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**EXPLOITATION IN REPORTING ON BALOCHISTAN BY  
PAKISTANI MAINSTREAM MEDIA**



**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY  
UNIVERSITI UTARA MALAYSIA  
2025**



Awang Had Salleh  
Graduate School  
of Arts And Sciences

Universiti Utara Malaysia

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## Abstrak

Prinsip utama kewartawanan adalah untuk mencari dan menyebarkan kebenaran, mendedahkan ketidakadilan, berkhidmat kepada masyarakat, dan memastikan institusi negara serta golongan elit pemerintah yang bertanggungjawab. Ia juga berusaha untuk memastikan perwakilan saksama bagi semua kumpulan sosial dan etnik, mematuhi prinsip keadilan serta mengelakkan berat sebelah atau prasangka. Pemaparan berita mengenai satu kumpulan sedangkan kumpulan lain dipinggirkan, bukan sahaja melanggar etika kewartawanan tetapi juga menjejaskan norma dan nilai demokrasi. Secara global, institusi media sering berpihak kepada golongan elit pemerintah, tetapi gagal memperjuangkan hak populasi yang terpinggir. Kajian ini, yang berasaskan Teori Autoritarian Akhbar, secara kritikal mengkaji bagaimana media arus perdana Pakistan, terutamanya saluran televisyen swasta dan wartawan yang berpusat di Islamabad, menangani cabaran yang dihadapi oleh masyarakat Baloch di Balochistan. Kajian ini menggunakan reka bentuk penyelidikan kualitatif melalui kaedah pengumpulan data primer dan sekunder. Ia merangkumi 17 temu bual mendalam dan analisis kandungan terhadap 68 laporan berita dari Geo TV News dan ARY TV News sepanjang tempoh dua tahun. Kaedah triangulasi digunakan untuk memastikan kesahan dan kebolehpercayaan dapatan kajian. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa institusi negara Pakistan, termasuk tentera, Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), Military Intelligence (MI), dan Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), serta pemilik media dan wartawan beretnik Punjabi, mempunyai kawalan yang besar ke atas amalan kewartawanan di Balochistan. Entiti-entiti ini dengan sengaja menekan liputan mengenai pelanggaran hak asasi manusia yang serius sambil memperbesarkan isu-isu kecil di Punjab untuk mengelakkan perhatian daripada masyarakat antarabangsa dan organisasi hak asasi manusia yang lain. Pemilik media dan wartawan yang berpusat di Islamabad mengabaikan Balochistan kerana mereka kurang berani untuk membuat liputan, sebaliknya mengutamakan kepentingan peribadi dan keuntungan perniagaan. Akibatnya, isu-isu kritikal yang dihadapi oleh masyarakat Baloch, seperti kehilangan secara paksa, pembunuhan di luar bidang kehakiman, kemiskinan, dan peminggiran sosioekonomi, terus disembunyikan baik di dalam negara mahupun di peringkat antarabangsa. Kajian ini mengkritik Teori Autoritarian Akhbar dalam konteks Pakistan, dengan menawarkan cadangan praktikal untuk memupuk kewartawanan yang beretika dan bebas serta memperjuangkan suara golongan terpinggir dan menyederhanakan kawalan kerajaan.

**Kata Kunci:** Kewartawanan Balochistan, Suara Baloch, Media Arus Perdana Pakistan, Eksploitasi Media, Teori Autoritarian.

## Abstract

The core principle of journalism is to pursue and disseminate the truth, expose injustices, serve the public, and hold state institutions and ruling elites accountable. It also strives to ensure equitable representation for all social and ethnic groups, adhering to principles of fairness while avoiding bias or prejudice. The news portrayals of one group yet marginalising others, not only violate journalistic ethics but also undermine democratic norms and values. Globally, media institutions often align with state elites but fail to advocate for marginalised populations. This study, grounded in the Authoritarian Theory of the Press, critically examines how Pakistan's mainstream media, particularly private television channels and Islamabad-based journalists, report the issues faced by the Baloch people in Balochistan. This study employed a qualitative research design through primary and secondary data collection methods. It includes 17 in-depth interviews and content analysis of 68 news stories from Geo TV News and ARY TV News over a two-year period. The triangulation methodology was used to ensure the validity and reliability of the study findings. The findings reveal that Pakistan's state institutions, including the military, Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), Military Intelligence (MI) and Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), as well as Punjabi-ethnic media owners and journalists, exert substantial control over journalistic practices in Balochistan. These entities deliberately suppress coverage of severe human rights violations while amplifying minor issues in Punjab to avoid scrutiny from the international communities and other human rights organisations. Media owners and Islamabad-based journalists neglect Balochistan because they lack the courage to cover it, instead prioritising personal interest and business profits. Consequently, critical issues of the Baloch people, such as enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings, poverty, and socioeconomic marginalisation, remain obscured both domestically and internationally. This study critiques the Authoritarian Theory of the Press within the Pakistani context, offering practical recommendations to foster ethical and independent journalism that amplifies marginalised voices and moderates state control.

**Keywords:** Balochistan Journalism, Baloch Voices, Pakistani Mainstream Media, Media Exploitation, Authoritarian Theory

## Acknowledgement

The completion of this Ph.D. thesis would not have been possible without the unwavering support and encouragement of my supervisor, Associate Prof. Dr. Awan Binti Ismail. I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to her for guiding me on the right path and making me feel that my work truly mattered. Her willingness to devote so much of her time, energy, and intellect is the primary reason this dissertation has reached completion.

I am also deeply grateful to the faculty, management, and staff of the Awang Had Salleh Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, as well as the School of Multimedia Technology and Communications (SMMTC), Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM). Their collective support and resources have been instrumental in my academic journey.

Special thanks go to all the distinguished participants who contributed to this research. I am sincerely thankful for their time, support, and valuable insights on a phenomenon that is undeniably serious and sensitive. Their active participation and open expression of views made it possible for this thesis to take shape and reach its conclusion.

I would like to extend my gratitude to my friends, both in Malaysia and Pakistan, who supported me throughout this journey. A special gratitude goes to Norlizah Matshah, Prof. Dr. Manzur Baloch, Abdullah Khan, Khuram Shujra, Advocate Imran Baloch, Rehmatullah Khan, Naseer Khan Mandokhail, and others for their immense support and encouragement during the endeavour of this PhD thesis.

Finally, I would like to thank my entire family, my loving brothers, sisters-in-laws, lovely nieces, and nephews, for their unwavering support and sacrifices. Their love and encouragement sustained me through the many times I left them behind and travelled abroad to continue my studies. This thesis is particularly, dedicated to the cherished memory of my father, mother, and my two brothers (*Manzoor Ahmed and Mushtaq Ahmed*) who passed away while studying my PhD

**“With love and eternal appreciation!”**

*Jan Muhammad Baloch*

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## **List of Abbreviations**

ABC	American Broadcasting Company
AD	After Death
AFP	Agence France-Presse
AHSGS	Awang Had Saleh Graduate School
AI	Amnesty International
ANI	Asian News International
BBC	British Broadcasting Company
BC	Before Christ
BCE	Before the Common Era
BLA	Baloch Liberation Army
BNP	Balochistan National Party
BSO	Baloch Students Organization
BYC	Baloch Yakjehti Committee
CBS	Columbia Broadcasting System
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CE	Common Era
CNN	Cable News Network
COAS	Chief of Army Staff
COJ	Canons of journalism
COVID	Coronavirus Disease
CPEC	China Pakistan Economic Corridor
CPMC	China-Pakistan Media Corridor
DEI	Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
DGPR	Directorate General Public Relations
DW	Deutsch Welle
EU	European Union
FC	Frontier Corps
FCR	Frontier Crimes Regulation

FIA	Federal Investigation Agency
FSIIS	Freeman Spogli Institute of International Studies
GHQ	General Head Quarters
HRCOP	Human Rights Commission of Pakistan
HRJ	Human Rights Journalism
ISI	Inter-Services Intelligence
ISIS-K	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria Khurasaan
ISPR	Inter-Services Public Relations
JI	Jamat-e-Islami
KI	Key Informants
KPK	Khairber Pashtun Khuwa
LUMS	Lahore University of Management Sciences
MCC	China Metallurgical Construction Corp
MI	Military Intelligence
NAM	Non-Align Movement
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NBC	National Broadcasting Company
NOC	No Objection Certificate
NWICO	New World Information and Communication Order
Ofcom	Office of the Communications
PECA	Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act
PEMRA	Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority
PM	Prime Minster
PSL	Pakistan Super League
PTA	Pakistan Telecommunication Authority
PTM	Pashtun Tahafuz Movement
PTV	Pakistan Television Network
QCA	Qualitative Content Analysis
RFA	Radio Free Asia

RSF	Reporters Without Borders
RTA	Radio Television Afghanistan
RTA	Russia Today Arabic
SMMTC	School of Multimedia Technologies and Communication
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UK	United Kingdom
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organization
UNHRC	United Nations Human Rights Council
UNHRO	United Nations Human Rights Organization
US	United States
USA	United States of America
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
UUM	Universiti Utara Malaysia
VoA	Voice of America
VVIP	Very Very important person
WION	World is One News



UUM  
Universiti Utara Malaysia

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

In healthy democracies, the free press is considered a paramount tool for bringing prosperity, development, and social change. The free press strengthens journalism practices and compels journalists and reporters to make journalism an essential mission in their lives. Scholars and experts defined the mission and purpose of journalism differently.

In their Book, *The Elements of Journalism*, Kovach and Rosenstiel (2007) stated that the primary purpose of journalism is to offer global audience in-depth knowledge, empowering them to be knowledgeable and self-governing. While defining the essence of journalism, both scholars introduced ten fundamental principles of journalism (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2014). They believed that journalism must tell the truth, serve the public interest, verify information, maintain independence, hold those in power accountable, offer platforms for public discussion and debate, disclose important information, reporting should be balanced, must follow ethics, and support citizen's rights (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2014).

Moroianu (2022) endorsed Kovach and Rosenstiel's journalism principles and considered journalism as a public good, watchdog and agenda-settler. Similarly, Norris (2006) supported the free and independent press and assessed that free and independent journalism upholds transparency and accountability in the governance system and offers voiceless platforms to raise their diverse concerns. Happer and Philo (2013) argued that the news media makes people well-informed, especially neglected people,

communities, and regions, disconnected from the world, and seeking information about daily affairs.

In simple words, scholars emphasized that the primary function of journalism and news media whether public or private; is to serve the public. While discussing the journalistic quality and standard of BBC, Nielsen and Fletcher (2023) asserted that the BBC, as a public service broadcaster, is dedicated to serving the public by providing impartial, high-quality, and distinctive news and stories about global issues. It reaches more than 400 million people globally with news every week, serving audiences across the political spectrum (Nielsen & Fletcher, 2023).

Critics asserted that one of the primary duties of journalists and news media is to critically monitor the actions of ruling elites, and state institutions, and hold them accountable when their actions or decisions contravene public interest and democratic values (Kara Dimitriou et al., 2021). This watchdog function is considered essential for the health of democracy and nation-building (Norris, 2014).

However, history shows that many monarchs and rulers in many parts of the world considered intellectualism and journalism a threat to their ruling affairs and state-building (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2007). Such monarchs imposed strict controls over the free flow of ideas and journalism practices. For instance, the first Chinese Emperor Qin Shi Huang in the 3rd century BC, treated control and authority on free expression of ideas and public expression as crucial for his state-building efforts (Sima, 1993).

In his historic work '*Records of the Grand Historian*' originally published in 100BC; Sima Qian (1993) mentioned that Emperor Qin initiated a significant event in the 3rd century BC known as the "Burning of Books and Burying of Scholars." During this

event, the emperor ordered the execution of four hundred Confucian scholars to maintain control and authority (Sima, 1993). These scholars criticized Qin's rule and his reforms, which were perceived as disruptive to traditional Chinese customs and governance (Sima, 1993).

