

**IMPACT OF ‘WAR ON TERROR’ ON MEDIA IN
PAKISTAN: A CASE STUDY OF KHYBER
PAKHTUNKHWA AND EARSTWHILE FATA (2004-2014)**

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Abstract

The ‘war on terror’ brought both blessings and curses for media in Pakistan especially Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and former Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). Its curses, however, surmounted the blessings. The media saw a boom after the ‘war on terror’, working conditions for media professionals improved and a competition was witnessed both among media professionals as well as owners. The influx of foreign journalists in search of investigative reports also provided an opportunity to the local media personnel to get better exposure and be connected with foreign media. But with the rapid increase in media houses and space for media professional what suffered the most was professionalism which was replaced by the race for ‘breaking news’. Naïve people were seen joining media without having any training. The attitude of the warring sides – militants and the security forces – was also strange. They too would want to have their version dominated the mainstream media. For the purpose the used both hook and crook. The media professional were also not trained for covering conflict due to which scores of journalists lost their lives, a number of others got injured and several suffered kidnapping and torture. This article deals with the state of media during the ‘war on terror’, sufferings of media people and freedom of expression.

Key Words: Media, war on terror, journalists, freedom of expression

Introduction

Media played a vital role in the ‘war on terror’. The

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warring sides – the security forces and militant outfits - struggled hard to make effective use of indigenous as well as mainstream media to achieve their respective goals. During the decade (2004-2014) under study, rapid increase in the number of media outlets, both national and international, was witnessed. Media houses saw a boom during the war to the benefits of working journalists whose working as well as financial conditions improved during this period. However, they also faced serious threats to their lives that made independent journalism impossible. Scores of journalists were killed in the line of duty in Pakistan especially in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and the former Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), which have been merged with KP. Many others were kidnapped, harassed and intimidated (PFUJ, 2012a).

The world changed after the 9/11 strikes that resulted in the US assault on Afghanistan. The region was yet to recover from the aftermaths of the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan, when Pakistan had to make a choice between siding with the US or Taliban for a variety of reasons. Pakistan landed in an awkward position owing to its support to the Afghan Taliban in establishing writ in a country plagued by civil war. Even worse, the movement had its roots and a formidable support base in Pakistan. Once the decision was made, Pakistan was left to deal with support base within its borders before it could help the Allied Forces in Afghanistan.

Though a backlash was expected, no one could anticipate its severity until 2004, when Pakistan Army was sent to FATA. It opened the floodgates for a wave of terrorism across the country, especially in KP, which shared a long border with the tribal areas. Ever since, the Pakistani society witnessed the worst state of insecurity of its history and terms such as *Talibanisation*, militancy, drone strikes, attacks on NATO supplies, military

operations, terrorism and extremism became household phenomena.

Both the warring sides; the Pakistan Army and the militants, strived endlessly to enhance their support in the conflict areas as well as in the rest of the country, though strategies adopted by the two sides were largely different. However, one of the tools used by both of them was blame game, for which electronic and print media was used or rather misused.

The militants used every tactic to win the sympathies of the people to get more and more people recruited in their ranks and above all maintain their terror among the masses. They made effective use of guns, bombs, suicide bombers and media to accomplish their designs. Same was done by the security forces.

The psychological warfare continued in media actively and effectively along with the battle fought on the ground both in Afghanistan and in Pakistan. The warring sides made effective use of media to get the objectives of psychological warfare such as to mobilize hatred against enemy, to preserve friendship of allies, preserve friendship and if possible, to procure the cooperation of neutrals and to demoralize enemies (Severin & Tankard, 1992). The Taliban militants proved more powerful than the regular forces – US-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan and Pakistan's security forces on this side of the Durand Line – in making effective use of both indigenous and mainstream media, especially the international media, for furthering their agenda and creating terror.

Mass media in Pakistan also saw drastic changes after 9/11. Before this date if there was only one radio network in the country, that too state-run, the number reached almost one hundred after the 9/11 incident. The international media organizations like the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)

and Voice of America (VoA) also focused more attention on the region by starting special online editions and television transmission exclusively for this region. VOA went a few steps ahead by initiating around a dozen new radio projects in Urdu, Pashto, Dari and Persian languages. Similarly the private television channel was something unknown in the country before 9/11. But after it, over 50 television channels, mostly meant for news and current affairs, were established in the country. The boom in broadcast media helped improve the working conditions of the media workers. A sense of competition among different media groups started, bringing with it a score of positive and negative impacts (Rehmat, 2014). It was not long before the media persons found themselves caught between the two warring sides, believed to have the will and power to target the media if they refused to toe their respective line. The truth behind this belief, however, remained unknown as none of the investigations in any of the attacks against media persons could reach its conclusion.

