

PERCEPTION OF MUSLIM ISSUES IN MEDIA BY MUSLIMS AND NON-MUSLIMS – A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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Abstract: *In the era of communication, war begins, continue and end with media war. The media shapes public opinion and covers realities by their censorship. The mass media are used as the most important weapon. There is a connection between the role of media and post modernity. The media shapes the world how we see it. The purpose of this study is to know the perception of Muslims and Non-Muslims about Muslim issues. For this study descriptive research design was adopted and the primary data is collected through survey method by using structured interview schedule. The area of the study is Vijayapura District of Karnataka State, in this 60 Muslims and 60 Non-Muslims total 120 respondents were selected to compare their views about Muslims issues covered by different newspapers.*

Key Words: *Muslim issues, Muslims, Non-Muslims and Media.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

The present society is influenced by mass media in many ways. From educating the society by providing information about various aspects to forming the public opinion the mass media performs various roles. It functions as a bridge between the policy makers and the citizens. From the ages the media had a great influence over public. It had both positive and negative impact to the people. In many instances all over the world the mass media have brought positive changes in the society. In other hand we have also witnessed negative campaigns and false agenda setting activities of the media. Muslim represents 14.2 percent of the total population of the country (According to 2011 census report). Being the largest minority group the Muslims are participating in politics, defense, sports, business, entertainment industries and many other fields in a large number. Over the years the literacy rate of Muslims is progressing. The participation in academic and media industries is increasing as well. The government also released many funds and schemes for the betterment of minority communities in the country. The media frequently covers news about the Muslims and Muslim issues in various categories such as Muslim festivals, Political affairs, Crime against Muslims, Religious activities, ceremonies etc. Along with the print media the electronic media and digital media also provides wider coverage to the Muslim news. One among the fastest growing religious groups, the Muslims or Islam is misunderstood and misrepresented in various contexts by the people of other religions. The negative depictions of Muslims in the country are influenced by the societal views and the effects of media agenda. In addition to the academy, the corporations, and the government, the media play a fundamental role in this regard.

According to the experimental and co relational studies, the research team – Muniba Saleem, Sara Prot, Craig Anderson and Anthony Lemieux -- tested the short-term and long-term effects of media stereotypes of Muslims as terrorists on Americans' perceptions of Muslims. The study surveyed more than 700 American college students to find that when Muslims are specifically portrayed by the media as terrorists, there is a significant association with support for military action in Muslim countries. The effect was independent of exposure to entertainment media violence in general; it was specific to media portrayals of Muslims as terrorists. The next study surveyed 200 participants with an average age of 37.5 years old. It found that as exposure to news portraying Muslims as terrorists increased, so did Americans' support for civil restrictions for Muslim Americans. The final study surveyed more than 300 college students and adults and revealed that short-term exposure to news media portraying Muslims as terrorists increased support for policies harming Muslims internationally and domestically.

1.1. Literature Review:

Ahmed Saifuddin and Matthes Jogs (2016) reported that a large majority of studies covered Western countries, while Muslim countries and Muslim media have been neglected. they also identified an evident lack of comparative research, a neglect of visuals, and a dearth of research on online media. It is found that most studies investigated the themes of 'migration', 'terrorism', and 'war'. Moreover, their meta-study shows that Muslims tend to be negatively framed, while Islam is dominantly portrayed as a violent religion. Tufyal, Md.Aziz, Izzidien, Khreeji and Hussain (2006). In their study respondents reported that the media present largely a negative image of Muslims. They get frustrated over what they consider as negative portrayal resulting from distortions through selective

reporting. It is found that often Islam is presented as monolithic, authoritarian and oppressive towards women, which is often the consequence of the treatment of women in some Muslim communities, but this is reinforced by a constant focus in media and public discussion on issues such as forced marriages and female circumcision.

Hidayat, Sutan and Al-Bawardi, Nouf (2012). In their study, a survey was conducted to evaluate the perceptions of non-Muslim expatriates in Saudi Arabia toward Islamic banking products and services. The findings indicate that majority of non-Muslim customers in Saudi Arabia perceive current Islamic banking services as diverse and suitable in satisfying their banking needs. This positive image has to be seen as an opportunity for Islamic banks to expand their businesses into this market segment. Therefore, Islamic banks in Saudi Arabia should tailor their non-Muslim customer acquisition strategies accordingly and intensive product awareness campaigns should be made if the Islamic banks want to capture a larger share of non-Muslim customer market in Saudi Arabia.