Thomas Jefferson, the President of the United States in 1801, on the other hand, advocated for liberal principles, freedom, liberty, and a free press (Levy, 1985). His well-known statement that he would rather have newspapers without a government than have a government without newspapers has become part of history (First Amendment Encyclopaedia, n.d.). His decision highlighted the importance of the press in fulfilling its social responsibility and empowering marginalized voices against hegemonic classes (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2014).

Philosophers have long emphasized the duty of journalists and news organizations to pursue truth, regardless of the consequences (Sc Hudson, 2003). Following this philosophical tradition, the press evolved significantly, particularly after the invention of the printing press in 15th-century Europe (Eisenstein, 1979). During this transformative period, the European intellectual and scientific communities faced severe repercussions for disseminating new ideas and challenging hegemonic powers (McLuhan, 1964).

Historical figures such as Martin Luther played a pivotal role in this struggle. In 1517, Luther's actions challenged the longstanding authority of the Roman Catholic Church, contributing to the Protestant Reformation (Edwards, 2004). Similarly, in 1644, John Milton championed the free exchange of ideas and freedom of expression in England, famously describing a free press as a "thriving harvest of knowledge" (Blasi, 1995, p.

5). The French Revolution of 1789 further advanced democratic ideals worldwide and led to the establishment of influential press systems across Europe (Wagner, 2015).

The fight for press freedom, freedom of speech, and freedom of expression fostered the development of rational thought in European societies (Moller, 2014; Habermas, 1989). These intellectual movements significantly contributed to the growth of liberty and democracy (Moller & Habermas, 1989). As democracy and the press evolved together, their influence expanded globally, particularly in the United States (McGerr, 2003). In 1835, *The New York Herald* emerged as the most influential penny press in America, amplifying the voices of the working and lower classes (Keller, 2013). The power of independent journalism became especially evident during the Watergate scandal in the 1970s, when investigative reporting led to the resignation of U.S. President Richard Nixon (Woodward & Bernstein, 1974).

Julian Assange's *WikiLeaks* marked a new era in journalism in July 2010 by releasing over 700,000 classified documents exposing the actions of powerful global leaders and institutions (Leigh & Harding, 2011). Similarly, the *Panama Papers* scandal, which surfaced in 2016, resulted in the leak of approximately 11.5 million documents, highlighting corruption and financial misconduct among world leaders, leading to multiple resignations and political upheavals (Obermaier & Obermayer, 2016). Moreover, the assassination of Arab journalist Jamal Khashoggi in 2018 became a symbolic incident in the struggle for press freedom in the Arab world, reinforcing concerns about the safety of journalists and the suppression of dissenting voices (United Nations, 2019).

In essence, to challenge the actions of authorities and ruling elites while fostering social change and prosperity, journalists must demonstrate dedication and, at times,

personal sacrifice. Philosopher Walter Lippmann argued that societies should actively strive for journalism, as it is not a privilege but a necessity for democracy (Lippmann, 1922). He also described a free press as an "organic necessity" for an informed public (Lippmann, 1922, p. 12). Similarly, Nobel laureate Tawakkol Karman asserted that the press is the foundation of democratic transition, emphasizing that democracy cannot exist without a free and independent media (Karman, 2011).

Additionally, McQuail, Golding, and Bens (2005) stressed the responsibility of journalists and news media to amplify the voices of marginalized, distant, and socially deviant groups, ensuring their inclusion in public discourse. However, it remains crucial to assess whether journalists and media organizations are genuinely committed to upholding their ethical duties, prioritizing truth, and representing underprivileged communities. In this context, Kovach and Rosenstiel (2001) highlighted a growing public distrust in the media, noting that audiences are increasingly turning away from news outlets due to perceived biases and unethical practices. They argued that many journalists and commercial news organizations compromise ethical standards by disseminating misinformation and fabricated stories. To restore credibility, Kovach and Rosenstiel (2001) urged journalists and media institutions to adhere to ethical principles and professional codes of conduct, which are essential for maintaining journalistic integrity.

Ward (2010) explained that the term *ethics* originates from the Greek word *ethos*, meaning "character" (Ward, 2010). He further stated that the word *moral* is derived from the Latin term *mores*, which refers to the customs and traditions of social groups (Ward, 2010). Both concepts relate to how individuals, communities, and societies shape their conduct, character, and ethical behaviour (Ward, 2010).

Recognizing the importance of ethical journalism, the American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE) established the *Seven Canons of Journalism* in 1923 (Sandman, 1976). These canons are among the earliest and most widely recognized ethical guidelines in the field of journalism (Sandman, 1976). Discussing their significance, Saalberg (1973) emphasized that each canon plays a fundamental role in defining journalistic integrity and shaping professional ethics (Saalberg, 1973).

The list of seven canons of journalism is given below:

- i. **Responsibility:** The responsibility of the press is to serve the public without being biased. According to Ward (2010), news media and journalists must report on issues in ways that give representation to diverse social groups and a plurality of viewpoints.
- ii. **Freedom of the Press:** This canon talks about the free press and urges journalists to report freely without thinking about fear or a state of self-censorship (Saalberg, 1973).
- iii. **Independence:** News outlets and journalists must not support power or authority for self-interest or commercial interests and not become part of partisanship and politics (Hanson, 2016).
- iv. **Sincerity, Truthfulness, and Accuracy:** Journalists and news outlets bring sincerity, and accuracy and tell the truth while reporting on issues and events (Saalberg, 1973).
- v. **Impartiality:** Journalists and news organizations must be impartial break neutral and balance news and avoid personal biases (Hanson, 2016).

- vi. **Fair Play:** This canon provokes journalists and news media to avoid favouritism, agenda-setting, propagating misinformation, or selective reporting.
- vii. **Decency:** Journalists must bring decency in their attitudes and behaviours and professionally report on issues with equal respect, regardless of personal feelings or affiliations (Hanson, 2016).

Ward (2010) asserted that ethical journalism plays a vital role in expanding public knowledge, fostering informed debates on societal issues, and holding authorities and powerful elites accountable (Ward, 2010). He emphasized that journalism serves as a fundamental pillar of democracy by promoting transparency and civic engagement (Ward, 2010). However, despite the presence of ethical guidelines and journalistic principles, concerns regarding the sincerity and credibility of journalists and news media have intensified in various societies (Sterling, 2009). Studies indicate that public trust in media has declined due to perceived biases, misinformation, and sensationalized reporting (Sterling, 2009).

Many experts and theorists have various theories and concepts. Jones (2019) assessed that in modern liberal democracies, the media has lost its public trust and strayed from its watchdog role. The reasons Jones (2019) mentioned include government control, and censorship, as well as the influence of billionaire media ownership on media agendas that aim to generate revenue. As a result, they manipulate journalism practices, through state's intelligence agencies (Jones, 2019).

Kellner (2018) argued that news media often serves corporate and conservative interests by aligning itself with state and corporate power (Kellner, 2018). Similarly, Chomsky (1997) contended that the media has become increasingly monopolized and

centralized, frequently operating in close association with governmental authorities (Chomsky, 1997). Expanding on this idea, Chomsky and Herman (1979) asserted that governments and influential groups allocate substantial financial resources to shape media narratives, aiming to exert "thought control" over the public (Herman & Chomsky, 1979). They further noted that while states publicly advocate for media freedom, they simultaneously engage in censorship and regulatory control to maintain dominance (Herman & Chomsky, 1988).

Baran and Davis (2011) supported Herman and Chomsky's viewpoint, emphasizing that capitalist interests significantly influence social transformations and technological advancements in the news media sector (Baran & Davis, 2011). Likewise, Freedman (2014) argued that neoliberal economic structures have facilitated an unprecedented concentration of wealth and political power among media elites. This consolidation enables corporate executives to shape editorial policies, determine business objectives, and selectively recruit individuals who align with their ideological and economic interests (Freedman, 2014).

These perspectives underscore the persistent failure of media organizations to uphold their role as watchdogs of democracy and public interest. Instead, powerful entities frequently utilize media platforms to advance their agendas, thereby diminishing journalism's value as a public service. Additionally, the representation of marginalized and minority communities in the media continues to reflect systemic biases, misrepresentation, and structural discrimination.

Historical accounts reveal that, in 1939, the U.S. broadcast media was predominantly controlled by white-dominant groups, curating content that aligned with their perspectives (Larson, 2006). This media disparity contributed to the emergence of

racial and civil rights movements, challenging the existing power structures (Larson, 2006). Furthermore, Larson (2006) found that Asian, Latino, Black, and Hispanic Americans consistently reported feeling underrepresented in mainstream U.S. media (Larson, 2006). Similarly, Smitherman and Teun (1988) observed that in the UK and Western Europe, minorities were either ignored entirely or depicted negatively, reinforcing dominant white social power within the media landscape (Smitherman & Teun, 1988).

Journalists often reinforced these hegemonic structures by producing content that favoured dominant social groups and media institutions (Teun, 1988). Relevant to this notion, Reese (2001) found that the historical media dominance by white groups in the U.S., UK, and other Western nations mirrors the media patterns that marginalized Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) countries during the 1960s, a trend that continues to persist today (Reese, 2001).

It happened in the 1960s that the countries of the south in shape of the Non-Aligned Movement (Price et al. 2013) expressed their concerns about the dominance of Western news media. The weak nations of the south had a feeling that they were either completely ignored or portrayed negatively. Journalists frequently followed the ideologies of the Western dominant News media and influential groups. Strong Western media outlets disregarded the voices of these countries. As a result, modern journalism is fraught with ethical quandaries caused by racial, ethnic, cultural, and economic disparities.

The weak nations established the New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) in Tunis and Delhi in 1976 (Meigs et al., 2012). NWICO declared that the

western media agencies were propagating against third world countries, hence they should have equal media that address their issues too (Meigs et al., 2012).

The above-cited lines perceive that journalist biases and subjective perceptions can distort the truth, misrepresent communities, and perpetuate systemic inequality, limiting the public's ability to make informed decisions (Reese, 2001). Like the discrimination experienced by Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) nations, this lack of coverage is indicative of a larger pattern. However, discrimination can come from a variety of sources.

Balochistan, Pakistan's largest province, is one such neglected area, with locals seeking support from national and international news media to highlight their pressing issues. Residents and politicians argue that the region has become an information black hole, where discussions are systematically suppressed, and reports of human rights violations and grievances are routinely ignored (Gul, 2018; Kahn, 2017). People of Balochistan experience both, a lack of representation and coverage from their own media, whereas NAM countries were often subjected to bias by Western media (Shah, 2021).

In this context, the proposed study seeks to investigate the challenges experienced by the people of Balochistan, Pakistan. It aims to analyse critical issues such as human rights violations, enforced disappearances, and various social, political, economic, and healthcare concerns.

Additionally, the study intends to examine how these pressing matters are represented in Pakistan's mainstream media.

## **1.2 Balochistan: *What is it?***

Balochistan is Pakistan's largest province by land-wise, accounting for roughly 44% of the country's total territory. However, it is the least densely populated region, accounting for only 5.94% of the national population in the 2018 census (Government of Pakistan, 2018). The province's name, "Balochistan," translates to "land of the Baloch ethnic group," which according to Government of Pakistan 2018 census, makes up 3.57% of the population. Other ethnic groups, including the Pashtun and Hazara, account for the remaining 2.37% (Spooner, 1988). Geographically, Balochistan borders Afghanistan to the west, Iran to the southwest, and the Indian Ocean to the south (Spooner, 1988).

Historically, dominant monarchies in the region divided Balochistan around 1500 AD into western and eastern regions (Pillalamarri, 2016). The Mughal Empire exerted influence over the eastern region, while the Safavid Persian Empire controlled the western region (Pillalamarri, 2016). Following the fall of Nader Shah's empire in the 18th century, Balochistan was divided into smaller principalities. Some regions came were under Afghan control, while others retained varying degrees of independence (Pillalamarri, 2016).

Among such independent principalities, the State of Kalat emerged as a major political and influential state. The State of Kalat or Khanate of Kalat, was ruled by several Khans, including Mir Noori Naseer Khan Baloch, who ruled for 45 years from 1749 to 1794 (Spooner, 1988). The arrival of the British East India Company in the Indian subcontinent in 1600 signalled the beginning of colonial expansion, which included Balochistan (Syed, 2007).