Though journalism seemingly became more independent during the last over one decade, the real freedom of press shrunk to a major extent due to the pressures from all sides – militants, security forces and others. The sufferings of media people also increased during this period. Some 32 journalists were killed in KP and FATA in the line of their duty since January 2003 till January 2014. Media outlets and press clubs also came under frequent attacks during this period for not toeing the specific line of the warring sides. Media people were practically sandwiched between the militant and the military (PFUJ, 2012b).

This study discusses the state of media during the war on terror. It deals with the changes that the media saw during these 10 years. The positive impacts as well as adverse effects of the war on terror on media are covered in the study. It also analyses

the question that how independent journalism could not be made possible, though the media enjoyed increased level of freedom in the country during this period. How did the militant extremists use media as an effective tool to further their agenda and what media strategies did the security forces adopt. It covers the media sources of the stakeholders of the war on terror and also their approaches to mainstream media.

So far no formal study on the impact of the war on terror on media and in KP and former FATA could be done. Only the organizations for the protection of the rights of journalists like the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), Reporters Sans Frontiers (RSF) and Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) and some national organizations like the Inter Media could file some reports on the issue but those were specific to the threats to journalists, killings of media people and government response to them. However, this article is an effort to cover all aspects of the issue.

Some research has already been made on state of media in conflict situations in different parts of the world. A book titled “Conflict Reporting” has covered in detail access to information during war, maintaining objectivity. It has suggested valuable guidelines for reporters covering conflict in a separate chapter: 'Remember, it's not your war' – Reporter Involvement (Rodgers, 2013). Similarly some essays and articles of renowned journalists, who covered war in different parts of the world, have been compiled in another book “War and The Media; Reporting Conflict 24/7” (Kishan & Freedman, 2003). “The Media at War” is another book which has covered inter-relation between war and media. It deals with how news and entertainment media cover conflict (Carruthers, 2011).

Another study “Reporting War: Journalism in Wartime” is

mainly focused on war in Iraq. It discusses about social responsibilities of journalists during war. It covers the influence of censorship and propaganda. Embedded journalism and difference between objectivity and patriotism have also been discussed in the book (Allan & Zelizer, 2004).

Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS), an Islamabad-based research organization, published a 109-page book titled 'Media Safety In Pakistan'. The book discusses the overall safety situation of working journalists across Pakistan in the aftermath of 9/11. A separate chapter has been written on KP and FATA and some case studies of slain journalists and some media persons under serious threats have been given (PIPS, 2014).

The IFJ brought out a journal titled: "Freedom in Solidarity; Media Working for Peace in South Asia" in 2010 with the support of the United States Institute for Peace (USIP). The journal having a specific article on Pakistan under the title of "Journalism Under Stress". The article discusses the overall security situation of journalists, working conditions and press freedom (IFJ, 2010).

In 2011, the IFJ published its 'Ninth Annual Press Freedom Report for South Asia 2010-11' under the title of Free Speech in Peril. The report carried two separate articles about Pakistan, which were titled as: "Few Reassurances as Dangers Grow" and "Who Will Stand Up for Free Speech." The second one was exclusively about the murder of former Punjab Governor Salman Taseer, while the first one is about the overall situation of media in Pakistan with some focus on KP and FATA (IFJ, 2011).

In its 'Ninth Annual Press Freedom Report for South Asia 2011-12' published in 2012 under the title of "New Frontiers, New Struggle" a chapter on Pakistan: "A Year of Extreme Hazards and Trauma" has been included. The security threats,

killings, kidnappings and harassments of working journalists have been discussed in the chapter. Also, an article: “The Inconclusive Inquiry” has been made part of the report. This is all about the judicial commission probe and report of the murder of journalist Saleem Shehzad (IFJ, 2012).

