

Comparative Coverage Of Independence Movement Of Kashmir By American, Chinese And Britain Print Media Before And After Burhan Wani

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Abstract

Kashmir is the most vulnerable issue of the modern world and is a major source of regional instability of South Asia where two neighboring nuclear powers are constantly under threat of war. Recent uprising of the Kashmir Movement after the killing of Burhan Wani and brutalities conducted by Indian Armed forces attracted the attention of international media. This study examined the frames about the Kashmir issue used by the print media of the USA, China and UK after the killing of Burhan Wani by the Indian Army. One elite newspaper from each country was selected and all the editorials and news stories related to Kashmir were identified which then placed into categories. There is a major shift and significant rise of coverage to Kashmir and comparatively more stories and editorials were written after the killing of Burhan Wani. Differences in the tone of coverage and the use of sources across the news media were also found. Study further reveals that global media show serious concerns over the human rights violation by Indian army in Kashmir.

Keywords: Kashmir, Indian forces, nuclear powers, protest

Introduction

The partition of subcontinent in 1947 resulted in the emergence of two nation states, Pakistan and India. The partition was done on the basis of religion as India was seen as a Hindu-majority state while Pakistan was envisioned by its founder, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, to be the home of Muslims to practice their lives according to the teachings of Islam. The areas with Hindu majority population were designated as India and the areas having Muslims in majority annexed to Pakistan. All princely states were given a choice of acceding into either nascent state. The region of Kashmir was a Muslim-

majority state ruled by a Hindu king Maharaja Hari Singh who delayed on the decision to join either India or Pakistan (Mason, 2008). He signed the controversial Instrument of Accession on 26th October 1947 with India (Tremblay, 2009).

Being the majority Muslim state, uprising had begun and this decision of the Hindu Raja resulted in war in the state which was ceased on the intervention of United Nations on the promise of a free and fair plebiscite. From then it is one of the most alarming, longstanding and huge undecided dispute in the world and the bone of contention between Pakistan and India (Varshney, 1991). Both the nations have completely different ideologies and social norms and ethical standards hence decision about Kashmir is a matter of great concern for both the nations. While on the one hand Pakistan contends that Kashmir should legitimately be a part of its territory because the two-nation theory holds that Muslim-majority regions be a part of Pakistan, India insists that it cannot allow any part of its territory to be separated from it on the basis of religious affiliation because India was founded to be a pluralistic and multi-religious nation (Dixit, 2002). Geographical and strategic location of Kashmir is also of great importance (R. Wirsing, 1998). Pakistan has consistently demanded that India conduct the UN-mandated plebiscite, a demand that India refuses. India asserts that Kashmir is legitimately a part of its territory because the king chose to accede into India after the partition. Another important reason why India refuses to let go of Kashmir is because it fears this will set off a domino effect and provide support to other regions in India that want to break off from the Indian union (Cohen, 2003).

Kashmir issue lead to severe tension among both the countries and it is one the biggest issue that hinders the normalization of bilateral relations. Three wars after the 1947 war – one in 1965, 1971 and the third undeclared war was fought in 1999 in the Kargil sector in the upper reaches of the Himalayas in Kashmir (Schofield, 2000). Another turning point in India-Pakistan relations and in Kashmir as the subcontinent's flashpoint came when both countries tested their nuclear devices in May 1998. Defying pressure from the western powers to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), which stipulated a ban on nuclear testing, India tested five nuclear devices on May 11 and May 13, 1998 (Mc Horney, 2002 as quoted in Ray (2004). Alarmed at India's actions, Pakistan also conducted underground nuclear tests on May 28 and 30. As a punitive measure, the U.S administration headed by President Bill Clinton imposed economic sanctions against India and Pakistan, limiting U.S. economic aid as well as trade and military transfers to both countries (Morrow & Carriere, 1999). After testing nuclear capability the first post-nuclear-tests war between India and Pakistan was fought in and around Kargil in the upper reaches of the western Himalayas in the summer of 1999 (R. G. Wirsing, 2003).