On March 28, 1839, the Khan of Kalat granted the British permission to travel through eastern Balochistan, allowing them to reach Qandahar from the Indus Valley (Syed,2007), which is currently known as the Sindh province of Pakistan. This agreement resulted in increased British influence, culminating in the occupation of Kalat. On November 13, 1839, General Willshire led British forces into Kalat, resulting in the assassination of Mir Mehrab Khan, the then-Khan of Kalat (Syed, 2007) and made it one of their colonies.

By 1854, Khanate of Kalat considered as an associated state of the British Empire. The British established the Balochistan Agency in 1877 to oversee the Baloch princely states' governance (Pillalamarri, 2016). The demarcation of the Durand Line in 1893 altered the region's territorial boundaries by transferring the provinces of Nimruz, Helmand, and Kandahar to Afghanistan, while Iran took control of Balochistan-Sistan in 1928. The rest of Balochistan eventually annexed to Pakistan in March 1948 through a military power (Pillalamarri, 2016).

Bansal (2006) notes that the Khan of Kalat declared independence on August 11, 1947, shortly before the partition of British India. However, in March 1948, Pakistani military forces intervened in Balochistan, leading to the first armed insurgency led by Prince Karim Khan, the brother of the Khan of Kalat (Bansal, 2006). Since the annexation of Balochistan in 1948, the Baloch people have experienced political and economic marginalization, resulting in multiple insurgencies (Bansal, 2006). The initial uprising occurred in 1948, followed by subsequent revolts in 1958, 1962, and a more prolonged conflict between 1973 and 1977 (Bansal, 2006). The most recent insurgency began in 2004 and continues, with demands for greater autonomy and control over local resources (Bansal, 2006). These recurring uprisings underscore the

Baloch people's enduring grievances over systemic exclusion and disenfranchisement (Bansal, 2006).

In stark contrast, Punjab, Pakistan's most populous and politically dominant province, accounts for roughly 56% of the country's population (Government of Pakistan, 2018). This demographic majority results in disproportionate political influence, with Punjabis wielding significant power over state institutions (Seyal, 2017). In 2001, more than 71% of Pakistan's armed forces personnel were Punjabi (Dawn, 2007). According to Seyal (2017), this ethnically dominant group frequently ignores the sociopolitical and economic conditions of marginalized and minority groups, particularly Baloch people.

The Baloch people considered as traditionally a tribal society and constitute a minority ethnic group in Pakistan (Jetly, 1999). They face systemic socioeconomic underdevelopment and persistent marginalization (Jetly, 1999). According to Shim et al. (2015), the Baloch are consistently regarded as a disadvantaged minority. Seyal (2017) further critiqued the Pakistani media for perpetuating marginalization of the Baloch people through underrepresentation and discriminatory practices.

### **1.3 Problem Statement**

The historical trajectory of Balochistan showcases a widespread belief among the Baloch population that their region's abundant natural resources are exploited by the Punjabi-dominated federal government (Kemp, 2010). At the same time, issues of poverty and underdevelopment are routinely ignored (Kemp, 2010). This sense of exploitation is exacerbated by the perception that the Punjabi elite controls not only the political landscape, but also the national media. Arif (2010) compared the Punjabi

elite's media hegemony to the White elite's monopoly in the United States, where ownership and narratives are shaped to benefit the ruling class.

Notably, prominent journalists, analysts, and senior media figures frequently come from Punjab's retired military and bureaucratic communities (Kukreja, 2020). This dynamic exacerbates the marginalization of smaller ethnic communities, such as the Pathans, Saraiki, Sindhis, and Muhajirs, who, like the Baloch, are routinely barred from equal participation in political and media platforms (Kukreja 2020).

Mushtaq and Mirza's (2022) research shows that since Pakistan's inception in August 1947, Balochistan has been trapped in a never-ending cycle of violent insurgency. These insurgencies are motivated by a desire for political autonomy, grievances about inequitable resource allocation, and stark socioeconomic disparities. The ongoing unrest in Balochistan not only endangers the stability of the Pakistani state, but it also undermines civil society, exacerbating tensions between the region and the central government (Kukreja, 2020).

Adding to the complexities, Masood and Mir (2023) described Balochistan as an "information black hole," where mainstream media of Pakistan systematically ignores critical issues, perpetuating widespread ignorance of the region's struggles. According to Nadir (2022), dominant media institutions in Pakistan deliberately conceal human rights violations in Balochistan, making the Baloch people's plight largely invisible. Furthermore, any criticism of the state's negligence is frequently dismissed as "anti-state" rhetoric (Masood & Mir, 2023), creating a censored environment that distorts narratives about human rights violations (Chaudhary, 2022).

Using Braun's (2019) concept of "post-truth," the media's selective storytelling in Pakistan manipulates public perceptions by omitting critical evidence and aligning narratives with state objectives. This distortion has further alienated the Baloch people, whose voices and grievances are routinely drowned out by a media framework that favours the ruling elite's viewpoints (Sunghor, 2024).

One of the most glaring omissions in mainstream media is the plight of Baloch women, who have led protests the state's "kidnap, kill, and dump" policies. Activists like Dr. Mahrang Baloch have emerged as prominent leaders in these movements, but their efforts have received little media coverage (Malhotra, 2024).

Sunghor (2024) criticized Pakistani media for following a "post-truth" paradigm in which exaggerated or fabricated stories are spread to minimize or outright deny critical issues such as enforced disappearances. He argued that this strategy diverts public attention away from legitimate concerns, reinforcing state-sponsored narratives that dismiss Baloch grievances as insignificant (Sunghor, 2024).

The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) has documented widespread abuses in Balochistan, such as forced disappearances, systemic marginalization, and economic exploitation (HRCP, 2023). These findings show that the Pakistani mainstream media is severely constrained by Pakistan's security establishment, which has a significant influence on the framing and reporting of events. This authoritarian control restricts objective journalism, suppresses dissent, and reinforces state narratives, obscuring Balochistan's sociopolitical realities. The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) has highlighted a deeply concerning trend of women disappearing in areas such as Dera Bugti and Awaran, a phenomenon that receives little to no attention in Pakistan's mainstream media (Chaudhary, 2022).

Sarwar et al. (2022) also criticize the media's inaction on critical issues in Balochistan, particularly the enforced disappearances of Baloch people. Despite being central to the Baloch people's struggles, such issues are largely overlooked in mainstream media discourse. Many in the Baloch community blame these enforced disappearances and broader sociopolitical suppression on the military's pervasive influence in the region (Sarwer et al. 2022).

Similarly, Shirazi (2017) highlighted the mainstream media's persistent failure to report on critical issues in Balochistan, such as rampant lawlessness, spiralling inflation, a lack of effective civilian governance, severe underdevelopment, entrenched poverty, public health crises, a scarcity of potable water, and inequitable resource allocation.

Evidence showcased that local journalists or freelancer that work with locally published newspapers in Balochistan, face significant censorship and intimidation when reporting on ground realities (Ashraf & Badar, 2014; Sangar Publication, n.d.; Akbar, 2011). However, these discussions are conspicuously absent from national narratives, prompting allegations of "media apartheid" against the Baloch people. This deliberate exclusion not only undermines their grievances, but it also reinforces their sense of alienation and exclusion from the Pakistani state. Senior journalists, analysts, and media executives, primarily from Punjab, frequently ignore the grievances of minor ethnic groups, reinforcing a media narrative that marginalizes and silences these communities (Arif, 2010).

In December 2023, the Baloch Yakjehti Committee (BYC), a newly formed group advocating for social and political rights, planned a protest march from Balochistan to Islamabad. The group aimed to bring attention to the issues of enforced disappearances

and extrajudicial killings. Despite camping outside the National Press Club in Islamabad for 30 days, their demands and narratives were largely ignored by mainstream media, with expression limited to social media platforms (ANI, 2024). Activist Dr. Mahrang Baloch, a leading voice in the movement, expressed the protesters' profound disappointment, claiming that the media's silence reflected an underlying anti-Baloch sentiment prevalent in Islamabad. This, she claimed, alienated the Baloch people and widened the divide between the capital and the province (ANI, 2024). Analysts, including Shirazi (2017), argue that the mainstream media's dismissive attitude exacerbates ethnic tensions and reinforces the political and social divide between the Baloch and the government.

Collectively, these observations demonstrate that Pakistan's national media appears to fail to fulfil its democratic obligation to report on the pressing issues of the Baloch people while also avoiding playing its watchdog role by holding state institutions and ruling elites accountable. This media blackout perpetuates Pakistan's largest province's sociopolitical marginalization and has the potential to fuel further hostilities and insurgencies (Ricciardi 2012).

The absence of adequate representation in national media narratives contributes to the systemic disregard for the Baloch people's struggles, aspirations, and identity (Shams Ullah, 2022). In this context, Ward (2010) warns that biased journalism can exacerbate inter-ethnic tensions, a warning that is particularly relevant in Balochistan, where calls for secession from Pakistan are gaining traction amid hostile and exclusionary media narratives.

While previous research has investigated various aspects of media neglect in Balochistan, significant gaps remain in understanding the underlying causes and

consequences of this bias. Recent studies have shown a significant gap in academic research on the role of media in addressing Balochistan and its people (Masood & Mir, 2023; Yousafzai, 2022; Baloch & Jaffar, 2021).

While some research has investigated topics like the securitization of social media in the Baloch conflict (Masood & Mir, 2023) and the difficulties journalists face when covering conflicts in the region (Yousafzai, 2022), these studies are limited in scope and number. For example, Masood and Mir (2023) discussed how social media platforms have changed narratives about the Baloch conflict, emphasizing both the opportunities and challenges they present. Furthermore, research has examined Baloch people's perceptions of electronic media coverage, revealing a general sentiment that media portrayal is negative and insufficient in highlighting the province's socioeconomic issues (Baloch & Jaffar, 2021).

Despite these contributions, there was a lack of comprehensive academic work that could critically examine how the media was involved and influenced the discourse surrounding Balochistan's issues (Masood & Mir, 2023; Yousafzai, 2022; Baloch & Jaffar, 2021). This gap diverted the need for more in-depth research into the media's role in either perpetuating stereotypes or fostering informed discussions about the Baloch people's challenges.

To address this gap, the present study employs a qualitative research framework, utilizing both primary and secondary data collection methods to explore the role of mainstream media in exacerbating socioeconomic, political, and human rights issues in Balochistan. This study aims to use in-depth interviews to gather primary data from a diverse group of informants. For secondary data, content analysis is used to examine

video materials from Pakistan's two major television channels, Geo TV News and ARY TV News, over a two-year period.

Considering the widespread authoritarian influence on media narratives, this study adopts the Authoritarian Theory of the Press as a conceptual framework to explore the role of Pakistan's mainstream media in shaping the discourse surrounding Balochistan. By examining the intersection of media practices and state-driven agendas, the research seeks to reveal the systemic mechanisms that contribute to the marginalization and ongoing sociopolitical struggles of the Baloch people.

Ultimately, the study aims to enhance understanding of the relationship between media representation and the sociopolitical and human rights dynamics in Balochistan. By identifying the structural and ideological factors that influence media narratives, this study strives to provide valuable insights into the challenges faced by the Baloch people and their broader implications for Pakistan's national discourse.

#### **1.4 Research Questions**

This study investigated how Pakistani mainstream media (two television channels) portrayed marginalized Baloch people in Balochistan. The research aimed to improve understanding of this issue and provided practical insights. The study had the following research questions:

1. How does the mainstream media of Pakistan portray the pressing issues of the Baloch people in Balochistan?
2. How does the mainstream media of Pakistan fulfil its democratic and watchdog role in reporting the pressing issues of the Baloch people in Balochistan?

3. How do locally published newspapers, international press, and social media report the pressing issues of the Baloch people in Balochistan?
4. How does the narrative of Pakistani mainstream media impact the Baloch population?

