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APPROACH PAPER ON SEMINAR: CONVERGENCE OF SECURITY FORCES AND MASS MEDIA TOWARDS NATION BUILDING

Introduction

A seminar under aegis of HQ DGAR, titled “**Convergence of Security Forces and Mass Media Towards Nation Building**” is being jointly conducted by HQ IGAR (East) and Department of Mass Communication, Assam University on 23 Jun 2018. The seminar will be spread over three sessions and will cover issues related to synergising the efforts of Security Forces and Mass Media.

Aim

To identify constructs of nationhood, challenges in establishing synergy between Security Forces and Mass Media and formulating the collaborative framework as the way ahead for nation building.

Objectives

The objectives of the seminar are as follows:-

- (a) Identify constructs of nationhood and nation building.
- (b) Highlight the role of Security Forces and Mass Media in nation building.
- (c) Analyse Security Forces–Mass Media relationship and cultural divide manifesting in lack of synergy.
- (d) Suggest a collaborative framework to evolve a way ahead for establishing convergence between Security Forces and Mass Media.

Primer

Nations stay together only when its citizens share enough values and preferences and can communicate with each other in spite of lack of homogeneity. For a vast, democratic and diverse nation which receives legitimacy from its people, India requires a high degree of identification from its citizens. A national identity is therefore essential to provide Indian citizens a feeling of common belonging, usually borne out of national characteristics such as history, culture and language. Though widely used, ‘nation building’ as a term remains imprecise and contested. Not only is the term ‘nation building’ used loosely but its meaning is often assumed rather than defined.

For the purpose of progressing the seminar, a consensus definition of ‘nation building’ could be, ‘the process where people with diverse origins, histories, languages, cultures and religions come together as equals to foster unity and promote a nationwide conscious sense of being proud citizens’.

The seminar aims to debate the role of security forces and mass media towards ‘nation building’. However, the deliberations would seek to adopt a descriptive approach by seeking differing perspectives to questions rather than seeking prescriptive solutions.



The remainder part of this primer would endeavour to highlight issues which need to be explored and identify a way ahead with specific reference to North East India.

Constructs of Nation Building

The process of 'nation building' seeks to develop an emotional connect in spite of cultural, social, ethical, lingual and several other myriad differences. The first issue which merits attention is the difference between 'nation building' and 'state building' and identify the instruments of 'nation building'. Other topics include identifying constructs contributing towards emotional bonding amongst the people and how the complex and challenging process of 'nation building' is put into effect in North East India?

The 21st Century looks towards security, justice, economic development and democracy as pillars of national building. Security comes first in the pecking order because the other three pillars can function effectively only when national security is guaranteed. The fundamental issue to be debated is how apart from ensuring physical security do the security forces provide the emotive appeal for unifying the masses? Other than national security, what are the other ways in which security forces contribute towards 'nation building' and how have the security forces contributed towards 'nation building' in North East India?

The primary role of mass media is dissemination of information which shapes the thinking of general public, influences their decisions and helps people establish and understand their national identity. But, does the mass media undertake 'nation building' by design or by default? How is mass media undertaking 'nation building'? Finally, what are the challenges faced by mass media in 'nation building' with specific reference to North East India?

Security Forces - Mass Media Relations

Security forces and mass media generate intense emotions and national appeal, thereby contributing towards 'nation building'. While mass media has always influenced national security, its impact has become a dominant factor in present times.

Therefore, the symbiotic relationship between the two instruments of 'nation building' has only become stronger with passage of time. What are the reasons for deepening of the symbiotic relationship between the security forces and mass media? This relationship however is imperfect and can move along divergent paths. Inquiries could seek to highlight reasons for divergences between the security forces and mass media in spite of the common intent towards 'nation building'. How do the two view each other and what are their expectations? Are cultural factors shaped by professional ethos of security forces and mass media responsible for tensions in their relationship? How are relations between the security forces and mass media in North East India and finally what is the image of security forces in the eyes of regional media?

Framework for the Way Ahead

The security forces and mass media share a unique relationship. There is also near unanimity that healthy relations between security forces and mass media directly affect perceptions. While there is a high degree of mutual inter-dependence, both sides also share challenges and constraints in accommodating each other's sensitivities. While mass



media resents attempts by security forces to protect security of their operations, media calls it 'censorship'.

In charting plausible way(s) ahead, is there a need to accept that lack of convergence between the two powerful instruments of 'nation building' will never disappear? What are the emerging trends in security forces-mass media relations? How can security forces and mass media, especially regional media leverage healthy equations. Can one side take the initiative in reconciling its stand, or would a pragmatic solution require accommodation by both parties? However, should understanding be elusive, would it be appropriate to force legal intervention or would voluntary adherence to principles based practices be adequate to define the way ahead.

Plenary Sessions

The three sessions planned are as follows:-

- (a) **Inaugural Session.** The inaugural session would include the welcome address by Dr Dilip Chandra Nath, Vice Chancellor, Assam University, Silchar and Keynote address by Lt Gen Sukhdeep Sangwan, SM**, Director General Assam Rifles.
- (b) **Session - I: Constructs of Nationhood & Nation Building: Role of Security Forces & Mass Media.** This session would seek to identify constructs of nationhood and national building. It will also seek to draw linkages between Security Forces and Mass Media and their activities towards nation building.
- (c) **Session - II: Security Forces and Mass Media Relationship.** This session would endeavour to identify the symbiotic relationship between Security Forces and Mass Media and how cultural differences manifest lack of synergy between the two instruments of nation building.
- (d) **Session - III: Framework for a Way Ahead.** The final session would build on the previous sessions and suggest a collaborative framework for establishing convergence between Security Forces and Mass Media.

Sub Themes for Plenary Sessions

The sub themes for the three plenary sessions are discussed in the following paragraphs.

PLENARY SESSION - I: CONSTRUCTS OF NATIONHOOD & NATION BUILDING: ROLE OF SECURITY FORCES & MASS MEDIA

India stands at an important juncture today. The efforts invested today by the entire country, all its institutions and policy makers will decide the path on which it will progress in the future. Hence, it becomes pertinent that the entire nation unites and synergises its efforts towards the common goal of Nation Building. Also, Security Forces and Mass Media are two important pillars of a thriving democracy. Both these agencies can contribute immensely towards nation building by virtue of their outreach as well as ability to shape perceptions.

What is nation building? What are the various aspects which can contribute towards nation building? How can the Security Forces and Mass Media contribute best towards



nation building? These are some of the questions, answers to which will provide the necessary impetus towards realization of the full potential of the country.

PLENARY SESSION - II: SECURITY FORCES AND MASS MEDIA RELATIONSHIP

Security Forces and Mass Media, being vital drivers of nationhood and nation building, need to work together harmoniously. What is the present status of their relationship? What are the major causes of concern/ reservations in each of these agencies with respect to each other? Are these two agencies doing enough to create suitable conditions for working together towards a common goal?

The reach of Mass Media especially Social Media has grown exponentially. Are the measures being followed by Security Forces adequate to fully utilise Mass Media as a Force Multiplier? Are our Security Forces optimally engaging with all forms of Mass Media, with special reference to Regional Media?

PLENARY SESSION - III: FRAMEWORK FOR WAY AHEAD

The interaction between Security Forces and Mass Media has increased manifold due to the prevailing security dynamics in the country. How best can the points of divergence between the two agencies be mitigated or reduced? Is there a requirement of any external impetus as far as the functioning of the Media is concerned or is the existing self-regulation adequate for creating an environment of mutual trust?

The Mass Media and Security Forces are two distinct entities with unique characteristics. What are the ways and means by which these two agencies can converge without tampering their basic fabric of functioning? What are the mutually agreed to points of focus to enable the two agencies to synergise their functioning?

PANELISTS

The panelists for the seminar have been drawn from Security Forces, Media and Academia from Department of Mass Communication in Assam University, Silchar and Mizoram University.



WELCOME ADDRESS

Prof (Dr) Dilip Chandra Nath, Vice Chancellor, Assam University, Silchar

Lieutenant General Syed Ata Hasnain, Lieutenant General SL Narasimhan, Lieutenant General Gopal R, General Officer Commanding Spear Corps, Lieutenant General Sukhdeep Sangwan, Director General Assam Rifles, Mr Subir Bhaumik, Mr Subimal Bhattacharjee, Dr Irene Lalruatkimi, Mr Samudra Gupta Kashyap, Mr Moji Riba, Mr Taimur Raja Choudhury, Officers from Army, Assam Rifles and other CAPFs, Journalists and Faculty & students of Assam University, Silchar.

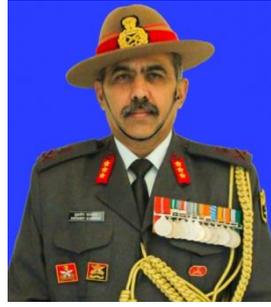
I take this opportunity to welcome everyone and thank them for having taken out time from their busy schedules to be with us here to share their thoughts during the course of today's deliberations. We are truly privileged to have amongst us experts from the fields of the Security Forces as well as the Mass Media and also our Scholars from the academia in this forum to share their valuable insights on the theme, "Convergence of Security Forces and Mass Media Towards Nation Building". I would also like to convey my heartfelt appreciation to Assam Rifles for initiating the process for conducting the seminar on this very pertinent and contemporary topic.

India is a country of diversity with a number of languages, religions, castes and culture. Nation Building as applicable in the other countries is not applicable in the same sense in our country. Hence, there is a need to identify the factors which contribute to nation building in India. Security Forces and mass media are two vital pillars of Indian democracy. While the primary role of Security Forces is to ensure Security of the Nation from both internal and external aggression, it is also necessary to highlight the ways and means by which it can contribute to nation building other than physical security. The primary role of the media is to disseminate information to the public but due to its reach and popularity, it also has the capability to shape the thinking of the general public and influence their decisions.

It thus becomes necessary to continuously strive to find out the best possible ways in which these two agencies can work together for the betterment of the country. Today's seminar is aimed at deliberating and evolving an implementable framework for this process. I am confident that our esteemed speakers will not only enlighten the audience on this subject with their immense knowledge but will also facilitate our moving towards this aim.

I once again welcome you all to today's seminar and thank you for your participation in it.

Jai Hind and Bharat Mata Ki Jai



KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Lt Gen Sukhdeep Sangwan, SM, Director General, Assam Rifles**

“There cannot be a firmly established political state unless there is a teaching body with definitely recognised principles. If a child is not taught from infancy that he ought to be a Republican or Monarchist, a Catholic or a Free Thinker, the state will not constitute a nation, its interest will rest on certain uncertain and shifting foundations and it will be constantly exposed to disorder and change”

- Napoleon Bonaparte

We are fortunate today to have amongst us a teaching body which has pursued the seminar alongside us and I am sure that we will be the beneficiaries of the efforts of Assam University, Silchar. I express my gratitude to Vice Chancellor, Assam University, Prof (Dr) Dilip Chandra Nath, for co - hosting this seminar with Assam Rifles. We are also fortunate to have amongst us eminent Defence Officers, speakers in the form of retired senior journalists with plethora of exposure in this domain as well as specialists and renowned speakers from the Media itself. My special thanks to General Officer Commanding the Spear Corps to be with us on this occasion, despite his hectic professional commitments. I also complement the Scholars present here, who provide us with a wholesome conglomerate to pursue this journey towards success.

Nation building is a process which leads to the formation of countries in which the citizens feel a sufficient amount of commonality of interest, goals and preferences so that they do not wish to separate from each other. Nation building and it's more or less predominant forms transgress all political regions and in times of crisis the citizens embrace and hug each other so as to collectively tide over such crises and adversities. Nation building is a process, a mechanism which binds the entire society together.

It is a chemistry which ensures that the heterogeneous mixture of population is bound together as an inseparable chemical compound which will collectively neutralize the effect of any retarders of national growth and national Unity. Nation building is always an on-going process which keeps grappling with new challenges and the changing Geo strategic dynamics.

Each Nation has its own share of challenges which it needs to surmount and India is no different from others. For India communalism continues to be a major cause of worry which is further compounded by regionalism and sub regionalism. It is an accepted fact that a multicultural society like India cannot aspire to be homogenous but the politics of populism exploits the inherent structural dimensions of the Indian society. The use of



caste, class, colour, creed and costume; all of these are tools which are used to mobilize the citizens for Vote Bank.

Poverty, illiteracy, politics of violence and movement centered on sectarian goals are all issues that damage not only the political propriety but also the very belief of the strength of a nation. Therefore, it has to be ensured that the security of the nation does not succumb to such tendencies which can be exploited by our adversarial neighbours. Security Forces thus have a task carved out for themselves which cannot be accomplished all by them alone but needs a sound political backing and immense coordination of the entire National effort. National security is a multidisciplinary subject ranging from core values, national security objectives, security interest, challenges and other aspects covering almost all aspects of national enterprise.

In today's age of globalisation and interdependence, security threats to national interests not only involve conventional threats but also non state actors such as Terror Organizations, Multinational operations etc. Traditional threats to National Security have been bypassed into an era where the security challenges could be eliminated mainly by military force. Today they require the cooperation and collaboration of forces in the entire spectrum as well as every element of the nation.

Experience of the post war era suggests that the nature of war has changed. Potential for mutually assured destruction in CBRN scenario has made wars and major national confrontation a thing of the past. In future the major international and Regional powers will pursue their ambitions through Limited conflicts. Limited conflicts, almost by definition, try to avoid uncontrollable escalation and are unlikely to pose any threat to the survival of the state. It is here that the media in turn assumes greater importance. Media too has been liberated from a supporting role allocated to them in the previous wars of survival. The Media now potentially becomes a free and independent player in this environment with a capacity to influence both the conduct of the hostilities as well as in directing the government policies and decisions. It is here that the Security Forces - Media paradigm becomes significant.

After the Kargil conflict, the media coverage of Defence and national security issues have certainly improved but it still leaves much distance to be travelled particularly so in convergence towards nation building and collective furtherance of national aims and national objectives.

There are apprehensions on part of the both the Media as well as the entire Security Forces about each other's role and their contribution to governance and public opinion. The trust deficit between these two components has reduced over the last few years but the gap needs to be narrowed down further. Certain steps that could help bridge this gap and strengthen the efforts of nation building are as follows:-

- (a) An attitudinal change on both side and frequent interactions at all levels of command in Security Forces and all levels in the media.
- (b) Institutional reforms including revamp of the PR mechanism within the Security Forces as well as the PR setup of the government machinery.



- (c) Transparency and promptness in sharing information with the media without hesitation.
- (d) Leveraging collective capabilities of both the Agencies so as to enhance their outreach.
- (e) Building capacities at all levels.
- (f) Institutionalized interactions with Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) and highest decision making bodies albeit with a caution and after stringent selection of the Security Forces and Media personnel who can be entrusted with this task of understanding the CCS and how the security impacts the nation.

The deliberations today are intended to throw up more such measures which can be incorporated to synergise the functioning of Security Forces and Mass Media towards a common goal.



PLENARY SESSION: I
CONSTRUCTS OF NATIONHOOD & NATION BUILDING:
ROLE OF SECURITY FORCES & MASS MEDIA





CONSTRUCTS OF NATIONHOOD & NATION BUILDING : A PERSPECTIVE FROM THE NORTH EAST

Mr Moji Riba

Introduction

70 years into our Independence, and we are gathered here to talk about nationhood, nation building and ideas of a Nation. On the surface, it would appear that something is not quite right. That after 70 years we still have to discuss the idea of nationhood and explore what it means to each one of us. It is almost like we invented the idea of India and now we want to invent the idea of 'Indians'. But then, if we scratch the surface, we would realise that something is actually quite right and that there are lessons to be derived.

Eight states, over 46 million people, 220 languages in multi lingual families (mostly mutually unintelligible), distinct communities each independent of the other, practicing almost all the world's known religions, having diverse histories, different cultural backgrounds and political realities- and yet we live together as one nation. Are there no fault lines? There are and there have also been difficulties. But today when we stand here and talk about nationhood, in spite of everything, we realise that we exist today within what can best be described as the idea of India- albeit as a grand geo-political experiment and learning process.

Regional Context

Northeast India has a very complex history. It is not the way how one would perceive 'One Nation, One State'. It is not even what some may call 'Many Nations, One State'. What would instead be more appropriate is to view the northeast as 'Many Nations, within the idea of One Nationhood'. That really is what binds the region together and that is what can be called the miracle of the northeast. Because, there *is* no northeast! It is just a political construct, a developmental concept at best. What exists is a "polite accommodation of spaces for mutual advancement".

Before India itself came into existence as a Nation, in Northeast including Arunachal Pradesh, most communities settled in river valleys separated by mountain ranges and did not have any connect with tribes living in other river valleys. And so, there was no concept of a Nation, or even a State. It was mostly independent village chiefdoms. Then the region moved towards an idea of states, towards the idea of being a part of India and today it is recognised as a conglomerate of eight north-eastern states (seven sisters and a brother) of people sharing a same ideal.

The region has a wide and conflicting spectrum even about the idea of belonging- where on one hand in Arunachal when one goes even into the interior areas, there are people greeting each other with the salutation of 'Jai Hind'. They may not speak any language other than their own, but when they greet each other they would say 'Jai Hind'. At the other end of the spectrum we have states in the northeast where we are still negotiating ideas of nations and territories, and rights and sovereignty. That is what the northeast is to us today. Therefore, when we talk of nationhood in the context of the region, we need to recognize the dangers of romanticizing of homogeneous nation states.



Here I would like to share a small story. I went to a funeral last month. And as it is in our tradition, after the person was buried, for the next five days people kept coming to the house to offer comfort to the bereaved family. No one was told to mourn or not mourn. They played cards, they drank alcohol, they joked, cried and laughed. But what they did mostly was that they remembered the departed. They spoke of him, they shared stories about him and they talked about what he meant to them and over those five days, a memorial for him was built. It was not a physical memorial, but a memorial in the mind. The idea of nationhood too, exists in our minds and will continue to exist in the minds and that is where we need to work at. How do we create, if there is none, the idea of a Nation amidst this wonderful diversity that we call the northeast?

Nations and Nationhood

So complex is the idea of nationhood and how it plays out in the minds of people that there realistically are no agreed upon definitions of it. If we attempt a theoretical understanding of the concept, we see that it is about communities who share by consensus, sentiments of being together and who agree to be together with this idea of shared aspirations and of growing collectively. When we talk of a State, it is about territorial boundaries. So when we use the term 'nation-state', we imply not just the political boundaries but also the sentiments that bind it. By extension, when we talk of a nation-state we essentially imply people who have come together, in many different forms. Be it the example of the territorial State of France, which has come together on the basis of language, where the State takes predominance and there we have one kind of nationhood. Or we look at the idea of the Native Nations, of communities who are dispersed across the Americas and yet call themselves a nation. The Cheyenne, the Navajo, the Sioux all live in different parts of America, but consider themselves as One Nation- as a community who connect to each other without perhaps even knowing each other.

Nationhood and North-East India

The idea of nationhood in context of the northeast is linked to the idea of identity. It is not linked to the idea of language, of a shared political ambition or development alone. Instead it is linked to the idea of how people perceive themselves, their areas, their space and how they perceive and assert their identities. Hence, it also includes a reflection of 'identity' and the 'notions of identity'. In the northeast, this has meant that some communities have evolved from 'statelessness to states and nation systems (like Arunachal Pradesh)' and yet others towards 'de-evolution where states lost power and the communities got incorporated as subjects of some other state'.

For the region, with its ethnic and historical diversity and the existence of both large and marginal communities, each with their own ideas of identity and nationhood the move becomes even more complex, if not complicated- we have all interfaced differently with the idea of an Indian nation and with the idea of Indian nationhood. Arunachal Pradesh, for instance, has evolved from independent village states and it is only with the coming of the British administration, who put it together in a combined political unit, that the idea of India was known and accepted. Today in the northeast one would not find people more agreeable to talk patriotism as much as people in Arunachal Pradesh. Hence, when we explore how the idea of a nation emerged in the northeast vis-a-vis its relationship with Indian nationhood, what is seen is that not only have people in the region gotten together with this idea of shared aspirations and of a shared future, but also, as they went along, they began to understand that given the emerging realities of the world today, perhaps the



idea of independent, small sovereign nations is not as intense as the idea of shared aspirations. All considered, we have seen various movements even in Arunachal Pradesh for example, for a kind of a sovereign State. Insurgent groups, who had come up, but realized perhaps that it is not the best option at this point of time.

Idea of Nationhood

Borders cannot make a nation. Nor do attempts at nationalising population. Nationhood cannot be created on the idea of using governance to build infrastructure, to create assets or only by looking after the welfare of the people. What is needed instead is to note that when we increasingly talk about the idea of nationhood and particularly in the context of the complex region that is the northeast, it is to be understood that somewhere the idea of nation building has to emerge from the idea of idea-building. We are not only looking into the fact of a common past, or not even a common present today, but also realising that for the northeast in particular the idea of a nation has to be built on the ideal of a shared future.

As we move towards a global economy, towards a society rooted in development and economic progress, the questions of ethnic assertion are taking as much space or are getting as much attention as the idea of having access to livelihoods, better economic opportunities and the idea of access to resources and best use of those resources. The 'narrative of neglect' that has characterized the northeast for a very long time, is now gradually disappearing. It has not gone completely, we still hear echoes of that narrative, but to a large extent it is dwindling. That narrative has been replaced by the idea that if we are to grow, we must grow together. Not necessarily because of a shared political ideology, but also because economics and development cannot happen in silos. If you ask me what drives people today, it is primarily the issue of resources, livelihood and access to opportunities as much as identity and language. Hence, when we look at this idea that we are talking about, of a nation and what nationhood means to people in the northeast, we need to start by engaging with the idea of collaboration and cooperation.

So we have to look at the way forward. But to look at the way forward, we also need to retrospect on the path that has brought us to the point we are in today. Here we increasingly realize that each one of us in the northeast have engaged with the idea of nationhood differently. We have engaged with the Security Forces and the media differently.

