

Media management towards national security media essay



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INTRODUCTION

“ War is fought with the will of the government, competence of the armed forces and the support of the nation”

Carl Von Clausewitz

1. A nation's military security comes from the strength of its armed forces and the media is considered to be the watchdog of nation itself. With adequate knowledge of each other's vulnerabilities and strengths, media and military can immensely benefit from each other. The fear of the military is that the media in their exuberance and hurry to take the truth to the masses might jeopardise their future operations. The main concern of the military is that of information, which could jeopardise a military operation or endanger the lives of the troops who have to carry it out, should not be published. The very first in any operation is to prevent any information of value falling in to the hands of the adversary, who in turn could utilize the same to his advantage. On the other hand, the media does not wish to be seen working under the influence of the armed forces and wishes to be totally independent in its reporting. The media play a crucial role in projecting images and moulding perceptions in the realm of foreign and defense policies. It is through media that information is gleaned, perceptions shaped and policies articulated on such issues. Media continues to be a thermometer/barometer/mirror of the society. Public support and national morale are powerful force multipliers in themselves which is moulded by the media. The impact of media, especially the visual media, on military operations is becoming increasingly important. Real time visual presentation can rapidly influence

adversary, public and therefore political opinion. Thus media has a great role to play towards security of a nation.

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

1. Aim. To study & analyse the role of media in war and internal crisis situations, media as a force multiplier for armed forces and their interoperability towards national security.

2. Statement of the Problem. This dissertation aims at an in-depth study of the role of media during war and towards growing internal security situations and the inter operability with the armed forces.

3. Justification of the study. As future military commanders why do we need to study role of media in today's context? The reason is that media plays an important role in the national security. It is the fourth estate which acts as a watchdog to the nation. The information generated by the media can influence the people of the nation and mould the perception of a nation. While being transparent the media may compromise on information leading to false sense of realism or jeopardise operations. Media being a strong pillar of the society can help towards the security of the nation simultaneously not compromising on its basic role of transparency.

4. Hypothesis. Sensible and responsible Media reporting will ensure media not infringing into national security. Media is a force multiplier for the armed forces during war, internal crisis and peace. Media invariably form a major

player in the security situations and inter operability with armed forces which will ensure synergized effort towards national security.

5. Scope. Media is a vast subject and how it can relate towards the national security, this paper only gives a brief overview of the role of media in the internal crisis situation and the recent developments relating to the issue and how military and media can work towards the overall security situation.

6. Methods of Data Collection. The data for this dissertation has been collected from large number of magazines, books, periodicals & journals which are available in the DSSC Library. In addition certain web sites related to the subject were accessed on the Internet. Lectures given by eminent speakers at DSSC have also been referred to.

CHAPTER III (FINAL)

MEDIA IN INDIA

1. Media in India has been established since long and their contribution to the society and nation as such is commendable. Media in India has evolved from humble news print to the modern cyber media. Before going on to discuss about the media management and using media as a tool towards military operations to ensure national security, let us examine the media in general in present day India. The issue of internet will be touched upon superficially as it is a vast subject in itself.

Defence journalism

Looking at the history of news coverage of the war and internal crisis situation, it is quite evident that the news from the area of operation has

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always interested the mankind. Media these days has now assumed a status which it had seldom enjoyed earlier. Starting as an institutionalized approach to generate awareness and inform masses, media has become an instrument to govern our lives. A close scrutiny and study of Mahabharata would expose to us the nuances of battle that went on between the two adversaries and till date it remains a great testimony to what the quality of battlefield reporting analyses was during the epic period in India. If we were to identify a war correspondent in correspondingly modern India, possibly William Howard Russell's name could be the first one to be cited as he reported upon the first war of independence in India in 1857. The coverage of the war and internal crisis in present day scenario has taken an interesting turn with the near real time to live coverage of the events showing pictures from the crisis zone instantly. Media has been playing a vital link to the rest of India on the ongoing insurgency/militancy in Kashmir and North East.