### **1.5 Research Objectives**

The primary aim of this study was to explore the representation of the Baloch people in Balochistan by mainstream Pakistani media (specifically two television channels), with the goal of enhancing understanding and providing practical insights for the fields of media and journalism. The study is guided by the following research objectives:

1. To investigate the portrayal of the pressing issues of the Baloch people in Pakistan's mainstream media.
2. To evaluate the democratic and watchdog role of the Pakistan's mainstream media in reporting the pressing issues of the Baloch people in Balochistan.
3. To analyse the coverage of pressing issues related to the Baloch people in locally published newspapers, international media, and social media platforms.
4. To investigate the impacts of the narrative presented by Pakistan's mainstream media on the Baloch population.

### **1.6 Theoretical, Methodological and Practical Significance**

This research marks an important and bold advancement in tackling a topic often sidestepped due to the fear and political constraints imposed by the Pakistani government and its agencies. The researcher's decision to explore the impact of state institutions, mainstream media, and Islamabad-based journalists on journalism practices in Balochistan is a pioneering effort, one that has not been attempted before.

Balochistan, often seen as an inaccessible region for journalists and researchers, is shrouded in secrecy and strict control. The region's politically sensitive nature, coupled with widespread state repression and the risk of retaliation, discourages many from probing its issues critically, particularly when such inquiries threaten the established narrative upheld by Pakistan's military and state authorities. This study ventures into largely unexamined territory, aiming to uncover how state agencies and the media play a role in maintaining marginalization and silencing the voices of the Baloch people.

The research delves into why state-controlled media often label Baloch leaders and human rights advocates as anti-state, and why urgent issues like poverty, inequality, and human rights abuses are underrepresented or distorted in national media. By undertaking this work, the researcher challenges the silence that surrounds this issue and addresses the systemic barriers that have kept it outside the realm of critical scholarly investigation.

The significance of this study goes beyond its examination of a sensitive issue. It offers valuable insights into the broader sociopolitical and media landscapes of Pakistan. The research seeks to reveal the intricate dynamics between state agencies, the mainstream media, and the deliberate exclusion of Balochistan from national discourse. In doing so, the study confronts entrenched power structures and provides a platform for amplifying the voices of the marginalized Baloch community.

### **1.6.1 Global Relevance and Scholarly Contribution**

The findings of this research have important implications for global discussions on press freedom, human rights, and the role of journalism in conflict zones. By analysing the suppression of marginalized voices in Balochistan, this study contributes to the

larger conversation about the responsibility of the media in promoting fairness, accountability, and freedom.

It offers a critical perspective that can inform policymakers, international human rights organizations, and media watchdogs, helping them understand the challenges faced by journalists and marginalized communities in politically charged environments. Moreover, the study is intended to inspire future scholars, media professionals, and human rights activists to take on research and activism that confronts oppressive power structures. It highlights the need for academic courage in engaging in topics that are often avoided due to fear or state-imposed limitations.

### **1.6.2 Practical and Theoretical Implications**

Theoretically, this research fills critical gaps in existing literature by examining the roles that state institutions and mainstream media play in the systematic marginalization of Balochistan. It explores the media's function as an instrument of state control and its failure to fulfil its journalistic duty of giving voice to marginalized communities. This study contributes to the fields of media studies, political science, and human rights by offering new frameworks and perspectives.

On a practical level, the research aims to provide actionable recommendations for media outlets, policymakers, and journalists to ensure that marginalized groups, particularly the Baloch people, are more equitably represented in the media. The study stresses the need for reform in media practices and policies, both nationally and internationally, to foster greater transparency, inclusivity, and accountability.

In conclusion, this research represents a pioneering effort to challenge the status quo and expose the systemic biases and control exercised by Pakistan's state institutions and the media.

The researcher's bold decision to tackle this sensitive and high-risk topic makes a significant contribution to the academic world and beyond. By critically examining the dynamics of media suppression and state control in Balochistan, this study not only gives a voice to the marginalized but also sets a precedent for courageous and impactful research. The findings of this study are intended to shape global conversations on press freedom, human rights, and the representation of marginalized communities in the media, while also inspiring future academic and journalistic work on sensitive, underreported issues.

### **1.7 Conceptual Definitions**

Below are the conceptual and operational definitions for key terms in this study:

#### **i) Exploitation**

##### *Conceptual Definition*

Exploitation in the media refers to unethical practices where media outlets prioritize sensationalism, profit, or agendas over responsible journalism. This often leads to the manipulation of stories, misrepresentation, or the commodification of personal suffering (Barendt, 2005). Such exploitation undermines the integrity of journalism and reduces the public's trust in the media (McChesney, 2008).

##### *Operational Definition*

In practice, media exploitation involves using sensational headlines, imagery, and invasive techniques to capture attention, often at the cost of accuracy and respect for

the subjects involved (McCarthy, 2019). Tactics such as privacy violations and stereotyping can lead to a distorted view of reality, further commercializing news (Lichtenberg, 2006).

## **ii) Mainstream Media**

### *Conceptual Definition*

Mainstream media consists of the major communication outlets, including prominent newspapers, television networks, radio stations, and digital platforms, which have significant societal influence. According to Lunt and Livingstone (2013), mainstream media plays a pivotal role in shaping public opinion, often aligning with the interests of dominant social and political groups, which can marginalize alternative voices.

### *Operational Definition*

Operationally, mainstream media refers to influential media organizations that create content with broad audience reach, governed by established journalistic standards. Davis (2013) emphasizes that commercial networks, leading newspapers, and digital media outlets dominate public discourse through their extensive distribution capabilities.

## **iii) Reporting**

### *Conceptual Definition*

Reporting in the news media involves gathering, verifying, and disseminating information on current events to inform the public. McQuail (2010) asserts that reporting is not just factual recounting but involves the interpretation and contextualization of events to help educate citizens and foster informed participation in democracy.

### *Operational Definition*

In media practice, reporting includes systematically gathering data through methods like interviews, observation, and document analysis, followed by the creation of written or broadcast content. According to Ward (2015), ethical reporting must adhere to accuracy, fairness, and balance, ensuring that news is presented in a responsible manner.

#### **iv) Tone (in Media)**

### *Conceptual Definition*

In the context of media, "tone" refers to the emotional attitude conveyed through language, framing, and presentation. Tone shapes audience perceptions and can range from neutral to positive, negative, or biased (Fawcett, 2018). It significantly influences how a message is received and interpreted by the public.

### *Operational Definition*

Operationally, tone is analysed through linguistic choices, visual elements, and contextual cues in media content. It can be classified as positive, negative, neutral, or biased depending on the word choices, framing, and visuals used. Techniques like sentiment analysis and content analysis are employed to measure tone (Thelwall, 2014).

## **1.8 Summary of the Chapter**

This chapter explores the essential role of a free press in advancing democratic values, promoting accountability, and amplifying the voices of marginalized communities. Drawing on the work of scholars such as Kovach and Rosenstiel, it emphasizes the press's function in informing the public, scrutinizing power, and acting as a guardian of the public interest. The historical development of journalism is traced from ancient

censorship in imperial China to the rise of investigative reporting, underscoring how the struggle for press freedom has been intertwined with broader movements for truth and justice. Key historical milestones such as the French Revolution, the Reformation, and the Watergate scandal illustrate the press's transformative influence on societies.

The chapter then shifts focus to the complex relationship between media and marginalized communities, using the Baloch population in Pakistan as a case study. Despite Balochistan's economic importance and history of political struggle, its representation in mainstream Pakistani media remains severely limited. Through the lens of the Authoritarian Theory of the Press, the chapter analyses how centralized media ownership and state influence have contributed to the erasure and distortion of Baloch narratives. This exclusion has not only fuelled misinformation but also deepened the community's social, political, and economic disenfranchisement.

By examining the structural inequalities in media portrayal, the chapter argues for a more equitable and socially responsible journalism. It calls attention to the ways in which fair representation in media can serve as a catalyst for social justice, particularly in conflict-ridden and underreported regions. Through this lens, the chapter contributes to a broader understanding of how media systems shape public perception, influence policy discourse, and reinforce or challenge existing power structures.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Early Forms of Communication**

Human interaction began around 30,000 BC, when early people used various means of communication to relay information. This comprised cave paintings, as well as the fabrication of marks and patterns on bones, ivory, and stones (Woodford, 2022). Around 3500 BCE, the Sumerians developed cuneiform (pictographs), which paved the way for written communication (Woodford, 2022). Significant advances followed, including the production of paper from crushed tree bark in 105 CE and the discovery of stone ink by the Chinese approximately 3000 BCE (Test, 2023).

These advancements opened the way for the Chinese woodblock printing technology, which was created around 700 CE and culminated in Johannes Gutenberg's printing press around 1450 CE (Test, 2023). This progress in communication systems marked a transition away from simple alphabets, languages, and speech and toward a more systematic transmission of messages and information to broad, unconnected audiences (Test, 2023).

Monarchies and kingdoms used these communication techniques to spread their achievements, cultures, languages, and civilizations. Notably, Alexander the Great launched the Hellenistic Age, in which Greek culture, language, and intellectual thought extended over Asia Minor, including Turkey, Egypt, and India (Bury et al., 2023). This cultural exchange also permitted the transmission of Greek classics and values to Latin Western Europe during the Middle Ages, having a substantial impact on Europe's intellectual landscape (Perry et al. 2009). Credit goes to the Greeks who for the first time, developed news as a means of spreading information, particularly

about wars and victories. According to Fornieles (2022), they used to share information about military encounters, victories, and other cultural and literary activities, such as poetry. On a larger scale, they transported Greek literature, medicine, science, theology, philosophy, law, history, material culture, and ancient traditions.

Thucydides was a pioneering figure in journalism, functioning as the first Greek war correspondent to capture major military engagements and political speeches about 2,500 years ago. He participated directly in these events, laying the groundwork for journalism and reporting accurately (CBC, 2023). Political scientist Professor Clifford Orwin emphasized the terrible impact of wars on Greek cities, which displaced countless people and destroyed homes. Thucydides scrupulously chronicled their experiences, ensuring that critical lessons from these turbulent times were not forgotten (CBC, 2023).

Furthermore, Homer's "The Odyssey" is widely recognized as one of the most significant works of journalism, embodying the four competitive roles of mass communication: informing, persuading, entertaining, and transmitting culture. By this time, ancient Europe had seen the birth of daily newspapers, with the Romans publishing the *Acta* in 131 BCE. This newspaper provides insight into the activities of government officials, allowing inhabitants of Rome to interact with the information supplied.

Similarly, in 1282 AD, the Spanish established a communication system by making extensive use of paper from Aragon (now part of Spain), allowing anybody, regardless of social standing, to print their writings, including poetry.

## 2.2 The Emergence of Elite-Oriented Press

In the early days of communication, scholars and intellectuals had feelings that the public did not have understanding about complex political and strategic topics. The elites developed the press and journalist class to become intermediaries to play a role between public and elites. Turner (1998) explained that journalists were responsible for listening to elites, documenting their information, polishing it, and communicating it to the public. Walter Lippmann mirrored this sentiment, seeing journalism as a link between the general people, and legislators or policymakers.

Early journalism flourished in several European countries, including Italy, France, England, Germany, the Netherlands, Portugal, and Spain. Significant periodicals were published during this time including the Gazette, created in French in 1631; Gazeta Nueva, inaugurated in Spanish in 1661; and the London Gazette, started in England in 1665. These state-sponsored journalism initiatives acted as vehicles for monarchical propaganda (Espejo, 2011).

During this time, journalists mostly served as interpreters of elite movements and political issues. The intellectual class denounced this system as an authoritarian communication apparatus that controlled popular opinion. For over two centuries after Gutenberg established the printing press in 1440, Western Europe followed authoritarian principles that restricted press freedom and imposed rigorous rules that stifled free expression (Siebert & Schramm, 1956).

According to historical records, great philosophers such as Plato argued for control over ideas and the press to defend state-affairs and well-being of territories. Socrates, a proponent of authoritarianism, encouraged submission to authority. Machiavelli

agreed with these concepts, arguing that rulers should exercise control when public discourse threatened state stability (Siebert & Schramm, 1956).