When we evaluate the history of how we have engaged with Security Forces, we do so with a sense of uneasiness. Whether it is the manner in which insurgencies were put down very brutally (that is a reality that we cannot forget), or its over-arching presence across the region and especially in Arunachal Pradesh where one cannot ignore the Security Forces who are there in large numbers definitely for best reasons, but which have its social repercussions. Then we have the Armed Forces Special Powers Act and what it means. Not just from the prism of security but also from that of the citizens who are caught between the insurgents and the Security Forces- unfairly caught in the violence that unfolds. That too is a reality we live in and these are realities that we need to accept. The image of Security Forces as usurpers of local resources and land which existed earlier has now changed, as we shall explore later.

The media in the Northeast has been under a lot of stress and under a lot of threat. Yet it has done wonderful work in terms of how issues of the region have been



represented. But there have also been cases, in sections of a media now driven by TRPs, where we notice how for instance inter-State boundary issues are played up not necessarily objectively with facts, but with intent of inciting people and sensationalisation.

Caution in the Way Forward

For the prospect of moving forward to the idea of building a nation, building shared dreams and a shared future, we need to acknowledge that there are challenges and that we have to be cautious in our approach.

Firstly, the idea of diversity needs not only to be accepted, but it must also be respected. The northeast is what the northeast is because of its diverse cultural heritage, its strong traditional institutions and its deep rooted value systems. If we are to look at building bridges, as we must, we have to start by looking at these institutions, these practices and these value systems and build on them as the cornerstones for mutual trust and faith. It is imperative that traditional institutions find a key place in all that we want to do, as must traditional ideas and value systems. Institutions like the village councils, women's bodies and community driven movements like the Young Mizo Association in Mizoram must be made vital partners in this.

The second critical issue is that of sharing of resources. It would not be wrong to say that in the pursuit of the idea of a nation-state and the way it works in terms of development and creating assets and welfare for people, the available resources have not been equitably shared with the communities that own them, mostly in the name of national interest.

One of the reasons that insurgency still has a presence in the north-east (and not even just armed insurgency, even unarmed conflict, unarmed insurgencies of the mind where people feel a sense of neglect and apathy) rises from the fact that the resources of the community have not been equitably shared. Whether it be the water resources in Arunachal Pradesh, the coal resources in Meghalaya or the timber resources across Northeast; there is a feeling that the communities who own these resources are not actually benefitting as much as they should. The principle of access and benefit of sharing of resources, based on consent and mutually agreed terms with communities getting what is due to them, should also form another vital component of this path forward.

The other thing that needs to be emphasised is the idea of engaging with the youth. Our youth have been a much forgotten, if not a much overlooked component of our engagements. There is a change today in the way the youth interact and the way they view the world. There is a definite change in their mind-sets. There is a space for positive action and we have to fill that space and invest in our youth.

If we build on this and combine it with the use of Information Technology (IT) and the penetration that it has among young users, we can really make a difference. What IT and social media can do is immense. It is unthinkable how we have today become an extension of the virtual world that we live in and not the other way round. The virtual space seems to define who we are more than where we physically and emotionally exist and while on one hand it is the bane of society today, on the other, there is also an opportunity in how we can use this technology to our own advantage.



The other idea that I want to share with you is building social entrepreneurship in the region. There are quite a lot of instances where social entrepreneurs are taking up problems and are looking at innovative ways to come up with solutions to them. That would be another way by which we can actually look at how we can build on these 3-4 pillars and look forward to better shared aspirations and better shared dreams.

To my mind, what has happened is remarkable. What the army and the Security Forces have been able to do in terms of confidence building has indeed been commendable. With the slashing of the nation's defence budget the amazing CSR and other welfare measures that the security forces have taken up in the northeast should not be the first victim of this slash. It would be a pity if it is. We all have seen for ourselves that this has really worked. The way the Security Forces are now perceived in the region, in Arunachal Pradesh and I have heard stories about how it is perceived in Haflong- the perception has changed so much. There is a lot of positivity that is emerging now. I am sure that this is true of all the other north eastern states.

This initiative and advantage needs to be pursued. We cannot sit on our laurels, we have to work at this, we have to engage further with it and we have to push it forward. These confidence building measures are what will eventually benefit us all, not just in terms of nation building but even as citizens of the country.

A New Paradigm

But one thing remains. We should not be under any illusion that it is the Security Forces and the media alone who can make this difference. The effort will really have to come from the people themselves. The north-east does not have the best reputation for sharing of resources and use of the allocated resources. This needs to change. The people in the Northeast as well as the thinking in our political leadership needs to change. The idea of equitable sharing of resources in a transparent manner becomes critical.

The Security Forces and the media have their mandate and under all the challenges, they have always delivered. To some extent, there have been fault lines and difficulties but they have continued to engage with this idea of building a nation. Sadly, our political leadership have not engaged with the idea of building a nation as enthusiastically.

The responsibility of nation building is not just of the government, the Security Forces of the media or of those teaching in colleges and schools and Universities. The people need to accept that the idea of nation building has to come from them in the first instance and only then can the engagement be effective.

We have to look towards a new paradigm of nation building where de-centralization, openness, democratization and transparency form the cornerstones of this engagement. We now need to move away from the traditional idea of nation building by merely creating infrastructure, or by dominance, by coercion or by force. It is only when dialogue becomes the watermark of a new reality of building upon the idea of nation that we will truly succeed.

Just like the funeral I had gone to, where the memorial was not a physical one but where a living, organic one emerged over the five days that people talked about the departed, so will the idea of one shared ideal of nationhood definitely emerge in India because the idea of a shared India is intrinsically a workable one.



It is not going to be easy and neither is it going to happen soon. But still, I am positive and confident of the resilience of our traditional societies with their respect for community, sharing of resources, and most importantly the value of living together with nature, with one another.

As I stand here before you and introspect into my own idea of what India means to me and what nationhood means to me, today the heart weights over the mind.



Mr Moji Riba is a Filmmaker and cultural activist. He has made over 30 documentaries - screened at various national & international venues & film festivals. He is the Founder Executive Director of Centre for Cultural Research & Documentation. He has been awarded the Rolex Awards for Enterprise. He is the Core team member of various international & national research projects and is also a part of an eight member Expert Group on Protection and Preservation of Indigenous Traditional Knowledge & Endangered Languages, under HRD Ministry Festival Director of Film, North East 2016 - the State's regional film festival. In 2015, he has featured on the global TEDx platform, with a talk on Loss of Languages. Currently, he also teaches documentary filming at the Department of Mass Communication, Rajiv Gandhi University, Rono Hills in Arunachal Pradesh, that he also helped set-up.



ROLE OF MASS MEDIA IN NATION BUILDING

Prof (Dr) Gyan Prakash Pandey

Concept of Nation Building

To understand what nation building is, we must first understand what a nation is. A nation is basically a group of people living in the same territory and who have a common history and culture. The people of a nation visualize themselves as one with a shared destiny which instils in them a sense of belongingness. The sense of oneness and 'we-feeling' highly develops among the people of a nation.

Nation-building refers to the process of constructing a national identity. It does not occur overnight. Rather it is a gradual process that takes place over a long period of time. Nation building or the process of creating national identity is an on-going process for any country which initiates with the establishment of modern national states and continue in the form of state politics with an aim to consolidate and promote the nation. It refers to a constructive process of building and maintaining political stability, social cohesion and economic prosperity in an inclusive and democratic way.

Significance of Nationalism in the Indian Context

Nationalism is basically a feeling of belongingness. We experience a feeling of oneness, togetherness, solidarity, brotherhood and we share a common identity related to the nation. That is we are Indian. In a diverse land like India, nationality emerged during the British rule. They brought a centralized system of administration, education, railways and so on. Through education, a new social class emerged who inspired our people to fight for Independence. Satyagraha, non-cooperation movement, civil disobedience movement stands as examples of how people belonging to different caste, class, religion and region united to fight against the British for attaining freedom and Independence.

In India, the media became a poignant medium in gaining independence from the 200 years of British rule. If we talk about Gandhi, Nehru, Tilak and many others, they have all utilized the print media to circulate their thoughts and opinions. Even when they were in prison, they continued to do so. All the freedom fighters have distributed their messages and voiced their opinions through the print media, thereby uniting the people to fight for freedom and liberty.

The third world countries which are engaged in the processes of decolonization and development face the common problem of nation building¹. Yogesh Atal in his book 'Building A Nation states' has said, "both in the rise of nationalism and emergence of new nations, and in the process of modernization and political development following it, communication play a vital role."

Significance of Mass Media

The collective means of communication which keeps the general public informed about what is happening around the world is the mass media. It refers to the communication channels which are utilized to reach the mass audience. The mass media therefore are the instruments which can pass knowledge and information across a broad spectrum of the society in real time thereby motivating and mobilizing the people, fostering the process of nation-building. Mc Quail referred to the mass media as including the entire system within which information is generated and transmitted in order to achieve specific



goal². It includes the print media like newspapers and magazines, electronic media such as radio, television and the New Media including the social networking sites.

Mass media is essentially important because it has the reach. Today in this era of Information and Communication Technologies, mass media transcends the barriers of time and space. It can communicate what is going on around the globe practically in no time. This power of the media is utilized not only to perform its core functions which are to inform, educate and entertain but also to motivate and mobilize the masses to achieve desired goals. The history of India's struggle for Independence shows vibrant examples of this. Our history shows that the press has gone a long way in contributing to the growth of the nation. The mass media played a poignant role to actualize the desire of a free India. The press was used extensively and comprehensively to ignite in the masses a sense of self-determination. Press and journalism played the central role in national awakening and the freedom struggle³. The whole phase of freedom struggle was led by the spirited journalism of Sri Aurobindo, Mahatma Gandhi, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Pandit Makhnarlal Chaturvedi among others.

In post-independent India, mass media are essential for the conduct of free and fair elections. India could not have been the world's largest democracy, had there not been the existence of an independent media⁴. Democracy is a government of the people, for the people and by the people and thus it requires wide participation of the general masses which is not possible without the active participation of mass media. Media has immensely contributed in national movement and national integration. It has cultivated the feeling of Indian-ness and patriotism among the people⁵. But with the emergence of a profit gain media, the spirit of the media seems to gradually fade away.

The concern for developmental issues, traditional values and common masses find mere space. The origin of journalism certainly adheres to its basic role of being the fourth pillar of democracy. But while globalization and 'corporatisation' has made the media industry a big one, it should not tilt from rendering its foremost duty as a watchdog of the society.

Objective

The main focus of the paper is on the role mass media plays in building a nation. This paper aims to introduce the importance and significance of mass media in the process of nation-building. Also, it talks about the factors restraining the media in this process.

Role of Mass Media in Nation Building

Mass media has a critical role to play in the nation-building process⁶. Media, as the voice of a democratic nation in a globalized world can play a crucial role in the process of developing and building the identity of a nation. It is the guardian of the people's interest. The media checks and balances the powers of executive, legislature and judiciary. It, as the Fourth Estate, performs the role of watchdog in maintaining political transparency and fighting against corruption. Gate-keeping, setting public agenda and force multiplying are other roles the media must pursue for developing the nation. In a diverse and democratic country like India, media contributes to nation building. To facilitate the process of building the nation, the media needs to focus on the following roles.



Education and Raising Awareness. The power or the strength of the mass media should be utilized in a constructive manner by educating the people. As one of its prime function, media must educate and aware the people socially as well as politically. The media is to educate the people regarding the basic human rights. It is the media which can play an efficient and effective role in raising awareness and consciousness among the citizens regarding the policies of the government and also, its limitations. It is the media which holds the responsibility to enlighten and educate the people about the priorities of the nation.

The media should make the people realize that being the citizens of the largest democracy they have the ultimate right to elect their leaders and representatives which must be done wisely. Since only the right ones can bring glory to the nation and contribute towards building and developing it. The media therefore holds the power to make or break governments. The government can effectively utilize the mass media as an instrument of social change. In-depth analysis and recommendations, as provided by the media can largely contribute towards the process of bringing a positive change in the society.

Mobilizing Public Opinion. Media is a vital tool towards good governance. It plays a key role in promoting democracy, mobilizing public opinion as well as influencing people's behaviour. The media can create, mould and reflect public opinion in a democratic country like India. It plays a significant part in the formation of public opinion which can force the political parties to address the core issues of the nation⁷.

Mouthpiece of the Society. One of the most important roles of the mass media is to be the mouthpiece and represent the interests of the common people. It should give voice to the voiceless. And while doing so, media ownership and religious or political affiliation should never act as a setback. Media acts as the mouthpiece of societal issues making us aware of the realities of life. That is what we see, read or hear on the mass media shapes our social reality. This is in accordance with George Gerbner's cultivation theory as he says that exposure to the media, especially television, shapes our social reality.

Media has the potential to meet the needs of the people thereby strengthening the roots of democracy⁸. Therefore the media should bring into light the sufferings and aspirations of people and stories that generate confidence regarding the creative potential of the grassroots whereby media can contribute being a partner in national development⁹.

Surveillance. Media is one of the strongest weapons to fight and control corruption. The Hindu's Bofors expose in 1987, Indian Express's Human Trafficking expose in 1981, Tehelka's Defence Deals and match fixing scandal expose in 2001 are only a few of the many cases when honest initiatives and investigative journalism¹⁰ justified its role as the watchdog of democracy. Several scams have been pushed into limelight by the Indian media like 2G spectrum scam, Commonwealth games scam, Indian coal allocation scam, etc. From exposing corrupt practices to hidden deals, the media puts a check on the evils of the society and acts as a custodian of human rights. By pointing out the social, moral and economic evils prevailing in a society, the media can play a significant role in the reconstruction and regeneration of a nation. It can further contribute in eradicating the evils by initiating propaganda against these. Thus the media can contribute immensely in the nation-building activities.



Social Welfare. For ensuring welfare of the public, it is important to promote various institutions at all levels that are responsive, accountable and inclusive. It will empower the poor and vulnerable people to participate effectively in development processes. The media must assist the society in tackling the diverse problems of corruption, criminal violence, communal conflict, public health, hygiene and other related issues.

For instance, media played a constructive role in promoting the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan. Mass media are very important for public health campaign, especially against epidemics and other fast spreading diseases. It plays its part in improving public health efforts by initiating health campaigns to raise awareness. Health and family welfare programs are regular broadcasts of All India Radio. The regional and local radio stations broadcast these programs in their regional languages. These programs cover varied subjects including maternal and child health, drug abuse, AIDS, tobacco consumption, illicit trafficking and other issues involved with the health of the people. Also, for communicating agricultural information to the farmers, media does a significant job. Decades ago in 1966, a project named Krishi Darshan was initiated on experimental basis in Delhi through community viewing of television and thereafter, discussions among themselves. The initiative gained huge success and was able to deliver rich information regarding agricultural practices. The media in India have played a significant role in informing the people about the extreme poverty in the country, the suicide of farmers in various states and so on¹¹. Today, in the age of Information and Communication Technologies and New Media, planning, implementation and monitoring of government programs is conducted effectively and in real time through E-governance.

Bridge of Communication. Mass media serves as a bridge between the government and the people. By organizing discussions and debates, media enhances the knowledge of the masses. It provides platforms for intelligent discourses among the public and the policymakers which aids in deciding the priorities and determining the possible pitfalls in the process of implementation.

This enlightens the people about the democratic process. Since the media acts as the bridge of communication between the government and the masses, thus it must represent the interests and needs of the common man. Also, the plans and policies of the government have to be effectively communicated to the masses. This way, the media should contribute as being partners in progress. For instance, the show 'Ghanti Bajao' in ABP news attempts to bring people's perspectives of stories by directly engaging with them. This show has created a huge impact among the people and the government bodies¹².

Social Responsibility. The media professionals as socially responsible persons should serve the public interest and contribute towards national development. The media should work for the betterment of the society and nation, as a whole¹³. Media professionals including the owners and managers of the media must realize their social responsibility and provide information that is clean, transparent and reliable. They have the power to influence public opinion in a positive sense. It is a social responsibility on the part of the media to effectively utilize the power they possess. By doing so, it can strengthen the very roots of democracy.



Media has the responsibility to safeguard the rights of the socially-economically deprived sections of the society, including the Dalits. There has always been low representation of Dalit issues in the Indian media. The media should represent the atrocities against them and resort to judicious coverage and advocacy programmes on Dalits¹⁴. Sustained and farsighted coverage have to be projected by the Indian media in public interest for the well-being of the society.

Agenda Setting. Mc Comb and Shaw rightfully asserted that agenda setting is one of the prime roles of the media, as they decide and publicize news thereby ascertaining more value to particular news compared to the other. The media might not tell the people what to think, but it surely does tell the people what to think about. In other words, the media agenda determines the public agenda. The news media possess the power to set a nation's agenda and focus public attention on a few key public issues. In Jessica Lall murder case, Nirbhaya rape case and many such cases, media played an active role in highlighting the incidents which led to a huge public outcry and ultimately justice was served. This shows that active media interference can ensure justice to the victims. Agenda setting thus exerts tremendous influence.

Therefore the media should perform its function by giving assistance in determining what to talk and think about. The media, being the Fourth Estate must remind the political leaders what they owe to the masses and what the people's aspirations are.

Peace Building. Media possess the responsibility towards promoting communal harmony. This is also enshrined in the guidelines issued by the Press Council of India for the journalists. The guidelines of the code of conduct of the Press Council of India state that the role of media in such situations like violence and war is to be peacemakers and trouble-shooters. Thus media plays a major role in peace-building.

It basically means strengthening the prospects of peace and enhancing a society's capability to manage its own conflicts and tensions without violence. Media can play the ultimate role in bringing peace and tranquillity in the society which will preserve the secularity that India boasts of. Media essentially provides a platform to come together to discuss and debate on issues of importance. It must inculcate a feeling of tolerance and understanding for one another. Media in this way can instil the essential ideals of democracy in the people. Powerful media messages have the potential to influence the attitudes and behaviour of people. This can contribute in the process of resolving existing conflicts including Kashmir issue. Media thus plays a major role in peaceful conflict resolution¹⁵.

The role of mass media in the national building can be enhanced by following considerations:-

- (a) The media must be free and independent in order to exert an effective role in nation building. An impartial and free media thus is the utter requirement of a successful democracy.
- (b) The media must be professional and objective to succeed in their role. Truth, objectivity, accuracy, balance and fairness are what the media must follow in the execution of their duties.



Freedom of the media must go hand in hand with responsibility. In the rat race of monetary gains and topping the TRP, negativity and sensationalism have become the guiding principles of media today¹⁶. For the media to contribute towards nation-building, it should, first of all, restrain itself from sensationalism and do its rightful duties wholeheartedly. The media persons have the responsibility to deliver objective facts of any issue. Propaganda, sensationalism, distortions and media vices negatively affect the media's role towards national development. Selectivity and biases on the part of the media can prove to be negative for the society. Also, when the phenomenon of paid news becomes prevalent during elections, it subverts the democratic process¹⁷. Therefore, editors should curb the practice of paid news. Since these are the menace of journalism and can be extremely harmful. Only when the media sticks to the virtues of professionalism, truth, justice and fairness, the society can benefit and the media will fulfil their true role in a democracy. A socially responsible, enlightened and fearless media can thereby play a decisive role in uplifting the spirit of the nation¹⁸.

Factors Restraining the Media in Nation Building Process

The nature of the media is such that 'bad news is good news'. The media follows this and focuses on the negativities in the country. This can develop a feeling of alienation among the people who think that the country is no good and they start to delink themselves from the state. In the Indian context, nation building necessitates that the mass media should be working towards overcoming the challenges faced by the society.

A lot of false information and rumours are circulated through the media which can trigger variable responses from the masses, especially in this age of New Media. Every now and then the virtual space is filled with fake news doing the rounds. The information people deliver must come from authentic sources and should be verified before dispersal. Internet trolls, fake news and hate speech rule the Internet today. This is of key concern regarding the role of media in nation building.

The media possess the power to transform the whole society as it is said that media can be used as a 'weapon of mass destruction'. Therefore, media should never be used to mislead the people. If so done, it can bring destruction in ways unimaginable.

In India, communal conflict is a serious concern in the path of development or nation-building. Unless there are fraternity and cross-cultural harmony, there can be no nation building¹⁹. Since independence, communal clashes and riots have continued to disrupt development. A large amount of money and personnel are required to resolve such disturbances resulting in Government's attention being diverted from the development of the country. Also, ideals of fraternity and harmony, as enshrined in our constitution can only prevail when all sections of the society experience socio-economic, political and cultural justice, liberty and equality²⁰.

The process of nation-building is a huge task which should be done efficiently and effectively both by the media and the government. The government activities need to be mobilized for achieving the national or societal aims and goals which can be done effectively by the mass media²¹.

The government should also do the needful in order to support the media in the process of building the nation. And most importantly, while building an identity for our



nation, we must not neglect our own peripheries. What is happening in the nooks and crannies of far-flung regions gets very rare attention from the national media.

For example, the North East region of the country most of the time feels alienated. Until and unless there is violence in this region, the national media never cares to give a headline or a prime time. This has to change. The very concept of nationality or nationalism which refers to the feeling of oneness must be developed among all the citizens by giving due attention to their concerns which can further contribute towards the process of consolidating the national identity.

Conclusion

A structured panacea cannot really be provided for the complex process of building a nation. But in this process, media certainly has a constructive part in the society. The media plays a pivotal role in maintaining the social structure, values and identity. By effectively fulfilling all its responsibilities, media possess the potential to raise the status of a country. In addition, media professionals need to be responsible and committed towards the society. It is the media who can contribute to eliminating the social vices confronting humanity. They should efficiently attend to the needs of the society which will aid in enriching the different sectors of the nation. In a multicultural and multilingual country like India, media can retain harmony in the State by attending to the cultural, political, ethnic and religious differences which can prove to be the sources of strength and platform for nation building²².

