

How is terrorism and its perception Shaped by the Mass Media

Outline

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2 - Understanding the relationship of Mass Media and terrorism

3 - Media-mediated role in terrorism and its perception

a) Provides a mass fame to terrorist groups
Ref: Inside Terrorism by Bruce Hoffman

b) Contributes to fuelling terrorist ideologies
Daesh exploit twitter to propagandize for spreading its narrative

c) Influences other terrorist groups to imitate terrorist incidents

Example of plane hijacking activity

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d) Serves as a recruitment platform for terrorists

UN: Abu bakr Al Baghdadi's online magazine (Dabiq) attracted 40,000 people to join ISIS

e) Assist terrorist groups to interact with each other across the world

Case study of Daesh, TTP and BLA nexus

f) Spreads fear among people by focusing on bloodshed terrorist events

example of media reporting after 9/11 attack

g) Frames a distorted perception of terrorism

Only western countries are facing terrorism

h) Portrays only muslims as terrorists through biased reporting
Perpetrators of Christ church mosque attack were described as "attackers"

i) Disrupts the response of security forces by suggesting that all anti-terrorist measures are tyrannical

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4- Strategies for mitigating media-triggered terrorism and its perception

a) Implementation of Firewall for restricting terrorist ideologies on social media

Case Study of China

b) Enforcement of AI-technology for detecting the content shared by terrorists

USA has employed AI-technology against terrorism

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c) Initiation of strict law against media channels for curbing their support to terrorists

Example of Defamation Law in Pakistan

5- Conclusion

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The Essay

AL-Shahab, a notorious terrorist organization in Somalia, attacked a shopping mall and killed many people. The pertinent aspect of its attack was live broadcasting of all the incident. The sole aim of the terrorist group was to attain global attention and to spread fear among people. In order to fulfill its mission, media had popularized this live streaming across the world. This incident highlights the negative role of media ~~in~~ regarding terrorism. There are various grounds where media assists terrorist groups, providing them unwavering support unknowingly. It provides a mass support to terrorist groups, contributes to fueling terrorist ideologies, and influences other terrorist groups to imitate terrorist incidents. Additionally, it serves as a recruiting platform for terrorist organization, helping them in getting new supporters. In the same manner, it assists terrorist groups

to interact with each other across the globe. It spreads fear among people by focusing on bloodshed terrorist events. Moreover, the media frames a distorted perception of terrorism, portrays only Muslims as terrorists, and disrupts the response of security forces against terrorists. Although, media exacerbates the terrorism and shapes its perception, it does not mean that this role of media can not be mitigated. By following careful steps such as implementation of firewall and enforcement of AI-technology for restricting terrorist content on media can effectively solve this problem. Similarly, the initiation of strict laws against media channels for curbing their support to terrorists can also contribute to this. Consequently, media plays a negative role in terrorism and shaping its perception. However, certain strategies could effectively minimize this adverse role of media

The relationship of mass media and terrorism is based on interdependence. Terrorism, for its propagation, uses media as a useful instrument. While media plays this role unknowingly, Bruce Hoffman has argued that media performs a critical role in expanding terrorism. Moreover, media also forms the perception of terrorism among people. On the whole, media plays an adverse role in exacerbating terrorism and shaping its perception.

To begin with, it provides a mass fame to terrorist groups. With its coverage of all types of terrorist incidents, it provides a global attention to terrorist groups. As a result, these groups gain a wide range of fame regarding their notorious acts. Bruce Hoffman, an eminent author, argues that media assist terrorist groups to attain massive fame by providing coverage to their acts. [Inside Terrorism]. Thus, by using media, terrorists gain a massive attention of people.

Similarly, media contributes to fuelling the ideologies of terrorists. These groups exploit media for the propagation of their ideologies. Most importantly, social media has emerged as a wonderful tool for popularizing any kind of narrative among masses. By utilising these media platforms, the terrorist organization remain successful in circulating their extremist ideas. For instance, Daesh, a terrorist organisation, has exploited twitter to propagandize for spreading its narrative. Therefore, media offers a platform to terrorists for spreading their ideas.

Another disadvantage of media is that it influences other terrorist groups to imitate the acts of terrorism. Many terrorist organizations attempt to follow the acts of their counterparts. Historically, many terror organisation has repeatedly emulated their actions. The most prominent example is of plane hijacking idea, with aim to spread fear. This a terror act has been experienced

by almost every terrorist group. In the same manner, another example is of attacking ships, carrying goods for trade. Consequently, media reporting encourages terrorists to imitate other's actions.