Paul Joseph Goebbels famously portrayed the press as an instrument used by the government or elites, analogous to a piano under their control (Siebert & Schramm, 1956). Similarly, in 1651, Thomas Hobbes articulated a political philosophy emphasizing the importance of monitoring individuals to maintain order and peace (Siebert & Schramm, 1956).

In contrast, the Chinese media landscape followed a market-socialist paradigm in which freedom and communication were centralized and regulated by the government. Cédric Alviani, head of Reporters Without Borders for Taiwan and Southeast Asia, stated that in the 1990s, high-quality investigative journalism arose in China, with state media criticizing the government and Chinese Communist Party (CCP) officials (Noubel, 2023). However, Alviani saw a decrease in this trend after Xi Jinping tightened control over the press in 2012, which has had negative consequences on Chinese society (Noubel, 2023).

### **2.3 The Rise of the Free Press**

The printing press facilitated the formation of several journalistic paradigms, such as the English model, the French or Continental model, the liberal thesis, and the Marxist thesis (Espejo, 2011). The eighteenth century saw the growth of political parties and the spread of democratic ideology, which dramatically reduced authoritarian regimes' ability to control journalistic freedom. Shepard (1913) contended that citizens needed awareness of their difficulties as members of social organizations rather than as mere objects of government.

Freedom of speech and expression were held in high respect in the United States (Lee, 2009). Following the Civil War, news organizations in the United States established strong institutional frameworks that aided in the professionalization of the press. Journalism has developed from a job to a disciplined profession that requires extensive training (Magarian, 2023).

Institutional news media adopted professional norms alongside the learning of essential skills, resulting in the formation of complex hierarchies that maximized operational effectiveness and credibility. This professionalization increased competition among news organizations, resulting in publicly beneficial consequences (Magarian, 2023). The institutionalization and professionalization of the news industry gave journalists a unique constitutional role as public trustees. The United States Supreme Court granted newspapers immunity from punishment for criticizing government officials, reaffirming the press's role in keeping the government and strong private players responsible (Magarian, 2023).

Sulzberger (2023) stated that the New York Times has been committed to independent journalistic practices for almost a century, reporting on worldwide stories without fear or favour. Historically, media specialists saw journalism as an organized system and an expression of popular culture in civilizations around the world. In 1845, German philosopher Robert Eduard Prutz described journalism as the documentation of debates within conflict-ridden society, highlighting the importance of skilled individuals. According to Erjavec (2011), journalists act as both chroniclers of events and bearers of social critique. The ideals of accuracy and credibility have been central to journalism, with Buttry (2009) naming accuracy as the most important criterion in journalistic ethics.

Some other numerous media scholars, such as James Curran, regard the liberal narrative of media as the best-established practice, arguing that it not only facilitated the introduction of mass democracy in the Western world, particularly in the United Kingdom, but also distanced itself from ruling elites and government control (Curran, 2012). The eighteenth century saw the end of government licensing for the press, and by the mid-nineteenth century, press taxes and newspaper charges had been eliminated (Curran, 2012).

In the field of broadcasting, BBC Radio, which was established in the 1930s, and BBC Television, which emerged in the 1950s, gradually gained operational independence from direct government influence (Curran, 2012). Public service radio played a vital role in reducing the knowledge gap between political elites and the public by prioritizing information dissemination (Scannell & Cardiff, 1991). By the 1950s, BBC Television adopted a more proactive approach to political interviews, enhancing public accountability and fostering greater political engagement (Curran & Seaton, 2018).

Marshall McLuhan's thoughts in the 1960s, particularly "the medium is the message," highlighted the importance of press freedoms. Along with McLuhan, thinkers such as John B. Thompson and John W. Chapman investigated how mass media affects society. They proposed that the expansion of mass media altered social, economic, religious, and political systems (Singh, 2016). Television evolved as a vital medium, reaching a larger audience and becoming a very effective advertising platform (Stevenson, 2002). According to Baran (2009), television technology was one of the most significant technologies of the twentieth century. Similarly, Turner (1998) found that the historical evolution of the press has largely tracked the trajectory of civil rights movements, showing the interaction of communication medium and society dynamics.

## 2.4 Ethics and Responsibilities of the Press

Since the seventeenth century, European media practices have been guided by the concepts of responsible journalism and media ethics. According to theorists such as Ward (2007), journalism ethics entails investigating the behaviour of journalists as well as the media's broader societal responsibility. Scholars offer multiple stages and methodologies for investigating how people interpret, convey, and exchange information on a wide range of subjects. Finally, the media benefits society by providing accurate information while reducing harm (Ward, 2008).

Scholars of communication have examined journalists and news organizations critically. Sorensen (2012) puts it best: *"Once journalists exposed lies, fought for the truth, and dedicated significant time to well-crafted stories, everything has gone awry today."*

Critics believe that the media should promote cultural autonomy and authenticity among social groups characterized by language, location, and national identity. There is also the view that media should provide access and aid to disenfranchised or nonconforming social groups that differ from the prevailing national narrative (McQual et al., 2005). In this context, Van Dijk (1995) underlines the press's persuasive power, particularly when its reporting corresponds to audience interests. Journalists have more clout by focusing on grassroots issues rather than national ones, thereby tackling local problems.

Furthermore, McNair (2006) encourages media academics to argue for maximum freedom across and within national borders, rejecting censorship and other restrictions. He observes that this struggle goes beyond class issues, symbolizing a global war for the rights of all people. McNair's views encourage media professionals to engage with

people from all cultural origins, nationalities, languages, and religions without discrimination. His position encourages adherence to ethical principles and the primary aim of journalism.

Ethical issues require media outlets and journalists to prioritize the public's welfare (Sandman, 1976). When journalists use media influence for personal gain, they violate ethical standards. According to Ward (2007), journalism ethics helps resolve issues and harmonize ideals, guiding people toward a more just way of life. Christians and Nordenstreng (2004), as well as Thompson (1995), emphasize the need of internationally responsible media in educating the public about their rights and crucial concerns.

Free media is regarded as critical to democracy and a significant platform for freedom of expression (Deane, 2015). The free press promotes government responsibility, debate, and tolerance, especially in fragile and conflict-affected communities. Servae and Lie (1997) emphasize the media's obligations to communities, societies, and states, claiming that during crises, the media works collaboratively by providing information, highlighting urgent community issues, and fostering public discourse.

In this capacity, the media serves as a watchdog against state power, challenging authority and defending journalism (Servae & Lie, 1997). The concepts of rationalism and postmodern critiques in the contemporary news are inextricably linked; rationalist approaches use scientific methods to uncover truths, whereas postmodernism holds that truth is subjective and formed by many civilizations. Walter Lippmann championed scientific data collection and analysis.

Truth-telling is a core premise of the press, founded on democratic ideals (Sulzberger, 2023). In a pluralistic democracy, independent media acts as a link between individuals and society, providing forums for varied arguments and points of view. The life and sustainability of democracy are dependent on this flow of ideas (Sulzberger, 2023).

Journalists contribute to public discourse by exposing lies and facilitating critical conversation. This dedication to the truth elevates journalism's value and fosters public trust (Sulzberger, 2023). As a democratic institution, the free press enables voters to hold their elected officials accountable through open discussion and debate (America, 2023). Investigative journalists in the United States, for example, work to find truths that the public ought to know while functioning under the protection of the Constitution (America, 2023).

## **2.5 Advantages of Media**

During World War II, many authoritarian regimes in the Western world exploited the press to uphold their own goals and targets, frequently drowning out the voices of weak nations. In response to this serious situation, the Hutchins Commission was formed in 1942, led by University of Chicago President Robert M. Hutchins. The Commission argued that the press should more truthfully and independently depict the conditions and aspirations of all ethnic and religious minorities, as well as rural communities. Following this attempt, Denis McQuail introduced a concept arguing that media should identify and fulfil certain public obligations (McQuail, 2005).

Mohandas Gandhi used the printing press, as well as his multilingual journal, *Indian Opinion*, to rouse the masses against British colonial rule in India. He established the concept of Satyagraha, which emphasised truthfulness as a means of expressing a third viewpoint in the conflict between India and the British Empire. Hofmeyr (2013)

defined this as an ideology of nonviolent resistance that allowed people to learn self-governance.

The social responsibility theory of the press, developed by Siebert, Peterson, and Schramm in 1956, advocates for censorship-free media. In 1972, Dr. Maxwell McCombs and Dr. Donald Shaw added to the discussion by developing the agenda-setting hypothesis, emphasizing the need for the press to adopt procedures that align public agendas with media coverage (Berger & Freeman, 2011).

Sandoval and Fuchs (2010) presented an alternative media system that invites regular persons to engage in media activism through community and participatory journalism, as opposed to the concepts of social responsibility and agenda shaping. Trevino (2013) perceived alternative media as a forum for marginalized and minority voices, noting that online blogging enables lower-class people to contest mainstream narratives generated by power elites.

In today's digital media ecosystem, prominent businesses such as Facebook, Google, Apple, and Microsoft have a tremendous impact. These platform businesses have created a publishing ecosystem in which many news organizations have minimal control over the distribution of their content. The relationship between communication sciences, media studies, and data sciences is strengthening, notably through big data and artificial intelligence, raising public awareness of technology and global challenges (Nguyen, 2022). X (Twitter) has evolved as a significant agenda-setter that influences mainstream media coverage due to its large user base. For example, two billion tweets were registered in 2022 (Herve et al., 2022).

Despite the rise of these platforms, conventional media such as television, newspapers, and radio continue to have a substantial influence on public opinion. According to Seipp et al. (2023), traditional media pose a danger to editorial independence and autonomy, since newsrooms increasingly rely on these platforms for content distribution, potentially impeding the creation of independent opinions. According to Vaassen (2020), traditional news media continues to be a main source of information and has a responsibility to accurately inform global audiences while avoiding instigating conflict.

Experts have identified several ways by which the mass media shapes public opinion, with agenda-setting being particularly important (Ballan, 2023). The traditional media's choice of themes and approaches influences public perception; selective reporting and framing can also affect how stories are received. For example, depictions of prominent people that are unpleasant can lead to audiences adopting prejudiced opinions (Ballan, 2023).

Overall, media has the power to alter public and societal perceptions, both positively and negatively (Ballan, 2023). The impact of news media—whether political, social, or cultural—is inextricably linked to its policies and practices. On the bright side, when used correctly, media can promote sustainability and enable attitude shifts (MARF, 2023).

## **2.6 Disadvantages of Media**

In contrast, when utilized as a tool for control and manipulation, media can cause disruption. Media analysts claim that news institutions and journalists have lost public trust, owing to their apparent passivity and reluctance to hold power accountable.

According to Schudson (2022), the fall in trust can be traced back to the rise of democratic models in various parts of the world in the early 1970s, which changed the function and expectations of the media.

The rise of market-driven journalism has worsened the problem, as many media outlets increasingly prioritize responding to public demand over meeting the public's need for accurate and timely information. This trend, frequently linked with public media, has resulted in situations in which subjective emotions and sensationalism trump factual reporting and objective analysis (Buoncompagni, 2023).

Research shows that mainstream media regularly misrepresents underprivileged populations while encouraging prejudices and sensationalism that target vulnerable groups (Arguedas et al., 2023). According to research, the media in the United Kingdom, the United States, and India frequently serve the interests of powerful classes, with journalists lacking the lived experiences required to grasp varied realities.

Andersen et al. (2023) discovered that the public's preference for alternative news sources, such as social media, has eroded trust in traditional news media. For example, during the Israel-Gaza conflict, U.S. media was chastised for propagating storylines that ignored the plight of innocent Palestinian civilians. According to some observers, the lack of government support allows US media outlets to maintain their independence.

In contrast, in some countries, government money is frequently used to control and silence critical views (America, 2023). As traditional media loses public trust, people are increasingly turning to social media for news. To reestablish public trust, the mainstream media routinely recirculates social media material. Individuals can

generate independent viewpoints and challenge skewed narratives using social media and alternative news outlets, reducing their reliance on mainstream media (Andersen et al., 2023).

