instances (Siraj. 2008).

Due to its importance global news media and regional south Asian media is giving more importance to CPEC project. China and Pakistan mass media seemed in favor of the project while American and Indian media seemed to oppose this project. There is number of research studies conducted which revealed multiple factors responsible for framing the news media of global media on this project (Saleem, 2008). The results of these studies identified that bilateral relations, regional conflicts, trade and ideological differences seemed to play pivot role in the projection of the CPEC in mass media. It is also identified that coverage of international issues in the media most often support their governments and guards interest of the governing parties (Chang, Jian, Hsien and Chih 2014).

Present study also deals with the framing of an international event in cross national context. So source selected as a sample were elite newspapers of China, India, Pakistan and America. Hence this study major aim is to explore the difference between

these cross nation newspapers coverage, frame used and selection of news sources for the reporting of the Pakistan and China developing ties as financial roadmap.

Present literature review attempted to allocate the answers of; how successful this economic path had been yet in the eyes of international press. The Pakistani ministry in finance viewed thee ties in this way (2014):

Development of strengthening ties between two nations Pakistan and China prolongs over many years and enjoys friendly relation and support in the hour of difficulty. Keeping these unities together aforesaid nations are going to agree on memorandum of unity as per offer from China to join hands in trade. This trade would consist of import and export and with the passage of time a link for the commercial gains between two countries would make it stronger.

This link was developed in January 1963 and both of the countries signed a MoU for the long term trade (p.126).

The renewal of this past agreement is made again between these countries as an extension to the previous agreement. Pakistan is going to support one belt one road concept of China on the whole. The initial reports on this project obviously designed a new era for the Asian countries and supportive to the South Asian countries especially. The reports findings stated the duration of this project which stated that it will take three years to complete this project and it was announced that with the initiation of this scheme a whole new development would appear in the area. It is expected that major beneficiary in the region would be Pakistan as it would strengthen economy of Pakistan and put healthy impact on the GDP of the country.

Similar assertions were made by the federal minister of Pakistan Mr. Ahsan Iqbal (2016) who put forth the project as future of Pakistani nation and youth. He identified that with this project all provinces of Pakistan would decrease unemployment and almost three billion jobs will be given to the people in all provinces of Pakistan. He assured that no discernment would be made among provinces and distribution of benefits would be given at equal basis.

Here the role of national and international media seemed most important. At national level mass media may synchronize domestic and international communities to advocate the case of CPEC. National angularities in Baluchistan and Sindh needs to be addressed completely and the rights of provinces may be given on identical grounds.

Present study is based on the editorials published in the daily newspapers of renowned publications such as Daily Dawn from Pakistan is read at large level nationally and internationally. Likewise, The China Daily in China and Times of India in India is read widely. In USA, The New York times is read wide spread and makes opinions national as well as at international level. The researcher took editorials published since

Results

Bulletin means of communication said to be the key network between public and representatives. Legislators' access contents portrayed in the media and on the basis of the content they articulate public opinion; on the other, the media are the people's major source of information on what policymakers are doing (Soroka, 2003). Lippmann (2017) originated on the basis of this:

In global world the opinion development is now a day in the hands of the editorial writers who make grounds for the people's opinion.

Another researcher from media Ross (2006) advocated the same

It is media in the world who plays emphatic role internationally. They develop or extinct conflicts, issues or matters among nations. Now first hand information sourced to people is media and media acts as a power in the affairs of a state. In 2013 Pakistani Newspaper "Dawn" published one article on CPEC while China Daily also published one article. Since it was initial period, so the Indian Times and, The New York Times did not show any concerns about the matter and issue. On the whole two editorials had been published. In year 2014 Dawn published total nine articles showing opinion about CPEC while China Daily printed ten editorials and Times of India published 19 articles while The New York times Published 02 editorials. On the whole 40 editorials were published regarding CPEC in the year 2014. With the beginning of 2015 the number of editorials began to prosper as the outlines of this project were quite visible in Asian territory. Year 2015 saw 28 editorials from Dawn newspaper while China daily printed ten editorials and 09 and 02 were published by times of India and the New York Times. Deceleration seemed to occur in year 2016 in editorial as the CPEC seemed to have less importance in the eyes of USA while India and Pakistan seemed to exploit their position as in Dawn a Pakistani New daily printed 31 editorials regarding CPEC project while Times of India printed 12 editorials and China daily published only two and USA based Newspaper The New York times did not publish any. In year 2017, Dawn editorials acceded more as CPEC seemed to progress rapidly so policy shifts saw major drifting towards Pakistani benefits in Asia so 30 editorials were published in Pakistan on CPEC while in India 16 editorials esteemed problems and negative propaganda against CPEC in the editorials of Times of India. On the other way round China Daily and New York Times published two editorials each.