In 2012, PFUJ in collaboration with IFJ launched a research mission about the “The state of journalism in KP and FATA”. The mission submitted its research report the same year, which was presented in an international moot in Islamabad in 2013. The report presents an overall picture of media in KP and FATA (PFUJ, 2012).

Rehmat (2014) has filed testimonies of 57 working journalists from across the country, who have been facing serious threats in the line of duty. Most of these journalists belong to KP and FATA. Sultan and Qazi (2010) discussed in detail the media tools adopted by the Taliban like the illegal FM radio stations and others.

CPJ conducted a study based on investigation into the killings of journalists Saleem Shehzad, Wali Khan Babar and Mukarram Khan Atif. The chapter 2 of the study: “A Death in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa” is focused on KP and FATA (CPJ, 2013).

‘Surviving the Story’ is another study conducted by Myra Imran in 2017 with the support of Communication Research Strategies (CRS) and JournalismPakistan.com. The student analyses the economic situation of the families slain journalists and those displaced from their native areas due to security threats. Some case studies are given in the booklet and the overall situation is analyzed. Interviews have also been conducted with family members of the slain journalists in the study (Imran, 17).

The available literature deals with the overall condition of

media during conflict. Some journalist organizations have covered the sufferings of media people. All the studies that have already been done do not cover the independence of media. The pressures applied on media houses and journalists by the warring sides adversely affected independent journalism. This study covers the state of media, its use and abuse by the security forces as well as militant-extremists, sufferings of media people and freedom of the press.

KP and ex-FATA: A Case Study

Pakistani society in general and the Pakhtun dominated KP and adjacent former tribal belt in particular have been crippled by the militant activities and counter militancy operations. No area in the country particularly in KP and former FATA has remained safe from the terror incidents. The people of the country have seen terrorism of every kind. Surge in terror activities was seen soon after the US-led NATO forces' onslaught on Afghanistan on October 7, 2001 (Vulliamy, 2001). Many authors, researchers and journalists have compiled valuable contributions on different aspects of the militant-extremists both in Afghanistan and Pakistan. However, the specific research on the role of media in the war on terror could rarely be done. The state of media in KP and erstwhile FATA during the war on terror is a vast area that needs to be looked into in detail.

This article covers the media strategies of the warring sides – militants and military. It also deals with the overall condition of media – local, national and international – and how was it used by both the sides for their interests.

The media strategy of the militants in Pakistan has been mainly two-pronged. In the first instance, extremists have been trying their bit to either control media through intimidation or, wherever it is not practicable, to influence them favourably. In

line with this strategy, substantial hold has been established over local correspondents in areas considered as hubs of extremism and terrorism like Waziristan in the tribal areas and parts of KP, thus effectively stopping facts to disseminate. This influence over representatives of media has been attained through naked aggression, threat of force and other violent means along with bribes and kickbacks to media men. In the process several journalists working against extremists' interest in tribal areas have lost their lives while many elsewhere had to face intimidation (Sultan & Qazi, 2010). According to the report jointly compiled by the IFJ and PFUJ, 32 journalists have lost their lives in violent attacks in KP province and the adjacent FATA during the years since January 2003.

The Pakistan based Taliban militants and the Al-Qaeda organized some slaughtering of 'US spies' and flogging of criminals and invited media for their coverage to take the terror to every home. The purpose to invite media to broadcast and report such organized incidents is clear: sending ripples of terror across the population and telling those who are against the terrorist tactics and antics of the militants that they should desist from raising voice against them. Secondly the aim of such attempts by extremists and terrorists is to win the sympathies of the local population by playing upon the anti-US sentiments as well as hatred for the criminals. In achieving both these aims, the militants have been successful to varying degrees (Sultan & Qazi, 2010).

The terrorists have been able to create a situation of silencing people, despite being greatly against the militants and their acts, as explained by spiral of silence theory by Neolle Neumann (Severin, 1992).

Another prong of media strategy of extremists which has

been critical to their overall goals, was to organize local media channels and networks and target local mainly rural communities and legions of un-educated or partially literate populace (Sultan & Qazi, 2010).

The illegally established FM radio channels were the most effective of these networks. The Taliban had their own FM radio stations in all areas under their influence. The one started by Mufti Munir Shakir in Khyber Agency and another by Maulvi Fazlullah in Swat were the most famous ones. So popular was the speech of Fazlullah on his illegal FM radio that it made him known as Radio *Mullah*.