In 2020, the average age of an Indian will be 29 years and it is very challenging for any country or nation to utilize the human resources for the benefit of the nation. If harnessed for developmental work, they can do wonders and bring laurels for the nation. This certainly builds in us the hope of realizing what researcher Javed Jabbar said, “The 21st century will be as much an era of building state structures and systems as it will be a period of building and boosting nations to their optimal potential”²³.



Prof (Dr) Gyan Prakash Pandey has 26 years of teaching experience and has been teaching in Department of Mass Communication, Assam University, Silchar since 2005 and is presently its HOD. He is a Member of Executive Body, All India Communication and Media Association, Delhi and Indian Media Academy, Kolkata. He has Authored eight books and has 61 papers published. He was selected for Common Wealth Fellowship in 1997 by UGC, has been awarded with Rajiv Gandhi Sadbhavana Samman by Indian Council for National Solidarity, Varanasi, ‘Bhartendu Harish Chandra Award’ by Union Information & Broadcasting Ministry in 2005 and ‘Pandey Bechan Sharma Ugra Award 2006’ in Journalism by Purvanchal Press Club, Uttar Pradesh.



IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN SETTING OPINIONS: PROS & CONS

Ms Sutapa Misra & Prof (Dr) S K Upadhyay

Social Media - A New Public Sphere

Social media are web-based communication platforms which provide on-demand access to content anywhere, anytime and by using any digital device. It spreads across the nooks and corners of a society thereby reaching a broad spectrum of the masses in real time²⁴. The Fifth Estate, today, dominates the Internet and incorporates features which allow the users to connect and interact, build communities and relationships, discuss and debate about varied topics and publish opinions.

The social media has made possible an effective flow of information and communication between various groups in the public sphere. The users can select the topic of their choice for discussion and sharing opinion. They can formulate their own agenda based on their interests. According to the views of Herman & Chomsky²⁵ and Van Dijk²⁶, as certain knowledge gets promoted over others, they are very effectively given the status of being authoritative and in most cases, truthful.

Public Opinion

In general, public opinion is said to be a collection of thoughts and opinions of the majority of a social group²⁷. 'Majority' because it is very rare for all the members of a society to agree or disagree on a specific issue. Thus, when we say public opinion, we usually refer to the opinion of the majority of a social group. The term 'public opinion' certainly needs to be explored. In some cases, it is subject to constant fluctuation, while in others, the public opinion is more solid and stable, based on traditional thought process²⁸. It is thus defined as an ideological consent, where the opinion of the majority is dominant and it thereby influences the opinion of the community in which it exists.

How Social Media Shapes Public Opinion

Any kind of media exerts some impact on the public opinion. So does social media. Every medium has a message, it has a target audience and it aims at influencing a change. It influences the attitudes, perceptions and decision-making thereby influencing the behaviour. Anything we see on the social media, all the advertisements that different brands show us, all the content we read in the social media, every posts, pictures and videos we see on Facebook, Twitter or YouTube, all of them are contents that can affect or even change our thoughts, beliefs, perceptions and opinions.

Social media is a very personal medium. It is an extension of us. That is why social media is most likely to influence our opinions because we remain in the most comfortable space in our mind. This way we are very likely to get influenced by what we read, what we see and we are most susceptible to become the person that someone wants us to be. This is how social media influences us.

There are millions and millions of active social media users who access the social networking sites every day. As much as it influences the relationships and purchase behaviour, social media heavily influence our opinions and decisions. Talking about the



positive idea of having an opinion in the social media, it is the only medium where one can easily reach millions of people in one go. Today, people turn to the social media for the latest knowledge and gain opinions and feedback on every issue. With social media, persuading the public and influencing opinions have not only become more achievable but also, more uncontrollable²⁹.

Articles and commentaries, news and investigations, photographs and cartoon, pictures and drawings are most capable of forming public opinion and conscience of the masses. This means of influencing, work with the formation of public opinion on various issues and problems that present themselves on the mind of the people relating to various aspects of socio-political, cultural or economic importance. One of the most powerful weapons, the social media catches the attention of the reader and thereafter contemplates a long discussion on the subject matter which immediately affects the conscience, thus serving its purpose in an efficient and effective manner. In recent years, the seriousness and the importance of social media and its impact in setting and forming opinion prompt the opinion leaders to utilize this medium so that they can guide public opinion to serve their interests.

Impact of Social Media in Setting Opinion - Pros & Cons

The social media have a huge influence and impact on individuals and society, as many people rely on them as a source of information without even thinking whether it is true or not.

Furthermore, the social media is a very powerful weapon that can very quickly change people's perspectives and beliefs. For instance, a news report concerning a conflict may cover and focus only on one side of the story and ignore or fail to mention the other part which will make the viewers pity one side and neglect the other. Moreover, nowadays social media users give their own opinions on the public platform which is somehow very positive but when it comes to a sensitive subject they should be careful as many people take those opinions as the final truth and as a result, they maintain a false idea regarding a certain topic.

Pros

In many ways, social media proves to be positive in the process of setting public opinion. Following are some of them.

Regionalisation. Social media is a platform which is effective in posting the region globally which was not possible earlier. Even the people of rural areas have easy access to social media and they can highlight their place in a global platform. It mobilizes the local people. It has provided a global space to voice the problem and concerns of any remote region. In the age of social media, we cannot ignore any event for long. Regional news gets equal attention in the cyberspace which is most often neglected by the mainstream media. Social media, thus has actually become a critical component in emergency response and preparedness³⁰. A very recent example is the Assam floods. Every year, floods hit Assam and other states of the north-eastern region of India. It affects thousands of people bringing devastation on a large scale. Today it is known to everybody with the help of Facebook and Twitter. Everybody comes to know about the situation with photographs and live video footage. This has helped the people in getting assistance from other places as well. Even in the year 2016, social media was extensively used to put together relief efforts for the victims of Assam floods. As posts began to be shared, the



devastating condition of people caught the much-needed attention of people worldwide. As a result, help came in from different parts of the country and social media played a big role in that.

Civil Society Movements. A collective of people when gather together for a greater cause other than family, state, or market can be called the civil society movement. With the advent of Information and Communication Technologies, social networking sites have been growing at an amazing pace and catalysing civil society movements thereby bringing in political changes in various parts of the globe. The social media played a major role in movements like India Against Corruption, Arab Spring, Occupy Wall Street and so on. The cyberspace became the origin of such protests. People utilized Facebook pages and Tweets to convey to the world the cruelties of the authorities. They also used social media as a tool to attract more people to the protest.

India Against Corruption. India witnessed a major civil society movement against corruption in the country, under the leadership of anti-corruption activist Anna Hazare. His effort was to introduce a Jan Lokpal bill in the Indian Parliament that would bring the prime minister and the members of parliament within the ambit of the People's Ombudsman.

In the era of Facebook and Twitter, the civil society movement of 2011 strongly countered the traditional media's self-created agenda and neglect. Social media became an innovative tool in the hands of the leaders of the movement. The social networks helped the activists to get national and international attention for their cause. Non-violent means of protest were adopted, and the group communicated their ideas through cyberspace, incorporating various tools like social networking sites (Facebook), video-sharing (YouTube), micro-blogging (Twitter), blogs and websites. They had four different pages on Facebook and two websites.

While Anna Hazare wrote a blog, Kiran Bedi and Arvind Kejriwal focused on tweeting. Videos and cartoons were prominent in their Facebook activities. More than the mainstream or industrialized media, it was due to the influence of social media that it became such a large scale movement.

With the evolution of these multiple portals of social media, things are changing. Also, the rate at which social media drives change is massive. It has evolved from being a platform for discussions and debates to a forum for organizing mass protests and movements.

Election Campaign. Voter mobilisation during elections, maintaining day to day accountability of the elected representatives, discourses on matters of public importance, active involvement of the ordinary citizens in setting the terms of the debates, protection of the vulnerable communities, ensuring justice to the exploited or discriminated are some of the aspects involved in healthy functioning of democracy. Social media platforms which have more than hundred million active users in India roughly play a prominent role in all these.

Today almost every political representative has an active presence on social media. BJP's win in the 2014 Lok Sabha Elections is one of the best examples of the impact of social media on elections. Also, an example can be cited of the US Presidential Election of 2017. Voters were seen debating and openly supporting political parties on social media.



Through this medium, people have got an open space where they can discuss, debate and get all the required information about political parties and their manifesto. Political parties use the cyberspace to promote their candidates, create a buzz about their social work, reveal their agendas and promote their rallies³¹. This global space has thus become autonomous participants in building and influencing democratic societies as everyone can be engaged in the decision-making process.

Public Support. Public support is very often a crucial factor in bringing a change in the prevailing conditions. The weight of public approval is largely important in community improvements. Social media has the power to do so through network effects. The social media space aids in garnering public support and ensuring that an issue is well addressed.

How Social Media Helped ‘Padmaavat’ to be Released In Theatres. Sanjay Leela Bhansali’s period drama Padmaavat had caught hold of controversies ever since the project was announced by the producers. Unrest, tension and the protests in different parts of the country even postponed the release of the movie. Digital media had immensely helped controversy mired Padmaavat see the Box office light and garner the much-needed support.

The director uploaded a video in the social media in which he could be seen appealing to the audience to allow the movie to get released and clarified regarding the absence of any illicit scenes in the film. The video very soon garnered millions of views on the internet. In response to the Padmaavat ban, Renuka Sahane’s post demanding a ban on important issues like sexual molestation, female feticide and rape went viral on social media.

Even after CBFC suggested the change in title of the film, Twitter users extensively used the medium to express their pity concerning the sad state of affairs. From film stars to journalists, there were a lot of positive sentiments on the social media. Twitter was filled with positive reviews just before the release of the film. Basically social media displayed a whole different dimension to the issue. This was definitely not the first time a piece of art had been condemned and social media had been flooded with love and hate posts about it³².

Popular Sentiments. The social media has not only become an important and integral part of our lives but eventually, it has become a true reflection of the popular sentiments³³. Hash tags that trend in the social media like Facebook and Twitter at different times shape the Indian life. #Shutdown JNU, #Kashmir Unrest, #Rio2016, #Irom Sharmila, #Uri Attack, #surgical strikes, #demonetization are only some of the incidents that ruled the Internet and dominated the news feeds of social networking sites at times. Social media posts regarding these and many other incidents reflected the views and opinions of Indians from across the country and the world.

Cons

In the relatively short time, social media is in existence, they have rendered positive effects in terms of empowering and connecting people. But at the same time, they have provided new platforms for some decidedly unhealthy and destructive behaviour. Some of these include the following:



Bots. Bots and fake followers are a big concern in the social media environment. This is a growing issue where the Bot programs target specific hash tags and work by auto-commenting and auto-liking in order to attract followers who are mostly other fake bot accounts³⁴. The problem lies because these are an automated system which can automatically get engaged with other users without your active presence. It was actually created with a noble purpose like a brand can reply to a user whenever it is mentioned. But, now they have gone much beyond their noble act and are being misused for varied purposes. From manipulating a conversation to creating a mirage of someone's popularity³⁵, they can do it all. A study conducted by 'Twiplomacy' revealed that more than half of the Twitter followers of many public figures around the world are fake³⁶. This is a massive problem. It is said that Twitter is addressing the issue by suspending fake accounts which was also evident after a number of followers of many such Twitter accounts suddenly reduced by a large number this year. But the problem persists. We do not know if a like is generated by bots or a real user. Of course, there are ways to differentiate between a real and a fake profile, but everyone every day and every time would not go that extra mile. In this age of misinformation, bots possess the power to hijack a conversation, troll someone, promote propaganda and even cause security issues³⁷.

Negative Online Word of Mouth Social media are a highly beneficial global platform for word-of-mouth propagation of new ideas and products, and this has increasingly made them a focus of marketing communications. But companies and their brands, as well as politicians, celebrities and government institutions, have increasingly been facing the impact of negative online word-of-mouth and complaint behaviour. In reaction to any questionable statement or activity, social media users can create huge waves of outrage within just a few hours³⁸. These online firestorms pose new challenges for marketing communications. In the cyberspace, being silent about these verbal attacks is not always a good strategy. If the space is only left open for the opponents, they will fill it with one-sided messages which have the capability of shifting public opinion. A better way is to be on the platform willing and able to discuss issues and answer questions in times of crisis. A calm, thoughtful response to a heated argument is the best way to convince the maximum number of audience who can be satisfied that one's argument is more logical and truthful.

Terrorist Attacks. Terrorists have always sought attention and that is what they receive from the social media. Whenever there is any terror attack, as a response to the horrific events, people share images and videos of the devastating attack on social media. Social media thus spread the horror far and wide. This is a very natural instinct to do so, but it also threatens to amplify the chaos that the terrorists intend to spread. "That amplification encourages more terrorism, inspires copycat and turns the perpetrators into martyrs"³⁹. In the process, misinformation and fear spread. It further traumatizes the families of the victims and also the public, at large. Extremists use the social media to make an impact. They make use of the social media to recruit, to inspire and to connect. Moreover, they rely on the regular social media users to spread the impact of terror further, to a greater degree than what they themselves could have done in addition to confusing authorities with misinformation⁴⁰.

Although, social media sites like Facebook and Twitter have now initiated reporting procedures that allow users to flag any kind of content that supports any terrorism for removal. Also, the social networking sites today are playing an important role in counter-



terrorism operations. The law enforcement authorities make good use of the social media by keeping people informed regularly⁴¹.

Misleading Headlines. Headlines are the most important part of a news story which arise the curiosity of the reader. Particularly in this era of New Media and social media, the headline determines how many people will read a piece of information. A headline tells the reader what she/he is going to read but a headline can also change the way we think. The crafting of a headline can shift the perception of the text that follows. Problems arise when a headline misleads the reader as a result of this shift in perception. Their whole idea regarding an issue may change. Now, within minutes of any event or announcement, we get thousands of perspectives thousands of times instantly via social media. There are constant reactions and debates, often repeating the same arguments and information. While meaningful exchanges between individuals are possible on social media, there's so much noise that it's difficult to make complex arguments or check the validity of information⁴². On a daily basis, social media users are bombarded with misleading headlines. This is the reason verification of news reports on social media before sharing it becomes relevant.

Fake News and Rumours. The fake news problem is very real in India. The present date rumour tools like social networking sites (Facebook, Twitter, SMS etc.) have emerged as one of the sharpest weapons, complimenting politics and media which easily misguide the mob. There is also the expanding use of social media channels for propaganda. Today, fake news, internet trolls and misinformation rule the internet. Troll, be it positive or negative are definitely putting and setting an opinion.

Thus there is a need for “responsible” use of social networking sites which will lessen instances of fake and misleading videos or rumours being propagated. Several attributes of violence prevail in India which provokes aggression and crime. It also includes numerous issues related to religion and community violence. Such situations often involve the misuse of social media.

Another con of social media is the viral nature of the content distribution. It allows unreliable information as well as indiscreet remarks and photos to spread quickly. Once something is out there, no one can take it back.

Riots Based on Misinformation. In the recent decades, with a rise in the communal incidents and religion based tensions, the growth of communal riots and force has acquired a dangerous position in India. In incidents like the Muzaffarnagar riots in 2013, social media like Facebook acted as a tool to arouse hatred before as well as during the riots. Moreover, during such incidents, people most of the time give a communal colour to the violence by exaggerating the incidents. Most of the times, misreporting of the happenings set up a picture in the minds of the public which initiate distorted violence.

The very recent incident of mob lynching in Karbianglong where two men were killed by a mob of over 200 people on the suspicion of them being child lifters shames the entire humanity. In the last two months, around 6-7 people have been lynched all over India due to such fake messages and falsified information that is born on social networking sites. This and similar other incidents reiterates to treat such fake news and videos cautiously and not circulate these types of provocative posts.



Conclusion

Every time we experience a significant technological advancement that changes the way people live, it generates debate over the nature of that change and whether it is 'good' or 'bad'. There are multifarious uses of social media for multifarious people. It is still a subject to humanity because the same media can be used in multiple ways.

With social media there comes a sense of anonymity where one can be anybody that one wants to be. It is both a pro and con. Pro because we get to voice our opinion and the con is that it invites a lot of cyber predators which may lead to unintended consequences. So we should always monitor the kind of interaction we have in social media and regulate and filter our own speech, not hold ourselves back but understand what is coming out of what we are speaking about and the context.

The key to enjoy the benefits while avoiding the problems of the medium is to use these powerful tools sensibly, constructively and in moderation. Therefore, it is the responsibility of each one of us to understand, and equally help others to understand, how to use them productively and responsibly. This will definitely ensure that the netizens are not only techno-savvy and socially existent but also embody social consciousness⁴³.



Ms Sutapa Misra is a Research Scholar at the Department of Mass Communication, Assam University, Silchar. She is pursuing her PhD on "New Media and its Impact on Conventional Journalism Practices in the era of Media Convergence". Having done her graduation in Journalism and Mass Communication from Shri Shikshayatan College, Kolkata, she passed masters in the same discipline from Assam University in 2016. Sutapa has presented research papers at several national and international seminars and also participated in various workshops. In 2017, she cleared the UGC-NET examination and aims to pursue her career in academics.



ARMED FORCES & MEDIA: NATURAL PARTNERS IN COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

**Lt Gen Syed Ata Hasnain,
PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, SM, VSM** (Retd)**

Introduction

The proliferation of both internet and social media has taken the world of mass communication by storm. These have the power to spread information in an uncontrolled manner and at lightning speed. We need to harness this reach of Mass Media to our own advantage rather than be wary of it. A simple message put out at the right time in response to negative news/information can become a master stroke of strategy or alternatively be a sufficient counter to an adversary or anti-national entity attempting to dominate the information space against our interests.

Today it has become more important for a country's population to have informed opinion. For example the rationale behind any decision by the Government needs to be understood before the public jumps to any conclusion. It is the role of the media to present both the positives as well as negatives of any such decision before the citizens and leave it to them to form their own opinion.

Communication Strategy as a Part of Nation Building

Communication Strategy is a modern day refined terminology for what was once called Psychological Warfare. Perception Management was an interim terminology which continues to be used primarily by the Indian Army. The art of Perception Management is to convey a message with desired subtleness so that the target audience believes the narrative being spelled out, with a degree of credibility. It involves public relation efforts and outreach to the target population through multiple means with mass media being one of them.

This also includes spelling out of narratives to neutralise the adversary and other ANE efforts to make their narrative the dominant one. The placing of banners etc with the title 'Perception Management' emblazoned on them is in complete contravention to the whole process and displays a lack of understanding of the concept.

The possibility of a full scale war has considerably diminished in the present day security dynamics. Today the Security Forces are at war 24/7 for 365 days of the year through the concept of hybrid warfare which can continue for long, below the threshold of tolerance of an adversary. In such operations, both intelligence and information are important domains.

In most of our teachings in the military much importance is given to Intelligence which is essentially processed information, to be acted upon or subsequently synthesized with more information/intelligence. While that definition remains correct, in the current scenario unprocessed information by itself has become a huge driver and this in India has not been realised till date.



The Power of Information in Shaping of International Perceptions

In India, the attempts to shape international perceptions leave much to be desired. On the other hand we have our two adversaries, China and Pakistan, who have mastered this art. As part of unstructured diplomacy speakers from Pakistan, especially the Army are seen to be active in major political nerve centres, participating in international seminars on a variety of subjects involving geopolitics and conflict, even in countries like Israel with which they have no diplomatic relations. Since India is not putting much emphasis on this aspect, our adversary has been successful in creating a situation where the world believes the false picture fabricated by Pakistan against India. Pakistan has ensured its presence in such international events having wide participation while remaining below the radar to prevent rising of any suspicions of its propaganda or Perception Management. This is what is called Informal Communication Channel or Informal Diplomacy which is emerging as a new and a very powerful tool to shape international perceptions.

Communication Strategy of China and Pakistan

The importance attached to this subject by Pakistan can be gauged from the fact that its Inter-Services Public Relations wing or ISPR was raised in 1949, much before its infamous Inter Services Intelligence wing or ISI. Information as a domain of conflict was understood by Pakistan way back in 1949 while here in India we have not yet realised it, even today. The ownership of Information as an element of Hybrid Warfare, remains unassigned which clearly shows the lack of importance being attached to it.

The example of Siachen Glacier is an appropriate one to explain the role of information as part of strategy. As part of its communication strategy, Pakistan has been able to convince the world that it is willing to withdraw from Siachen along with India but India does not agree to it. In reality, the Pakistan Army has no presence at the Siachen Glacier. It was hugely humiliated by the proactive Indian occupation of the Glacier in 1984 and has convinced its people that it is in part occupation of the glacier. It has even made documentary films for international television channels which show Pakistani troops at the Siachen. There is no harm accepting an adversary's outstanding Communication Strategy and taking effective measures to neutralise it.

China observed the 1990 Gulf War 1 and saw the entry of embedded journalists into the War by the NATO Forces. They carefully observed the power of CNN entering into the drawing rooms. By the end of 1990, China had already adopted the doctrine of 'War under Informationised Conditions' and by 2003 China had formulated its new strategy to win wars without fighting them. It comprises of the three sub strategies, the Media Warfare, Legal Warfare and Cyber Warfare to enable it to win a conflict with minimum physical contact. This is an outstanding example of implementation of manoeuvre philosophy which professes the placement of own resources, ideas and thoughts in such a way so as to garner maximum advantage with least effort.

Manoeuvre Philosophy in Communication Strategy

In India, many still think that Manoeuvre is all about Mechanized Forces. However, using the unexpected to put yourself in a position of advantage, that is the essence of Manoeuvre. If the power of information and the media is in sync with the Security Forces and they are put together as drivers and tools it can be a winning strategy. It can be used to work on the minds of our adversaries or use even as a part of nation building, acting as



a countermeasure against their attempts to create security challenges and unrest through propaganda.

Sensitising the Media on Aspects Affecting Security Forces

The media in its attempts to garner maximum viewership has often created situations detrimental to the functioning of the country's Security Forces. These incidents have occurred not due to malicious intentions but because there is a lack of understanding on the part of Media on aspects which can harm its nation's Security Forces. An example of the same is the coverage of the 1987 offensive of the Indian Army into Jaffna, in Srilanka, as part of Operation PAWAN.