While digital platforms can help to reduce political polarization, they can also spread misinformation and conspiracy theories, confusing the media landscape (Andersen et al., 2023). McNair (2006), a communication specialist, claims that certain parties, such as neoconservatives and evangelicals, use information and communication technology to influence the global news agenda. He described this media system as an intellectual state propaganda machine for ruling elites. Similarly, Chomsky and Herman (1979) criticize Western media as 'ideological organizations' that hide and support the objectives of dominant groups.

In today's digital landscape, researchers say that the media strongly use to establish political legitimacy and advance their goals. According to Nerone (1987), the growth of partisan politics and market economics has resulted in the politicized and commercialization of the media. As a result, media agendas grow more customized and fragmented, reducing the effectiveness of agenda-setting theory in today's media ecosystem (Turner, 1990; Berger & Freeman, 2011).

Critics claim that private media frequently prioritizes financial gain over public interest, resulting in news coverage that reflects corporate principles (Chomsky 1999). According to Moeller (1999), mainstream media is progressively ignoring human catastrophes, instead focusing on spectacular and violent imagery with limited context. Economic and cultural changes in globalization further defines the global media environment, promoting commercial marketplaces and consumer ideals. McChesney (2001) associates media ideals with neoliberalism, emphasizing how corporate

interests drive media and communication markets. Progressive anti-neoliberal movements in industrialized nations are increasingly including media issues into their political agenda.

Herman and Chomsky (2010) believed that the media serves the interests of powerful organizations that affect policies and narratives, resulting in manipulation and meaninglessness in news reporting (D'Angelo & Kuypers, 2010). Chomsky (2003) warns that when the media controls public opinion and reinforces corporate power, the system resembles a skewed version of democracy. This control undermines public agency and restricts knowledge distribution, perpetuating a cycle of deception and exploitation.

Critics see news media outlets as threats to press freedom, claiming that most news organizations globally are influenced by authorities and capitalists (Himmelboim & Limor, 2008). These authorities frequently develop journalists who share their objectives, resulting in the hiding of key topics from public view (Bowman and Wills, 2003). According to Luther et al. (2012), the media favours dominant groups while being hostile to minority ones.

## **2.7 Control and Biases in Media**

In liberal democracies, the voices of the public are given importance by the press. As stated in previous chapters that the free press is necessary for society to function effectively (Myrie, 2023). However, the free press may become both enticing and hazardous for certain powerful groups, such as elites, financial backers, and influencers, who may be resistant to diversity of thought and debate (Myrie, 2023). This opposition frequently presents itself in propaganda and one-sided narratives, which violate journalistic ethics (Myrie, 2023).

Critical theory suggests that the media frequently exhibits conservative bias, interprets news as an ideological product intended to mold public awareness and sustain society's governing interests (Lichter, 2017). According to this viewpoint, corporate ownership and control of commercial-oriented news organizations contribute to an oligopoly in which misinformation serves corporation rather than public interests, stifling enlightenment and emancipation (Lichter, 2017).

Literature shows that media bias existed since the beginning of newspapers. This bias has frequently caused political authorities to limit press freedom. President Abraham Lincoln, for example, closed numerous newspapers that supported the South during the Civil War in the 1860s (Essays, 2018). This historical setting exemplifies the media's ongoing inclination to favour specific ideas or social groups.

Castaneda (2014) discusses the notions of "pushing down" and "pushing away" in media, relating them to the exclusion of Latino voices from mainstream American media. These practices raise impediments to the representation of underrepresented communities. Consequently, UNESCO stated that communication has frequently deteriorated into an interchange between unequal partners, mostly supporting the interests of the wealthier, hegemonic classes (UNESCO 1980).

Experts define media bias as distortions of reality, favouritism, and partisanship that can undermine civic engagement and democratic processes. Such biases impede the distribution of information required for audiences to make educated decisions about current affairs, with television usually identified as the principal target of this critique (Lichter, 2017). Trust in the news media is considered critical to the health of democracy. However, Dolan (2019) reports a considerable drop in trust due to popular unhappiness with skewed reporting. Mitchel (2018) emphasizes that politicians have

increasingly questioned the media's reporting content and journalistic standards. The findings of Newman and Fletcher's (2017) study reveal a general lack of faith in media across audiences in eight European nations, including the United States, with around 67% identifying bias, spin, and hidden agendas as main concerns. The public believes that powerful people use the media to advance their political and economic goals, while ignoring the representation of ordinary citizens and marginalized groups.

Many media outlets contribute to polarization by picking sides, failing to challenge falsehoods, concealing crucial information, or presenting false equivalencies between partisan viewpoints. According to Mitchel et al. (2018), almost 75% of people in 38 nations considered the media failed to report honestly. Gallup survey data revealed that there is a growing suspicion of skewed news among Americans, with Rothwell (2018) stating that 47% of the audience is sceptical of the media due to limited storytelling.

The partiality of the news media raises questions about public judgment and might instil prejudice in audiences. The recent Columbia Journalism Review figured out that no major news media in the United States has earned the public's trust (Rothwell, 2018). Furthermore, major media outlets in the industrialized world show partiality toward global political concerns. For example, Guidero and Hallward (2019) discovered that foreign media covers the Yemen conflict far less than it does Syria. Similarly, Lobe (2019) found that in 2018, the war in Yemen received only 20 minutes of coverage on A.B.C., N.B.C., and C.B.S. news shows, whereas the British royal wedding received 71 minutes.

Media analysts feel that manipulators distort facts and only show what benefits the authority (Konieczny, 2023). The state implements a misinformation strategy to

manipulate and control communities or societies (Konieczny, 2023). The distorted flow of information blinds viewers to global reality and prevents them from comprehending how governments and violent groups affect news distribution across boundaries.

Simon (2018) contends that new control mechanisms introduced by autocrats or democrats are growing around the world, suffocating public discourse and endangering the free press. Instead of using overt force, such autocrats purposefully use stealth, deception, and deceit to disguise their policies in democratic discourse while dealing with the international community.

Scholars believe that autocrats who dominate the media transmit skewed attitudes across generations. Essays (2018) showed that younger people take partisan viewpoints as fundamental facts and pass them down to their children. While this strategy has always aided in the spread of racist notions, modern media plays an important part in propagating such myths. According to Rasidi (2018), big media firms favour Western military efforts in Syria while ignoring the humanitarian disaster in Yemen.

Messamore (2018) added that the atrocities occurring in Yemen are frequently ignored by global media due to the United States' domination in mainstream media. Similarly, while certain media sources have risen in support of Ukrainians against Russia, they also support Israel while ignoring the depiction of the Palestinian situation.

## **2.8 News Media: *Tool of Exploitation and Propaganda***

Actors use numerous distraction strategies through mass media to control, filter, and manipulate information and communication processes (Stone, 2011). Propaganda is a

common tactic that seeks to affect public perception by directing attention to specific content or one-sided narratives that coincide with the actors' intentions (Stone, 2011). French philosopher and theologian Jacques Ellul believed that public opinion can only be expressed through media channels; without them, propaganda is impossible (Ellul, 2021).

Frohardt (2003) provided persuasive data to highlight the significance of journalists' political, ethnic, religious, and regional backgrounds. When individuals from specific political parties, ethnic groups, or regions have a strong impact on media outlets, they may collaborate to impose disproportionate control over media content. In extreme situations, the media can be used to promote small group interests, influencing public discourse and potentially leading society into conflict (Frohardt, 2003). This leads to media manipulation, in which actors use media and communication venues to propagate their narratives while suppressing opposing views (Marwick & Lewis, 2017).

Exploitation, according to John Roemer's thesis, is a type of distributive injustice associated with asset imbalances that do not involve conceptions of power or domination. However, Veneziani (2013) contends that power dynamics must be considered while defining exploitation. Media exploitation happens when someone uses the media to falsify facts to appeal to specific audiences and advance their political, social, or economic objectives.

Langworth's (2020) findings showed that News International, which is Rupert Murdoch's UK media corporation, used biased reporting against the BBC and Ofcom to serve its financial objectives. This coverage demonstrates Murdoch's use of his newspapers for self-interest and media market supremacy (Langworth, 2020). This

technique employs distractions to shift public attention away from critical concerns (Sean & Jeanne, 1997). Mass media manipulation techniques substantially reduce the reception of crucial information (Sean & Jeanne 1997).

Donovan (2021) observed that media manipulators have used imaginative strategies such as hoaxes and fabrications to create their narratives, considerably altering public discourse and generating disruption on a local, national, and worldwide scale. Media manipulation has two consequences: it erodes public faith in mainstream media and exacerbates problems with misinformation and extremism (Grindle, 2023). Grindle (2023) believed that the media has historically misled or ignored society's most vulnerable populations. Cooke (2018) claimed that fake news is frequently circulated for financial gain while misleading the public.

### **2.8.1 Media Ownership**

Sjvaag and Ohlsson (2019) emphasized the importance of media ownership in shaping news content, journalistic autonomy, freedom of expression, and professional practices. Media owners frequently utilize their platforms to create societal narratives that support their interests or advance specific group agendas, which can influence political processes (Sjvaag & Ohlsson, 2019). Transparency in media ownership is a legal condition that must be met when judging journalistic excellence (Figueira, 2023). When media outlets serve as instruments for diverse interests, they cause long-term harm to society by disseminating incorrect and biased information. Historically, powerful elites have used media to spread propaganda, expending significant money to obtain media support for their agendas (Raj et al., 2023).

Ownership of news media often entails two key characteristics: economic and political advantages. Economic reasons entice company owners looking to maximize profits,

whereas political incentives entice military, partisan, or industrial interests (Amos & Joseph, 2023). In his book *Media and Power*, James Curran contended that media has substantial power to bring a positive social change or diverting the perceptions of public if effectively utilized by its affiliated persons; however, this power is deemed weak if it remains dormant (Curran, 2012).

In many so-called democracies, media has a dual function: it provides insights into diverse interest groups' efforts to influence public policy while also safeguarding and promoting their interests (Johnson, 2014). Journalists are thus responsible for elevating minority perspectives and holding strong organizations accountable without fear of punishment. Sevenans (2018), assessed that information distributed through media attracts more attention from politicians and powerful elites than similar information from non-media sources, implying that media selection—what news is covered or ignored—has a significant impact on public perception.

According to European and American political agenda-setting academics, politicians react to media announcements because they impact public discourse (Van Aelst & Walgrave, 2016). Politicians understand the link between media coverage and public opinion, which makes it critical to respond to media narratives.

### **2.8.2 Advertisement, Psychological Warfare, and Funding**

Advertising strategies are another distraction in the media world. Wu (2017) defines "attention theft" as how advertisers divert people's attention away from important topics by directing them to commercial content. Advertisements are classified into two types: commercial advertisements that promote products and non-commercial advertisements that transmit certain state narratives.

Shehzad Roy, a Pakistani pop singer, published a national song showing Balochistan as a prosperous province pleased with its administration, which serves as an exemplary example. News outlets such as Al Jazeera TV aired a program called it false propaganda that contradicts Balochistan and its people's circumstances (Al Jazeera, 2022).

Furthermore, governments or elite forces use psychological warfare to diver people's values, emotions, norms, and beliefs via media reporting (Stone, 2011). One significant example is Pakistani institutions portraying Dr. Mahrang Baloch as being involved in anti-state activities, even though she is a nonviolent activist pushing for justice in Balochistan (Baloch, 2024; Malhotra, 2024). Critics, such as Dragomir (2018), argue that governments use strategies such as adopting regulations, making legislation, and threatening journalists or media owners to control the media environment. However, money appears to be the most effective technique for controlling narratives. Authorities manage to control a significant portion of the media landscape by offering financial incentives to government-aligned media outlets and journalists while withholding resources from independent media (Dragomir, 2018).

Many countries maintain direct or indirect control over the whole media industry (Dragomir, 2018). State-sponsored advertising, like subsidies, is one of the more clandestine kinds of government funding that serves as a potent instrument for shaping the news media.

### **2.8.3 Framing the News Media**

When it comes to framing news media, editorial decisions regarding what to publish, which articles to emphasize, and who to highlight on talk shows have a significant impact on public opinion (Remmers, 2014). Erving Goffman created the notion of

media framing, which emphasizes how the media draws attention to specific occurrences and sets them within larger narratives (D'Angelo, 2017). Audiences interpret their surroundings through the media's glasses (D'Angelo, 2017).