As both the states and nuclear powers hence there is continuous threat of war between both the countries due to the burning issue of Kashmir (Schofield, 2000). Recently the independence movement of Kashmir gets revitalized after the killing of Burhan wani who was a freedom fighter and was fighting against the Indian troops to free the people of Kashmir from the atrocities being committed by the Indian forces. Burhan Muzaffar Wani, also known as Burhan Wani, belonged to Dadsara village of Tral area of Pulwama in the IHK. He was born on September 19, 1994. His

father, Muzaffar Ahmad Wani, is a principal of Higher Secondary School in Tral while his mother, a graduate in Science, teaches Quran in Dadsara village. Burhan was considered to be a bright student and scored good grades in his early years of education. He was an active child and liked to play sports, cricket being his favorite. The oppression and brutality of Indian forces which has resulted in the deaths of thousands of innocent Kashmiris and a personal experience of such brutality compelled Burhan to rise against the Indian forces (Nabeel, Riaz, & Muneer).

Indian Army and security agencies traced Burhan in Bundoora village of Kokernag on July 8, 2016. Burhan was accompanied by two other freedom fighters - Sartaj Sheikh and Pervaiz Ahmad. The Special Operations group of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) Police and 19 Rashtriya Rifles of Indian Army surrounded the village and cornered Burhan and his two associates to a house. During the operation, the Indian security forces faced resistance from local Kashmiris who pelted them with stones. The encounter lasted for almost two hours during which Burhan and his companions were martyred. On the same day, the J&K Police Director General K. Rajendra confirmed that Burhan was martyred during an exchange of fire with Indian Army. Immediately after the news of Burhan's martyrdom spread, Pro-Pakistan slogans were heard in downtown Srinagar with people coming out along the Srinagar-Anantnag highway, burning tyres and stopping vehicles. Funeral prayers for Burhan were offered in several areas on Friday night. In addition, announcements were also made on public address systems with youths chanting slogan in favor of Wani (Nabeel et al.).

According to media reports, an estimated 200,000 people attended Burhan's funeral prayers in Tral on Saturday morning. Thousands of Kashmiris attended the funeral of Burhan Wani who chanted anti-India slogans. Pakistani flags were waved throughout the funeral procession. Freedom fighters were also presented at the funeral of Burhan Wani who offered him a 21 gun salute. His body was wrapped in Pakistani flag and was buried next to that of his brother Khalid Wani in Tral (Rafiq, 2016).

This study aims to analyze the coverage of the independence movement of Kashmir before and after Burhan Wani's martyrdom in the newspapers of United States of America, United Kingdom and China as the valley of Kashmir witnessed a sudden rise against the

Indian forces after the martyrdom of Burhan Wani resulting in more atrocities committed by Indian forces on Kashmiris including brutal killing and use of pellet guns. The brutalities committed by Indian forces attracted the attention of world media and media discuss the Kashmir issue in more depth and detail. International also realized the importance of the resolution of the Kashmir issue for the regional stability and progress.

Framing of International Conflicts

A major and fairly recent part of media effects research, framing theory is used to explain the power of a communicating text. Framing by the mass media is an essential part of their role in the construction of social reality (Tuchman, 1978). The news media have the power to shape the

meanings that the audience assigns to an issue or event because they “disseminate the information that people want, need, and should know” (p.2). In this way, the media actively promote the frames of reference that readers and viewers use to interpret and discuss public events and problems. McCombs, Shaw, and Weaver (1997) have equated framing with second-level agenda setting, which is transfer of issue attributes from the media to the public. They argue that framing is an extension of agenda setting in terms of media effects. The mass media have been shown to have on the public, a powerful agenda setting influence whereby the priority assigned by the media to certain issues gets translated into the priority assigned to them by the consumers of these mass media (McCombs & Shaw, 1972).