Media coverage took an upward surge almost nearing a deluge during the Kargil conflict. Twenty four into seven channels began churning the battlefield in a hunt for not only the latest stories but a series of stories eclipsing the previous one thereby arousing public interest and forming opinions. Never had there been so much support to the war effort in the recent history as was evident during the Kargil conflict. Why did it happen the way it did-did media play a role in it? Do we expect the media to be as supportive during future operations as it was during Kargil? Would the part of media that is controlled and financed by people from outside the country continue to play the ball the way it did during the Kargil conflict? Today, the images of war, for that matter peace, can decisively draw the contours of a

nation's public opinion even before the authorities can confirm or repudiate the authenticity. Therefore, it is all the more essential to critically analyse the role media can play and how best can it be optimized without compromising any of its essential elements.

Press council of India

1. Press Council is a mechanism for the press to regulate itself. The raison d'être of this unique institution is rooted in the concept that in a democratic society the press needs at once to be free and reasonable. If the press is to function effectively as the watchdog of public interest, it must have a secure freedom of expression, unfettered and unhindered by any authority, organised body or individuals. But, this claim to press freedom has legitimacy only if it is exercised with due sense of responsibility. The press must therefore scrupulously adhere to accepted norms of journalistic ethics and maintain high standard of professional conduct. Where the norms are breached and freedom is defiled by unprofessional conduct, a way must exist to check and control it. But, control by government or official authorities may prove destructive of this freedom. Therefore, the best way is to let peers of the profession, assisted by a few discerning layman to regulate it through a properly structured representative impartial machinery. Hence, the Press Council.

2. The Press Council of India was first set up in the year 1966 by the Parliament on the recommendations of the First Press Commission with the objective of preserving the freedom of the press and of maintaining and improving the standards of press in India. The present Council functions under the Press Council Act 1978. It adjudicates the complaints against and <https://assignbuster.com/media-management-towards-national-security-media-essay/>

by the press for violation of ethics and for violation of the freedom of the press respectively. The Press Council is headed by a chairman, who has by convention, been a retired judge of Supreme Court of India. The council consists of 28 other members of whom 20 represent the press and are nominated by the press organisation/news agencies recognised and notified by the Council as all India bodies of categories such as editors, working journalists and owners and managers of newspaper, five members are nominated from the two houses of the Parliament and represent cultural, literary and legal fields as nominees of Sahitya Academy, University Grant Commission and Bar Council of India. The members serve on the Council for a term of three years. The Council was last reconstituted on May 22, 2001. The Press Council of India has the following function:-

To help the newspaper to maintain their independence.

(ii)

Medium of Media

Role of Media

2. Role of media is that of mediation between the government and the people of the nation. Due to its responsibilities, media is the fourth pillar of the democratic India. After 63 years of achieving independence and quest towards becoming number one power of the world by 2020 through economic growth, the role of media is somewhat uncertain and putting a question mark on the Indian journalism. Before moving ahead we need to ask ourselves and think as to is Indian media playing the role for what it has been known that is the fourth pillar of the state? If not then what role media

should play? The obvious answer to this question is that the media should be fair, reliable, impartial, accurate analysis/reporting and work in an integrated manner towards the overall benefit of the people of the nation. As far as news is concerned, media should analyse the news in a very rigid manner, how it has happened and what is the very existence of the news to go to the root cause of the problem instead of being biased to any facts and figures available of hand or floated by anybody. But the fact remains very often rather going deep into any problem, journalists are blindly accepting the news as truth which is being formulated and carefully manipulated by the evil elements and disseminate the same publicly. Well, the entire community of journalist s cannot be placed under suspicious category for the inappropriate reporting or misdeeds of few journalists.