Kattarwala Nafisa H. (2010). This study reveals the existing dichotomy in understanding Islam and its depiction in the Indian mass-media, particularly films. The Indian Cinema and specially the Hindi films have captured Islam in its numerous forms. This paper will explore how these images have been both useful and harmful at the same time in endorsing the identity of Islam in the Indian subcontinent. Being the second largest faith in this part of the world, Islam has invoked many interpretations which have either led to public disharmony or the communal bonhomie. It is significant to note that these perspectives have shaped the lives of millions of people and have hugely impacted the understanding of Islam within the Indian cultural milieu.

1.2. Statement of the problem:

“Perception of Muslim Issues in Media by Muslims and Non-Muslims – A Comparative Study”

1.3. Objective of the study:

- To compare the perception of Muslims and Non-Muslim citizens with respect to coverage of Muslim issues in Newspaper.
- To study the opinion of Muslim and Non-Muslims citizen regarding the coverage of Muslim issues in Newspaper.
- To examine the differences in perception of Muslims and Non-Muslims regarding the coverage of Muslim issues in Newspaper.

2. METHODOLOGY:

To examine the perception of Muslim issues in media descriptive research design was adopted and the primary data is collected through survey method by using structured interview schedule. The area of the study is Vijayapura District of Karnataka State, in this 60 Muslims and 60 Non-Muslims total 120 respondents were selected to compare their views about Muslim issues covered by different newspapers. For the selection of the sample simple random sampling is adopted.

3. RESULTS:

Table 1 Gender wise distributions of the respondents

Sl. No	Gender	Frequency	Percentage
1	Male	45	37.5%
2	Female	75	62.5%
	Total	120	100%

The table 1 reveals that a large number of respondents (62.5%, N=75) are female and very few are (37.5%, N=45) male.

Table 2 Age wise distribution of the respondents

Sl. No	Age	Frequency	Percentage
1	18-25 years	36	30%
2	26-35 years	63	52.5%
3	36-40 years	06	5%
4	41-50 years	12	10%
5	Above 50 years	03	2.5%
	Total	120	100%

Table 2 reported that among the sampled respondents, 52.5% (N=63) belongs to 26 to 35 years age group, followed by 30% (N=36) from the age group of 18 to 25 years, 10% (N=12) belongs to 41-50 years age group, 5% (N=6) of

respondents belongs to the age group of 36 to 40 years and only 2.5% (N=3) belongs to the age group of above 50 years.

Table 3 Education wise distributions of the respondents

Sl. No	Education	Frequency	Percentage
1	Primary and Secondary	02	1.6%
2	PUC/ Degree	52	43.3%
3	Post Graduate	60	50%
4	Ph. D	06	5%
	Total	120	100%

Table 3 reveals the education level of the selected respondents 50% (N=60) are post graduate, 43.3% (N=52) of the respondents have education up to PUC/Degree, followed by 5% (N=6) have PhD degree and only 1.6% (N=2) of the respondents who have primary and secondary education.

Table 4 Marital Status of the respondents

Sl. No	Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
1	Married	42	35%
2	Unmarried	78	65%
	Total	120	100%

According to table 4, majority of the respondents were married i.e 65% (N=78) and 35% (N=42) were unmarried.

Table 5 Occupation of the respondents

Sl. No	Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
1	Government Employees	24	20%
2	Private Employees	18	15%
3	House wife	12	10%
4	Students	66	55%
5	Others	00	00%
	Total	120	100%

Table 5 examines the respondents on the basis of their occupation. More than half of the respondents 55% (N=66) were students, followed by 20% (N=24) Government employees, 15% (N=18) Private employees and only 10% (N=12) were house wives.

Table 6 Preferred Media to access news and information

N=120

Sl. No	Media	Frequency	Percentage
1	Newspaper	74	61.7%
2	Radio	18	15%
3	Television	54	45%
4	Online media	70	58.3%
5	Others	00	00%

In the present study an attempt is made to know the preference of media to access news and information. The majority of the respondents i.e. 61.7% (N=74) opined that they prefer newspaper to access news and information, followed by 58.3% (N=70) prefer online media, 45% (N=54) prefer television and only 15% (N=18) prefer radio to access news and information.

Table 7 Trustworthy media among respondents

N=120

Sl. No	Media	Frequency	Percentage
1	Newspaper	90	75%
2	Radio	46	38.3%
3	Television	46	38.3%
4	Online media	30	25%

With respect to trustworthy media table 7 reveals that three fourth (75%, N=90) of the respondents opine that newspaper is most trustworthy media, followed by 38.3% (N=46) radio and Television each, and only 25% (N=30) of the respondents opine online media is trustworthy.