On the whole Dawn, Pakistani newspaper published majority of the editorials on CPEC that were 99 while Times of India published 56 and China Daily printed 27 and New York Times printed out 06 editorials since 2013 to 2017. Findings As per the discussed facts and figures in the current strategic scenario, following findings were taken from the contextual and content analysis

1. It was found that majority of the opinions shared in the editorials of Times of India and New York Times 04 editorials were published which showed positive opinionative from the editors of Times of India and New York Times which is 6.45% percent while 47 Editorials were written showing negative opinion which is 75.80% of the editorials while 20 articles were written on neutral opinions which is 32.25% of the editorials remained neutral in their opinion making.
2. It may be concluded that the Indian Print media and American print media seemed terrified with the CPEC and China influence in Asia. American interest is in China they do not want to see China getting into an economic power while India wished to have hegemony in Asia. India is threatened with Pakistan and China both as prosperous and stable Pakistan meant dangerous to India and China's influence in Pakistan would make Pakistan stabilize and economically strong. So both of these countries print media in their pursuit seemed to develop blame game on China and Pakistan.
3. It was found that Framing of CPEC in Pakistani newspapers is supportive; the framing of CPEC in Chinese newspapers is supportive; CPEC is considered and described by the leadership of both countries (China-Pakistan) as a game changer in the area.
4. It was found that majority of the opinions shared in the editorials 70% were positive while 12.5% of the editorials showed negative opinion while 17.5% of the editorials remained neutral in their opinion making.
5. It was found that majority of the opinions shared in the editorials 50% were positive while 70% of the editorials showed negative opinion while 25% of the editorials remained neutral in their opinion making.

Researcher took editorials of the journals and analyzed the contents and formed out factors based on the contents. Data were transcribed using content analysis and common themes were set out to analyze data. From the gathered data, researcher assorted important emerging threads culminating in five broad themes and several sub-themes or categories which researcher used to organize the data.

Table 1

Inscription of editorials opinion

Years	Dawn	China Daily	Times of India	The New York Times	Total
2013	01	01	0	00	02
2014	09	10	19	02	40
2015	28	10	09	02	49
2016	31	04	12	00	47
2017	30	02	16	02	50
Total	99	27	56	06	188

Print Media seemed to play an indispensable role in today's world. Effects of print media seemed to diverge from individual to groups and nations to globalization. Print media's content is now happening to be the dynamic source of subsequent changes in individuals' as well as community's inclinations about foreign policy and relations among nations.

Table 1 identified year wise description of the editorials published on the topic of CPEC. A heated controversy seemed to prevail among India and Pakistan; China and United States of America. Print media showed time to time the analysis of these states. The present research identified that from CPEC initiation in Pakistan till 2017 a lot of material had been published showing positive, negative and neutral opinions on the issue of CPEC. Table showed that in 2013 Pakistani Newspaper "Dawn" published one article on CPEC while China Daily also published one article. Since it was initial period, so the Indian Times and, The New York Times did not show any concerns about the matter and issue. On the whole two editorials had been published. In year 2014 Dawn published total nine articles showing opinion about CPEC while China Daily printed ten editorials and Times of India published 19 articles while The New York times Published 02 editorials. On the whole 40 editorials were published regarding CPEC in the year 2014. With the beginning of 2015 the number of editorials began to prosper as the outlines of this project were quite visible in Asian territory. Year 2015 saw 28 editorials from Dawn newspaper while China daily printed ten editorials and 09 and 02 were published by times of India and the New York Times. Deceleration seemed to occur in year 2016 in editorial as the CPEC seemed to have less importance in the eyes of USA while India and Pakistan seemed to exploit their position as in Dawn a Pakistani New daily printed 31 editorials regarding CPEC project while Times of India printed 12 editorials and China daily published only two and USA based Newspaper The New York times did not publish any. In year 2017, Dawn editorials acceded more as CPEC seemed to progress rapidly so policy shifts saw major drifting towards Pakistani benefits in Asia so 30 editorials were published in Pakistan on CPEC while in India 16 editorials esteemed problems and negative propaganda against CPEC in the editorials of Times of India. On the other way round China Daily and New York Times published two editorials each.

So it is quite obvious from the figures that Dawn, Pakistani newspaper published majority of the editorials on CPEC that were 99 while Times of India published 56 and China Daily printed 27 and New York Times printed out 06 editorials since 2013 to 2017.

Table 2

Framing of Editorials regarding opinions about CPEC published in Chinese newspaper China Daily for the period of 2013 to 2017

Editorials	Year	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Total
Opinions published in China Daily	2013-2017	19	01	07	27
Percentage of opinion	2013-2017	70.0%	12.5%	17.5%	100%

China Daily editorials framed that they are developing the opinions of the Chinese statesmen, business community and skilled workers by showing them the picture which may portray CPEC as a mega project all set for the development of the well-being of a China men; as majority of the articles 19 written in this context showed positive opinion while 01 of the editorials also showed negative opinion while in 07 of the editorials showed neutral opinions. So it is quite clear that editorials in China Daily meant to show positive image of the CPEC in Pakistan.

Table 3

Framing of Editorials regarding opinions about CPEC published in Indian newspaper Times of India for the period of 2013 to 2017

Editorials	Year	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Total
Opinions published in Times of India	2013-2017	03	42	14	56
Percentage of opinion	2013-2017	5.0%	70%	25%	

The Times of India” is due to its high ranking in IRS (2012) as India’s widely read English Daily having an astonishing readership of 7.643 million readers. The Times of India is owned by Bennett, Coleman and Co. Ltd which works under The Times Group. Keeping these references in view, the study focuses on the qualitative analysis to understand how CPEC issue is constructed in the news media and their discourse. The study period covers the reports from 2013-2017 which is the culmination time where media picked the issue with great interest.