3. Media's basic role is to inform, influence, entertain and help develop economy of state which involves news evaluation, analysis and assessment and finally dissemination. Newspapers have a dual role; it is a quasi public institution and a free enterprise and same holds good for the electronic media also. However when the media overlooks its responsibility to the people of a nation and lays more emphasis on being free enterprise that is the problem starts. Another problem is what news is worthy and what is not, and most important is what news need not be published or broadcasted is decided by whom? The journalist is neither to be considered as a detective nor a historian but as mediator in conveying its readers all about the event. Major General Winant Sidle of the US Army says, " The appropriate media role in relation to the government has been summarised aptly as being neither a lap dog nor an attack dog but, rather, a watch dog." Apart from

acquisition, interpretation and dissemination of news, role of media can be summarised as; to create public opinion and attitudes, act as watch-dog for citizens in terms of human rights issues and abuses by institution of power, inform public with events that are balanced and finally maintain national morale by responsible news coverage.

The Constitution of India and Press Freedom

4. The Constitution of India, specifically in the chapter on Fundamental Rights, surprisingly, does not mention “ freedom of press”. Later on, Dr. Ambedkar however had mentioned that being part of the guarantees of Freedom of Speech and Expression in Article 19 (1) (a) of the constitution it was not necessary to stipulate the freedom of press separately. Freedom of expression as mentioned in the Constitution implies all forms of opinions, thoughts, ideas and conviction and thus covers most of what is needed for the freedom of press. Censorship is no way covered in any provisions of the Indian constitutions. However during an emergency under the Indian Constitution, Fundamental Rights including Freedom of Expression and Speech stands suspended. The Article 19 (2) of the Constitution of India states that the freedom of the press can be restricted for reasons of sovereignty and integrity of India, preserving democracy and the security of the state, besides some other contingencies.

5. Freedom of the media in actual facts is tempered by hard ground realities such as power and influence of the ownership on editorial policies, commercial orientation of the media, government control over key resources such as newsprint, communications and advertisements. Very often media misuses the freedom given to it and it is evident from a number of issues. <https://assignbuster.com/media-management-towards-national-security-media-essay/>

Media these days are more engaged in dramatization of an event or news rather than reflecting the informative part. More often, unnecessarily intruding into private lives/personal matters of the people and especially focussing on the distress victims and their families. Media has been in highlight for being involved in corrupt practices and favouring the publishers, political parties, business houses, religious institutions to name a few. Biased publishing, journalist and editor block some news while highlighting others for the reasons of their own. There have been instances where media play up regional emotions leading to strong appeal and wide spread commotion. During reportage of war or any operations related to internal crisis situation, many a times media has show immaturity and is irresponsible in its reporting by sensationalizing and escalating the conflict. Police, politician and corporate can still be considered for double standards, but how can we expect the same standards from our journalist community. When one pillar collapses, the whole building is likely to fall down. Media being the fourth pillar need to be strong enough in breaking the ice and put forward news and make the truth distinct from ambiguous or falsehood which will entail death of social evil and the people of the nation and the state itself will live in peace. This is the responsibility than needs to be understood and taken up by the Indian journalism. Now, how they are going to shape, direct and lead the new generation of India towards to a peaceful nation as a whole is matter of time and the self awakening.

Media ethics

6. Media both print and more so the electronic media plays an important catalyst in shaping the public opinions, sentiments and dogmas by

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promulgating accurate and desirable information and knowledge. Due to the vast intrusion of television news in public life, it has the power and can create an enduring impact on society, culture and security of a region. These days media is generally facing a qualitative crisis pertaining to the news disseminated by it and it seems as the news channels in India have their respective doctrine charted out presenting anything as news which leads to an departure from the ethical issues of journalism. They have metamorphosed themselves towards packaging of information and have adopted a policy of corporate culture wherein their basic motto has transformed from disseminating information to earning television rating points. With numerous news channels being beamed to our houses the thirst for the actual news by the public is not met due to lack of content, quality and authenticity which have deteriorated over a period of time. Electronic media in India has been irresponsible in presenting news and sensitizing crucial events without understanding and realising the impact and implications on the people and security of the nation. Investigative journalism is the in thing now where in the channels has become a self proclaimed investigating agency which to some extent is instrumental in bringing out the truth but slowly the channels are being used as a means of personal vendetta or gains by insiders as well as outsiders.