Critics link this notion of framing to the practice of agenda-setting, arguing that how topics are framed for the audience influences how they digest information (D'Angelo, 2017). This implies that the media not only determines which issues viewers should consider (agenda-setting theory) but also influences how they interpret these topics (second-level agenda setting, or framing theory) (D'Angelo, 2017).

## **2.9 Media Landscape and Journalism Practices in Pakistan**

Many Pakistanis believe that the launch of private television channels by President Pervaiz Musharaf in 2002 was a watershed moment in the country's press. It is widely assumed that the military purposefully developed this new media landscape to exercise control over mainstream media by providing financial opportunities that aided spread their narratives (Baluch, 2021). The media landscape in Pakistan was thought to have developed a strong alliance between television broadcasters and state institutions in 2002 (Baluch, 2021).

Private television networks, such as Geo TV, ARY News, Samaa News, and Dawn News, compete fiercely for ratings, which are required to attract advertisements and generate money. However, the major emphasis on ratings has resulted in a drop in journalism standards, with these channels frequently succumbing to sensationalism rather than pursuing healthy, ethical journalism (Ashfaq & Shabir, 2018). These media outlets have never refrained from criticizing politicians and democratic institutions, but they are nonetheless hesitant to expose human rights breaches and corruption inside the military and intelligence organizations ("The Hard Limits of," 2018).

The factor of media ownership complicates Pakistan's media landscape since media owners, considered as businesses, desire money over journalistic integrity. Because of their reliance on government marketing, they are hesitant to criticize state officials. Journalists from lower socioeconomic origins who join such publications may soon become wealthy and popular, but they must balance financial success with journalistic integrity.

Traditionally, journalists should promote impartiality and serve the public good, as underlined by Yun (2008), who argued for the media's social responsibility. However, as Herman and Chomsky (1988) point out, the concentration of media ownership can function as a barrier to these principles by tying media operatives' tendencies to safeguard financial interests. Raza et al. (2022) discovered a severe lack of public confidence in Pakistani media, with many people believing that cross-media ownership undermines variety and journalistic independence.

Furthermore, the mainstream media landscape fails to provide a pluralistic representation of Pakistan's different social and religious communities, resulting in a limited portrayal of reality that favours elite narratives over constitutional ones (Ghouri et al., 2022). Nadeem's (2022) research stressed that major newspapers have a monopoly on essential news content, which contributes to a lack of public discourse on critical problems. This trend extends to the portrayal of Afghan refugees, who are frequently misunderstood or neglected, with the military establishment playing a prominent part in this narrative (Jehangir, 2023).

The mainstream media frequently dismisses human development difficulties, such as Pakistan's low Human Development Index rating (Kamboh, 2022). Similarly, civil rights movements receive little attention (Hussain et al., 2022). Chaudhry (2019)

observed that minorities are rarely covered in the media unless they are involved in issues, such as blasphemy, maintaining a cycle of marginalization.

Media institutions and journalists are frequently criticized for failing to uphold journalistic norms, resulting in biased news and agenda-driven storylines. The gap in coverage of cases like Zainab and Farishta demonstrates how ethnicity can unfairly influence media prioritizing, jeopardizing the quality of reporting.

The military's tremendous influence over the media is a major source of concern, according to Seyal (2017), who claimed that gatekeepers in the news industry select whether stories are covered, leading to greater polarization. Military and intelligence organizations actively repress opposition and criticism of their operations (Odonnell, 2022). The historical backdrop of press freedom in Pakistan demonstrates continuing obstacles, with Hussain et al. (2023) noting that media endured worse harassment under democratic administrations than under authoritarian regimes.

Furthermore, the US State Department has highlighted the China-Pakistan Media Corridor (CPMC) as a means of influencing Pakistani media and furthering China's objectives in the region. This effort includes reducing criticism of China and projects such as the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), including

This approach involves limiting criticism of China and projects such as the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which encapsulates the complex interplay between local media practices and foreign interests (Adnan, 2023).

## **2.10 Journalism Practices in Balochistan**

Baloch insurgents have been fighting for independence from the Pakistani state since 1948 (Petersen, 2024). This prolonged conflict has also escalated relations between

Pakistan and Iran, with both blaming the other of backing separatist rebels (Petersen, 2024). The dispute has recently received international attention as a result of a series of air strikes between the two countries in January 2024.

Despite the severity of the violence and unrest, Pakistan's mainstream media has mainly ignored the Balochistan conflict. Shamsullah (2022) argues that censorship and a lack of independent journalism have prevented significant concerns from reaching a national and global audience. While the situation between Pakistan and Iran has made headlines, more serious incidents in Balochistan sometimes go unreported. The region has garnered notoriety as one of the world's most dangerous places for journalists, as reported by Reporters Without Borders and dubbed a "graveyard for journalists" by Amnesty International (Ali, 2023).

The Baloch Liberation Army (B.L.A.) started an attack against military and security posts in Mach City on January 29, 2024, in the Mach area, which is around sixty-five kilo meters from Quetta, Balochistan's capital. The B.L.A. claimed control of the city for two days, citing significant military achievements such as the deaths of 78 Pakistani soldiers and the destruction of critical infrastructure. However, both Pakistani and foreign news channels failed to cover this significant occurrence.

Women in Balochistan are painfully aware of the consequences of this conflict, as they have openly protested governmental violence and sought justice. Women have been beaten, arrested, and intimidated by police and intelligence organizations, but these abuses have gone mostly undetected (Saba, 2023). Families of missing people staged a march from Balochistan to Islamabad in December 2023, camping outside the National Press Club for 30 days to demand justice and the return of their loved ones. Security officers used water cannons and tear gas to disperse the peaceful marchers,

treating women, children, and the elderly cruelly. Nonetheless, the mainstream media kept silent on this human rights violation (Jurist, 2023).

Dr. Mahrang Baloch, the protest leader, blasted the media's failure to report human rights violations, stressing a strong bias among Islamabad-based journalists who prioritize other issues over the condition of Balochistan's oppressed (Baloch, 2023). These tales must break through restrictions to reach national and global audiences, amplifying the voices of those suffering in Balochistan.

### **2.11 The Authoritarian Theory of the Press**

Historically, there has been a confrontation between two opposed ideologies: Authoritarians and Liberal Intellectuals. Authoritarians have sought to impose state control over media and journalistic practices, whilst liberal intellectuals have pushed for press independence from state monopolization (Siebert et al., 1956; McQuail, 2010). For centuries, different kingdoms and elites dominated media power. This behavior was referred to as "the authoritarian theory of the press" (Siebert et al., 1956). Dictatorial regimes have consistently claimed that the media should not question their authority and must follow their orders (Sheen et al., 2022). As a result, authoritarian governments developed situations in which the press benefited the ruling class (Silke, 1989).

These regimes enforced legal sanctions on journalists, including incarceration, bans, and even exile for those who disagreed with the official state narrative (Dragomir 2019). The authoritarian press idea has philosophical roots, particularly in Plato's belief that the state was safest in the hands of a few clever people (Hussain & Ahmad, 2020). In the 17th century, Thomas Hobbes acknowledged the state's hegemony over individual rights, as well as the state's authority over personal beliefs.

Friedrich Engels, a German revolutionary socialist, repeated Plato's thought, claiming that full freedom could only be achieved under authoritarianism (Silke, 1989). As a result, monarchies created a media environment that backed their rule while limiting opposition (Dragomir, 2019). They built a social order in which the media was forbidden from voicing the people's issues (Hussain & Ahmad, 2020).

Historical patterns of media management under authoritarian regimes are important for understanding the relationship between power and communication. According to Siebert et al. (1956), authoritarian regimes often impose strict media regulations that hinder press freedom. Some Rules are stated below:

- The press remains under the authority of the state that holds absolute power (Siebert et al., 1956).
- Media should not challenge state policies (McQuail, 2010).
- Defying these rules can lead to state-imposed censorship (Dragomir, 2019).
- Criticizing power is considered both a moral and criminal violation (Brown, 2013).
- The media must promote government or state ideologies (Savin et al. 2018).
- All printed information must reinforce the current authority (Somfaly, 2023).
- Content that threatens government power is prohibited (Sheen et al. 2022).
- Those who criticize the state's ideology suffer punishment, while media professionals lack independence from governmental influence (Brown, 2013).
- The government controls international media and imported material (Silke, 1989).
- Media outlets must register with the state (Walker, 2014).

A noteworthy difficulty in authoritarian nations is the lack of a unified journalism history that considers the opinions of prominent elites, such as the Roman Catholic Church (Silke, 1989). The continuous narrative frequently focuses on media manipulation and censorship, which have roots that go beyond journalism itself (Dragomir, 2019). Censorship has historically acted as a form of control, beginning with the Roman Catholic Church in the 16th century and transferring to secular absolutist regimes in the 17th century (Hussain & Ahmad, 2020).

As censorship shifted from clerical to secular authority, techniques for managing public information formed (Dragomir, 2019). Intellectuals made great efforts to remove these censoring techniques in the nineteenth century; yet authoritarianism resurfaced in the interwar period (Silke, 1989). This period saw the development of personalities like Kemal Ataturk, Francisco Franco, and Adolf Hitler (Hussain & Ahmad, 2020). Francis Fukuyama noted the rise of authoritarianism in the twenty-first century, indicating that major powers are progressively turning to authoritarian regimes (Hussain & Ahmad, 2020). Robert Kagan termed this regression as a "return to the jungle" (Hussain & Ahmad, 2020).

Fascist rulers, particularly those in the Soviet Union, used increasingly sophisticated and harsh censorship methods throughout the twentieth century. During the Cold War, Soviet propaganda spread throughout communist countries around the world (Silke, 1989). However, the dissolution of the Soviet Union created a new terrain for press freedom in various post-Soviet countries, enabling independent journalism (Hussain & Ahmad, 2020). Nonetheless, many governments continued to use authoritarian techniques, which are still prevalent today (Dragomir, 2019).

Scholars divide media control systems into Authoritarian and Competitive Authoritarian Systems (Silke, 1989). In an authoritarian context, the state strictly controls the media to stifle opposition and use communication to strengthen its dominance. This concept implies that the state has complete control over all modes of communication, with the media being utilized to advance governmental interests (Siebert et al. 1956). Media licenses are closely regulated, with the threat of revocation or pressure to conceal negative narratives (Hussain & Ahmad, 2020). As a result, authorities take legal action against imagined transgressions such as seditious libel, frequently enforcing restrictive press regulations (Brown, 2013).

Critics, such as Savin et al. (2018) stated that in the modern mediatized era, authoritarian governments have evolved in tandem with democratic norms and principles (Savin et al., 2018). Contemporary authoritarians employ tactics that avoid overt violence, relying instead on information manipulation to project their competence and governance (Sheen et al., 2022). While dictators are motivated to control the media, they also need access to knowledge to maintain an authoritarian regime (Sheen et al. 2018). As a result, they may enable enhanced media independence and transparency, fostering confidence and cooperation among regime elites (Hussain & Ahmad, 2020). In competitive authoritarian regimes, authorities use media pluralism to strengthen their power and compete with opposition parties for public support (Silke 1989).

In this setting, oligarchs frequently use media assets to trade media support for political goals, a practice called Media Capture (Pleines & Somfalvy, 2023). The media capture arises when business executives and politicians buy media outlets to increase their political clout. Regardless of whether the media is state-owned or private, authoritarian

regimes often control the agenda-setting role, using favourable material and propaganda to preserve power (Siebert et al., 1956).

The goal of propaganda is not always to persuade the public, but rather to demonstrate the regime's unrivalled power (Pleines & Somfalvy, 2023). Authorities in competitive authoritarian regimes may push or pay independent media outlets to ensure pro-regime coverage (Pleines & Somfalvy, 2023). Various researchers and journalism institutions have conducted research to understand the reasons for the global rise in authoritarianism (Morgan, 2021).