The mortal remains of Indian soldiers were shown on the cover page while covering the operation which resulted in a major blow to not only the morale of Indian Army but also to the morale of the entire nation. As a convention, it's a practice that mortal remains of own troops are never publicly displayed.

The incident could have been avoided if the media had been adequately sensitised regarding repercussions of such coverage. The blame lies equally with the Security Forces in not having adequate measures to educate our media while covering such events. This also brings to fore the importance of imaging and the immense impact it has on the psyche of the people. It is a powerful tool in shaping the perceptions of the people. A picture is worth a thousand words.

Shaping Of Perceptions in Kashmir

Today in Kashmir, a section of the population refuse to consider themselves as a part of India, thereby resulting in unrest and violence which is further being fuelled by our Western adversary. The feeling of alienation is further aggravated by the primetime live debates on various media channels in which there are people spewing venom against Kashmiris. Many of them do not even have complete knowledge of the situation on ground or have out-dated information. All attempts by our Government and various Security Agencies to shape the perception of the Kashmiris through pro India narratives in favour of being a part of India come to a naught by the broadcasting of such hate filled programmes.

There are films being made in India which portray the actions by the Security Forces in bad light during the initial years of insurgency in Kashmir. But what is important to understand is that at that point of time there was a necessity of using force to control the situation from getting out of hand which is portrayed in these films.

But now the situation has completely changed and force is no longer the solution to the problem. The conflict has now moved on and requires more emphasis on perception while securing the conflict zone from terrorist and other proxy capabilities. Therefore, the messaging which is being sent out to Kashmir has to be carefully considered to prevent further alienation of the population.

Inadequate Narratives for Nation Building

One of the major drawbacks in India is that we do not have enough narratives which contribute to nation building. It is important to first have a clear understanding of the term narrative. It is really an idea around which a cause is built. It is a factual, imaginary or intended theme which drives emotions and helps bind the people to a common cause. Therefore, different narratives can be built by the Security Forces and the Media today



which can benefit the country. An example of a narrative is that today we find so many people belonging to the North East working all over India, especially in the Hospitality sector as well as in the Aviation Industry. Their immaculate dressing, finesse, politeness and well-mannered conduct has resulted in an increased demand in these industries. This can be used to build a narrative which highlights the importance being accorded by mainland India to people of North East which will act as a major binding factor for the people of this region and will tide over the feeling of alienation being faced. It will also prevent incidents like the Bangalore incident in 2011-12 which led to mass exodus of North Eastern students in wake of propaganda originating from our external adversaries through social media.

Specialisation for Cyber and Information Warfare

It is a known fact that Pakistan and China have got a community of civilian social media warriors being employed for Cyber and Information warfare. The use of civilians is very important as there is a requirement of specialisation and continuity in the field which is not possible in case of Security Force personnel due the inherent drawback of tenure based postings. All that is required is about 5-10 percent of the cyber and information warfare force should be uniformed personnel from the Security Forces for guidance and a large army of media warriors in Delhi or other centres looking at this subject to counter the propaganda of our adversaries.

There is a need to use this kind of warfare to get to the minds of our adversaries and let them perceive that they are a weak Army insufficient to safeguard their interests. This is what the Chinese tried with India during the Doklam standoff last year. However, in Doklam the Indian counter strategy worked. China's Media Strategy was all about brinkmanship and global perception with its controlled media and National Defence University (NDU) putting out stories to showcase their military might to weaken the Indian will and cause mayhem. However, neither India nor the international media was convinced and China failed in its strategy due to their overzealous attempts.

Strategic Culture for Integration of Security Forces, Media and the Academia

Other limitation of communication strategy in India is that there is no link between the Security Forces, Media and the Academia. It is very rare to find all these three entities coming together. They are distinct by themselves with their own knowledge and functioning but do not come together. Academia may be considered much more important than media itself because it is the place which provides the intellectual insight into this endless game of media and communication strategy.

A lack of strategic culture prevents Academia to actually develop Communication Strategy as a subject by itself. The whole aspect of integration should be started much earlier in our universities and colleges as a part of strategic culture. The absence of even sensitivity about our lack of strategic culture can be further confirmed by the fact that the setting up of a Indian National Defence University was approved in 2001 after the recommendations of the Kargil Review Committee and the foundation stone was laid by our then Prime Minister Mr Manmohan Singh in 2011. However, even after 17 years of approval and seven years after the laying of the foundation stone by the Prime Minister himself, the construction has not yet started.

In the absence of strategic culture, uninformed public opinion is driving much of the perception. As per this opinion conflicts can only be won by employing all kinetic resources



and nothing else. For achieving peace, prosperity and stability, ultimately one has to integrate the country's hard power with its soft power and that realisation can only come when a strategic culture exists in the country.

Conclusion

There is an inescapable requirement of having Defence Reporting as a subject in our Universities and needs to be studied much more seriously. It has to be made into a big subject with adequate syllabus and curriculum in the future otherwise there will be situations where there are successful surgical strikes conducted by the Indian Army but the adversary succeeds in convincing the International Media, including Indian Media, that no surgical strikes took place. The same happened only because India has been unable to develop a culture of defence reporting as part of its communication strategy.



One of India's most decorated military leaders and a second generation officer from the Indian Army, Lt Gen Hasnain retired after serving 40 years. He served in Sri Lanka with the Indian Peace Keeping Force, in Punjab during the heyday of militancy and fought the North East India militancy. Most importantly he had seven tenures of duty in Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) including the Siachen Glacier where he commanded his infantry battalion. He also served with the United Nations forces in Mozambique and Rwanda in 1994-95 during the turbulent years. Among his most prestigious and challenging assignments in the rank of Lt Gen was the appointment of GOC 15 Corps in Kashmir where he initiated a slew of innovative measures in 2010-12 to turn around the situation. His doctrine of balancing what he called soft and hard power and efforts to reach out to the Kashmiri people, while conducting kinetic operations against the terrorists, succeeded in stabilizing the proxy internal conflict.

Post retirement, with his hands on combat experience in Hybrid Warfare he is virtually the voice of the Army in the media, both print and visual. He writes for all major Indian media houses and speaks on various television channels on subjects of his focus, to include Pakistan, Afghanistan, Central and West Asia, Radical Islam and military and conflict related issues around the world. His vast experience of turbulent zones helps him approach his strategic writing with much sensitivity. He is a member of the India Afghanistan Foundation and also formed a part of the India-Indonesia Group for promotion of bilateral relations. He recently spoke at Australia's biannual conference on civil security.

He is associated with the Vivekanand International Foundation and the Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, two of India's leading think tanks. He was also honored by the Capital Foundation Society of Delhi for his achievements in the field of military leadership. Schooled at Sherwood College Nainital, he is a graduate of St Stephen's College, Delhi. He went on to do his post-graduation in International Studies from Kings College University of London and attended two major long strategic programs at the Royal College of Defence Studies (RCDS), London and Asia Pacific Centre for Security Studies (APCSS), Hawaii, US.

He is a regular speaker at the Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), Singapore and various institutions in India. A corporate speaker in much demand all over India and academic institutions abroad he adapts his talks to his audiences and speaks on a variety of subjects from Geopolitics to Leadership helping people connect dots in their knowledge graph. He has spoken at seven chapters of the YPO and among other companies, to Larsen & Toubro, Deloitte, Ashok Leyland, Toyota Kirloskar, Knight Frank India, Sanofi Pasteur, Amdocs Pune in the last one year. His hands on experience of turbulent situations are what make him stand out as his anecdotes gel with audiences across generations. He has recently been appointed as the Chancellor of the Central University of Kashmir



PLENARY SESSION: II

SECURITY FORCES - MASS MEDIA RELATIONSHIP AND CULTURAL DIVIDE





IMAGE OF MASS MEDIA AMONGST SECURITY FORCES AND MEASURES TO IMPROVE SELF IMAGE OF ARMY

Lt Gen SL Narasimhan, PVSM, AVSM, VSM (Retd)**

Introduction

Over a period of time Media has become a powerful tool in shaping public opinion. The Indian Army for a very long time has been using the term Media Management to describe its relationship with Media. The Media is very averse to this term and it is only very recently that this realisation has come in the Indian Army and the term changed to Media Relations. This describes the relation between the two Agencies. There are differences in the way both perceive each other but things are changing for the better.

Media's View of the Indian Army

As per the Media, the Indian Army is very slow to react. A reporter who has to file his report in a time bound manner does not get the required inputs from the Army. So he has no choice but to speculate and write his own version of the story to meet the deadlines. Second is that the Army is Media Shy, because they are not trained to interact with the media. This means that they do not interact with media very well and it is a major challenge for them. Next is that the retired people are more free to speak. They are easily accessible, they are willing to come on the TV and are more willing to speak. The media also feels that informal interaction with the Army reveals many more details than the formal ones.

Army's View of the Media

The Indian Army's view of Media is that it looks for and exaggerates negative news more than the positive ones because as they say good news is as good as no news. So they look for something sensational which they can sell to their audience for increased viewership.

The next view is that there is a complete lack of understanding about the Indian Army, be its functioning or its rank structure. When there is a matter regarding National Security or anything regarding the Army being covered in the Media, there is a general thinking within the Army that the Media persons do not know enough about the Army to cover the topic adequately.

Even if it is being covered by a retired army personnel they do not have updated information on the subject which results in inaccurate information being propagated. Another view is that the Media is biased and carries out motivated reporting. There are certain news channels and news houses which have an agenda and cover the subject as per that agenda. This is a fact of life and the Army has to understand that there is very little it can do about.

Image Which the Indian Army Would Like to Project

The Indian armed forces want to project that their good image is in the interest of the country. They want to project that the profession of the Armed Forces is an honourable and clean profession and the entire force is apolitical. The army is the last bastion against any threat and it is a well-disciplined force with its personnel being dedicated to the



profession. In spite of all the negative news about the Army which keeps getting broadcasted, the fact of the matter is that majority of the civilians have a high regard for the armed forces and look up to them.

Audience Which Needs to be Communicated With by Armed Forces

It is very important for the Armed Forces to identify the audience with which it must communicate to project its correct image. First is the domestic population especially the Youth of the country, second is the Armed Forces fraternity itself, the third is the decision making authorities in the government, fourth is how to deal in the Counter Insurgency and Counter Terrorism areas and the fifth is the International media and organisations. We talk about nation building internally but there is also a need for a narrative which we need to build for our Nation to the Foreign Countries and International organisations. It is a very important factor which is often lost sight of. The last is the Media itself. It is important to realise that Media is also an audience and has to be communicated with.

Communication Strategy with the Identified Audience

People and the Youth. It has to be communicated to them that the Indian Army is a professional and a disciplined force which is apolitical and always puts the Nation first. It is a strong and modern force which is honest and upright.

What has to be impressed upon the youth during the interactions is that Army has good career prospects for them and is an adventurous and a very satisfying life because career options are what they are interested in at that stage of their life. They are looking for prospects which are better than the Corporate Sector which has a lot of uncertainty in it.

Armed Forces Fraternity. Armed forces fraternity is not a single fraternity. It is important to understand that the senior officers have a different outlook to things as compared to junior officers and then there are the retired officers who have a completely different perspective. Similarly, all men are not the same. The Junior Commissioned Officers and the Jawans rely more on the communication medium in Hindi which is generally neglected in the mainstream media. Hence, they predominantly rely on the visual media i.e. the television, especially in remote locations and posts where the newspapers reach very late. The issues which they want to look at are very different from what the officers look at. These differences have to be understood and then the communication strategy to be modified accordingly.

Decision Making Authorities. The decision making authorities rightly feel that the civilian authority i.e. the Political Authority is supreme and their role in decision making is important. They feel that the Indian Army is apolitical and need to be given their due. They also understand that the understanding of military matters is extremely important because they do not have Army background and come from different departments and then start learning on the job. However, they feel that the Army is rigid, has certain fixed ideas and do not want to change. They also feel that there is a lack of continuity since officers get posted out after every two to three years. Another common perception is that the Indian Army tries to sell their ideas very aggressively. The knowledge of Armed Forces amongst bureaucracy is very less and similarly the Armed Forces also have inadequate knowledge about the functioning of the civil authorities.

Perception in Counter Insurgency and Counter Terrorism Areas. The Army wants to project that they are there for the local population and have been called in to control a particular situation. The proxy war has a foreign hand which needs to be dealt



with. The Army functions in these areas with an Iron Fist in a Velvet glove which is to say that they also carry out Civic Aid Projects under Sadhbhavana and Samaritan but simultaneously it also deals with the terrorism and insurgency aspects.

The Army wants to bring back normalcy and development and a better life for the locals is what the army is looking at. The Army also wants to defeat the separatist's agenda against it in these areas.

The feeling of some people in these areas be it in J&K or in the North East, is that the Army is an occupational force which is a perpetrator of their misery. The locals also feel that the Army has immunity from all acts of injustice. This is something which requires to be addressed on priority. There is a need to put out a narrative very frequently to say that just because Armed Forces Special Powers Act is applicable somewhere; it does not mean that the Army can get away with anything. That is neither the way that the act has been designed or is meant to be.

The locals also feel that the Armed Forces is a source of resources. Today anybody might say that Army should move out of areas but the truth of the matter is that the locals do not actually want it to happen because it provides them with employment and many other things. It is also a view that the Army is vulnerable to the extent that it can be shown in poor light in the media.

Each of the insurgency prone areas have different perceptions. Even within a region the perceptions in rural areas will be very different from that in urban areas or in the civil administration or with the political services. It is important to have this understanding so that a common narrative is not built for all these areas.

Foreign Nations. The points which need to be put across to the international audience is that the Indian Army is a professional army with capable leaders and motivated soldiers. It has a lot of experience in Conventional as well as Counter Insurgency and Counter Terrorism operations and the general public holds the Army in a very high esteem.

Also, the Indian Army advocates peace but is always prepared for war. However, it is the sub optimal relations between civil and military which generally get highlighted in the media quite frequently and it is this image which gets projected to the international organisations. Everyone in the country especially the Security Forces and the Media needs to deal with this aspect in a responsible and accountable manner.

Challenges Faced by Indian Armed Forces and Mass Media with Each Other

Fairness and Impartiality. A high sense of fairness and impartiality is required by both while dealing with each other, which is lacking. If the Army favours a particular Media channel or newspaper, all others will turn against it. The same fairness is also expected from the Media while reporting on military matters.

Sceptical. The Army is always apprehensive of how a matter being covered by the Media may be twisted to completely misrepresent the news or views expressed and so there is a need to remain guarded while interacting with the Media. However, it does not work very well and there is a need to be very frank and if one cannot deal with a situation



then it is better to tell the Media that this cannot be done but never give wrong information to the media.

Personality Based Interactions. The interactions of the Armed Forces with the Media are very personality based and depend on the personality of the senior officers who speak to them. Some officers will be very forthcoming and free while interacting while others may prefer to shy away from the Media. But the Media has to understand that these are personal traits and they should not expect everyone to interact openly and more frequently.

Sensitivity of the Armed Forces. If negative news about the Army is published or broadcasted it becomes very sensitive about it because they feel that when they are sacrificing so much for their country, the same is not being reciprocated by the Media. The Armed Forces have to understand that they are a huge Force and everybody is not above board, they need to look at things from that perspective. Armed Forces personnel feel that enough rebuttals are not being given in case of incorrect reporting. It has to be understood that rebuttals are not necessarily published the next day. There is a window of two weeks with the Media to publish them and they will publish it on the last page and that too when everyone has forgotten about it.

Social Media Activism. Activism in Social Media is another challenge being faced today by the Indian Armed Forces. Social Media is a double edged weapon and it can either be used extremely effectively in a positive manner or it can go in the right opposite manner in no time. Hence, one needs to be extremely careful in handling it. The effective use of Social Media requires someone with the correct attitude and aptitude which should always be kept in mind while identifying individuals for such sensitive jobs.

Lack of Mutual trust: The lack of mutual trust between the two agencies is a major issue which needs to be addressed. If there is an understanding or even a verbal agreement between the two it should not be broken. The media is often guilty of breaking this trust due to the extremely high competition especially between the Print and the Visual media. News which will be published on the next day in Print media gets broadcasted on news channels almost immediately. This competition frequently manifests into a major challenge for the relation between Army and the media.

Ineffectiveness of Regulators. The ineffectiveness of Media regulators needs to be focused on specially in terms of the Press Council of India which hardly has any powers and even if they take any action by the time it comes to a conclusion it is two to three years down the line from the date of the occurrence. News Broadcasting Standards Authority is slightly better but even they lack the necessary powers.

Self- regulation in Media. The lack of self -regulation in the Media is an aspect which needs to be looked into. While there are cases when the Media has exercised restraint in broadcasting news which might hurt the sensitivities of the Security Forces, it still leaves a lot to be desired.

Regional Media. The reach of the regional Media has not been comprehensively understood by the Armed Forces. Certain regional Media Houses have channels running in almost every state and people sitting in Delhi do not even look at these channels. Majority of the intellectuals and the army officers read English media and they feel that



that it has the maximum penetration but that is not the case in reality. The maximum penetration comes from the Hindi Media. Newspapers like Punjab Kesari, Amar Ujala, Dainik Bhaskar and Dainik Jagran are the ones which actually spread your message all over the country. Hence, they have to be given that much importance. The term Vernacular Media which is often used to describe Regional Media is considered derogatory by them but most of us do not even know that.

Inter departmental Rivalry in the Government. There have been instances when there was a complete clampdown on sharing of sensitive information with the Media by the Defence Ministry or by the Foreign ministry, some other departments of the Government were found to be giving updates on the issue to the media openly. This is one trend which need to be arrested and there has to be complete coherence in the communication policy while dealing with Media on matters of National importance.

Steps for Improving Self Image of Army

Synergy: There should be complete synergy between the Security Forces, the civil authorities as well as the Media while covering matters pertaining to National Security.

Prompt Response and Increased Interaction with Media. There should be a significant increase in the frequency of Army's interaction with the Media but at the appropriate level and by the selected officers. There is a feeling amongst the Media as well as within the Armed Forces fraternity against not allowing the Company Commanders and other junior officers who are right there on the ground to interact with the Media. While they can be allowed to speak to the Media but there are chances that he has very little peripheral knowledge and is not aware of the complete picture or he is unable to communicate correctly with the Media as per army's and media's requirements. Hence, it necessitates that only those personnel who are trained in this aspect and are posted at the appropriate level who have a complete understanding of the issue at hand should interact with the Media.

Keep Pace with the Technological Advancements. It is a very important aspect and needs constant emphasis. The Indian Army has now caught up with Social Media and is able to monitor it or take appropriate measures for damage control in case of situations arising out of it.

Balanced Focus. There is a need to focus adequately on all types of Media i.e. International, National and Regional. The Security Forces are shy of talking to the International Media which is important to convey a positive image to the international audience.

Wider Audience. The Indian Army needs to ensure that a wider audience is addressed in its efforts to project a positive image. The message should get percolated to the man on the streets and not just a select few.

The 70:30 Syndrome. This is an aspect related to the Media. They have a tendency to cover only 30% of the good news and 70% news which gets published or broadcasted is the negative news. This tendency has to be curbed in the Media.

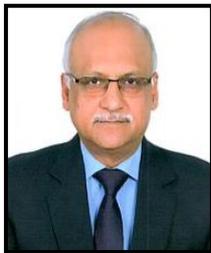


Conclusion

While there are many challenges being faced by the Armed Forces in dealing with the Media, it cannot sit back and continue complaining. It has to take measures to empower the Mass Media and educate them of the challenges being faced. This can be done through various forums like background briefings during operations, informal discussions, issuing of hand-outs and questionnaires on the important aspects which should be known by the Media about the Army, by organising Media visits and through interviews on the subject.

The Army also has to realise that the journalists are under a lot of pressure to submit their reports with strict deadlines. If they are called in the middle of an important situation which requires coverage and if the armed forces give them only background information, they will not be interested in it at that point of time. So timing these activities is also very important for maximum benefits and to achieve the intended aim.

The need of the day is to have joint efforts by the Army and the Media to identify each other's strengths and weaknesses so that the shortcomings can be removed and the strength is further built upon.



Lt Gen SL Narasimhan is an Infantry Officer commissioned in 1977. He has seen action in OP PAWAN and has a vast experience in Counter Insurgency Operations, Line of Actual Control & High Altitude Areas. He has been awarded four times for his contributions to Indian Army by the President of India. He has a wide ranging experience of various high profile Command, Staff & Instructional appointments. He has been an instructor in Indian Military Training Team, Bhutan, and has also served as a Defence Attaché in Indian Embassy, China. He has been the GOC of the Spear Corps. His expertise spans international relations & internal issues, economy & defence subjects of China. He has taken part in many Track 2 dialogues and has authored many articles in various journals & magazines. Presently, he is a member of the National Security Advisory Board & Director General, Centre for Contemporary China Studies. He is also a Distinguished Fellow with Centre for Air Power Studies, India



IMAGE OF SECURITY FORCES AMONGST MASS MEDIA AND EXPECTATIONS

Mr Samudra Gupta Kashyap

With the passage of time, the role of security forces in India has not only increased manifold but has also witnessed engagements in a wide diversity of newly-emerging situations. There was a time when the country largely had only two major security forces, the Armed Forces to defend the country from external threats and the Police forces to maintain law and order. The past few decades however has seen the increased necessity for deployment of forces superior to the regular police forces and specialised in tackling armed militancy, extremism and insurgency leading to both engaging the Armed Forces, and creating more para-military forces to meet the new challenges.

While application of force is only one aspect of the game, what is also important is the image and public perception of the security forces, be they central para-military forces or the Armed Forces, especially because proper management of public perception too contributes in a big way towards handling various kinds of situation. It is in such a situation or backdrop that the question of “image” of security forces comes into play, one that can not only instill a sense of security and confidence among members of the public but also in motivating the public to take a strong and loud stand against the armed extremist and insurgent groups. Needless to say, one small incident or aberration can at times pull down the public image of security forces, especially when extremist groups and insurgent organisations are constantly at work to vilify the government forces.