While agenda setting describes the power of the media to tell people “what” to think about, framing can be regarded as telling them “how” to think about it; Framing can be defined as the selection of some attributes of a given event or issue and the presentation of them as more prominent than other attributes or aspects of the event or issue in the media. According to Entman (1993), “to frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation” (p. 52). According to (Gitlin, 1980), the origin of frames lies in the media’s selection of certain versions of reality over others. “Day by day, normal organizational procedures define “the story,” identifies the protagonists and the issues, and suggests appropriate attitudes toward them” (p. 4). Since this research is limited to the print media, it will discuss only frames that are embedded in print news texts. Frames have four locations – the communicator, the text, the audience and the culture – and on any given issue, frames from different locations might be different from each other (Entman, 1993). The communicators (journalists) have certain ways in which they cover each event and these are dictated by news values, routines of news coverage – deadline pressures, preferred use of certain types of sources over others, and organizational ideology – and their own personal values (Shoemaker & Reese, 2013; Tuchman, 1978). These factors contribute to them looking at events in a certain manner; this gets translated intentionally or otherwise into frames in the text that they write (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989). The presence of frames in a text can be gauged by looking for the use of “certain keywords, stock phrases, stereotyped images, sources of information, and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgments” (Entman, 1993). These frames are transferred to the readers, who interpret them according to their mental schemata, defined as mentally stored clusters of ideas that guide individuals’ processing of information (Doris A Graber, 1989). In the words of Lippman (1922) “the only feeling that anyone can have about an event that he does not experience is the feeling aroused by his mental image of that event” (p.13). Although each member of the audience has unique mental schemata, frames can be regarded as having a common effect on the majority, if not all, of the people subjected to them. This common effect on readers is what makes it important to study the frames used by the mass media.

The fourth location for frames is the culture, which can be regarded as a storehouse of values, beliefs and practices that inform both the communicator and the audience. The frames embedded in popular culture assume special significance in international communication because journalists reporting on a

foreign nation are bound to frame their messages in a manner that is compatible with the audience and cultural frames in their home country.

According to Doris Appel Graber (1980) American correspondents abroad must operate within the context of current American politics and the current American culture and their stories “must not only reflect the American value structure, but also conform to established American stereotypes.” For example, Noakes and Wilkins (2002) contend that US media coverage of the first Palestinian intifada (popular uprising against Israel in 1987), was sympathetic to the Palestinians’ cause because the claims of the intifada resonated with Western social movement frames.

According to Entman (1993) “the frame in a text is an imprint of power. Several powerful groups compete to get their frames included in the reporting of an event or issue and therefore a communicating text conveys the frame of the group that won the battle to dominate it”. According to Lippman (1922), since major issues are very complicated and subject to several different choices and opinions, “it is natural that everyone should wish to make his or her own choice of facts for the newspapers to print” (p. 345). An obvious example of this tussle for ensuring that one’s interpretation of an issue is the dominant perception about it is the one that goes on between interest groups on either side of a debate.

Andsager (2000) studied the comparative success of pro-life and pro-choice groups in dominating media discourse on policymaking on late-term abortion in 1996 through their use of rhetoric. She found that although pro-choice groups had more press releases than pro-life ones, the rhetorical terms used by pro-life groups appeared in the media twice as frequently as those used by pro-choice groups. Andsager (2000) posited that this could be because the pro-life rhetoric “fit-in with journalists’ attitude towards late-term abortion, which most people found grisly, as well as the traditional newsworthiness value of conflict” (p. 589). It is evident from her study that the rhetoric employed by competing groups has an impact on journalistic framing.

Objectives of the Study

Followings are the major objectives of the study:

1. To study the coverage of Kashmir Movement in American, Chinese and British Press.
2. To describe the frames of American, Chinese and British Press for covering Kashmir Movement.
3. To compare the framing of Kashmir Issue in American, Chinese and British Press.
4. To check the framing of Kashmir Conflict in American, Chinese and British Press over time.

Research Questions of the Study

Followings are the research questions of the study:

1. How do American, Chinese and British Press cover Kashmir movement?
2. What are the major frames which are being used by American, Chinese and British Press for covering Kashmir Conflict?

3. Is there any difference in framing of Kashmir Conflict among American, Chinese and British Press?
4. Is there any difference in framing of Kashmir issue before and after Burhan Wani killing?

Methodology

Present study used qualitative content analysis method for examining the coverage of Burhan Wani killing with reference to Kashmir issue in elite American, Chinese and British press. Population of study is American, Chinese and British press. Sample newspapers were; New York Times from USA, China Daily from China and The Guardian from Britain. These newspapers were selected for the time period of 1 year. Time period was divided into two phases; pre-Wani, and post Wani. Pre-Wani period includes 6 month before the death of Burhan Wani and Post-Wani period includes 6 month after the death of Burhan Wani. Descriptive statistics were used to explain the data analysis.