Table 8 Duration of watching and reading news in Media

Sl. No	Duration	Frequency	Percentage
1	Less than one hour	54	45%
2	1-2 hours	48	40%
3	2-3 hours	12	10%
4	More than 3 hours	06	5%
	Total	120	100%

Table 8 depicts the frequency of watching/reading news in different media. According to the acquired data among the respondents, a large number of the respondents (45%, N=54) spend less than one hour a day, followed by 40% (N=48) who spend one to two hours, whereas 10% (N=12) spend two to three hours a day and only 5% (N=6) of the respondents spend more than three hours a day in reading/watching news in media.

Table 9 Media coverage of regional news

N=120

Sl. No	Media	Frequency	Percentage
1	Newspaper	78	65%
2	Radio	18	15%
3	Television	60	50%
4	Online media	18	15%

The information depicted in table 9 demonstrate that a great majority of the respondents i.e. 65% (N=78) opined that newspaper is giving more coverage to regional issues, followed by TV 50% (N=60) and equal number of i.e. 15% (N=18) of respondents says radio and television gives more coverage to regional news.

Table 10 Different categories of news read/watch by the respondents

N=120

Sl. No	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
1	Political	60	50%
2	Sports	54	45%
3	Business	12	10%
4	Religion	42	35%
5	Crime	60	50%
6	Entertainment	60	50%
7	Other	12	10%

The table 10 indicates the interested news categories of the respondents. It shows that equal number of respondents (50%, N=60) prefer political, crime and entertainment news, followed by 45% (N=54) prefer sports news, 35% (N=42) prefer religious news and only 10% (N=12) each prefer business and others categories of news.

Table 11 Coverage of Religious news by different media

N=120

Sl. No	Media	Frequency	Percentage
1	Newspaper	60	50%
2	Radio	00	00%
3	Television	96	80%
4	Online media	30	25%

Table 11 reveals the opinion of the respondents regarding coverage of religious news by different media. It indicates that a great majority of the respondents (80%, N=96) opine that television is giving more coverage to religious issues, followed by newspapers (50%, N=60), online media (25%, N=30) and none of the respondents register their opinion for radio.

Table 12 Watching religious channels

Sl. No	Opinion	Frequency	Percentage
1	Yes	38	31.6%
2	No	82	68.4%
	Total	120	100%

Table 12 reveals that a great majority of the respondents 68.4% (N=82) does not watch any religious television channels and only 31.6% (N=38) of the respondents watch religious channels.

Table 13 Coverage of Muslim issues in Media

N=120

Sl. No	Media	Very high	High	Average	Less	Very Less
1	Newspaper	18 (15%)	42 (35%)	48 (40%)	06 (5%)	06 (5%)
2	Radio	12 (10%)	00 (0%)	60 (50%)	36 (30%)	12 (10%)
3	Television	30 (25%)	48 (40%)	36 (30%)	06 (5%)	00 (0%)
4	Online Media	24 (20%)	30 (25%)	54 (45%)	06 (5%)	06 (5%)
5	Other	00 (0%)	12 (10%)	60 (50%)	18 (15%)	30 (25%)

Table 13 shows the opinion of the respondents regarding the coverage of Muslim issues in different media. They reported that 40% of the respondents opine that newspaper covers average news related to Muslims, radio is also giving minimum coverage (50%, N=60) to Muslim issues. Whereas, 40% (N=48) of the respondents opine that television is giving high coverage to Muslim issues and 45% (N=54) of the respondents said online media covers average news related to Muslims.

Table 14 Kinds of news covered by the media related to Muslims

N=120

Sl. No	Opinion	Frequency	Percentage
1	Political affairs	54	45%
2	Religious programmes	102	85%
3	Communal conflicts	54	45%
4	Developmental stories	42	35%
5	Others	00	00%

When analyzed what kinds of news covered more in media related to Muslims it is found from table 14 that among the respondents a great majority (85%, N=102) said religious programmes coverage is more, followed by each 45% (N=54) coverage is related to political affairs and communal conflicts and only 35% (N=42) coverage is given to development stories.