Moreover, a positive public image and perception of security forces also immensely helps in keeping the morale of members of the forces high, particularly in the backdrop of the extremist and insurgent groups trying to raise issues of human rights violations against the forces. One has to keep in mind the fact that the soldier’s work, which often involves uncommon sacrifices is held in high esteem by the countrymen.

This profession is counted among very few other professions that have been traditionally regarded as 'honourable' by society. This universal image is bolstered time and again, when society witnesses the relevance of soldiering in the face of external aggression, internal instability or natural calamities. Thus, Armed/ Security Forces are looked upon by the general masses as 'protectors' & 'saviours' – impressions that are laden with awe and admiration.

This image obviously confers a high degree of responsibility upon members of the Armed/ Security Forces, which in turn contributes towards raising expectations in terms of conduct become proportionally exponential. It is this very image which also works as a major attraction or incentive for young people to join the ranks in order to fulfil their aspirations based on the needs of self-actualisation. Thus, there is a 'larger than life' image of Armed/ Security Forces, which is fundamental to its effectual existence and functioning.

This country has come a long way from the days of 'Jai Jawan Jai Kisan' – a highly popular slogan coined by then Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Sashtri in the wake of the Pakistan War of 1965 – a slogan that had sent a strong wave of patriotism across the



length and width of the country. It is worth noting that for nearly three decades after Independence, India's mass media had sung the glory of the Security Forces. Cinema, which alongside All India Radio, was the strongest mass media till the arrival of satellite television had always projected Armed/Security Forces of the country in the most glorifying manner. One can draw up a long list of Hindi films (and also films made in different regional languages) that performed this task very religiously, thus instilling a sense of responsibility among members of the forces, as also a nationwide support from the mass people. Some of the most famous films that created this magic were Haqeeqat (1964), Upkar (1967), Humsaya (1968), Prem Pujari (1970), Lalkar (1972), Hindustan Ki Kasam (1973), Aakraman (1975), Border (1977), Vijeta (1982), Mission Kashmir (2000), LOC: Kargil (2003), Zameen (2003) and so on.

One must always keep in mind the fact that the government had never asked the film-makers to produce films projecting good image of the Indian Army/Security Forces. Instead, film-makers always considered it their bounden duty to glorify Security Forces through their popular medium. In contrast, the regular police forces however were mostly shown in a very bad light in Indian cinema, with only a very few exceptions. It was only since Deewar (1975) that the trend has changed reaching its peak in Singham (2011).

Alongside other changes that the world has experienced in the modern times, it is the Media that has undergone one of the fastest processes of change, in the process becoming omnipresent 24x7 and all-pervading. With literacy rate fast increasing – it crossed the 50% mark only as recently as in 1991 – the urge or hunger among the people for more and more information has also increased manifold. Information has emerged as a tool or symbol of empowerment. Without information a person becomes crippled and helpless. The society today cannot do without the Media, be it the traditional print media, the TV channels, or the new-age social media and digital media.

Moreover, Media has such a wide range of functions. Media provides information, education, entertainment and acts as a watch-dog. It is a system for accountability and it also shapes public opinion. Media triggers off debates and discussions and influences decision-making. It acts as the oxygen to democracy and as its another crucial function – Media builds and demolishes image.

Media is a creation of Society, and are thus inseparable from our daily life, be it public or private. Media is a mirror of and to Society and thus influences public behaviour. Media is the most important tool that shapes public opinion. Media also shapes public perception of things. Additionally, Media is a force-multiplier to any effort.

Experience have proved beyond doubt that Media work as a powerful component for Security Forces, be it in conflict situations or in times of external aggression. Many a time, what cannot be achieved by using force, can be achieved by using Media as force-multiplier. And that exactly is why it is very important to keep in mind that Media, apart from building image, also create relationship with citizens. Media after all is a two-way process and thus also provides valuable inputs.

The public perception and image of Armed/Security Forces are dependent on or crucial at separate levels and/or situations: (i) Peace-time relationship (ii) War-time relationship (iii) CI-Ops-time relationship and (iv) Disaster-time relationship. But these relationships are gradually changing and getting strained due to various reasons.



Looking back to the early 1990s, one finds that during Operation Bajrang (launched in November, 1990), the Army failed to inform the Media on time and with accuracy. This resulted in local resentment and ill-informed reporting by Media. Insurgents reached out to Media faster than the Army as a result of which the Operations carried out by Army were seen in poor light.

The insurgent group (ULFA) used some human rights groups to cry hoarse against security forces. With very little idea about local Media, and vice-versa, the Army got very poor projection in the media and this in turn worked against any kind of relationship between the Army and the public.

While Operation Rhino was called off in March 1991 to facilitate holding of assembly elections in Assam, Operation Rhino (launched in September 1991) improved upon the lessons that were learnt from the bad experience of Operation Bajrang. It was seen that gradually a tendency or practice of including Media as force multiplier was gradually developed. But again, even then, the general tendency among the officers was to get national media coverage. Despite that, the immediate outcome of this improved relationship was that the people saw the need for Army action against insurgents in order to restore peace.

Even after more than six decades of Counter-Insurgency operations in the North-eastern region (Armed Forces were first deployed in the Naga Hills – then a district of Assam – in 1958 with the enactment of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act), one does not really witness a clear-cut or well-defined Media Policy on the part of the Armed Forces. There have been observations that a section of the officers looked at Media more as a nuisance and not as a force-multiplier. Knee-jerk reaction was the norm. Whatever little Media engagement was seen was mostly personality-driven.

Gradually, this personality-driven effort began getting institutionalised and the Army began to reach out to local/language media. One-to-one interactions with journalists were increasingly encouraged and officers were “permitted” to interact with local media, though in a limited manner. When Operation Bajrang was launched, there was no mechanism to disseminate information to the Media, and it was only after a couple of months that a PRO was appointed in Guwahati. With the state government drawn into the counter-insurgency operations in the new arrangement called Unified Command, a Tactical HQ officer was also posted in Guwahati, who provided regular interaction with Media and increased strategic information that helped in using Media as a force multiplier. Media’s access to Corps HQ at Tezpur too was made easier.

By 1993, the Army organised a series of internal as well as external Media seminar, and the series was inaugurated by none other than the legendary Bhupen Hazarika. But consistency was still a far cry for quite a long time and a lot of good activities still do not find Media space because of poor presentation. But, it should not be difficult for the Army which functions with meticulous advance planning.

Interestingly, while Army-Media relationship has improved significantly in the entire North-eastern region that of the other Security Forces has not, despite the central paramilitary forces being also engaged quite extensively in counter-insurgency operations in the region. Sending out day-to-day press release of activities hardly draw Media’s



attention. Lot of good civic action do not get space in the Media or do not elicit interest among media persons as they appear to be monotonous/routine. Many a time, press releases are seen to be lacking in imagination and creativity. Communication after all is a very sophisticated skill that requires rigorous training and practice.

Everybody needs the Media. Terrorists and underground groups consistently attempt to draw the attention of the Media. By doing so, the underground/armed groups also draw attention of decision-makers and the public. Similarly, government also utilizes Media to build public opinion against terror/violence. Thus, Media is a significant construct both to terrorists and the State.

Here also comes the question: Do the Armed/Security Forces need the Media only at times of crisis? Is there a long-term Media Strategy? Have there been serious attempts to find out what exactly are the types of stories Media is looking for? Is there scope for utilising this platform/opportunity to push “good” stories that build/enhance image of Security Forces? There is also a tendency to address Media persons like NCC cadets.

The Media looks for stories that sell, stories that will be remembered for a long time. Freedom to cover a story without external restraint – whether it comes from media owners, editors, advertisers or from government – is very important for even the lowly-paid stringer or part-time reporter at the village level. Moreover, every journalist wants to be the first to cover a particular story. In Media parlance, Scoop is golden; Old news is No news. Media do not want a dull press release which looks the same every day.

Again, it is also important to look beyond the Reporter, and reach to the Editor. It is finally the Editor who decides the policy of a Media organisation in consultation with the owner. So, it is also equally important to build rapport with the Editor. Editors can be involved in seminars and events during which they may come up with some brilliant ideas and suggestions. It is also important to organise occasional trips for selected editors to important locations. One must keep in mind that occupying space other than that of hard news is also possible.

It is a fact that with increased deployment of Armed/Security Forces in Internal Security situations, their image has been seriously affected. Counter-Insurgency Operations have often led to complaints about human rights violations. Operations in Nagaland, Mizoram & Assam had thrown up a lot of stories in Media about human rights violations. Many still remember Operation Bluebird (Manipur, 1987) as one dark chapter about human rights violations by Security Forces in the North-eastern region. Though not many newspapers had covered it, this continues to remain a blot, especially in the image of Assam Rifles for the alleged human rights excesses. These continue to adversely affect the image of security forces, especially in the Northeast.

Last, but not the least, there is an urgent need to introspect. There is also a need to acknowledge the Media for the support that has been always extended, despite numerous instances of human rights violations that have cropped up from time to time. There is also a need for creating awareness about Media among the rank and file of the Security/Armed Forces. Interactive sessions, seminars and workshops definitely help in creating better understanding and rapport between the Armed Forces and Media.



Mr Samudra Gupta Kashyap is an alumnus of Cotton College, Guwahati. He has a Post-graduate diploma in journalism from Indian Institute of Mass Communication, New Delhi. He is a Special Correspondent of Indian Express. He has 30 years' experience in journalism with 20 years with Indian Express. He is now an expert on the various contemporary subjects related to media & has delivered a number of talks in various institutions. He has been awarded Rai Bahadur M S Oberoi Media Award by an International NGO and has been conferred an Award of Excellence in Journalism by a leading TV channel of Guwahati. He has been awarded Sahitya Academy Award for his translation work.



MASS MEDIA AND NATIONAL SECURITY PROBLEM AND PROSPECT

Ms (Dr) Mita Das

Introduction

Mass media is considered as influential channel for effective communication. It supports in promoting the right things in proper time and provides a real exposure to the mass viewers about right or wrong process. It is the source of information for any societal or political issue. Whether the issue is local, regional or global, masses rely and even trust on information provided to them by mass media. Therefore, this dimension/ value of mass media increases its significance as an influential and instrumental tool with regards to building confidence or promoting mistrust among people on issues related to national security. The importance of media can be observed at the times of disaster at national level. Although, at times if the media is alleged to spread fake and unauthenticated news, the fact remains that it informs the people about the realities as well.

A free media is the mortar that binds the bricks of freedom in a democracy. Thomas Jefferson has said that given a choice between government without newspapers (there was no visual media in his time) and newspapers without government than he would opt for the latter. A government needs the media to keep a check on its policies as a mirror and a scalpel; instead, if a nation has a blunt-axe media, then the society is not well served and the media would not be playing its role efficiently. In India, this should be a matter of concern for right-minded citizens, if the information provided to them were impulsive the opinion would also be ill considered.

The mass media is a strong instrument of national power due to its incredible influence over our adversary as well as our own public. Near “real-time” news coverage has altered the decision-making process and influences our ability as well as that of our adversary to quickly manage its effects.

The Indian media in relation to coverage, discussion and analysis of India’s national security matters has displayed a deplorable insensitivity to both national interests and national security interests. In this respect the electronic media is more to blame with their attempts to encapsulate complex national security issues into thirty second sounds “bites”⁴⁴.

The mass media should be careful to write/talk about issues that are sensitive to national security. The PM, Mr Narendra Modi, while speaking on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of the Press Council of India on 16 Nov 2016, has said, “...there should be no government interference in the functioning of the media...freedom of expression needs to be followed, but there must be limits.” He too has expressed a similar opinion referring to the telecast of the angry reactions of the families of the passengers on board the Indian Airlines flight IC-814, during the Kandahar hijacking in 1999.

The mass media can affect the morale of enemy soldiers and that of the citizens of their nation’s, whose support will wane if unhappy with the political-military situation. Without the support of the public, the cause is soon forgotten and the morale of the military is adversely affected as we have seen in past conflicts.



Role of Mass Media

The concept of media as the 'fourth estate' is now firmly established as a main principle in modern Western democratic theory. Free and independent media are considered a key element in democracies, where they perform a vital role as a bridge or transmission belt between society and those who govern. By providing comprehensive and reliable information and giving voice to a diversity of views and opinions, the media facilitate informed debate and critical appraisal of state action. And by showing their audience what is actually happening, the media helps to subject the claims and actions of a government to public scrutiny and thus hold political and state actors accountable⁴⁵.

The dynamics of mass media impact are quite different, varying and diversified in different countries. When discussing about the Indo-Pakistan security relations, mass media has adopted a nationalistic approach forwarding and pushing the national interests such as in wars of 1965 and 1971, the 1990 nuclear alert, border skirmishes (Kargil) or the low-Intensity war (LIW) in Kashmir.

Mass media is considered as strong support which helps the state to promote its interests, objectives and goals. Since the beginning of information uprising and the use of media for attaining war objectives by other means, media is vital component in opinion making or building, creating leaders and anti-heroes, and creating monsters and enemies. The coverage of nuclear explosions carried out by India and Pakistan in 1998 is one of the major examples in this regard where popular sentiments were emphasised and mass media had major role to push forward the national program. During that period, media used a nationalistic approach to highlight the state standpoint.

Ideally, mass media must be unbiased and free from the publicity mechanisms. It has to play a role for preserving and pursuing the national interests of the state and highlighting its perspective along with the global issues. It has to scrutinise the conduct of international relations and emphasize the social issues at global level in lieu of global security⁴⁶.

The mass media has been waging the war of its own to counter the hostile propaganda from across the borders. The electronic media acts as a morale-building factor during wars. During wars, psychological operation is not the only function which the media is called upon to perform in the context of national security but it also has to act as a bridge between the armed forces and the people⁴⁷.

Role Played by Indian Mass Media in Security Issues

To add more detail on the relation between mass media and its role in safeguarding national security there are a many examples where Indian media has portrayed an effective role in providing information to the public, and confirming the actions of the government on the issues of national security. In August 1999, Pakistan Navy's Naval Air Arm Breguet Atlantique patrol plane was shot down by the Indian Air force for violating Indian air space as it was flying close to the Indian border off the Rann of Kutch in Gujarat⁴⁸. The issue flared tensions between the two countries as the Kargil War had just ended, and there was a destabilisation of on-going peace negotiations between India and Pakistan. Though claims were rebuked by the Pakistani authorities as the part of a training mission, questions were raised as to why the plane was flying so close to the international border between the two nations.



Pakistan even took the issue to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for resolution, as it condemned the shooting down of its plane by the Indian Air force. However, the Indian media's support for its country and the timely information that it provided to the domestic and international audience, helped not only the Indian public but also the foreign media grasp the ground situation, which in turn, influenced the judgment of the ICJ. The verdict thus given helped question Pakistan's credibility on the issue, and also urged both the countries to resolve their disputes bilaterally.

Likewise, but in different circumstances, the Indian media was also used by the Government as a tool to rightly inform and replace misinformation that could have hampered India's relations with its neighbouring countries mainly Pakistan. On January 24, 2010, a signal of a 'flying object' was picked up by the radar of the Indian Air force at Nalia base in the Rann of Kutch⁴⁹. Claimed to be an intrusion at first, the Government identified it to be one of the planes of the Indian Air force and confirmed a 'no threat' situation. In this matter, the Indian mass media was used by the government to clarify the event not only to its people but also to the international audience.

The editors and reporters/ journalists of media organisations in India were called upon by military and Government officials where they were shown the details of the plane, and were requested to convince the national audience that the radar picked up signal of an Indian plane, and that they help diminish any claims of outside intervention⁵⁰. The role played by the Indian media during this time helped to decrease the tension that existed between India and Pakistan, as there were reports earlier of a possible terrorist threat and disruption during India's Republic Day celebration, which was to be held two days later. Examples of the tremendous and radical change in technology of the Indian media and their repercussions thus continue to be numerous and in terms of national security, the impact of the media evidently has clear strategic implications.

Mass Media and National Security

The term 'national security' has long been used by politicians as a symbolic phrase and by military leaders to describe a policy objective. National security has wide meaning and all-embracing dimensions⁵¹. Threat posed to any element of national power creates security problems. The role of mass media in war is not just to project the developing activities in a particular area but to offer a comprehensive picture, encompassing all aspects of the policies of the country.

Currently, the war is not only fought by the armed forces but the whole nation is engaged in the economic, scientific, political and social endeavours and production in all feasible fields. It is a viable objective, which is achieved through the information and dissemination process of the mass media⁵².

When the two institutions- military and media- meet during a conflict, clashes are expected. The media wants to tell the story and the military wants to win the war and keep casualties to a minimum. The media wants freedom, no censorship, total access and the capability to get to their audience quickly. The military on the other hand, wants control. The greatest fear of a military commander in a pre-invasion scenario that something might leak out that would tip off the enemy. Otherwise, surprise is the most potent weapon in the commander's armoury.



On the other hand, the media fears that military might stifle news coverage for enhancing their public image or cover up their mistakes. These are fundamental differences that will never change. Presently military and the media have begun to work together in harmony for national interests and security⁵³.

At present, electronic media is the most effective and powerful means of mass motivation. A nation not motivated enough to withstand the aggression cannot aspire to preserve its freedom, faith and ideology for long. On the other hand, strong motivated people cannot be forced to abandon their struggle against heavy odds. It is for this aspect of unique coverage and impact that the electronic media can be geared up effectively to promote and expand security awareness among the people at large.

One of the most effective means of warfare is through propaganda which is a complicated science and a planned exercise to undermine the will of the people. Mass media is the primary tool of propaganda⁵⁴.

Some of the techniques adopted in a conflict through media to gain the desired results are repeating the lies, presenting personal opinion disguised as a fact, headline propaganda, selective control of information and the yellow journalism⁵⁵. Many military leaders have become aware that news media coverage of their operations can be a force multiplier.

They have come to the conclusion that media coverage not only develops public awareness and the support of military units, it has side benefit of enhancing their morale by informing their families and friends of their achievements.

'Security at source' is used as a preferred approach, and is relatively a new concept in which the military strives to develop a plan as far in advance of the operation as possible to allow the news media broad access to the total action. In this approach, journalists are accommodated with the combat forces as was witnessed during the 2003 US attack on Iraq. Each report is first approved and then given the ground rules with which the reporter is expected to comply⁵⁶.

Studies have established that the governments have routinely exercised control over the mass media when it comes to the 'matters of national security'. It decides what information to be given, how much content has to be shared, and how to relay it to the public. If carefully executed, the entire process helps to determine the thought process of the populace hence, giving legitimacy to their cause or issue⁵⁷.

Mass Media and Indo-Pakistan Security

South Asia is home to colour, culture and contradictions. It is a region rife with poverty, prone to conflicts and held hostage by acrimonious relationship of the hostile neighbors: India and Pakistan. Since the partition of 1947, both neighbors have fought three wars, came close to a nuclear stand-off in Kargil in 1999 while continuing a low-intensity war (LIW) in Kashmir. As a result of this decades-old hostility, South Asia today is one of the most militarized zones in the world and because of the protracted conflict the region stands nuclearized.

Both nations have been skeptical of each other from the very start, at the heart of which lies the perceived as well as real security threats of each nation. The security



climate of the region remains tense as both nations have used Kashmir among other factors to sustain the anti-enemy rhetoric.

Since 1947, the evolution of these nations' security has been enemy-specific and enemy centric. The security policies of both states are interplay of several factors, which have helped shape its perceptions as well as actions.

More often than not, India and Pakistan have looked outside, rather than inside, to take stock of the security threats. As a result, the enemy vilification and justification that started with the independence carnage continues unabated.

The already strained relations are further taxed by the misinformation, misperception as well as the over analysis of the threat emanating from the nuclear-armed neighbors. Both states have utilized the mass media to inculcate the politics of fear to silence critics of the government policies. Despite the vibrant media environment, it is easy to see that the 'sensitive' topics of national security are neither analyzed nor challenged.

Mass media reportage is often colored and harnessed in the garb of national interest. What is terrorism for one is freedom struggle for the other. Heroes of one nation are the villains for the other. The media is 'expected' to endorse the government definition of who constitutes the hero status and the media is allocated the job of identification and demonization. However, in matters of national security and cause, mostly the mass media has been supportive of the government policies in both the countries⁵⁸.

The Mass Media as a Tool Provider

The mass media, among other groups of the society, assume the critical frontline role in providing information on issues, government policies and actions, especially on the matters of security. So, the media cannot afford to shrink back or shirk this responsibility. It must be insatiable in finding creative ways of gathering, processing and disseminating accurate and meaningful information in fulfilling the need for national security. The truth needs to be stated here though, that, when the political and legal atmosphere is friendly and good, the media can flourish in this role. The media flourish in self-contradictory situations of government, where what is painted is a picture of clamour for national security and at the same time clipping the wings of press freedom and freedom of information⁵⁹.

Social Media Users and Social Networking

Social networking is a change in the form of human communication that cannot be ignored. Online social networks have impacted every field of human endeavor from education to health care and many more. National security is no exception. Due to globalization, focus has now shifted to assessing the effects of non-state actors. The advancement in social media has increased the ability of non-state actors including terrorists, criminals, protestors, hate mongers and rioters to impact national and international security⁶⁰.

These media can cause several negative effects for national security and unfavourable consequences for a state's strategic interests. Nevertheless, their use can also lead to remarkable opportunities for a country in order to reach its strategic relevant goals, foresee how threats will work in the future and figure out how to counter their effects⁶¹.