Findings of the Study

Figure 1: Coverage of Kashmir Issue in American, Chinese and British Press

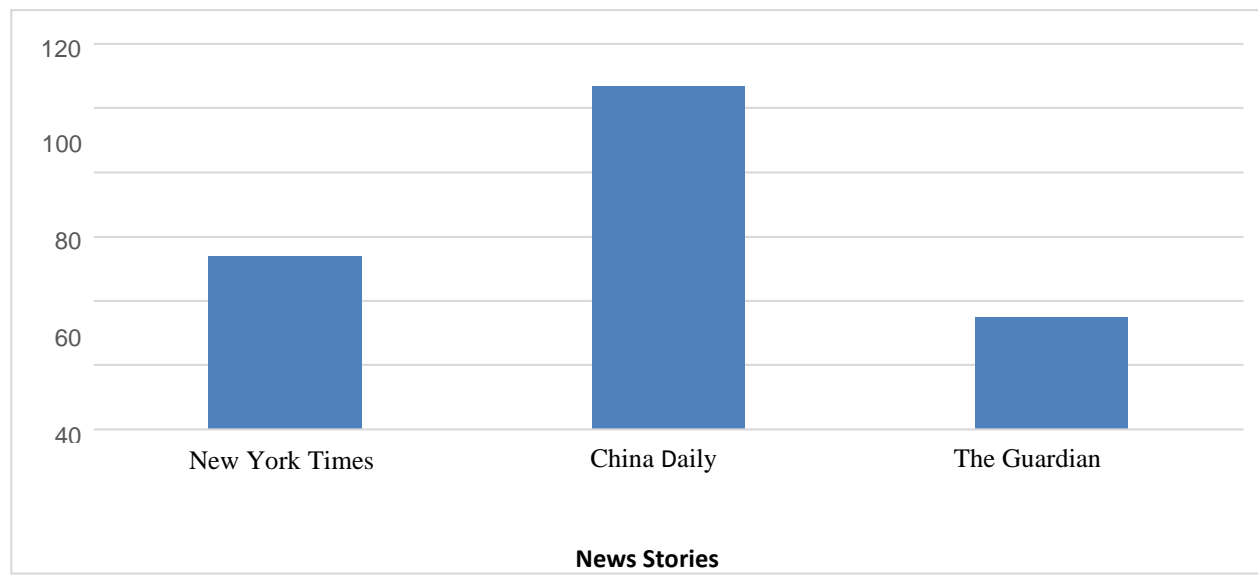


Figure 1 indicates that china daily gives higher coverage to Kashmir issue as compare to the New York Times and The Guardian.

Figure 2: Portrayal of Kashmir Issue with reference to Burhan Wani in American, Chinese and British Press