Table 15 Perception of Muslims and Non-Muslims regarding Muslim issues in Media

Sl. No	Opinion	Muslims		Non-Muslims	
		Yes	No	Yes	No
1	Enough coverage to Muslim issues	00 (0%)	60 (100%)	42 (70%)	18 (30%)
2	Subscribing Muslim related pages in Social Media	36 (60%)	24 (40%)	00 (0%)	60 (100%)
3	Biased coverage of Muslim issues	42 (70%)	18 (30%)	24 (40%)	36 (60%)
4	Satisfied about the news coverage about the Muslim's cultural diversity	00 (0%)	60 (100%)	06 (10%)	54 (90%)
5	Newspapers are publishing enough numbers of special stories	12 (20%)	48 (80%)	48 (80%)	12 (20%)
6	Mass Media giving more coverage to the other religious issues than the Muslim issues	24 (40%)	36 (60%)	48 (80%)	12 (20%)

7	Regional Muslim issues are neglected by the mainstream media	48 (80%)	12 (20%)	12 (20%)	48 (80%)
8	Media covering enough stories about the problems of Muslims	12 (20%)	48 (80%)	12 (20%)	48 (80%)
9	Local news channels of Vijayapur giving enough coverage to the Muslim issues	18 (30%)	42 (70%)	36 (60%)	24 (40%)
10	Enough number of Discussion programmes about the Muslim issues in the news channels	18 (30%)	42 (70%)	24 (40%)	36 (60%)

Table 15 examines the perceptions of Muslims and Non-Muslims towards the Muslim issues covered in the media. A total of ten different questions has been asked with both the category of respondents and recorded their responses. When it comes to the coverage of Muslim issues in media all the Muslims (100% N=60) said there is not enough coverage, and 70% (N=42) of non Muslim said there is enough coverage and 30% (N=18) says there is not enough coverage of Muslim issues.

None of the Non-Muslims have subscribed to Muslim related pages in the social media. Among the Muslims 60% (N=36) subscribed and 40% (N=24) have not subscribed any Muslim related pages in social media. Among the respondents 70% N=42 of Muslim says media is biased in covering Muslim issues and 60% N=36 of Non-Muslim says media is not biased in covering the Muslim issues. A great majority of the respondents are not satisfied about the coverage Muslim’s cultural diversity in media. Only 10% (N=06) of the Non-Muslims said they are satisfied with the coverage of Muslim’s cultural diversity in Media. Majority of the Muslims (80% N=48) opined that the news papers are not publishing enough number of special stories about the Muslims, Whereas the majority of the non-Muslims opined that the News papers are publishing enough number of special stories of Muslims in the newspaper Among the respondents 60% (N=36) Muslims said that mass media is not giving more coverage to other religious issues than the Muslim issues, and 80% (N=48) of Non-Muslims said that mass media is giving more coverage to other religious issues than the Muslim issues. Majority of the Muslims 80% (N=48) opined that Muslim issues are neglected by the main stream media. Majority of the Non-Muslims 80% (N=48) opined that Muslim issues are not neglected by the mainstream media. Equal number of i.e. 80% (N=48) of both the Muslim and Non-Muslims said that media is not covering enough number of stories about the problems of Muslims. When it comes to the coverage of Muslim issues by the local news channels of Vijayapura, majority of the Muslims (70% N=42) and 40% (N=24) of Non-Muslim opined there is not enough number of coverage by the local news channels. Among the total represents majority of the respondents (Muslims =70% N=42, Non Muslims 60% N=36) says there is not enough number of discussion programmes about the muslim issues in the news channel.

Table 16 Biased coverage of Muslim issues in Media

Sl. No	Opinion	Frequency	Percentage
1	Always	96	80%
2	Sometimes	18	15%
3	Never	06	5%
	Total	120	100%

Table 16 examines the perception of the respondents regarding the biased coverage of Muslim issues in Media. It shows that a great majority of the respondents 80% (N=96) opine that media is always biased in coverage of Muslim issues, followed by sometimes 15% (N=18) and only 5% (N=6) of the respondents said Media is never biased regarding the Muslims.

4. CONCLUSION:

Present study is undertaken to understand the differences of opinion among the Muslims and Non-Muslims regarding the coverage of Muslim issues in the media. It is clear from the study that there is wide gap in the perceptions of Muslim issues by the members of the Muslim community and the people of other religion. According to the respondents television stands in the top in covering religious issues, but most of the respondents opined that the coverage of Muslim issues are not satisfactory and it is biased. Regional Muslim issues and news related to the problems of Muslims needs to be given more importance while the cultural diversity of the religion should be highlighted by the media as opined by the respondents.

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