Apart from this, media serves a recruiting platform for terrorists. Under the assistance of media power, the terrorist organizations ~~violede~~ ^{whitewash} the brains of teenagers. After getting influence from extremist narratives, the teenagers easily get trapped in the vicious cycle of terrorism. In this regard, a worth-citing example is of Abu Bak - Al-Baghdadi, a ISIS commander. According to the estimation of United Nations, he ~~recruil~~ recruited 40,000 people through his online magazine named "Dabiq". To conclude, media helps the terrorist organisations in enhancing their manpower.

Along with this, it assists the terrorist groups to interact with each other across the world. Media popularizes

the narratives of terrorist organisations. After seeing the ideas of different terrorist groups, these groups find commonalities in their ideas. and this commonality of ideas forces them to collaborate them with each other. A recent example of this phenomenon is a nexus between Daesh, a middle Eastern groups, and Jafar's Taliban Pakistan (ITP), a Pakistani terrorist organisation. Hence, it provides an opportunity ~~for~~ to terror groups for building relations.

The dark side of media-mediated role in terrorism is that it spreads fear among people. By reporting bloodshed terrorist events, it exacerbates the fear of terrorism among people. There are many examples of this phenomenon. A prominent example is of 9/11 attacks, spreaded a wave of fear. Moreover, the attack on Army Public School in Peshawar ~~is~~ also raised the eyebrows of people.

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The reporting of such incidents have circulated a wave of fear among citizens. Therefore, media circulates the fear of terrorism among people.

In the same vein, it frames a distorted perception of terrorism. Simply, it means that media portrays that only western countries are facing terrorism, ignoring other countries. In fact, Eastern countries are also vulnerable against the threat of terrorism. For example, Pakistan, India, and Middle Eastern countries are experiencing the curse of terrorism. To put it briefly, the biased reporting of media forms a distorted perception of terrorism.

In addition to this, western media portrays only muslim as terrorists. According to western media, only muslim, having beard, are the perpetrators of terrorism. On the contrary, other people are victim of muslim-initiated terrorism. This biasness of media portrayal can be observed in many examples. For instance, the western media

announced the perpetrators of Christ church mosque attack as "attackers". However, Palestinian people, although they are fighting for their rights, are described as terrorists. Therefore, media expressed his biasness against muslims by announcing them terrorists.

Last but not the least disadvantage of media-mediated role in terrorism is that it disrupts the anti-terrorist measures.

It suggest that all anti-terrorist measures are tyrannical. The media not only popularizes this view but also encourages people stand against the response of government. A recent example is of Bannu, a city in Pakistan, where people are protesting against the operation Azm-i-Istekam. This operation is aimed at slowing down the pace of terrorism yet people are against it. In this way, the media impacts the anti-terrorist measures.

The media negatively forms the perception of terrorism among people, accelerating the pace of terrorist incidents.

Despite this, certain careful steps could prove helpful in reducing this adverse role of media.

Firstly, A firewall should be implemented for restricting terrorist narratives on social media. This technological gadget could help in stopping the propagation of extremist content. Many countries have employed this technique for keeping themselves secure for terror incidents. In this regard, a famous example is of China, controlling the media by applying firewall technology. Hence, this technological gadget could assist in restricting the prop promulgation of terror narratives.

Secondly, the enforcement of AI-technology for detecting the terrorist content is also a wonderful step. The modern AI-technology could help in identifying the accounts associated with terrorist activities. Moreover, it could keep a check

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On restricting the content full of extremist ideology. The advanced countries are using Artificial technology for this purpose. USA has integrated AI-technology with its system for restricting media-triggered terrorism. Hence, AI-technology could assist restricting media role in terrorism.

Another Strategy could be initiating strict laws against all media companies for curbing their support to terrorists. These laws will bind media companies to follow the guidelines prescribed by the government. Recently, Pakistan has passed a law for this purpose. The Defamation act is aimed at preventing criticism against the institutions of government. It will strengthen the government to take anti-terrorist steps. Consequently, the strict laws for media channel could reduce the adverse role of media.

In Conclusion, it becomes abundantly clear that media plays a negative role in terrorism. Moreover, it adversely forms the perception of people about terrorism. It not only assist the terrorist groups but also restricts the governments to take anti-terrorist measures. However, it does not mean that this biased role of media in terrorism can not be mitigated. By following certain careful strategies, this role of media could effectively be reduced to a significant extent. Now, the countries have began to take pre-cautionary measures against this phenomenon. These steps of different countries would ultimately bring results. The day is not far enough when world will be free from the shackles of terrorism.
