

Values of nationalism in pakistan



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The ideology of nationalism has been defined as a feeling of belonging among the individuals of a nation and it is based on the religion, language, and ethnic origins. In Pakistan, the ideology of nationalism was first initiated with Islam as single religion. The Muslim of India was unified on the basis of religion to create a single national identity (Haqqani, 2005)[1]. However, nationalism can also be defined as feeling among group that is reawakened by modernity (Adeel, 2005)[2], thus nationalism in Pakistan is a result of struggle to have separate identification from the Hindus in the region of sub-continent Asia. Since the creation of Pakistan, nationalism is related to expression of historical, cultural, religious, linguistic and political values which is further elaborated as showing pride in the historical culture, heritage and identity of Pakistan that also helps to formulate future vision of Pakistan.

Problem with Nationalism in Pakistan

Since its establishment, Pakistan has faced different difficulties and nationalism with concern to identity has been the most problematic national issue for Pakistan. Pakistan, being born from the old division of Indian civilization, has been struggling to construct its culture which gives it different identity, not much different from Indian culture but at the same time must be recognized as different by the world (Jaffrelot, 2002)[3]. After more than half century, nationalism in Pakistan has two faces or in other words there are two levels of values of nationalism exist. At first, there is nationalism which forms all Pakistani as one nation and according to that all Pakistanis possess one nationality and are citizen of Pakistan; similarly it is observed that government and media in Pakistan continuously attempts to

prevail the value for nationalism among the citizen by showing threaten from India (Jaffrelot, 2002). Conversely, for more than five decades, it has been observed that nationalism in Pakistan is disintegrated on the basis of linguistic, ethnicity and region. To Jaffrelot (2002), nationalism is an ideology which combines the people into a group and this formation occurs as a result of territorial, ethnic and social construction rather than on the basis of religion or language. Thus this definition excludes the linguistic group and religious communities. Pakistan, on the other hand, appears to be an unachieved nation on account of ethnic identities they have. Pakistan with disintegrated nation has been going through different problems. No matter what the nature of the problems is, media has long been playing its role in the creation of values of nationalism in Pakistan.

This paper intends to examine the role of media in the creation of nationalistic value in Pakistan with especial reference to media as strong source or tool for creating the values of nationalism.

Pakistani Media and Nationalism

With the disruptive nationalist ideologies in the period of globalization, present nationalism is significantly different from the ideology of nationalism in nineteenth and early twentieth century. Today, it is seen that nationalism is impacted and increased by the mutual incompatibility between local as well as global world. However, nationalism has its deep root in diverse political, and cultures while different national trends impacts the way of media and journalists choose to demonstrate the news stories about national collective identities and the national interests. It is considered that national welfare development impacts the news coverage criteria towards a less

narrow-minded and more responsible attitude on the part of the press. The role of mass media, since 1960s with the ideological state equipment, was able to organize the social image more concentrating on the ideology of national identity and national interest.

Since national integrity and solidity have been core national issues of Pakistan, and press media has been rather active in analyzing these problem through generating the public awareness than electronic media. In Pakistan electronic media has long been missing its place to make significant influence to create national values. According to Price (1995)[4], organized activity of media for social imagery was achieved by different controlling policies and it has directed to considerable and firm construction of consent in the name of the population within a nationality and nation state. The consent is taken from the symbolic and imaginary way of “ we” and “ them”, and it is implemented by the media event and the selection criteria of news and its presentation. To Dayan and Katz (1992)[5], this consent is more prominent when it is about foreign policy issues and the international relations of a nation state. Gans (1979)[6] contends that nation is presented as a unified entity through TV news which is framed into anthropomorphic term. In addition, ethnocentrism is considered as one of the main journalistic values through which TV news is selected and presented. In the same way, since Pakistan has long been ally with the US state government and after 9/11 attacks the news coverage by electronic media in Pakistan had followed the international relation policy of Pakistani government through which Pakistani media showed sympathy with the people and citizen of the US (PÅ, udowski, 2007)[7].

Generally people consider mass media as mean of determining the knowledge level and information about the national and international alliances, political players and foreign policy; similarly, news coverage both by press and electronic media also gives the geopolitical image of a country. For many decades nationalist movement was based on the typography and according to McLuhan (1987)[8] printed word make it possible to give the rise of national languages, producing common way of communication, and, as a result of it they have view of a common destiny. Urdu press in Pakistan, on the other hand, has been most careless and irresponsible in the world as it has always been indulge in promoting such conspiracy theories that could be harmful for the union of all provinces and its national image inside and outside the country. As discussed above that language communication is more powerful than picture communication with the view to have intimacy with the people using common language, Pakistani Urdu press media is deteriorating the national values by relying on the propaganda and prejudice views. However, here it is not significant to overview if the word of truth is promoted but more importantly that the news content is not relevant to promote the values of nationalism in the country (Gupta, 1999)[9]. However, the role of media with nationalism can also be observed in the time of war especially with reference to radio. Radio through broadcasting spreads the common words of fear and hate towards the other nations. Bias nationalism affects the selection as well as presentation of news stories and eventually results in outburst of nationalist mobilizations. The role of radio in Pakistan has similarly been motivated to promote the national values by the war threat from India in 1965 (Ali, 1995)[10]. Similar to theoretical concept about the role of radio with the context of creating the values of nationalism; radio

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in Pakistan is now less active is promoting integrated national values. Radio during the separation of East Pakistan from the West Wing had been remarkably positive and active in promoting integration between both wings on the other hand, radio in Bengal was active in disintegration of Bengal from the West Pakistan (Ghulam Kabir, 1994)[11].