7. Media used to be known as the voice of common people and a medium to grab knowledge of the world. Media had over a period of time had built some ethics which was appreciated but with the rapid development, mushrooming of news agencies and requirement of growth it is loosing its credibility. Print media compared to electronic media was known for its accuracy and its

ethics and with passage of time everything has become part of marketing and news turned into commodity. The so called free media talks the language of the agencies they are benefited from. The ethics which is being talked about is what should be written or shown and what shouldn't be. The overall aim should to add to society, nation building for a better tomorrow. Contrary to this, media coverage includes matters which are of no use to the citizen but surely for their own mileage. News is supposed to connect the world and not a soap opera in which media ethics, duties and purpose is lost.

Reach of mass media

8. It is important for a country like ours to know the capabilities of available mass media facilities, readership, listener ship and viewer ship habits of the people to gauge the reach of media. But do we know when it comes to the reach of various mass media individually and in combination among the diverse population in the country. There many question which arises like how many in the country are exposed to or read newspaper, view television, listen to radio, surf internet, etc? Which one of the available media and how frequently? How many and who all read more than one newspaper, which one and where in India? During what period of the day and how frequently do the people watch TV and listen to radio? What is the duplication/overlap of programmes between different media and many more intricate questions like such will determine the influence the media will create in the people of a nation and gauge its reach.

9. In the year 2006, National Readership was carried out in India which is considered the largest survey of its kind in the world, with samples from 2, 84, 373 house interviews to measure the media penetration and exposure in <https://assignbuster.com/media-management-towards-national-security-media-essay/>

both urban and rural India and obviously the readership of publications. According to the survey, today average urban adult is spending 44 minutes per day reading magazines and dailies. Readership of dailies continue to grow as compared to the previous year however there is a decline in magazine readership both in urban and rural India. Satellite television has grown in leaps and bound and has a considerable reach: TV now reaches 112 million Indian homes. Internet has also spread predominantly with a reach now exceeding 12 millions. Resurgence of radio cannot be ignored as its reach has increased to 27% of the population tuning in to any radio station in the average week, almost equaling the number of readers. This boom in media reach and penetration will play a vital role towards national perception and national security as such.

Media Ownership and control in India

10. In February 1995 in a landmark judgement, Supreme Court of India ruled that the airwaves are public property and no longer under government control. In 1996 a Broadcasting bill was formulated and an autonomous Broadcasting Authority was vested with regulatory powers. The ministry of information and broadcasting in June 1998 allowed private Indian satellite channels to uplink from India. With the media being liberalised entry of foreign media was eminent, now the question which comes to mind is; do foreign media impact the policy decisions, a tool of cultural imperialism, western business and foreign policy interest in turn hampering national security. The positive side may be in favours of foreign media on the ground of plurality, competition and readers right to know. Their influence will mould the perception of the population as they wield through their agenda.

11. It is very interesting to know as to who controls the various media entity in India and obviously it will stem out from the ownership. A very popular news channel NDTV, is funded by gospels of charity in Spain which supports communism. CEO of this company is Prannoy Roy who is related to Prakash karat, the General Secretary of communist party of India. CNN-IBN is funded by Southern Baptist Church with its branches all over the world with its HQ in US. Times Group which includes Times of India, Mid-Day, Nav Bharat Times, Stardust, Femina, Times Now (TV news channel) and many more is owned by Benet and Coleman. Star TV is managed by an Australian, who is supported by St. Peters Pontifical Church, Melbourne. Birla Group owned Hindustan Times have changed hands which is presently owned by Shobhana Bharatiya and working in collaboration with the Times Group. English daily, The Hindu started over 125 years has been taken over by Josua Society, Berne, Switzerland. The Indian express in which ACTS Christian Ministries have a major stake. There are many other regional news print who are privately owned by Indians which have more reach and impact in the rural, semi-urban and to some extent urban population. Regional TV network like Enadu is controlled by Ramoji Rao who has connection in the film industry.