The militant groups in Pakistan used other media extensively, which could be shared in other parts of Pakistan and beyond. These included: pamphlets, posters, handbills, and warning letters; most examples of letters were aimed at specific individuals as targets, together with CDs showing graphic violence. Most of these forms were in local languages, with only a few produced in Urdu. The material produced by the Taliban militants have been warmly entertained by the international media and in most of the cases the stuff make handsome earning for those producing and selling it out to international media (Stuff issued by Taleban to media). Militants were so effective in employing media that they used VoA, the US propaganda channel which was supposed to be used against the Taliban, for their own terrorist purposes. This even triggered debate in the US Senate when VoA was accused of being used as tool by the Taliban militants and some international media houses even went to the extent to ban coverage of militants' activities.

Statement of the Problem

The use of media by the warring sides involved in the war on terror especially the militants and military has been causing

serious threats to media people in particular and terrorizing the masses in general. The militant outfits wanted to keep mainstream media under control. The government agencies also did the same, but their strategy was a bit different from the militants who were more open in claiming responsibilities for journalists' killing and issuing threats on their own letterheads (Pamphlets issued to media). The security forces did the same thing through 'unknown people' and from 'undisclosed locations' etc. Both the sides intimidated, threatened and in some cases killed media persons who refused to toe their respective lines, aggravating the situation for working journalists to work in a free environment. The militants also used media for projection of their activities, mostly the horrific ones like the slaughter of human beings, suicide attacks, threatening letters and others, which resulted in overall terror among the common folks.

What lacks both on the part of owners of media outlets and the government was to provide protection to the journalists working in the conflict zones, build their capacity and arrange security gears for them. At the same time a proper policy to discourage militants' desired coverage in media was missing. Moreover, dissemination of information by militants through their own networks like the illegal FM Radios and other tools needed to be checked. A thorough study of these issues is aimed at assisting those at the helm of affairs and the media owners to mend their ways and do the needful.

Significance

Media is an important social institution which is used by different segments of the society for their own interests. Media has remained one of the most effective institutions during the ten years under study. The militant-extremists as well as the security forces wanted to use it as a tool for furthering their agenda. The media also tried its best to give a true picture of the ground

situation to the people. In some cases it succeeded in doing so. But mostly it failed. The wide coverage by the media of the issue of terrorism and war on terror added to the confusion of the masses. Apparently free and independent, the media failed to work independently during this whole period due to a number of pressures. Access to the facts has always been a great problem. Access to the conflict areas has been denied. The media can report only what is being fed to them by the warring sides. And if they get access to some important information, areas, they are unable to report things objectively for the fear of risking their lives.

Several writers and researchers have discussed various aspects of the war on terror. But specific academic study on the role of media during the war could not be carried out. The journalist bodies like IFJ, RSF, CPJ, PFUJ and some national media development organizations like Intermedia and InterNews came up with some reports of the subject matter, but those reports too pertained to the threats to media people, their killings and harassments only. This study covers every aspect of media during the war.

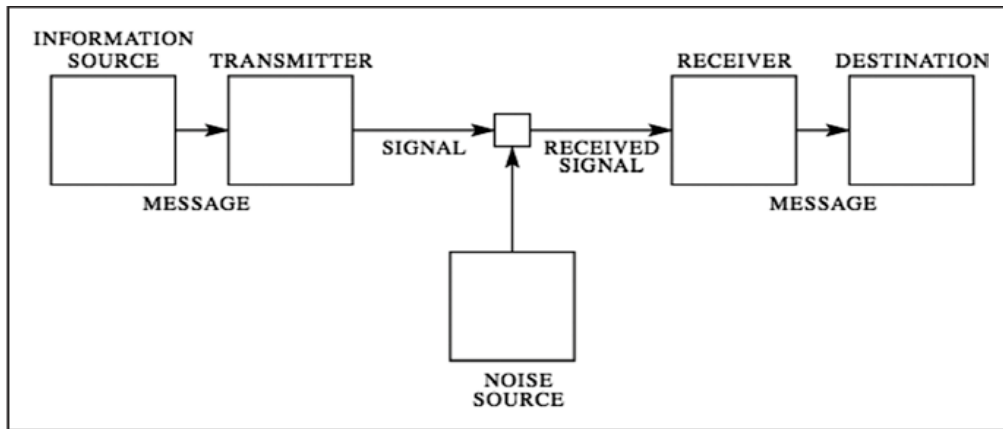
Research Questions

1. What were the effects of the war on terror on media especially in KP and erstwhile FATA?
2. What kind of developments did media see, what kind pressures did it face during the war?
3. How did these pressures affect media freedom?