Nationalism and Pakistani Media in the Era of Globalization

Present nationalism is not the result of reemergence of past but rather integral and self-reliant. The ideology of nationalism is different from the ideology that existed in ninetieth and twentieth century. Nowadays, nationalism ideology is more influenced by the global trends. However, the process of globalization occurs both on the level of systemic integration and on the level of social integration. Systemic integration refers to economy, technology, and communications; on the other hand, social integration is life-world. The process of globalization takes place in a very systematic way and occurs from place to place. Thus, in modern period ideology of nationalism is taken into account as local reaction of political system and mutual identities to different number of national welfare development (Robins, 1991)[12]. New era of popular electronic media in Pakistan is more like autonomous body especially electronic media which seems to find different ways through which public of Pakistan is making a successful transition to a democracy.

However, values of nationalism in Pakistan is complicated with the view of having multi-linguistic and ethnic population (Akbar, 1998)[13]but this complication is also related with lack of democracy in Pakistan and impartial judicial process which can remarkably overcome the disintegration (Akhtar, 2000)[14]. Pakistani media now seems to have role of watch-dog while

holding the politicians and making them accountable and keeping the public informed of the situation.

As far as role of television is concerned historically one of the evidence of media influence on the nationalism was observed in the late century when nationalist mobilization occurs owing to effects of TV pictures and power of media to construct the imaginary national community. According to Meyrowitz (1985)[15], the presentation and directness of TV pictures allows focusing on the local event to change into event of national and international interest. The effectiveness of media impact in the creation of nationalism is not measured yet but TV has been observed effective for spreading a word at a distance. In last few years electronic media in Pakistan has grown well with the inception of private news channels and radio channels; therefore now media is much free but less responsible in terms of bearing the responsibility towards creating the values for nationalism in the country. Even though if it is assumed that electronic media in Pakistan is not effective or playing role to promote national values to integrate the country, yet Pakistani media has deep effect on the popular consciousness (Jaffrelot, 2002).

To assess the historical role of television in Pakistan it is significant to overview the effectiveness of television in the creation of national values. Television with the coordination of demand and aims distant plays an important tool which forms the practical narrative and also creates group identity. Television is very friendly tool when it is used to address national minorities (Smith, 1990)[16]. Here it is essential to mention that current nationalism or previous nationalism is not the result of media communication

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but media has been used as such structure that aids to find the origination and development. However, once nationalism is created as on political ideologies, it can be effective or manipulative for media. Pakistan television which is government entity failed to maintain that integrity and promote the nationalism on account of government influence on the coverage of news (Asian Media Information and Communication Centre, 2000)[17].

To Altheide (1979)[18], there could be two different trends in relation to nationalism or national identification and media. At first it is excess or fast moving changing picture and images, this is the result of logic behind the concept of television. The commercialization in TV forms nation's identification the nation with indefinite, sporadic, and sometimes insecure identification. White (1992)[19] justifies it as citizen-viewers are with interrupted views and actions and usually have contradiction views. Thus, national dominancy over the social imagery is changed with diverse similarities. The last century (quarter of the twentieth century) is witness of the situation and was resulted as broadcasting deregulation and globalization of information and economy (Lash, 1994)[20]. Bauman (1993) [21] explains that it helps to promote the sense of co-belonging and also affects other mutual identity that is likely to conceal neotribalism. The relationship between nationalism and media is affected by both materially and conceptually and it is changing and shifting cultural, political and economic configuration (Schlesinger, 1991)[22]. Therefore, nowadays nationalism ideology has become a mediatized and it is used through TV which through narrative language leads to change in understanding and views of an individual towards national identity and feelings of nationalism.

To Luke (1995)[23], nationalism is nowadays related to and reproduced as part of real life and more associated with the national identity. Similarly, there is another trend related to globalization of communication; since globalization of communication has directed the world towards limited cultural difference and viewers usually find it easy to maintain the nationalism and make selective interpretation of international message. According to Negrine and Papathanassopoulos (1990)[24], paper and electronic media maintains their national integrity and interest and this orientation is observed by the news presentation especially international news.

Pakistan has been observing new era of modern communication in the country and local news channels within the country are more concerned about the national issues. Both electronic and press media in Pakistan is more focusing on the future of Pakistan as independent nation with different identity in the world. However, media in Pakistan is considered as effective entity with the perception to show the culture of Pakistan to the world and get them identified as separate nation. The news coverage of national issue, on one hand, is likely to support the national interest of the country, on the other hand national government and politics are more criticized by news channels. With such combination television in Pakistan is politicized and looks rather defocused on promoting the national integrity and national identification. As far as foreign policy is concerned the news media apply distinctive influence on the audience with the use of language and images. Since there is little contribution of television in Pakistan as a result of limited personal experience and involvement in the issues the news presentation is

commonly like cycle with popular expectations cultivated by national stereotypes especially in the time of nationalist enthusiasm.