12. The ownership explains the control of media in India by external agencies be it foreigner or Indian. The news will be biased by their owners and the product that filters down to the common man will distort. The result is obvious; we are going to be fed with tailor made news by the companies who are holding the strings.

Media responsibility

13. Freedom of press might have potential unintended effect while engaged in the internal crisis situation especially when considering modern media as a force multiplier. Many a times the media is in an awkward position when it is covering terrorist events. Media's role to protect the society's right to know comes in direct conflict with the state's (military, law enforcement and investigating agencies) mission is to protect and serve, and maintain order when covering internal crisis situations. The precarious balancing act that the press faces while covering terrorist incidents is like having censorship on one side of the weigh scale and freedom on the other side. During internal crisis situations, press needs to be always vigilant about balancing their freedom relating protecting the peoples right to know against their responsibility to play a constructive role. The more the freedom and accuracy goes into reporting, the more the coverage favours the terrorists and vice versa. Issues facing the governments and media outlets before, during and after a terrorist incident need to be closely examined by both the agencies towards dissemination of information which will strike a balance. The terrorist and government's agendas tend to dramatically oppose, while the media position is often judgment call. Media is a force multiplier stuck in between complete censorship and total freedom of the press. It is important that the media continues to play a constructive role during times of local and national crisis but it is also critical that the media be allowed to continue to provide a counterbalance.

CHAPTER V

MEDIA MANAGEMENT

Embedded journalism

1. Before discussing embedded journalism it is important to expound upon the two categories of media reporters, embedded media and unilaterals currently present on the battlefield. Embedded media live with a military unit, only after undergoing training prerequisite to proceeding on to the area of action. The embeds are taught with the fundamentals of the armed forces and basic survival skills including donning of nuclear, biological and chemical protection suits and gas masks. On the other hand, unilaterals are those journalists who show up in the battle field without a military endorsement in order to get the so called real story and while doing some pay the ultimate price. Personnel who do not wield weapon on the battlefield are not assets but a liability. The seat which is occupied by the embedded media cannot be used by a trained soldier who can provide with firepower in the battlefield. The benefits some what outweighs the drawback or can be debated for a particular situation or kind of operation. Since today's media is hi-tech and has the capability to transmit uncensored events as they occur across the globe real time, then it is prudent to integrate the media's involvement into the planning effort to accurately inform the public. Neglecting or delaying the media's integration into the planning process is liable to yield additional stories that produce a skeptical public.

2. A joint doctrine has been promulgated by the Indian armed forces to enhance war fighting capabilities one of which plans in co-opting media by creating a pool of embedded journalists. Select journalists who are trained in <https://assignbuster.com/media-management-towards-national-security-media-essay/>

the environment and fit may be granted access to stay with armed forces units near the tactical headquarters where they would be able to move upfront having watched the action on screen. The promulgation of the joint doctrine by the armed forces will entail the document as standard text and form part of the training syllabus for all officers at all levels. The joint doctrine lays emphasis on increasing the situational ethics of the media person which means indoctrinating journalists to a level where they will appreciate the necessities and compulsions of a military action. The media plan in the joint doctrine burrows heavily from the US and its allies invasion of Iraq in the year 2003 where few media persons were trained and allowed to accompany military units. This practice of attaching media with military gave rise to the phrase embedded journalism and the ethics of which is still being debated in the media circle.