Theoretical framework

This paper is purely related to the impact of the war on the media and the people affiliated with this profession. The

Mathematical theory of communication is applied to this study. The Mathematical theory of communication was produced by two American mathematicians and physicists Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver in 1949 (Severin & Tankard, 1992). This theory was later known as the Information Theory. It is so important and influential that it can rightly be called as mother of the communication models and theories as it proved to be a stimulus for all of them. It was Shannon who gave the concept of signal transmission and Weaver developed the schematic diagram of communication. This diagram is so comprehensively developed that it can still be easily applied on the mass communication.



The theory defines information source as the place, person or thing wherefrom a message is generated, while message is the set of spoken or written words which travels through a transmitter which could be a tool of print or electronic media. The transmitter has also been referred to as channel of signal by the theorists. The receivers and destination are of course the readers and audience (Severin & Tankard, 1992).

The theory has also given three new phenomena of channel noise, redundancy and entropy. All the three carry

immense importance. Channel noise in this particular theory has been defined as various kinds of noises that interrupt free flow of information and smooth communication. In a telephonic conversation that channel noise could be the lack of clarity in the telephone line or a network. On radio it could be the disruption of airwaves. On television it could be a problem on the television set. Other noises like that of a warplane flying overhead, beating of drum nearby, gunshots or a bang of some explosion could also interrupt information flow especially at the receiving end.

Redundancy is the mechanism to overcome these noises. It simply refers to the repetition of words and expressions which are feared to havenot been communicated properly. The deletion of extra information is also known as redundancy. It is actually the amount of wasted space in the communication process. For the purpose data is compressed and repetition is done (David, 2003).

Now this redundancy results in entropy, which in simple words is the amount of information that is received at the end. Generally, *entropy* refers to disorder or uncertainty. Entropy is a term used in statistical thermodynamics. But its definition used in the information theory is directly analogous to the one used in [the](#) statistical thermodynamics ([Shannon](#), 1948).

Information theory applied

In application of the information theory, the role of gatekeeper carries immense importance. According the Welber Schramm: “Any human information consists of a series of system coupled chain” (Schramm, 1955). The coupling to two systems has been referred to as gatekeeper point. In print and electronic media the reporter, photographer or camera-journalist serves as gatekeeper. He selects information for publication or broadcasting out of a set of information. The reporter tries to

choose the right words and expression to find space in the newspaper or radio/television, he works for. At the office, the editors and producers serve as gatekeepers. They make the decision as which information, news reports, articles and photographs should go for publication and broadcasting and which should not. These gatekeepers have to take care of all the pressures. In conflict as observed during the period under study, both the reporters and the editors faced tremendous pressure from all the stakeholders. The reporters were, however, the most vulnerable to the pressures and they had to work in the field. At some points the lack of understanding between the reporters and the editors also resulted in serious problems for the reporters working in the field. Due to the pressures exerted by the different stakeholders of the war, both the reporters and the editors could not find a free environment for work. They had to censor many happenings and interpret the information in line with the pressures they used to face. This affected the freedom of press. The free flow of information was also badly affected. The pressures from different quarters in this study have been seen as channel noise. The self-censorship and interpretations are the redundancy and what published and broadcasted is the entropy.

Methodology

Qualitative research method has been adopted for the study to acquire the most relevant data and analyze it in an appropriate manner. Before embarking upon the actual research the books and analysis already done by researchers, analysts and experts were consulted to gain maximum information about the subject matter and find gaps. The research done is primarily a qualitative one like all other social sciences' researches. It is based on in-depth interviews and focused group discussions. Some thirty semi-structured interviews were conducted with senior journalists, affectees of the war on terror and their family

members, experts in media development, officials of concerned government departments, militant outfits and representatives of journalist unions and press clubs. The interviews were conducted mostly at the offices of the persons concerned.