In modern advanced technical climate, social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook have remarkable eagerness among businesses and enterprises and it is also adopted by security officials to convey messages to distant officials. The biggest challenge for internal security of nation through social networking site is cyber terrorism. Social networking sites also invite fraudsters to take excellent opportunity to become wealthy by applying deceiver schemes. Internet media is a major resource for developing serious crime. As internet is growing explosively, online criminals try to present fraudulent plans in many ways. Cyber terrorism is simply the use of computer network tools to damage vital national infrastructures, for example transportation, government process. Many theorist's, scholars raised concern that cyber terrorism is growing at high speed due to dependency of nations and critical infrastructure on computer networks for their procedures. Today terrorists select cyber terrorism as a practical alternative to disturb the function of nations and other business activities because this technique has potential to cause huge damage. It poses enormous threat in international system and attracts the mass media, the security community, and the information technology corporation⁶².

Social media platforms have far reaching social and security implications for the people of India, their government and its national security agencies such as the military and the police.

In a study about the role of internet and social media with particular focus on international relations⁶³, a documented analysis was conducted on the extent to which social networks such as the Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and weblogs played in facilitating uprisings in Egypt, Tunisia and Syria.

The study found that the usage and growth of social media in the Arab region played a great role in mass mobilization of protestors, empowerment, shaping of opinions and influencing change. Till date Arab countries have witnessed constant conflicts and political instability, coupled with widespread social unrest affecting negatively on broader sets of economic, social, and political factors⁶⁴.

Social media therefore has become a tool rather than the actual cause of the revolution. However, apart from the Arab uprising, there exists other examples of people using social media effectively as forms of threats to violence and secure communities exist. For example, during the London riots, the police and the public at large used the social media to fight against rioters and improve security. The London police scanned through the CCTV images to find the pictures of rioters⁶⁵. Therefore, in an effort to understanding social media and national security, a number of studies have been documented especially on social dynamics of unrest and movements, driving on a directed ideological end.

Social media is being used by Islamic Jihadists⁶⁶ for their own purposes. These Jihadists also have their operations in the country. For example, Al-shabaab uses HSM press twitter handle for communication and news. Similarly, Facebook and YouTube channels are often used by al-Qaeda with the aim of recruiting and increasing the number of sympathizers and jihad-supporters.

Since Al-Shabaab has a "net-like" decentralized structure, Facebook and Twitter is used effectively as platforms to organize and connect the single groups or cells linked to Al-Shabaab and the leadership. More specifically, social media is used to communicate



coded messages to arrange plans for terrorist acts, to manage the training of new terrorists and provide logistical support and operative assistance like giving advice about how to go through a roadblock, build themselves and handle arms and explosives find and use cyber weapons, dodge and counter investigation by security agencies.

Since, social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter are extremely quickly evolving and are facing a many-sided interaction with geo-economics and socio-cultural elements, it is important to continuously monitor how they develop, analyses how they work, and measure their potentialities whether contributing positively or negatively to well-being of state and citizens⁶⁷. This process aims at making the states passively able to monitor report and neutralize potential offensive use of social media by enemies and instead diverting such innovative tools into resources of primary importance to be ready for all the bodies involved in the protection of the national security.

The Effects of Social Media on National Security

With the recent growth of social media in the past ten years as a new staple in our modern culture, social media has also emerged as a growing threat to national security. As the internet and social media are constantly growing and changing, national security has lagged behind.

National security experts and policy-makers must now adapt quickly to emerging threats or face major national security breaches. Although social media has the potential to be a threat to national security, it also has the opportunity to strengthen national security and to be used to benefit the government.

One of the fastest growing ways that governments are using social media is as a warning or trend prevention tool. As a monitoring tool, the government is able to recognize the first signs of any hostile or potentially dangerous activity by collecting and analyzing messages in order to try to predict events that could be a danger to national security. The Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) has recently launched a project that would seek to monitor social media in order to provide support to intelligence analysts in predicting future social events. This program is called **Open Source Indicators (OSI)**. This program is an automatic system that seeks to analyze social media with the goal of predicting when national security related events are going to occur including: political crisis, migrations, epidemics, humanitarian emergencies, protests, periods of economic instability etc. OSI is based on the principle that social events are always anticipated by changes of behavior through the population.

It also has an impact on obtaining and holding security clearances. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has an automated system that is constantly monitoring any publicly entered information for list of about 500-750 key words that deal with national security⁶⁸.

Besides, being potential threat tools, social media can represent an effective opportunity to preserve national security and/or reach the strategic interests of a state if used properly by civil institutions and in particular by security services and/or information security services. In this respect, Papic and Noonan stressed that if Social Media “*are presenting a demonstrable threat to governments, it could be vital for security services to continually refine and update plans for disrupting new Internet technology*”⁶⁹.



The Indian Mass Media in National Security Strategy

Apart from the relevance and acceptance of the Indian mass media as an entity into the maintenance of governance in the country in the current security environment, India's media continues to remain unique because of the culturally diverse nature of the country. On the one hand, India is politically and technologically advanced, upholding its strength in economy, democracy, and culture, and on the other hand, the majority of India remains a developing country with strong religious and conservative patriarchal systems isolated from the ideologies and advancements of modern and technological life. The mainstream Indian media reflects the distinct differences of its people and thoughts by supporting and catering to two types of media outlets and audience: the English language media and the non-English language media, including various newspapers, magazines and television channels, thereby upholding the difference in expression and perspectives of its multi-cultural population and showcasing the true essence of India⁷⁰.

Therefore, mass media remains an important component of statecraft, not only for India but even for the rest of the world as it helps the States to attain their goals and objectives⁷¹ mainly due to the effect that media has on opinion-building of the public. However, in terms of matters of national security, mass media of any country including that of India follows a nationalistic approach even though the dynamics of media are different and diverse in different countries.

Sometimes, the States use media to create fear or hatred among countries, and sometimes prolong diplomatic ties. In the contemporary strategic environment, mass media and the Government have a very strong and symbiotic relationship⁷², which is believed to be evolving as even political actors have started working in the environment set or prescribed by the media for undertaking their duties. Thus, not only are the perceptions of the public set by the media in this modern world but also that of the authorities and leaders, which in turn help them to set up policies in tune with the demands of the people.

Recent Trends for National Security and Mass Media

Today, there has been a change in news reporting and information handling with an increase in the media pressure on State to extract and attain information on security related issues of public relevance, mainly from the officials and the Government. This has in turn played an impact upon national security decision-making depending on its relevance and sensitivity⁷³ and creating an impact that resonates with the public mood.

Reports regarding national security have also forced the administration to react to the reports published in the newspapers or broadcasted in the television channels receiving positive or negative support by the media and the public depending on the actions taken by the authorities.

It has become important for the officials to provide information on national security to the media because along with independent civil society actors, the mass media plays an important role in monitoring security institutions and helps to ensure their effective functioning and accountability to the public⁷⁴. They remain vital elements in shaping the public debate on security policy and decision-making and helps in educating the general public on national security and related policies. Many official services such as the Defence and the Police in India have also established media relations offices similar to the West, as a realization of the need to constructively engage and manage their relationships with the



media and to communicate more freely with the journalists. However, the need of the hour is to strike a careful balance between the media and the security institutions. Limited and false coverage of national security and policy issues will only ineffectually educate citizens to act in a crisis situation, but if media coverage is specialised and detailed with official and expert reports, it will help the public be more prepared and knowledgeable.

Indian Media and Terrorism Reporting

Terrorism Laws in India

Conflict has always been of news value for media due to its public importance and its implications on the security situation of a country. The involvement of media and journalists in 'our war' and 'our conflict' situation has always been tremendous and enthusiastic⁷⁵. India has a long history of facing terrorist threats and acts, mainly in Kashmir, and the Indian media over the years has been able to play a major role in trying to ensure that the focus of the campaign remains on terrorism and role of the Government in resolving the problems responsible for the growth of terrorism. In response to heightened national security concerns, the Indian Government introduced the Prevention of Terrorism Ordinance (POTO), a modified version of the previous Terrorists and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act (TADA) of 1987. The POTO was signed into law on October 24, 2001. It was introduced as a bill in the Parliament and was passed on March 27, 2002. The need for a new law was under way because TADA allegedly forced politically motivated detentions, torture and other human rights violations committed against minorities, trade union activists and political opponents in the late 1980s and early 1990s. TADA was ended in 1995 with mounting opposition for the act.

Civil rights groups, journalists, minority rights groups and the National Human Rights Commission also condemned POTO due to the discriminatory and violative power it provided similar to that of TADA. However, a new law was introduced in the Parliament in 2002 - the Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA) - which set forth a broad definition of terrorism that included acts of violence or disruption of essential services carried out with 'intent to threaten the unity and integrity of India or to strike terror in any part of the people' and aimed to punish all guilty without any sort of discrimination.

The POTA was also repealed by the Indian Government for its draconian laws and now the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act amended in 2008 and the National Security Act are being strengthened to meet the security needs of the country. The Indian media had been supportive of the POTA and is being actively involved in covering issues related to terrorism both domestic and international set within the legal framework⁷⁶. The Indian media is also aware that terrorizing India is connected to global terrorism and needs hard power to effectively fight the terrorist forces⁷⁷.

Methodology

In this paper the researcher has adopted Qualitative Analysis of the Secondary sources such as Books, Research reports, Dissertations, Magazines and Journals.

Summary of Findings

Discussing about the Indo-Pakistan security relations, mass media has adopted a nationalistic approach forwarding and pushing the national interests such as in wars (1965, 1971), crisis (1990 nuclear alert), border skirmishes (Kargil) or the low-intensity war (LIW) in Kashmir.



Mass media reportage is often colored and harnessed in the garb of national interest. It is a vital component in opinion making or building, creating leaders and anti-heroes and creating monsters and enemies. One of the major examples in this regard was the coverage of nuclear explosions carried out by India and Pakistan in 1998 where popular sentiments were emphasised and mass media had played major role to push forward the national program. In safeguarding national security Indian media has portrayed an effective role in providing information to the public and confirming the actions of the government on the issues of national security.

The role of mass media in war is not just to project the developing activities in a particular area but to offer a comprehensive picture encompassing all aspects of the policies of the country. At any time, the two institutions- military and media- meet during a conflict, clashes are sure to expect as the media wants freedom, no censorship, total access and the capability to quickly get to their audience. The military on the other hand wants control. The greatest fear of a military commander in a pre-invasion scenario is that something might leak out that would tip off the enemy. On the other hand, the media fears that military might stifle news coverage for enhancing their public image or cover up their mistakes. No doubt at present military and the media have begun to work together in harmony for national interests and security. Studies have established that the governments have routinely exercised control over the mass media when it comes to the 'matters of national security'.

The advancement in social media has increased the ability of non-state actors including terrorists, criminals, protestors, hate mongers and rioters to impact national and international security.

These media often cause several negative effects for national security and unfavourable consequences for a state's strategic interests. Nevertheless, their use can also lead to remarkable opportunities for a country in order to reach its strategic relevant goals, foresee how threats will work in the future and figure out how to counter their effects. As internet is growing explosively, online criminals try to present fraudulent plans in many ways. Cyber terrorism is simply the use of computer network tools to damage vital national infrastructures, for example transportation, government process. Many theorist's, scholars raised concern that cyber terrorism is growing at high speed due to dependency of nations and critical infrastructure on computer networks for their procedures. Today terrorists select cyber terrorism as a practical alternative to disturb the function of nations and other business activities because this technique has potential to cause huge damage. More specifically, social media is used to communicate coded messages to arrange plans for terrorist acts, to manage the training of new terrorists and provide logistical support and operative assistance like giving advice about how to go through a roadblock, build themselves and handle arms and explosives, find and use cyber weapons, dodge and counter investigation by security agencies.

In 2002, a new law was introduced in the Parliament - the Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA). This Act aimed to punish all guilty without any sort of discrimination. The Act replaced the Prevention of Terrorism Ordinance (POTO) which was signed into law on October 24, 2001. The Indian media had been supportive of the POTA and is being actively involved in covering issues related to terrorism both domestic and international set within the legal framework.



Although social media has the potential to be a threat to national security, it also has the opportunity to strengthen national security and to be used to benefit the government. One of the fastest growing ways that governments are using social media is as a warning or trend prevention tool. The Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) has recently launched a project that would seek to monitor social media in order to provide support to intelligence analysts in predicting future social events. This program is called **Open Source Indicators (OSI)**.

Conclusion

The mass media along with independent civil society actors play a vital role in monitoring security institutions and therefore, it helps to ensure that they are effective and accountable. Mass media is the vital elements in shaping the public debate on security policy and decision-making. Nevertheless, the mass media and the security sphere are dependent on one another. Security institutions like governments, ultimately depend on public support for their activities and budgets. In a democracy, the media has a responsibility to subject political leaders and security elites to public scrutiny and to question their policies. Therefore, it is important that the mass media and the security sphere work together to educate the public, question government about security policy, and hold leaders to account.

Concerning sensitive topics such as those relating to national security or law and order, the media-government relationship is often characterised by conflicts over secrecy. Governments may suppress information if they believe its release would harm the public interest.

Thus, journalists face challenges when reporting on national security related issues, that includes limited or restricted access to information as it is considered sensitive; heavy reliance on official sources; situations where news organisations are not willing to risk their resources in attaining complex information on issues related to security or sacrificing their freedom for getting the security related information. Hence, journalists should maintain high levels of ethical professionalism and adhere to the code of conduct when covering matters of national security.



Ms (Dr) Mita Das is a PhD in Mass Communication from Assam University, Silchar. She is presently pursuing her Post Doctorate on “Impact of TV Programmes on College Going Students”. She has worked as an Assistant Director in a number of documentaries and is regular contributor to various local periodicals. She has five papers published and two are under process for publishing. She is currently taking Post Graduate classes in Assam University Silchar as part of her Post

Doctorate assignment



IMPACT OF REGIONAL MEDIA ON SECURITY FORCES AND NATION BUILDING IN NORTH EAST INDIA

Mr Taimur Raja Choudhury

The Preamble to the Constitution of India provides for the key to the national security policy of the Indian state as it enshrines these over eighty of the 'we the people of India' in a socialist, secular, democratic republic based on the cornerstones of Justice, Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. The task of nation building in India is contingent upon governance of the country in a just, fair and inclusive manner in accordance with the provisions of the plural Constitution of our country.

But even before embarking on the mission of nation building one has to understand and internalize the very nature of Indian nation. There are scholarly debates around the very definition of Indian nation. The major point of difference is whether India is 'one nation one state' or many nations one state'. I am not the right person to go into that loaded debate, nor is it my objective in the present discourse. It would only suffice to observe that any reading of the great culture and tradition of one of the oldest civilizations of the world has to factor in the ingrained diversity of India. Indian nation can be built only through the appreciative acknowledgement of the great diversity in language, religion, caste, creed, ethnicity and culture of this great nation. The cultural kaleidoscope of the North East India is very much a reflection of that pan-Indian diversity. The Northeast India comprising eight states officially constitutes the North Eastern Region (NER). The region shares an international border of 5,182 kilometres, which is about 99 percent of its total geographical boundary, with the neighbouring countries- 1,395 kilometres with Tibet Autonomous Region, China in the north, 1,640 kilometres with Myanmar in the east, 1,596 kilometres with Bangladesh in the south-west, 97 kilometres with Nepal in the West and 455 kilometres with Bhutan in the north-west. It comprises an area of 2,62,230 square kilometres, almost eight percent of that of India.

Northeast region is home to over 4 crore 60 lakh population around seventy percent of whom live in Assam only. As mentioned earlier, this stretch of land exhibits extreme kind of social and anthropological diversity. There are 220 different languages in multiple language families in the Region. The presence of all major religions in substantial number among the population also adds a layer to the social fabric of the Region. The NER has over two hundred ethnic groups spread over the eight states.

The uniqueness of the Region is a treasure for the country but at the same time, it has to be noted that the NER has presented alienation with the mainland India as well. Each of the NER states has at some point of time or other gone through the problem of secessionism and armed conflict challenging the sovereignty of the country. Even at the present juncture, in our own state of Assam, ULFA is operative at some scale. While we appreciate the success of the Central Government in bringing peace to a large extent to the troubled territory of the NER, through the combined process of security enhancement and dialogue, it cannot be forgotten that AFSPA is still in operation in many states of the Region.



This is exactly where the role of media in general and that of the regional media in particular becomes relevant. As it is said, 'The media is the most powerful entity on earth. They have the power to make the innocent guilty and to make the guilty innocent and that's power, because they control the minds of the masses.' Regional media can directly communicate with the people in the language the latter understand. This strong bond of communication makes the regional press even more powerful.

In my experience of being associated with the Bengali press of the Region for over four decades in various roles, I have seen how best we can connect with our readers. News is the most important component in the media. Fair, objective and neutral journalism demands that news should never be mixed with views which are subjective, but the reality is that news can hardly be separated from views on most of the occasions. Even a cursory look at the print and electronic media of Assam would surely tell us that they have always pampered the regional nationalism at times at the cost of nationalism. But the Bengali press in the Region has always considered the 'Nation First'. As an ordinary newsman in addition to being the editor of a Bengali daily I have always made it a point that selection of news and presentation of the same in our publication should never be allowed to create division in the society.

We need to cover the operations of the security forces in the Region. We need to run the press statements of the Forces. We also need to accommodate the voices that differ with the State but while we select the correct mix of the content, we try to be objective and most importantly we remain committed to the basic principles of the Indian Constitution. We give importance to the fundamental rights enumerated in the Part III of the Constitution. We try to work as the watchdog of the freedom of the Indian citizens transcending personal identities. At the same we take due note of the reasonable restriction put on the personal freedom. We are, in such cases, reminded of A G Gardiner, who had championed the cause of social liberty and advocated a right mix of individual liberty and social liberty. Security Forces are armed with a lot of power, even including the coercive jurisdiction, only to ensure the sovereignty of the country and the fullest expression of the freedom of the citizens. But at times, the forces are found defaulter in bringing the right balance between social liberty and individual liberty. Security Forces are the real mascot of a democracy. Only a responsible, restrained, reasonable force can champion the cause of sovereignty and democracy in India. The role of the regional media is very well defined in this context. On the one hand, we need to foster the spirit of brotherhood and assimilation in the Northeast society. On the other, we should cover the patriotic service of the Security Forces of the country. The Security Forces, in their turn, should maintain the equal distance between the state and the citizenry. This is actually a collaborative process where all the pillars of democracy should join hand for mainstreaming the Region. A robust, integrated NER can only contribute to the never ending process of building a great Indian nation.



Mr Taimur Raja Choudhury started his career in journalism right from his college days. He had a brief stint as a correspondent of Assamese daily Dainik Asom. In 1978, he brought out the fortnightly Samayik Prasanga. The periodical eventually became a daily publication. He was selected in the media entourage of Dr A P J Abdul Kalam, in his visit to France, Germany and Greece in April 2007. He has been the General Secretary of Silchar Press Club for twelve years and its President for two years. He has

also been the Organizing Secretary of the high power committee to celebrate 150 years of Newspapers in Assam. A Member of Telecom Advisory Committee, he was also on the district level screening committee of Assam Govt issuing official accreditation to journalists. He is an invited member of Internal Quality Assurance Cell of Cachar College. He is also a regular commentator in Doordashan & All India Radio.



PLENARY SESSION: III FRAMEWORK FOR WAY AHEAD





LEVERAGING HEALTHY SECURITY FORCES- MASS MEDIA RELATIONSHIP

Mr Subimal Bhattacharjee

Introduction

The relation between military forces and mass media goes to time immemorial. Both seek to serve the public good in their own ways. Generally this relationship is one which is symbiotic in nature and universal. While much of this relationship is significantly complementary both in conflict zones and peace avenues, there definitely exists a clear love-hate angle between the two fraternities. Much of that arises due to their competing compulsions⁷⁸. Military is mostly uniform and approach and attitude across the globe but media has its own background and not necessarily homogenous. Thus the same incident and action is reported with various degrees of sensitivity and approach. Clearly what is pertinent is to see that both these entities have a healthy workable relationship so that a balance between the two can play a crucial role in the correct reportage of situations.

In today's scenario, this military and mass media relationship applies to both conflict zones and peace areas equally, but with their relative zones of sensitivity. In conflict zones whether in real battlefields and asymmetric and insurgence warfare avenues, media has to be not only supported by the military in terms of their scope of certain assignments but also protection while covering many sensitive zones. On its turn the media fraternity has to ensure that correct and factual reporting happens and there is no tone towards sensationalising or over reporting. Conflict reporting needs a certain degree of understanding how the security forces operate as secrecy and tactics remain a very key element. Likewise media also cannot get trapped by the propaganda and rumour mongering that adversaries often undertake. Particularly in insurgent and extremist conflict zone reporting, media has to be extra conscious that civilian population are not impacted or provoked into taking a negative understanding of the situation. In Jammu and Kashmir and also in a few areas of Northeastern India, a few instances have been witnessed where provocative reporting overshadowed the factual reporting and in turn created a negative approach towards security forces and also the actual nature of the conflict.

With the advent of social media and the pace at which information spreads through them both in terms of visual images and videos, the need for restraint and correct reporting has become even more imperative. The prevalence of vested interests in propagating fake news over the online platform has already become a menace globally.

Likewise reporting in peace zones where security forces are deployed for building and maintaining peace also need a very delicate approach. In these situations military undertakes many welfare programmes and have close interaction with people of the society and are of great help in building public confidence for fostering peace and enhancing prosperity. Here the approach of military is to involve the media community in understanding the approach and scale of these efforts and also understand the public mood in terms of the efficacy of these efforts. One has to understand that the security man who is serving in a region much away from his home also brings in his civilian side in terms of connecting and reaching out. Some of these moves have resulted in lasting relationships and have reduced conflicts even among various communities. The role of



Assam Rifles in the Dima Hasao district is a case in point where all 13 tribes and 6 non tribes have been bonded in a better cohesive community to respect and support each other. This happened even when the armed action against militants was still continuing. Music and sports avenues⁷⁹ were supported by Assam Rifles in a big way to bring the people far much closer. Significant gains were made from such efforts and media also played a major role in reporting such efforts and often participated in the social events that helped the communities to respect each other better. Likewise in today's date propaganda war assumes a very important position during peace time situations and public opinion is also shaped around the prevailing news and information that is made available. As a result, the necessity of constant dialogue between the military and media is crucial so that the right reportage happens and the public opinion is better served.