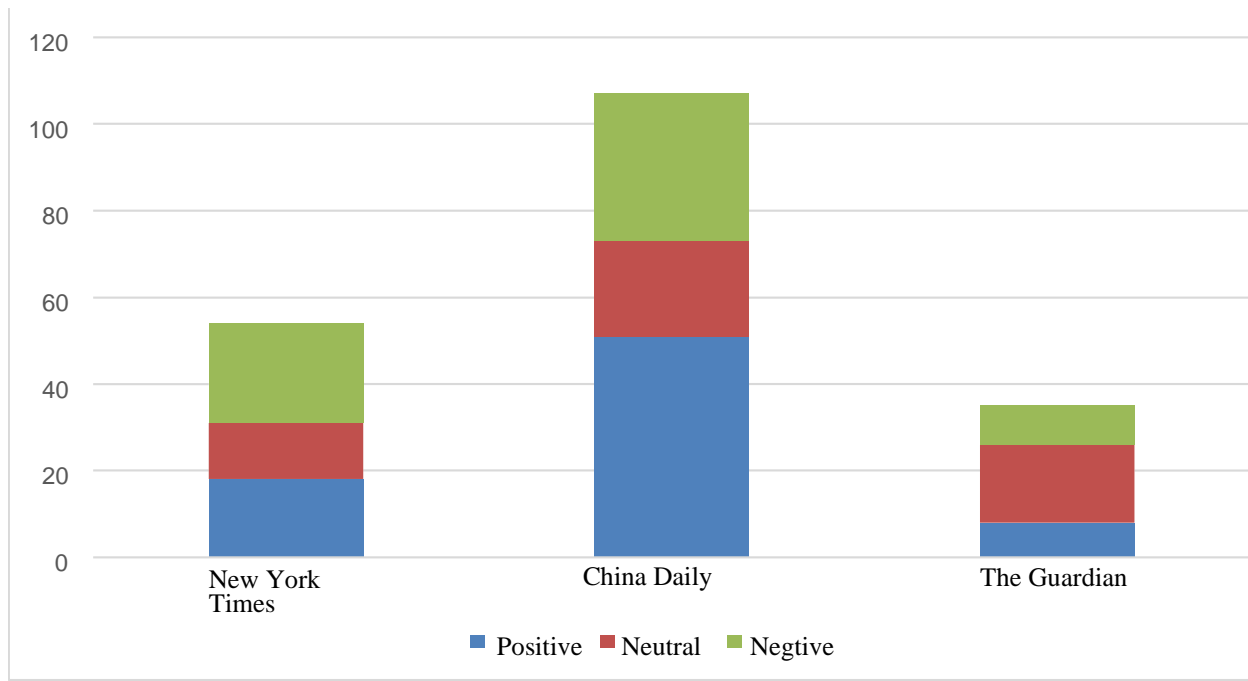


Figure 2 reveals that China Daily gives positive coverage to Kashmir Conflict. On the other side, New York Times and The Guardian cover Kashmir conflict negatively.

Figure 3: Coverage of Kashmir Issue Pre-Burhan and Post-Burhan in American, Chinese and British Press

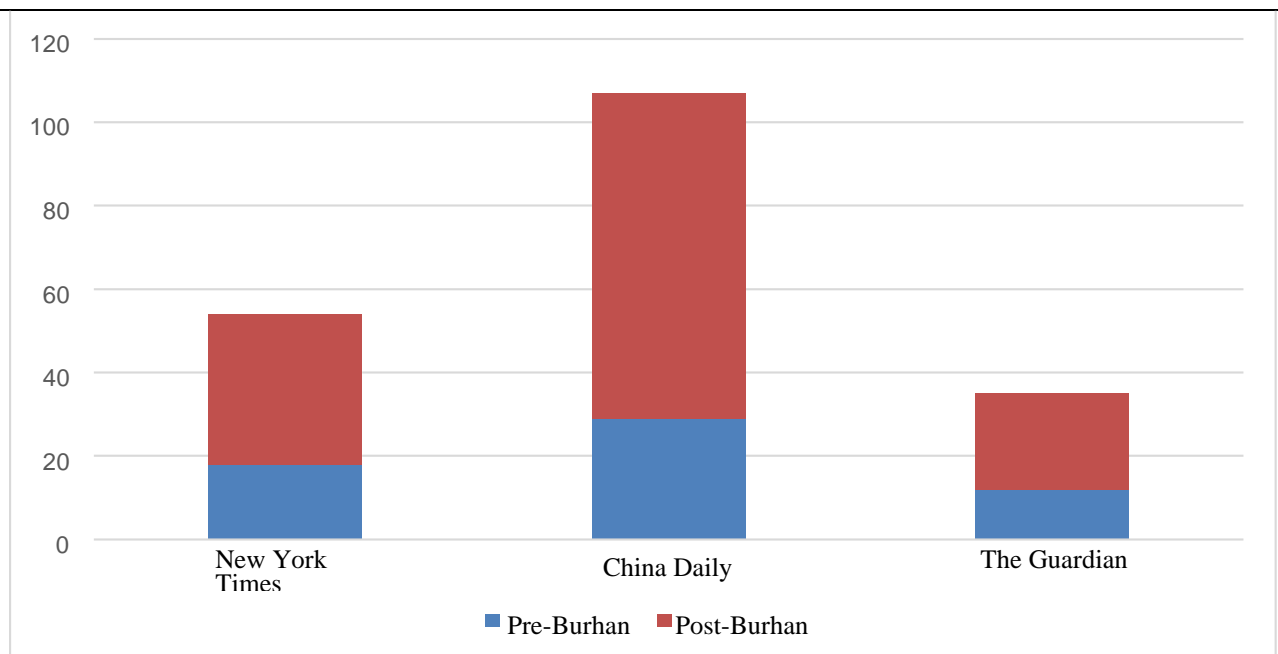


Figure 3 reveals that Kashmir issue was given more coverage after the death of Burhan Wani. Chain

Daily gave more coverage as compare to New York Times and The Guardian.