Some interesting case studies, which had not been published, were collected, analysed and made part of the research. All the interviews were properly recorded and notes were taken. Later, all the interviews were properly transcribed and thematically analyzed.

The content was placed under various required themes. The specialized terms were properly explained. Most of the answers given by participants of the interviews were in descriptive and storytelling manner, which were properly verified and interpreted.

Verification of the data was another important step undertaken. Specific data and figures shared by participants or allegations made by them were counter-checked and properly verified from a number of sources.

Analysis

It was learnt from the extensive interviews with media professionals and other stakeholders and also from the available literature that the war on terror affected media industry and people serving the field of journalism in the conflict riddled former tribal belt and KP both positively and negatively. The table given below gives a glimpse of the effects of the war on media.

Positive impact	Negative impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Media got enormously expanded during the	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The war brought with it more threats and risks to

<p>war against terror</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More opportunities for working journalists were generated • Media persons in KP and former FATA got new avenues to international media • With the influx of international media in the region, professionalism among journalists improved • Safety trainings were arranged for media persons • Sources for news increased and diversified • Media people got more wareness about their rights • Awareness among general public about media increasd • Local journalists especially those working in rural parts of KP and former 	<p>working journalists</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verification of news got weakened • Real questions about the war and situation in region remained unanswered • Real investigative journalism could not be done and mere event coverage was preferred • Abrupt expansion affected the quality of journalism adversely • Editorial control weakened, professionalism lacked • Elements of dishonesty, professional jealousy was seen among journalists • Journalists started suffering from psychological issues and a number of media persons were admitted to trauma centers • Embedded journalism was promoted during
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FATA secured more space in mainstream media	the prolonged war
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Findings

- Media saw tremendous expansion during this period. At the onset of the war there was only one state-run television news channel in the country. It took no time to cross the 100 figure, including 47 news and current affair channels. Besides, 104 FM radio stations were established, while more than two dozen pirated FM radios also remained operational.
- There were a total of 2,000 journalists in the country before 2004, including a couple of hundreds from KP and former FATA. The number jacked up to 18,000 in the country with roughly 2,000 from KP and the merged tribal districts.
- Journalism became a popular discipline of studies in universities across the country and 20 new departments of journalism and media studies were established bringing the tally to 32 across the country, several of which have also been offering MPhil and PhD courses.
- Journalists started getting better job opportunities. A sense of competition also emerged among the employers and media owners, resulting in better working conditions and more reasonable packages for working journalists.
- International media was attracted towards Pakistan due to the war on terror and big media houses sent their correspondents to the country including Peshawar. This helped the local media and journalists a lot in term of jobs

for working with the prominent journalists from across the world.

- While all this positive things happening, different quarters felt the need for the journalists to be on their side and to do that, very few opted for fair means. Most of the stakeholders used negative tactics to pressure media and those included torture, kidnappings and even murder of journalists. At least 92 media professionals were killed in the country, 32 from KP and former FATA.
- Scores of media workers suffered torture during this periods and good number of them faced kidnappings.
- Several media houses and press clubs came under direct attacks. Direct interventions into the news rooms of different media houses by militant/extremists as well as government agencies were made to keep media under control.
- The major finding of this thesis is that these pressures made it difficult for the media people to do free and independent journalism.
- Owing to lack of media freedom, the real questions remained unanswered and confusion prevailed.
- The parties to the war continued to use indigenous media tools side by side with mainstream media.

Conclusion

The war on terror left deep imprints on every segment of Pakistani society. The killing of 50,000 people in the war during the period under study and material losses worth \$80 billion as per the data shared by former Parliamentary Secretary for Interior Maryyam Aurangzeb in the National Assembly of Pakistan on December 4, 2014 speaks volume of the fact that every individual and sector of Pakistani society has been affected by the war (Gishkori, 2014). The role played by media and the changes as well as effects – both positive and negative – during this period have been discussed in the study. It was found that media saw tremendous expansion from all aspects. At the outset of the war there was only one state-run television in the country, but the number reached to over a 100 during the ten years under study, which include 47 news and current affair channels. The number of FM radio stations has also been increased many times. FM radios were hardly known before the war. But currently, its number has reached to 104 FM. The illegally established FM radios are apart from this figure, which too are not less the two dozens. As far as the number of working journalists is concerned, there were a total of 2,000 journalists in the country before 2004 and in KP and ex FATA their number was just a few hundreds. But during the period under study, the overall number of journalists in the country crossed the figure of 18,000, while in KP and former FATA their number reached to nearly, 2,000. After the boom in journalism, the subject became one of the most asked for discipline in the higher education institutions and most of the universities in the countries launched new departments of journalism and media studies. Before, the period under study only 12 departments in different universities across the country were there where journalism was taught as a discipline. But now the number has reached to 32 where from hundreds of graduates do their master's in journalism and mass communication. Several of these departments have also been offering MPhil and PhD courses (Rehmat & Alam, 2016).