Evolution

It will be pertinent here to mention that experience over the years has already set in motion many steps and best practices between both military and mass media. Most of these practices are the best yardstick to leverage and build up on for better and optimal reporting. Both in conflicts and peace zones, there are ample instances where an approach towards an optimal relationship is being harmonised.

One of the major changes that have significantly impacted this relationship is the change of strategy of military and security agencies from media management⁸⁰ towards a more media engagement approach. The scope for proactive interaction becomes a major focus area rather than a reactive approach to news and stories that have emanated. In this approach a few points to consider would be the below paragraphs.

Media community for reporting defence and conflict areas should always been given an orientation on the sensitivity of the sector and some of the cardinal points like never sounding one's actual position and communicating by non-secure media should be practiced. Journalism is a very challenging profession and security related journalism is even more challenging as often journalists become casualty for no fault of theirs.

Most of them take up the challenge of being in a conflict zone and boldly reporting the ground reality. A few of them take this challenge out of a zeal for patriotism and many others make this as an extension of their normal journalistic pursuit. Security forces and media community need to devise together an orientation module that both can harmonise on so that some basics are understood and followed. Case studies or conflict situations can best be discussed and the fallout of adventurism and voyeurism can be understood⁸¹. The television reporting of the Kargil conflict and the 26/11 Mumbai attack are cases in point where reporters from many news channels were reporting from ground and often inadvertently letting out sensitive inputs and inferences for the adversaries and some also reporting factually wrong materials.

Such conflict zones are complex because multiple forces operate and often the asymmetrical nature of the warfare needs very sensitive reporting. At the same it is also because of the media that the civilians actually come to know of the conflict updates and that time everyone has an extra ear for news coming from those zones. A case like 26/11 covers a crucial aspect of using media platform to convey the security forces' message and at the same time remain impartial; this perfectly explains that media and military can go hand in hand to let the citizens understand the ground situation.



Equally important is the fact that military and security forces operate in many zones that have different cultural and social values and understanding of situations. In some communities the presence of security forces is seen as an affront whereas many others have learnt to live with the presence of security forces and in time have also evolved a healthy relationship whereby they involve the security personal also in their religious and social functions⁸². In many of these cases, it is the media fraternity that has helped to build a proper picture and attitude of the security forces before the community. As a best practice this should be leveraged to the fullest and media and the forces should reach out to the civilian community whereby the media creates and sustains the right image of the security forces to the people.

Hence it is crucial for the military and security forces to feed the media with relevant information and make the effort more relevant. Of course tactical plans would never be shared as they would disturb the operations and the presence. Again as a reference the situation in north east India can be taken. There are many tribes in the region with wide cultural diversity and their engagements with security forces have been minimal. However media has facilitated a better understanding of their cultures among the security forces and also the geographical parameters and constraints and in turn have resulted in wider welfare efforts by the Security Forces which in turn has also alerted the civil administration of the deficiencies and the support needed.

Over the years, media relationship has also evolved as a focused area for the military and security forces. One of the healthy practices that have been devised is having designated officers who would inform the media via press releases or other communiqué and also interact with them and give the actual information out. That would keep the flow of information accurate and thus support reliability of the content. The presence of social media has given a much wider support to these efforts to disseminate official and accurate information. One of the best offices in this count is the office of Additional Directorate General of Public Information (ADGPI) of the Indian Army⁸³ that regularly sends out the factual information either by press releases, dedicated emails and event tweets. These are the sources today that most credible journalists refer to when they report situations and also build up their stories and analysis based on such inputs. The office of the ADGPI of the Indian Army which deals with functions of public relations (PR), media relations and monitoring, info release, publicity, image projection and perception management (PM) has evolved over the years as a very competent organisation to deal with all media matters.

The ADGPI and team has also evolved a healthy working relationship with the media fraternity and reportage around incidents in Jammu and Kashmir and North Eastern region and better and correctly presented.

As a thumb rule if the media community use these designated offices to collect the official and accurate information, it will serve both the media and military fraternity better. Many of the efforts undertaken by the designated media officers across forces to take media community to sensitive zones and show them the actual situation has become a healthy practice and in turn have helped to give the media community the correct content and also the cover to go and report from those zones.

Print and electronic media for long have reported based on their own coverage of military situations. Over the years much of the coverage have become more time bound and near to real time situations. However a great sense of editorial discretion has prevailed over the



years and this has definitely ensured that reportage is balanced and not propaganda based. Even films and documentaries have been popular on military situations and have portrayed them in various degrees without sensationalising situations. Many of these pieces of content have actually motivated many young minds to have a better understanding of the constraints under which security forces operate and on many occasions such reportages have also ensured young minds to join the military also.

With the evolution of social media and internet technology, communication avenues have also become far much easier, simple and instant. This has its advantages as well as disadvantages⁸⁴. Nowadays individual soldiers and security personnel are highly active on social media platform like Whatsapp, Facebook and Instagram and often communicate at their own will around zones of conflict which have greatly reduced the efforts of media who in the past had to wander far and wide to search of a little story hint. Clearly the need for discretion on the individual soldier and security personnel is crucial and for that a proper orientation is required on the extent to which such direct reportage should be undertaken.

Media also on its part need to use its discretion to publish the right aspect from social media postings of individuals. Some instances in the past have put the imperative to be careful not to blow up individual postings into a menace and discredit security forces. Social media is harvested by external adversaries and terrorist forces to malign our security forces with false and concocted images and videos. Needless to say, the benefits of digital revolution have its positive and negative impact on the defence and security sector and have also given a new form of reporting for media to show the ground reality.

Conclusion

Clearly the relationship between military and mass media is going to be a topic of pertinence always among both the civil and military community. In the last couple of decades, much wider interactions has evolved and often institutionalised and those avenues have given the scope to leverage further on this relationship. There is no fixed approach and there will be evolving mechanisms but engagement will be the only constant and will be better premised if both fraternities respect the other and stick to the truth and do their duties. The good part is that most of the people from both the communities do understand the realities of the relationship and are further building on it.



Mr Subimal Bhattacharjee is an independent consultant on defence, cyber security and high end technology policy. He is a member of Research Advisory Committee on Internet Governance. And a member of various groups invited by UN to deliberate on different issues. He was also a member of Expert Group on Global Initiatives under the Sam Pitroda Expert Committee to review functioning of Prasar Bharati. He is a globally acclaimed speaker on cyber security, defence and technology policy issues and impact of social media. He has to his credit more than 375 published articles, essays and papers. He is also the producer of an award winning documentary “Memories of a Forgotten War” on aspects of World War 2 in North East India. He is a visiting scholar at Indian Institute of Management Kashipur. He holds a Post Graduate in Mathematics from Delhi University



INSTITUTIONALISED/ LEGAL FRAMEWORK VS VALUE BASED REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

**Mr Arindam Gupta
Prof (Dr) SA Hussain**

Introduction

India, the largest democracy in the world has a flourishing media market. The boom in the media and the entertainment industry comes from the fact that the country's economy has been growing at a fair pace. Media, in its different forms has influenced human life with information entwined with entertainment. Print media was a forerunner in information dissemination to people until the role was taken over by Television. The Indian audience was inclined to radio for their news and information needs and the medium became the theatre of the mind for the people.

Indian media and entertainment industry grew at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 12.25 per cent from 2011-2017; and is expected to grow at a CAGR of 11.6 per cent to touch Rs 2,032 billion (US\$ 31.53 billion) by 2020 from Rs 1,308 billion (US\$ 19.46 billion) in 2016. The industry provided employment to 3.5-4 million people, including both direct and indirect employment as of 2017. India is one of the highest spending and fastest growing advertising market globally. India has more than 70,000 newspapers and over 900 satellite channels (more than 80 are news channels) and is the biggest newspaper market in the world – over 100 million copies sold each day. The next five years will see digital technologies increase their influence across the industry leading to a sea change in consumer behaviour across all segments.

Among the traditional media, Radio is projected to witness the fastest growth at 14.7% CAGR over 2021 to reach \$826 million, as against \$416 million in 2016. Also, the Indian film industry is expected to experience a strong growth to become the third largest cinema market, after the US and China by 2021, growing at a CAGR of 10.4%.

Media and Social Responsibility

The Indian media was traditionally a proponent of the Social Responsibility normative value of the Press. Freedom of publication, plurality in media ownership, diversity in information, culture and opinion, support for the democratic political system, support for public order and security of the state and respect for human rights have been the normative views maintained by the media, especially during the country's struggle for freedom. The social responsibility of the media tried to reconcile the divergent principles of individual freedom, media freedom, and media obligation to society. The social responsibilities expected from media in the public sphere emanated from the acceptance of media as the fourth estate, a term coined by Edmund Burke in England. The theory of social responsibility is guided by the principle that along with the freedom of the press there is also a need for self-regulation; it should adhere to the professional code of conduct and ethics and government may have a role to play if under certain circumstances public interest is hampered.

However, amidst the transitions and developments taking place in the country, there have been simmering concerns on the integrity of the media in rendering its social responsibilities especially in a country where media has far bigger role to play than mere



dissemination of information. Scholars like Barnet argued that the true sense of the public sphere in the modern times is getting eroded since public sphere can be channelized to serve vested interest.

After 1991, the opening of the Indian economy in the global market, the private media players posed a formidable challenge before the public service broadcasters resulting into ownership of the media. A higher concentration of ownership increases the risk of captured media. Bogart opines that in many democratic countries media ownership has reached dangerous levels of concentration. Barnet has cited the examples of News Corporation's (owned by Rupert Murdoch) 37 % share in United Kingdom's national newspaper circulation and Silvio Berlusconi's ownership of top three commercial television channels, three pay TV channels and various newspapers and magazine in Italy which act as his political mouthpieces. Transnational powerful media organizations are in operation in India post liberalisation.

In India, there are big players like the Times Group and ABP who rule the roost in the media arena. In a bid to open up the Indian market 26% foreign direct investment has been allowed in news publication and 74% has been allowed in non-news segments by the Government. 100% foreign direct investment is available in the film industry.

100% FDI is also allowed in television software production subject to certain government norms. Cable networks and FM Radio networks have FDI limits of 49% and 20% respectively⁸⁵. Research undertaken by PricewaterhouseCoopers has shown the FDI investment trend across mass media in India. Virgin Media Asia has a holding in HT media's foray into FM radio. Financial Times (Pearson Group) has an arrangement with Business Standard. Americorp Ventures, Mauritius has a stake in Nimbus Communications which deal in television and films and Reuters UK has equity sharing with Times Global Broadcasting, the Indian entity.

Mediated and Mediatized World

Media industry is in a state of flux in the age of Globalization. Audience and technology have become deciding factors in ensuring the success of the product. The boom in the satellite television of the 1990s has transformed the Indian media landscape.

The contemporary production of media generated content especially on television is loaded with a great degree of mimesis. Despite this, the phenomenon is, however, far from homogenization, or even hybridization. The multinational companies had to "Indianize" their content and form before becoming commercially viable. The pattern of strategizing resulted in yet another instance of re-territorialisation and trademarked tradition. The regional (vis-à-vis the American Anglo media) has been impacted by the flows of globality and acquired new meanings as well.

Guy Debord, in his work, 'The Society of the Spectacle' said that the individuals understand their existence and the society through the prism of images produced and disseminated by the cultural industry.

Douglas Kellner in his work *Media Culture and the Triumph of the Spectacle* said that media culture proliferate even more sophisticated spectacles to seize audiences to augment their power and profit.



In his work, *Media Spectacle and the Crisis of Democracy: 9/11, the War on Iraq, and Election 2004*, Douglas Kellner investigates the role of the media in the momentous political events. Beginning with the role of the media in contested election of 2000, Kellner examines how corporate media ownership and concentration, linked with a rightward shift of establishment media, have disadvantaged the Democrats and benefited George W. Bush and the Republicans: While exploring the role of media spectacle in the 9/11 attacks and subsequent Terror War in Afghanistan and Iraq, Kellner documents the centrality of media politics in advancing foreign policy agendas and militarism. Building on his analysis in *Media Spectacle*⁸⁶, Kellner demonstrates in detail how conflicting political forces ranging from Al Qaeda to the Bush administration construct media spectacles to advance their politics. Criticizing Bush's unilateralism, Kellner argues for a multilateral and cosmopolitan globalization and the need for democratic media to help overcome the current crisis of democracy in the United States.

Political and social life is also shaped by the media spectacle. The social and political conflicts and incidents of terror are increasingly played out on the screens of media culture that displays incidents like the 26/11 Mumbai attacks, sensational murders in the form of honour killings etc.

Political violence has widespread global consequences. The intersection of the global and the local concerns are discernable in the news media with the wide use of images and allusions in the dialogue. While there have been repeated attempts by the media to analyse the instances of terror attacks like the 9/11 or even the 26/11 Mumbai attacks, the coverage of terrorism and performance of counterterrorism by the state have been largely inadequate.

Mediatisation of Politics and Politicisation of Media

The increasing mediatisation of the events in the society has thrown a lot of light on the mediatisation of politics and the role of media for political debate and democracy.

The significant rise in the media audience and production resulted in the massification of media in India. The Indian media audience is exposed to the increase in studio based debates on major socio-political issues and current affairs is a clear pointer to the rise of a new form of political culture on the terrains of television channels which has turned the audience into demanding citizens.

The Policy paradigms have, however, been anything close to a nuanced appreciation of a variegated media terrain. In India the colonial paradigm of policing the media as in the case of the broadcast media, continued procrastination in implementing a regulatory framework fanning suspicions of agreement with the corporate sector. It is imperative to mention that the attempt to introduce regulatory framework for the broadcast media should not be delayed or diverted with excuses or echoes of self-regulation.

Despite the unabated flow of information, no one knows the real story. Different versions of a particular event are presented before the masses by the media and thus opinions are formed. The media strongly influences the people in the decision making process and the consumers are fed in the way what the media wants them to know. The political polarisation of the fourth estate of democracy emanates from the ownership patterns, majorly by the corporates and business giants.



Rise of Regional Media

Regional media is growing at a brisk pace in India. People want to read about events first in their own language. Viacom18 Media Private Limited announced the launch of Colors Tamil entertainment channel. With this the broadcasting company added another language to its existing bouquet of television channels in Kannada, Marathi, Gujarati, Bangla and Oriya. Star India Private Limited which runs a clutch of regional language entertainment channels (apart from flagship Hindi Star Plus) offered cricket commentary for the Indian Premier League (IPL) in regional languages.

Media in Assam has all along been about print. But the coming of the 24x7 news channels since 2004 saw new changes happening on the ground. NE TV was the first satellite television in Assam followed by News Live and DY 365 and others in the recent times. The emergence of Satellite television channels in Assam made it clear that both print and electronic media must rely on the same market pie.

Social Media- A Frankenstein Monster?

Mary Shelley, author of Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus had clearly posited that create life with the tools provided by science. Over the years, widespread research on artificial intelligence suffice that Shelley's premise is not just a science fiction. Protagonist of the novel Victor Frankenstein created a monster and the novel raised profound issues of the limits of the scientific creativity and responsibility.

Daniel Hanninger of the Wall Street journal said that data is the oxygen of the internet. However, researchers and guardians also agree that the social media tools like facebook, Whatsapp; Twitter is distorting lives of the young people. Besides, the obscene contents floating on the virtual space, there is constant cyber warfare. Terrorists wallow in videos on YouTube and other platforms to brainwash minds of youngsters and provoke them for anti-national and anti-social activities.

Social Media's contribution to the Arab Spring or the Orange Revolution of Ukraine was extremely positive. But today, the same tools are often misused as instruments of surveillance and control.

Social Media is perhaps a monster that has gone out of control Amazon is changing how we buy things, Google is changing our ways of information exchange, Facebook and twitter is changing mass and political communication altogether fostering a way of how we vent and emote. When People use social media, they find themselves in an ecosystem in the cyberspace that supports their egos, fantasies and prejudices. There is also a significant propensity of outrage by the users on the social media, particularly on Twitter.



A comparison chart of the 4 powerful armies of the world

Rank	Country	Government	Media/Military Relations
1	USA	Democracy	Free Media/ Adversarial/Antagonistic
2	Russia	Presidential/Authoritarian	State-Controlled/Censored
3	China	Communist	State- Controlled/Censored
4	India	Parliamentary Democracy	Free Media/reasonable restrictions

Legal Regulatory Frameworks & Press Laws in India

The Indian Press has been subject to institutional regulations since the days of the Bengal Gazette by James Augustus Hickey. Some of the legal regulations are mentioned here under:-

- (a) Gagging Act 1857.
- (b) The Press and Registration of Books Act (1867).
- (c) Vernacular Press Act 1878.
- (d) Telegraph Act 1885.
- (e) Newspaper (Incitement to Offences) Act 1908.
- (f) Indian Press Act, 1910.
- (g) Official Secrets Act 1923.
- (h) Foreign Relations Act 1932.
- (j) Defence of India Act 1962.

Value-Based Collaborative Paradigm

Media can help the military win the 'perception war.' Media can help boost the morale of the forces as well as the people of the country in times of stress. Media can help the Military the psychological warfare in intra-state or inter-state conflict. Media can help win international support for Indian military actions. Media can demonstrate the trying times in which the military operates while defending and protecting the territorial integrity of the country.

Towards a Media-Military Information Management Ecosystem

There is an imminent need for introduction of defence related courses in the syllabi of mass communication and journalism offered in Indian universities. Defence personnel can be encouraged to take up mass communication courses so that they can appreciate



the ways in which media functions. More investment of resources, time and energy is required to develop a well-oiled working relationship between the media and the military to build long-standing mutual trust and confidence. Lack of knowledge about defence matters especially among local media persons should be addressed. Sensationalism, Jingoism, as well as half-truths and propaganda should be avoided. Military should understand the critical enquiry of the media and accept it as a democratic necessity. The shroud of mystery surrounding the way the military operates, except for operational details, should be gradually done away with to a select group of credible journalists with proven track records. Social Media can work as a force multiplier.

Newspaper Editors should allow a few select correspondents to focus on defence and national security matters. Select group of journalists across national, regional and local media should be granted access to Defence related information beyond the mere handing out of press releases by the military establishment.



Mr Arindam Gupta is an alumnus of Department of Mass Communication, Assam University Silchar with over eight years of journalism experience. He is currently working as Staff Correspondent for Assam Tribune. He has also worked as a reporter at The Eastern Chronicle and written for The Telegraph and Tehelka. He was a newsreader at a local TV station in Silchar and continues to conduct panel discussions and interview programmes for Doordarshan, Silchar Kendra. He is pursuing his Ph.D research on Political Communication and Social Media from the Department of Mass Communication in Assam University.



CONVERGENCE OF SECURITY FORCES AND REGIONAL MEDIA TOWARDS ACT EAST VISION

Prof (Dr) Irene Lalruatkimi

Introduction

The power of media cannot be ignored at all in today's life. Every human being is touched in one way or the other by the media. The media in its various forms such as the print, visual and the new media is now accessed by each and every person. Media, which was earlier merely a reporting device, is today a vibrant means of shaping, moulding and influencing public opinion. In a world of virtual reality, communication gets impoverished and the language becomes stunted. The argument that the new media technology promotes creativity does not jell with them and the reverse that is loss of creativity is true. Regional media thus plays an important role for its own region. Veteran journalist communicating, informing in the best understood language that is the mother tongue of its audience becomes very powerful and meaningful as well.

Security Forces

Living in this world, security always remains as one of the important basic need. Security of a country is of paramount importance. It faces two challenges on this front. One is security against outside forces and other are the challenges emerging from within. These two need to be tackled effectively. To deal with security, countries have different forces that are specialized to deal with different security threat.

Act East Vision

Look East Policy (LEO) can be described as an offshoot of globalization, privatization and post-cold war phenomena. In fact, it is a strategic shift of India's foreign policy in the post-cold war era. It was developed and enacted during the government of Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao and vigorously pursued by the successive governments of Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Dr Manmohan Singh. The essential philosophy of the Look East Policy is that India must find its destiny by linking itself more and more with its Asian partners and the rest of the world, and that India's future and economic interests are best served by greater integration with East and South East Asia⁸⁷.

Modi's government turned the Look East Policy to Act East Policy⁸⁸. In his address to the East Asia Summit in the Myanmarese capital Nay Pyi Taw in 2014, he said "Since taking over office six months ago, my government has moved with a great sense of priority and speed to turn our 'Look East Policy' into 'Act East Policy'.

The Prime Minister also mentioned in his address at the Global Investor summits at Guwahati on 3rd February 2018 that, Act East Policy is created and the northeast is at the heart of it. The Act East Policy requires increased people to people contact, trade ties and other relations with countries on India's east, particularly ASEAN countries. He also added that the vision is development of the eastern part of India, as the country's fast pace of development will only be effective when the people living in the northeast develop.

Regional Media

Regional Media in its simplest form can be best defined as any type of media, whether it be print or electronic, which is in service in the region and is understood well by



its audience because of the dialect used or the area covered is mostly about the region in a more precise and easily understandable manner.

Because of globalization and also easy access to latest technology, regional media is facing many challenges. But in the case of India, especially in the Northeast region, the regional media will remain relevant because as Indians, as people from Northeast, we are always rooted to our own culture, no matter how successful we become in our professional life. We love and embrace our own culture, language and people.

Convergence

Convergence is an ambiguous term used by various disciplines to describe and analyses processes of change toward uniformity or union. Concepts of convergence fulfil different purposes and functions. They provide the analytical frame work for various aspects of change and bridge different disciplinary discourses of the subjects involved. They explore the big picture of change but also very detailed parts of it. By doing so, they integrate conflicting processes of convergence and divergence as two sides of the same coin⁸⁹. In other words, concepts of convergence embrace both blurring traditional boundaries between old media and novel diversification and differentiation of new media. Convergence as a metaphor has the function of simplifying the complexity of media change.