Table 1: Framing of Kashmir Conflict with reference to Burhan Wani in New York Times

Time Period	Category	Themes/Key Terms
Pre-Burhan	Kashmir	Disputed issue, occupied, violence, unrest, human rights violations, attacks, killing,
	India	Oppression, aggression, administration, combating warriors, trade, development, security forces killing
	Pakistan	Protest, LOC violations, Cease fire violations, military strategy, political support, diplomatic support, terror sponsor, militant groups support proxy war
Post-Burhan	Kashmir	Disputed issue, occupied, violence, unrest, human rights violations, attacks, killing, freedom movement, freedom fighters,
	India	Oppression, aggression, administration, combating warriors, security forces, killing, human rights violations, injustice, cruelty.
	Pakistan	Protest, LOC violations, Cease fire violations, military strategy, political support, diplomatic support, terror sponsor, militant groups support, proxy war.

Table 2: Framing of Kashmir Conflict with reference to Burhan Wani in China Daily

Time Period	Category	Themes/Key Terms
Pre-Burhan	Kashmir	Disputed issue, occupied, violence, unrest, human rights violations, attacks, killing.
	India	Oppression, aggression, administration, combating warriors, security forces killing, cease fire violations, LOC violations.
	Pakistan	Protest, political support, diplomatic support, cultural identity, geographical importance, strategic relations.
Post-Burhan	Kashmir	Disputed issue, occupied, violence, unrest, human rights violations, attacks, killing, women rights violations, injustice, forced occupation.
	India	Oppression, aggression, administration, combating warriors, security forces killing, cease fire violations, LOC violations.
	Pakistan	Protest, political support, diplomatic support, cultural identity, geographical importance, strategic relations.

Table 3: Framing of Kashmir Conflict with reference to Burhan Wani in The Guardian

Time Period	Category	Themes/Key Terms
Pre-Burhan	Kashmir	Disputed issue, occupied, violence, unrest, human rights violations, attacks, killing.

	India	Oppression, aggression, administration, combating warriors, trade, development, security forces killing
	Pakistan	Protest, LOC violations, cease fire violations, military strategy, political support, diplomatic support, terror sponsor, and militant groups support proxy war.
Post-Burhan	Kashmir	Disputed issue, occupied, violence, unrest, human rights violations, attacks, killing, freedom movement, freedom fighters.
	India	Oppression, aggression, administration, combating warriors, security forces, killing, human rights violations, injustice, cruelty, thread to regional peace, regional security thread.
	Pakistan	Protest, LOC violations, cease fire violations, military strategy, political support, diplomatic support, terror sponsor, militant groups support, and proxy war.

Discussion and Conclusion

Findings of the study reveal that China Daily gives high coverage to Kashmir issue as compare to New York Times and The Guardian (Figure 1). Further it indicated that China Daily cover positively Kashmir Conflict as compare to other two papers (Figure 2). In this way findings answer RQ 1 that China Daily covers Kashmir conflict differently as compared to other two papers. It covers positively, while other two papers cover negatively. Findings imply that foreign policy, and geo-strategic relations matter in the coverage of conflicts in international media.

Findings indicates that New York Times and The Guardian framed Kashmir conflict almost same (Table 1 & 3). There is no considerable difference in framing of Kashmir conflict in these papers. However, China Daily framing is different from other two papers (Table 2). New York Times and The Guardian covers Kashmir conflict as civil unrest, proxy war between Pakistan & India. They also used frames of trade and development for Kashmir and India. However, China Daily don't used these frames and cover Kashmir as a freedom movement. Findings provide answer to RQ2 and RQ3 that international media used different frames to cover Kashmir conflict.

Figure 3 highlights that International media gave higher coverage to Kashmir Issue after Burhan Wani killing. There is also change in framing of Kahsmir issue after Burhan Wani Killing. The focus of New York Times and The Guardian turned from the militancy, proxy war to Human Rights violations, high level dispute. China daily also used frame of thread to regional security. It addresses the RQ 4 that there was a change and shift in framing of Kashmir conflict after Burhan Wani killing. In this way, present study argue that framing of international conflicts not only varies country to country but also over time. Foreign policy, geo-strategic relations and real world events also influence coverage of international conflicts in international press.

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