With this huge expansion in media, the journalists started getting better job opportunities. A sense of competition also emerged among the employers and media owners, resulting in better working conditions and more reasonable packages for working journalists. Also, with the war the interest of international media increased in the region. All the big international media houses sent their correspondents to Pakistan in general and Peshawar in particular to cover the war on terror. This help the local media and journalists a lot in term of offering them jobs and providing them opportunities to the local journalists to work with the prominent journalists from across the world. This way the local journalists got many benefits both in terms of earning more and more money and also improving their professional capabilities.

The war, however, brought with it many curses for media people like other segments of the society. The warring sides adopted the policy of stick and carrot. They tried to provide incentives to journalists covering the war and also used pressures in order to get favourable coverage of their activities and discourage reporting against them. The major incentive provided to the journalist was to embed them into the war zones for reporting. Embedded journalism is, otherwise, a negative term and is not liked in media. But when the journalists were unable to move into the areas where war was in progress, they considered the embedded trips as blessing and would feel proud to become part of such trips. Among the curses that the journalists had to suffer during this period, the most serious was the threat to their lives. This study shows that Pakistan became the most dangerous country of the world for working journalists where nearly a 100 of media professionals were killed during the period under study and one-third of them i.e. 32 belonged to KP and FATA. Scores of media workers suffered torture during this periods and good number of them faced kidnappings. Several media houses and

press clubs came under direct attacks. Serious threats were issued to media houses in order to force them to toe a specific line. Direct interventions into the news rooms of different media houses by both the sides were made to keep media under control.

Under such circumstances, it became difficult for the media people to do free and independent journalism. A thorough analysis of media coverage during the period under study shows that social information has increased and sources of information have diversified. But no clarity of issues attached with the prolonged war on terror could be seen. The people are still confused about the real questions about the uprisings and military operations to counter them along with the sufferings of the common people. No one could know as who is responsible for what happened in the region during the last ten years? No accountability could be made of the 1990s policies when Taliban were supported and they were allowed to move freely in the country. Similarly, there are many questions about the entry of war into this side of the border, the militant uprising, the military operations, the losses and damages suffered by the common people and above all success of military operations which still need to be answered. Therefore, it is concluded that media saw tremendous expansion during this period, but real freedom of expression got vanished.

Still many people especially those alien to media have a great misconception about complete freedom of expression in Pakistan. They link the expansion in media with freedom of expression, which is not true. The people having long experience in the field of journalism can verify that the country is passing through the worst censorship of its history. There is no censorship on freedom of expression, if a journalist gives general information and writes or speaks in favour of some institutions and some developments. But, if he tries to speak the actual facts,

he would face serious consequences. “If you tries to unveil the actual facts, your views would not be published and you would not be able to hide anywhere” (Hussain, 18).

Media owners also stop journalists from speaking the truth, by asking them not to speak such and such sentences and avoid doing such and such programme as it would land their business in danger and the people working in the organisations would turn jobless. One can lift the burden of his own joblessness, but he cannot become the source for the loss of job by hundreds of media workers. This way the media owners gag freedom of expression. The journalists also remain concerned about their own job. This way censorship became deeper and strengthened its roots. The jealousy and dishonesty among journalists is another factor impeding freedom of expression. If a good journalist gets some better opportunity or he tries to explore and express some real facts, people from within his own community would start speaking against him to discredit him and dispute his information. But in this dark situation, one thing is clear that the tongues of the people are gagged but their minds are open. The gagging of tongues has not been converted into the censorship of minds for which one should be thankful to Allah. The journalists should wait for the time when they would be able to express themselves in a free and independent manner and they would be able to tell the truth to the people who believe media is free.

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