Table 4

Framing of Editorials regarding opinions about CPEC published in USA newspaper The New York Times for the period of 2013 to 2017

Editorials	Year	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Total
Opinions published in New York Times	2013-2017	01	05	00	06
Percentage of opinion	2013-2017	16%	84%	0%	100%

The New York Times Daily editorials framed that they are developing the opinions of the world stakeholders in business community and environmental zones by showing them the picture which may portray CPEC as a failure project all set for the development of the well-being of a China men; as majority of the articles 06 written in this context showed negative opinion while 01 of the editorials also showed positive opinion while in 00 of the editorials showed neutral opinions. So it is quite clear that editorials in China Daily meant to show positive image of the CPEC in Pakistan. It was found that majority of the opinions shared in the editorials 16% were positive while 84% of the editorials showed negative opinion while 0% of the editorials remained neutral in their opinion making.

American media also showed concern about Chinese influence over Pakistan. The U.S formulates its China policy on an issue-by-issue basis; but the US administration feels shaky of the Chinese who are continuously expanding business and trade tentacles around the globe (Hayder, 2017). The new National Security Strategy (NSS) of USA shows Donald Trump’s government uneasiness with a rising China. Haider, N. (2018). Europe’s Iran plan.

Table 5

Framing Statistics of editorial in the Times of India, China Daily, New York Times and Dawn News papers

Print Media		Reservations Frames	Infrastructure Development Frames	Job Opportunities Framing	Human Index Framing	Cultural Framing
New York Times	Mean	0.61	0.42	0.55	0.47	0.00
	N	06	06	06	06	06
	Std.Dev	0.13	0.23	0.13	0.21	0.00
of India	Mean	0.60	0.40	0.66	0.48	0.00
	N	56	56	56	56	56
China Daily	Std.Dev	0.08	0.15	0.18	0.211	0.00
	Mean	0.44	0.52	0.55	0.36	0.00
	N	27	27	27	27	27
	Std.Dev	0.19	0.17	0.16	0.26	0.00
Dawn	Mean	0.29	0.27	0.26	0.30	0.00
	N	99				
	Std.Dev	0.55	0.60	0.560	0.39	0.00

Total	Mean	0.57	0.45	0.59	0.44	0.00
	N	188	188	188	188	188
	Std.Dev	0.17	0.19	0.17	0.23	0.00

The table identified a pragmatic validation of existing generic frames-risks appearing in the print media casually and generally showing that there were some Reservations Frames regarding CPEC. Infrastructure Development Frames, Job Opportunities Framing, Human Index Framing, Cultural Framing does not appear in the entire research, possibly because selected newspapers have not produced any ethical or moral angle on CPEC.

Table1 further estimate Figure-1 by displaying standard deviations and mean scores of the newspapers attributing higher values of responsibility frames (M: 0.59, SD: 0.17), chased by reservation framing (M: 0.57, SD: 0.17), infrastructure development frames (M: 0.45, SD: 0.19), job opportunities frame (M: 0.44 SD: 0.23), and cultural frames producing no score. Principally, described under average scores of 188 editorials determined dictions of print media to certain frames, while providing less attention to others, for example, The Times of India is eagerly presenting reservation frames (Mean: 0.60) pursued by Job opportunities (M: 0.66), human index framing (M: 0.48), and cultural frames (M: 0.48). Likewise, Reservation frames (Mean: 0.61) are highly reported by The New York Times, chased by the infrastructure development frame (Mean: 0.42), Job opportunities frame (M: 0.55), and cultural frames (M: 0.47). Finally, The China Daily is more attributed to Reservation frames (Mean: 0.44) as compared to the infrastructure frame (M: 0.52), Job opportunities (M: 0.52), and cultural frame (M: 0.36).

Data displayed in above table-was derived after application of statistical tools tested under 5% level of significance, describing difference in result if p values is lesser than 0.05, or otherwise not.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The results revealed that the coverage of the issues is highly favorable in daily and dawn newspapers and they positively frame issues regarding CPEC. China Daily editorials framed that they are developing the opinions of the Chinese statesmen, business community and skilled workers by showing them the picture which may portray CPEC as a mega project. In order to get these benefits, it needs constant and sustained efforts from the two countries top leaderships (China & Pakistan) to stay firm on the track. Make sure that all the Memorandums of Understandings (MoUs) and any new policy agreement regarding CPEC between both countries in future implement and put into action without any hindrance. At the same time, different projects are progressing under the umbrella of CPEC the Government of Pakistan make sure that the performance and maintenance of quality of these different projects, is assured. It required a firm inspection team to protecting these projects against the malpractice and kickbacks. Law enforcement agencies in Pakistan must take some safety measures and to ensure fool-

proof security to Chinese personnel, Engineers, labors and technicians and other working staff from china who are working on these projects.

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