3. Ground rules for any operation should intent to prevent publication of details that could jeopardise an operation or endanger the troops. Is there a possibility for military to review and censor articles emanating out of an operational theatre, well media is not likely to digest this fact. Reporters covering from the battle front via real time will transmit images which will be broadcasted to the whole world as the battle unfolds. This capability has the potential to affect tactical and operational plans of our adversaries as they will be witness to the same news.

Social media management

4. A comprehensive strategy for using social media is the need of the hour to improve national security and the earlier it is adopted by the defence forces that much advantage it is going to pose for it. The use of social media can be <https://assignbuster.com/media-management-towards-national-security-media-essay/>

broadly divided into four categories; firstly, the inward sharing which is sharing information within the department and agencies. Individual defence services need to share information intra-service as well as inter-service which will enable the defence forces with synergy in intelligence handling and operational orientation. Secondly, the outward sharing which is sharing information with external groups and other agencies. Thirdly, inbound sharing which is obtaining information and input from outside organisations and the public. Lastly, the outbound sharing in which information is shared with people outside the government including with the people of the nation and friendly foreign nations. Sharing of information avoids duplication of job like gathering of information and analyzing the same. Well analysis can vary with department to department as to what is the requirement that needs to be gleaned out of the available data none the less, pre-analysed data from different agencies will enable in building the larger picture.

CHAPTER VIII (FINAL)

MEDIA AS FORCE MULTIPLIER

1. Today media needs to be used in a more pro-active manner to shape the operational scheme of a commander. This can be done by more integration and engagement of the media, public relations officer and the men in uniform into two way communication looking after each others needs at the same time. One very important aspect is the education of the staff and subordinate commanders at operational level to realise the need and advantage of engaging media towards military operations.

2. The fourth estate in this informational age gives commanders with vast opportunities to leverage towards own operations which should be exploited to the maximum. The media can be used as potent force multiplier in achieving the objective by boosting the morale of our own forces and people, as an agent of deception for the military, gathering valuable intelligence and enhancing better build up of situational awareness, sustained psychological operation and finally communicating the objective and end state to the international community.

3. Today the commander should know the fact that the thrust which comes from the people of the nation when any operation takes place is due to the instant relay of situation to the masses by the media. The military thus have an advantage in reaching to the people as fast as possible to generate and harness the support. Military being known for a respected institution and profession in the country, the image maintenance if not enhancing should be the prime concern of the commanders. During any conventional war or operation other than war, the credibility of military action is seldom questioned due to the trust, confidence and respect which the military enjoys. Commanders need to be proactive in engaging the press rather than being reactive and thus losing the opportunity to use the media rather than being used by the media.

4. Inaccurate reporting and depiction of the operations will have a negative and devastating effect on the conduct of operation there on in terms of likely changed perception of our own people and international opinion. This in turn will effect the decision making cycle from tactical to strategic level. Apart

from the people of the nation and high level decision makers, one very
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important factor which comes into picture is that of our own troops, who are exposed to the same news, be it at the air bases, ships, harbours, communication chains, rear areas, etc will have an impact on the psychi. This again is going to have a telling effect on the way the troops are going to fight subsequently. Commanders should to be concerned of the said fact in this information age to keep the morale of the troops high. In fact the operations where our forces have given a valiant fight should be projected to each and every possible people by the fastest means. Our soldiers are the best and to maintain the image of this potent force especially in this fast pace materialistic world, Commanders must take every opportunity to showcase our outstanding airmen, soldiers and sailors.

Maximizing the fourth estate

5. Maximising and moulding the perception of the masses and adversary by the use of fourth estate and how the commander leverage the media to effectively achieve operational objective to his own advantage is what the commander should explore which obviously is the need of the hour.

6. Before employing the media, a brief review of the nature of the media would be required to better understand its potential. Media covering any military operation ranges from novice in the field to the seasoned veteran. Thus employment of media by the commander should be in a judicious manner like not allowing the media to wander in the battlefield at free will due to the wide spectrum of their work experience. At operational level coverage of media can be dived into three