It fits nearly all aspects of digital media development, and it is also used as a 'rhetorical tool 'to convince stakeholders of certain reforms'⁹⁰. Convergence can be understood as an innovation-driven, co-evolutionary process in a complex environment. It is a process of structural change with a wide range of implications for content and creativity. Concepts of convergence not only provide the big picture but also allow for detailed analysis throughout the digital creative economy.

The world has witnessed every day that business, companies and even government sectors successfully launch and proceed with various issues and projects only because of their convergence with the media. Media as mentioned earlier is too powerful in today's set up. The arrival of the new media especially the internet has made life more informative but also complex in some ways. Therefore, it is high time that even in the security force, convergence with media in certain projects and issues becomes relevant.

Importance of Converging Media & Security Force Towards Act East Vision

The Act East Vision, a great project and vision is in full swing. In this, it is seen that the North Eastern states of India, become the most important in this context. Many writings on Act East Vision or Look East Policy are available in Northeast. But when we look carefully, the contribution of the media is very less. Most of the writings or studies on this topic remain only with the intellectuals. The University Professors, college lecturers and government officers who understand the concept and framework remains as the only population who are have serious knowledge of this vision. But it is predictable that later, if the majority of the common population is not convinced or do not comprehend properly, problems will arrive sooner or later. Therefore, convergence with the media becomes very important. The media, the regional media needs to be updated, taught and informed.

The Security Force, as mentioned earlier, is playing an important role in this Act East Policy. The security of the border area always remains important for every country and state. Many a times the Security Forces are misunderstood by the common populace.



The Act East Policy is surely going to make the role of forces more significant with more responsibility. Therefore, it is high time that the force made convergence with media. Converging with the media is sure to make many things easier and understandable.

The convergence of forces with media towards the Act East Vision will be successfully carried out well if it is in bottom up process, which means giving more importance to the regional media than the national or international media. The people who will be witnessing the Act East Vision in real life and in real way should be well prepared and proper information needs to be catered. The regional media will be able to give out their reports with their own eyes and ears as the first hand witness.

The Regional Media Issues

To be precise, the Northeast region is lagging behind in terms of journalism. Even the universities in Northeast have introduced the degree of journalism and mass communication only a few years back. For example, in Mizoram not even one third of the media persons have a Master's degree. Therefore, many working journalists in this region may not have professional background and thus may obviously lack certain ethics and information. Therefore at times, instead of investigative journalism, it is easier for them if important news is spoon fed to them which can be a great advantage as well.

Conclusion

As discussed earlier, media is very powerful and an important instrument in moulding the opinion of the people. Magic Bullet or Hypodermic Needle Theory in Mass Communication⁹¹ implies that mass media had a direct, immediate and powerful effect on its audiences. The theory suggests that mass media can influence a very large group of people directly and uniformly by 'shooting' or 'injecting' them with appropriate messages designed to trigger a desired response. Another theory known as Agenda Setting Theory describes the ability of the news media to influence the importance placed on the topics of the public agenda. That is, if the news item is covered frequently and prominently, the audience will regard the issue as more important. Based on the two theories, we can conclude that converging with the media is an essential effort to bring out the best result. Therefore, this is the best time for enhancing the convergence of Security Forces with the media towards the Act East Vision.



Dr. Irene Lalruatkimi joined Mizoram University, Department of Mass Communication in the year 2010. She was the first Head of department. She has worked with Doordarshan Kendra, Regional News - Aizawl Station, Press Information Bureau and Mizoram State AIDS Control Society. She has presented many research papers in International and National conferences under the subject of media, journalism and communication. Right now she is working on an ICSSR project on "Changing the media scape of Mizoram: A study of social factors impacting the professional role performance of media persons".



MEDIA AND SECURITY FORCES IN NORTHEAST INDIA: EMERGING TRENDS IN AN UNEASY RELATIONSHIP

Mr Subir Bhaumik

The country's Northeast is where post-colonial India's ambitious national building project was first challenged in the late 1950s, when the Naga National Council (NNC) and its armed wing, the Naga Army, unleashed a guerrilla campaign against Indian security forces to back its demand for independence. The Naga Army was a powerful guerrilla organization, its fighters numbering several thousands, armed and trained first in what was East Pakistan and then, since the mid-1960s in China. India managed to break the Sino-Pakistan nexus that had started to back other separatist groups in the Northeast but the Naga imbroglio, despite the fissures within the once-powerful separatist movement, is yet to be settled, though negotiations with the strongest rebel faction has continued for two decades now.

From the Naga Hills, the spirit of challenge spread to other parts of Northeast, until almost all the seven states in the region experienced the emergence of armed non-state actors fighting Indian security forces. That many of these groups received active backing from hostile neighbours lend a sharper element to the conflict – these no longer remained internal conflicts but became part of the 'proxy war' environment engulfing much of post-colonial South Asia⁹².

India's North East thus faced since the 1950s what British academic Mary Kaldor went on to characterize as "new wars" in her seminal work on conflict⁹³. Kaldor saw these four characteristics as important to her "New War" thesis

- (a) Violence between varying combinations of state and non-state networks.
- (b) Fighting in the name of identity politics as opposed to ideology.
- (c) Attempts to achieve political, rather than physical, control of the population through fear and terror.
- (d) Conflict financed not necessarily through the state, but through other predatory means that seek the continuation of violence.

Kaldor does admit that "new wars" are not necessarily new, in that they have no precedent in history; however, she insists on keeping the term because there is still a definite need for new policy responses. Old international strategies have failed to address the characteristics of new wars successfully and instead continue to treat it as older varieties of conventional warfare.

Other authors also attempted to characterize the shift in warfare but used other descriptors. Recognizing the blur between state and non-state actors and dual conflation of interstate and intrastate conflict, Frank Hoffman portrays modern wars as "hybrid wars." John Mueller claimed the institution of war was in decline and become so rare and unlikely that they could well be considered obsolescent, if not obsolete.



Mueller also describes modern warfare as "criminal" and perpetuated by small bands of greedy and predatory thugs⁹⁴. Martin Shaw chose the term "degenerate warfare" to describe how a belligerent attacks the enemy's civilian population as part of a broader military campaign, as in aerial bombing of cities, but destroying it is not the ultimate goal: the enemy is the state, not the enemy's population⁹⁵.

Often, the term "new war" is compared to or defined as "low intensity conflict" that was invented by the US Army to broadly encompass all modern warfare that does not quite meet the threshold or level of violence found in conventional wars.

Kaldor's concept of new wars has been criticized by some, who question whether the distinction between old and new can be made. De Waal stipulates that the idea of "New Wars" used by Kaldor is not a description of new conflicts as such but a description of conflicts in less governed countries⁹⁶. Duffield suggests that what is viewed as "new" is the security terrain which has been shaped by what he terms network wars, which are described as "rhizomatic and anti-institution in character" and which can be typically associated with alterations in social life. Network wars are seen as an uncertain and violent form of reflexive modernity and where "war as a reflexive network enterprise does not follow the traditional state-based pattern of escalation, stalemate, and decline"⁹⁷. The complexities of conceptualizing conflicts have been a global phenomenon but in India's Northeast, the phenomenon associated with Kaldor's "New Wars" or Hoffman's "Hybrid Warfare" has existed since the early 1960s.

During the first phase of the conflict in Northeast that begins with the start of the Naga insurgency and ends with the 1971 Bangladesh war, the Indian state did not have to worry much about the influence of media.

The situation changed dramatically in the late 1970s with the reorganization of the Northeast following the Indian victory in the 1971 war. That led to the creation of several new states following the breakup of the large colonial province of Assam. The ethnicity driven state formation process impacted on the media scenario and led to the proliferation of Media in the new states. The limited reach of the English newspapers based in Assam's Brahmaputra valley was now replaced by new English and regional papers and magazines in the new states.

The Assam media, largely supportive of the Indian state and its security forces in the Northeast were challenged by the emerging media in other states – and also in other parts of Assam where armed conflicts erupted. The character of the Assam media also changed dramatically in the 1980s with the advent of the anti-foreigner agitation and then the insurgency spearheaded by the ULFA. Newspapers broadly supportive of the state and security forces and owned and managed by conformist elites in Assam was replaced by publications like **Swadhin** and **Asomiya Protidin** that gave much space to human rights allegations against security forces and to what the rebel forces like ULFA had to say. The new generation insurgent leadership also displayed a better understanding of the media and skills to outmanoeuvre the security forces in the 'information warfare' environment.

Whereas the Naga or the Mizo insurgent of the 1960s was much better trained to fight a guerrilla campaign but hardly aware of the importance of the media, groups like the NSCN and the ULFA or the UNLF and PLA in Manipur have exhibited much better media



management skills than their predecessors in the bushwars of the Northeast. Even smaller groups like the DHD or NDFB in Assam or the KYKL have been adept at messaging through the media. The advent of private television channels in Northeast, as in the rest of the country, further complicated the media environment and impacted on how it played into the conflicts of Northeast. The emergence of powerful human rights groups in Northeast, like the Naga People's Movement for Human Rights (NPMHR), also introduced a new dynamic in the relations between the media and the security forces. These groups not only investigated allegations of human rights abuses but also developed a pro-active media strategy because they counted on the media to highlight their allegations and findings.

As the Indian security forces woke up to the use of media as force multiplier by non-state actors and its increasing proliferation and diversification, it faced serious challenges of management. The situation became more and more uneasy when the media, both in the region and also elements of the national media, began to question the conduct of the security forces during counter-insurgency operations. As they came under much pressure and their image took a beating in some cases, the security forces began to see both the media and the human rights groups as a force multiplier of the underground groups and began treating them as "necessary evil". That made the relationship uneasy.

The high point of this adversarial relationship emerged during Operation Bluebird in Manipur launched by the Assam Rifles after their camp at Oinam (Manipur) was raided by the NSCN guerrillas on 9 July 1987. The guerrillas decamped with a huge quantity of weapons and ammunition.

The Naga People Movement for Human Rights (NPMHR) later alleged that the Assam Rifles had let loose a reign of terror in 30 Naga villages and carried out several extra-judicial killings and extensive torture, partly to exact vengeance and partly to recover the weapons carried away by the rebels. The NPMHR filed two petitions, one alleging 5 Assam Rifles officers of contempt of court, while the Manipur Baptist Convention filed one petition. Hundreds of Naga villagers were mobilized by the NPMHR to give evidence in court and record testimonies, even as the NPMHR alleged that the security forces were carrying out arrests on flimsy grounds to muffle protests. India's leading human rights lawyer Nandita Haksar, daughter of the late P N Haksar who had been Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's principal secretary, led the legal battle on behalf of the NPMHR. Even senior Delhi-based journalists like Chaitanya Kalbagh, at that time with India Today and later editor of Hindustan Times, did long stories on human rights excesses by the armed forces post-Oinam.

Though the NSCN is now split and with its main group led by Thuingaleng Muivah involved in talks with Delhi for two decades, the Oinam incident has become a landmark in the human rights movement of Northeast. Incidents such as those following Oinam or the death of Manipuri girl Thangjam Manorama have not only tarnished the image of the security forces, including the otherwise people-friendly Assam Rifles, but driven home the challenge of perception management. Apart from Oinam or the Manorama episode, the human rights issue has made headlines in the press all over the region and the country through Manipuri lady Irom Sharmila's iconic hunger strike for more than a decade and a half.



The Manorama murder, for which soldiers of the Assam Rifles were accused, led to so much furore and agitation that the Indian government was forced to set up a five-member enquiry commission under stewardship of former Supreme Court judge Jeevan Reddy⁹⁸. The committee recommended scrapping of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act, the one single legislation which has been seen as misused by security forces in Northeast.

The human rights groups in Assam and other states have since blamed the security forces for a large number of extra-judicial killings and torture, including rape and molestation against local women.

In the past one decade, the security forces have woken up to the challenge. They have focused on developing closer relationship with the media and organized many formal and not-so-formal interactions with all levels of the media. Army-Media seminars have been organized and the public relations set-up of the security forces, specially the army, has been reinforced. The Indian army has developed a media policy, though the challenge lies in properly implementing it. Some of the essential realities of the relationship between media and security forces need to be highlighted and are as follows:-

- (a) Media and Security Forces engage with each other in exceptional and not-so-exceptional circumstances but the relationship is usually uneasy. While Security Forces insist on enforcing regulations or security measures which, the media often sees it as an obstruction on their right to information or right to report. Security forces see the media often as force multiplier of armed non-state actors or human rights groups seen as close to them. In a democracy like India, there is a need to strike a balance – the media's rights have to be protected, but the security forces need to have operational freedom to ensure national defence and security.
- (b) The situation is further complicated when a country like ours has special laws like Armed Forces Special Powers Act, the operations of which contradict with media freedom which is guaranteed by the Right of Expression that is a Fundamental Right under our Constitution.
- (c) The way to solve the tension is to put in place a culture of mutual appreciation. The Media has to realise the difficulties under which Security Forces operate, especially in counter-terrorism or counter-insurgency situations. The Security Forces on the other hand need to realise the requirements of the Media specially deadlines.
- (d) The security forces should refrain from pursuing a culture of impunity and any misuse of special laws and the Media should be objective and never be vindictive and the more serious the allegation, the more intensive should be the investigation needed to prove or disprove it.
- (e) Security forces usually lack a consistent Media Policy – the devil lies in the implementation. They need to have one which will clearly lay down the rules of the engagement. They need to appreciate three key requirement of the Media , especially in situations of turmoil -- tight deadlines, security issues, pressures from the top– Shujaat Bukhari's murder indicates the threat under which Media often works.



- (f) Often the Security Forces pursue a policy of favouritism – that complicates their relations with the Media – “friendly types” get favoured which turns the others against them.
- (g) The Media needs to respect the professional requirements of Security Forces during actual operations. The sensitive nature of service in the Security Forces needs to be appreciated by media. Media needs to respect the secrecy that security forces maintain for operational reasons – making them public is not acceptable.
- (h) Security Forces cannot blame media for disclosure if they are not enforcing necessary checks and restrictions, like during the counter-terrorism operations in Mumbai in November, 2008.
- (i) Media must develop a guideline for conduct while dealing with Security Forces. There can be no compromise on Fairness & accuracy and truthfulness must guide coverage. There must be no fudging of facts or sources. Double checking of sensitive information is a must, especially allegations of atrocities.
- (k) There is no room for vendetta while reporting despite occasional provocation. While the Media reserves the right to interact with non-state actors but only for reporting. There is no way the Media can be seen as supportive of the cause or even help non-state actors for any possible consideration.
- (l) The media cannot compromise its position as a valid source of unbiased news. It cannot become an instrument of Psy War or Psy Operations - it should weigh information for a story given by Security Forces and take a call after thorough checks – the same applies when dealing with insurgents and other non-state actors.
- (m) Embedding journalists in conflict situations is inevitable but there is need to qualify their reports by stating clearly the conditions under which they are reporting, also one needs to clearly mention if any Media censorship has taken place.
- (n) Often journalists well connected with non-state actors are used as mediators by the state and security agencies – from striking contacts for negotiation to negotiating abductions. It is very difficult for media persons to avoid such pressures but it is very risky. If they broker a deal, the politicians or security bosses take credit, but if the deal fails, they get sticks from both sides.
- (o) Gut feeling and appreciation of local situations should guide decisions taken by media practitioners. In the past one decade, the intensity of conflict in Northeast has dropped. The insurgent groups have weakened, many are involved in negotiations with the government, and some have become inconsequential.
- (p) The interplay of economic forces have drawn people from the Northeastern states into the country’s economic mainstream. More young men and women from the Northeast now gravitate towards Indian cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore ,



Hyderabad or Chennai in search of education, jobs and business opportunities than was the case two or three decades ago⁹⁹.

The insurgent in Northeast are also now wiser, they are no longer dependent only on the gun to make a point. He is far more adept at using the media, specially the unmarshalled social media, to score brownie points. The ULFA coming up with a Facebook page is a case in point.

The new counter-insurgency policy of the Indian armed forces must factor in these realities. The C-I strategy should clearly incorporate a Media plan, it should focus less on hard power and demonstrative use of force and more on soft power capabilities so essential to win hearts and minds¹⁰⁰. WHAM (Winning Hearts and Minds) is the key to victory in internal conflicts in the 'New Wars' that often leverage asymmetry.

Counter-insurgency is a war fought on one's own territory, often against one's own 'misguided brothers and sisters' in areas where national integration, as usually understood in statist terms, is not a settled question. Winning the argument, rather than a high body count of the adversary, holds the key to victory in this conflict. Actually, persuasion and winning over the adversary rather than physical elimination should be encouraged. In that, the media can often be more useful than military leaders can imagine.



Mr Subir Bhaumik is one of South Asia's most experienced journalists. Former Eastern Bureau Chief in BBC for 17 years, he has worked for Press Trust of India, Calcutta's Anandabazar group, Reuter's news agency & Time magazine. He has worked as Senior Editor in Dhaka's bdnews24.com and Myanmar's Mizzima media. Former Queen Elizabeth House fellow of Oxford University, senior fellow at East West Centre, Washington and an Eurasian fellow at Frankfurt university. He has authored five books on insurgency in South Asia, on Northeast India and on neighbouring countries. A corporate risk analyst and a media trainer he is a Board member of three Calcutta based companies.



CLOSING REMARKS & VOTE OF THANKS

Maj Gen Upendra Dwivedi, Inspector General Assam Rifles (East)

Ladies and Gentlemen, talking about seed germination as given out by Mr Moji Riba, it was only four months back, when Prof GP Pandey, as Dean and Head, Department of Mass Communication organized an excellent Seminar at Assam University and he committed a mistake by inviting me as the Chief Guest. I was awestruck by the presence of the cross section of Mass Media Panelists attending from BHU Varanasi, Jaipur, Delhi and Representatives from **Prasar Bharti**. Thus, germinated the idea of current Seminar as one could witness the reservoir of knowledge and was overwhelmed during my interaction with who's who of academia and stalwarts in the world of mass media. It was there that I realized the potential of a win-win situation for both outfits that is the SFs and Mass Media Fraternity. With the bigwigs and pundits of National and regional canvas responding in affirmation, we could translate it into a reality.

Now, talking about the Global Influence as talked about by Ms Sutapa Mishra, If we look at the **two forms of international World Orders** Realism and Constructivism, we find that Mass Media takes a lead in Constructivism (ideas creating the virtual bonding and international movement to pursue that for example **#ME TOO** or **Save World from Plastics**) and SFs take a lead in Realism (reality related to existing space, resources and time). The ideal outcome is combination of the two.

As far as the idea building is concerned, Mr Moji Riba brought out that the process of nation building has both **tangibles and intangibles**. The SFs look at tangibles with in-tangible implications and whereas Mass Media looks at in-tangibles with tangible results. The preamble gives us in-tangibles of nation building and today's Seminar was pitched at identifying tangible actions to give shape to our convergent role for the same. Thus the challenge was manifold and I am hopeful that we have overcome these challenges to a great extent in today's Seminar.

Sadguru Jaggi Vasudev believes that the idea of nation in India is yet to reach the masses. It is still mired into castes, tribes or narrow interpretation of religion. The Government can only facilitate a geographical area to become a state but it is idea of the 'nation' which will give it a credence of Nation-State bonded by commonalities in physical and non-physical world including ideologies.

Some pertinent points thrown up by our learned panelists today have provided us a valuable insight into the topic from multiple perspectives. Some of the key takeaways from today's seminar that merit special attention are **Nation building is a gradual**



process of creating a national identity through harnessing focus on an accepted national destiny. Mass Media has great responsibility in identifying and impacting the issues faced by the Indian society for its march towards Nation building.

Mass media exerts tremendous influence on the public perception of various issues which are aspirational and also uncontrollable. Cyber Media, especially, has transformed the repository of raw data into an interactive tool to connect and exchange knowledge and opinions. Its public and viral nature has within itself a combination of Yin and Yang. Thus positivity will be accompanied by negativity and it is our task to subdue negativity which is inherent part of any progressive society or a nation marching ahead. Media also need to influence 'citizens psyche' to enable switch from 'Rights to Responsibility' domain if it wants to play a key role in nation building.

The Security Forces are a formalised institution which occupy the physical realm of National security canvas while Mass Media is a virtual bonding of entities which is a powerful instrument in shaping minds and opinions. Towards, convergence, the power of information as an element of hybrid conflict and an instrument of nation building remains largely untapped in our case.

The Mass Media can be engaged as an effective tool for National Security from inception till execution. Therefore, it will always be in the forefront of debating formulation of strategy, midcourse correction, implementation and lay foundation for the generation next. The challenge with respect to Media and National Security is that while the Media has progressed exponentially, the National security establishment has been unable to harness its potential.

Similarly, in the sphere of socio-economic dimension including Act East Policy, both are equal partners especially in the regions where SFs are physically present or tasked to execute projects. Even, in case of various national and international obligations including Mil Diplomacy which the SFs have been bestowed to fulfil, Mass Media has to be integrated from day one.

In conflict Zones, correct and unbiased reporting is very crucial for the citizens to understand the actual situation. Security Forces in India, have to operate within the legal framework of a democratic polity and the Media needs to appreciate the larger national interests even as it seeks to protect its freedom and exercise its right to report freely and fairly. This has to form the bedrock of the relation between the two.

The recommendations for synergy as brought out today are broad based and the onus is on all of us to ensure that we jointly transform the knowledge gained today into an implementable framework. Onus also lies on us to make sure that the collective wisdom shared with us by our learned speakers does not remain confined within this hall but is spread amongst our respective colleagues and other team members for gaining maximum benefits out of this seminar. **Therefore, Ladies and Gentlemen**, this Seminar is not the end but the beginning of an era where we will find that Mass Media and SFs will have large common ground also at times referred to as Gray shade by HH Dalai Lama, where both have freedom to operate with complete Synergy. As the gray shade enlarges, our aspirations of nation building will become that much easier to accomplish.



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