Morgan (2021) at the Freeman Spogli Institute of International Studies (FSIIS) identifies three primary factors: first, globalization, capitalism, and inequality threaten national identity; second, the United States' securitization policy after 9/11 has provided justifications for autocrats to exploit such policies; and third, technology and digital media platforms have become ideal vehicles for disinformation and surveillance by authoritarian regimes (Hussain & Ahmad, 2020). Regardless of the underlying motives, authoritarian media seeks to influence individuals and communities, primarily by targeting four audience categories (Walker, 2014). First, they want to secure and maintain the reign of regime elites.

For example, China's Communist Party leadership uses media domination to strengthen its influence among party members, the state bureaucracy, the armed forces, and the growing party-linked business community (Hussain & Ahmad, 2020). Similarly, Putin uses state-controlled media to project power onto the siloviki who occupies the military, police, and state security apparatus (Walker, 2014).

Second, authoritarian media has an impact on the general population, creating both respect and fear of the authority (Hussain and Ahmad, 2020). Third, they attempt to destroy political opposition and autonomous civil society by impeding organization and mobilization (Walker, 2014). Finally, they target Internet users (Orttun & Walker 2014). The internet has created new opportunities for journalists to engage in global concerns and interact with audiences (Dragomir, 2019). However, authoritarian countries are adopting new tactics for digital control and censorship (Hussain & Ahmad, 2020).

Freedom House has recognized numerous governments globally that pose serious dangers to journalists, including Russia, China, and Iran (Hartman, 2021). Freedom House states that "China conducts the most sophisticated, global, and comprehensive campaign of transnational repression in the world" (Hartman, 2021). In this connection, Creemers (2020) stated that China is apparently transferring its surveillance regulatory model to Pakistan, thereby reinforcing authoritarian governance by increasing state control over digital spaces and monitoring opposition.

Iran's regime targets journalists outside its boundaries by making threats against them, performing cyberattacks on their devices, and arresting journalists' families in Iran. Authorities in Russia repress student journalists domestically while monitoring and threatening international correspondents (Hartman, 2021). These regimes use the media to disseminate disinformation and propaganda. Populist officials and politicians have used social media to monitor and manage public opinion (Hussain & Ahmad, 2020). As authoritarianism grows more prevalent in diverse global contexts, it is critical to construct a cohesive and broadly understood notion of authoritarianism and authoritarian media (Savin et al., 2018).

### **2.11.1 Authoritarian Journalism Practices in Pakistan**

Several historians have emphasized the military's long-standing dominance in Pakistan, including during periods of civilian authority. According to Ganguly and Fair (2013), from Pakistan's founding, the military has established itself as a formidable authoritarian institution with enormous influence over foreign and internal affairs. Even when not under direct control, civilian institutions and political parties have failed to overcome the military's authoritarian legacy (Ganguly & Fair, 2013). According to Barany (2009), army generals have ultimate authority over the political system, defining how much and how long civilian politicians can exercise power. This reality demonstrates the conditional character of civilian authority in Pakistan, which is heavily reliant on military approval and oversight (Barany, 2009).

The military's influence was obvious in the 2018 elections, when the military decided that rather than establishing direct authority, it would be more desirable to allow a quasi-military dictatorship. According to Rahman and Shurong (2021), this structure allowed the military to achieve its long-term strategic aims while retaining the image of civilian administration. This indirect control allowed the military to rule the civilian administration while posing as a formal state entity (Rahman & Shurong, 2021).

The military's domination has gradually eroded Pakistan's democratic institutions, particularly the media. Hassan (2012) believed that Pakistan has spent most of its history under either military control or indirect authoritarianism, which has undermined democratic institutions, with the media sector being particularly heavily damaged. Over time, ruling elites have gained control of the media, utilizing their power to silence dissent and shape public discourse. This predicament has been aggravated by media owners' affiliation with powerful elites (Qayyoom et al., 2023).

The concept of media capture, in which elites and corporate tycoons dominate media output, complicates Pakistan's media environment.

According to research, due to severe market concentration, a few conglomerates control the media. This dominance has resulted in a tightly regulated media environment that emphasizes the interests of the powerful, leaving little room for critical or independent reporting. According to Warraich et al. (2020), many Pakistani media proprietors have non-journalistic credentials, allowing business considerations to trump editorial integrity. These owners impact journalism practices by aligning editorial policies with commercial interests, further monopolizing the media landscape with profit-driven views rather than those based on journalistic knowledge (Warraich et al.,2020).

Çakır and Batool (2019) disclosed that military dictatorships have the greatest influence over Pakistan's media. The military and government have weaponized disinformation by purposefully distorting facts to advance their interests. Likewise, Sirmed (2024) stated that journalists and media outlets frequently avoid reporting on sensitive problems such as human rights violations, military intervention in governance, and corruption in strong institutions owing to fear of repercussions.

The main media outlets predominantly serve metropolitan elites, ignoring rural prospects and instilling a sense of estrangement in local inhabitants. This negligence undermines national cohesiveness by further marginalizing rural areas (Hussain, 2015). Real estate moguls have had a huge impact on this corporate-dominated media environment. According to Zafar (2024), these business personalities prioritized profit generation over sensational and glamorous material, frequently partnering with ruling elites to undermine the media's duty as an impartial public informer. This trend has

caused experts to refer to Pakistan's media as a corporate industry (Ghaznavi et al., 2024). As a result, the traditional media's position as a neutral and objective provider of information has been weakened, with political and financial interests taking precedence (Bilal et al., 2024).

Ashraf et al. (2016) used Herman and Chomsky's propaganda model to examine the Pakistani media landscape, demonstrating how media ownership has transformed into a commercial enterprise that serves the interests of ruling elites. This model explains how Pakistani media outlets actively supported Imran Khan's populist government from the 2018 elections to April 2022, profiting financially while suppressing opposition voices (Hussain et al., 2022).

Beyond traditional media, Pakistan's elites have extended their grip into the digital realm, controlling internet forums to strengthen their position. Yilmaz and Saleem (2022) contend that during Imran Khan's administration, the government collaborated with the military to construct a sort of digital dictatorship. This entailed using censorship to safeguard the state's Islamic identity while suppressing dissent.

Khan's legal frameworks have enhanced the military's grip over digital domains, even after he left power. This includes the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA), which allows intelligence services such as the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) and Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) to monitor and control online activity (Ahmed et al., 2023).

Most recently, in July 2024, the Pakistani government authorized military intelligence to intercept civilian communications, cementing the military's control over both the physical and digital domains (Zaman, 2024).

## 2.12 Research Gap and Unresolved Issues

The media's neglect of Balochistan has been a frequent subject in talks concerning regional coverage, but there is a significant gap in research that analyses the fundamental causes of this bias. Key elements such as ownership arrangements, ethnic priorities in journalism, editorial choices, and the impact of military pressure are sometimes overlooked. Although the Baloch people's hardships are occasionally covered in the media, other vulnerable groups, including as women, children, and tribal minorities, are rarely emphasized.

The previous literature did not properly examine how authoritarian administration influences or compromises Pakistan's media ethics, particularly in relation to Balochistan. More research is needed into the evolving narratives surrounding Baloch insurgencies, as well as their effects on public perception, policymaking, and conflict dynamics. The media's role in enforcing accountability for human rights breaches and socioeconomic inequality in Balochistan has also received little attention.

The techniques of information suppression and censorship in Balochistan, notably the involvement of state entities, demand special attention. There has been insufficient research on how the lack of Baloch voices in the broader national media dialogue affects the region's sociopolitical integration. Furthermore, existing literature undervalues Baloch women's involvement to sociopolitical movements and the media's coverage of gender-specific concerns, such as enforced disappearances.

The phrase "post-truth" is frequently used in connection to Balochistan, but its application in examining the media's portrayal and distortion of facts necessitates a more thorough investigation. Furthermore, how human rights organizations attempt to publicize Baloch issues in a limited media landscape is not extensively documented.

The role of civil society, media, and the state in promoting awareness about the region's intricacies is also an area of academic concern. Furthermore, the impact of biased media narratives on Balochistan's national policymaking for development and conflict resolution is a neglected topic.

Although there are broader issues about media control in Pakistan, detailed research on the media ecosystem in Balochistan is sparse. Journalists in this area have distinct obstacles resulting from military and regional power dynamics, as well as how military operations influence media. Journalists in this region have unique obstacles as a result of military and regional power dynamics, and the impact of military activities on media coverage of local issues deserves additional examination.

The frequent misinterpretation or exclusion of Baloch community narratives in mainstream media raises serious concerns about the mechanisms that now suppress their voices, notably in terms of human rights violations and sociopolitical challenges. Ethical considerations, such as safety dangers, censorship, and the effort to balance public interest with official monitoring, also require greater investigation to establish their impact on journalistic integrity.

The consequences of governmental censorship for public speech and Baloch communities' ability to engage in constructive dialogue remain unanswered. Investigating how censorship affects public perception and activism in Balochistan could provide valuable insights into its impact on democratic processes. Furthermore, knowing the historical background of media suppression in the region, especially the legacy of state violence, can shed light on present media practices and discourses about Baloch identity and rights.

The unique obstacles faced by journalists working under authoritarian conditions in Balochistan, as well as the broader consequences for minority representation, deserve additional investigation. Balochistan's international media coverage is either limited or slanted, necessitating an examination of how these factors influence global perceptions and local narratives.

This study seeks to address key research gaps concerning authoritarian journalistic practices in Balochistan. By highlighting the interconnected dynamics of media, power, and identity, the research aims to contribute to academic discourse while also supporting social justice efforts by amplifying marginalized voices in the region.

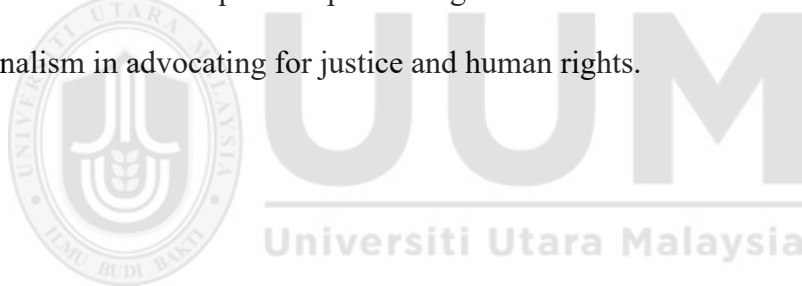
### **2.13 Summary of the Chapter**

This chapter traces the historical development of communication and the press, beginning with early human methods like cave paintings and progressing through major innovations such as the printing press. These milestones laid the groundwork for journalism as a tool for societal influence, truth-telling, and cultural autonomy. With the emergence of democratic ideals, particularly post-Civil War in the United States, the press gradually evolved from an instrument of state control to a platform for accountability and public discourse. The ethical responsibilities of journalists, emphasizing truth, minimizing harm, and serving the public, are framed as central to sustaining democratic engagement and protecting marginalized voices.

The chapter also interrogates the structural and ideological forces that compromise press freedom, especially under authoritarian regimes. It highlights how media ownership, political interference, and financial interests distort coverage, favour elite narratives, and marginalize vulnerable communities. Using global and regional examples, it explores how propaganda, censorship, and distraction techniques

undermine journalistic integrity, reduce public trust, and reinforce state agendas. The manipulation of media narratives in democratic systems reveals deeper concerns about the erosion of impartial reporting and the rise of market-driven journalism that prioritizes profit over truth.

Focusing on Balochistan, the chapter reveals how state influence and military control over media in Pakistan have led to the systemic erasure of Baloch voices. Journalists face threats, violence, and censorship, fostering a climate of fear and self-censorship. The chapter applies the Authoritarian Theory of the Press to examine how these dynamics restrict information flow, suppress dissent, and weaken democratic participation. By analysing these patterns, the chapter emphasizes the need for a more equitable media landscape that uplifts marginalized narratives and strengthens the role of journalism in advocating for justice and human rights.



## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

To address the research questions and achieve the study's objectives, a qualitative research framework was used, incorporating a variety of methods and tools to comprehensively investigate how Pakistan's mainstream media reported on the pressing issues and injustices faced by Baloch people in Balochistan. The methodological approach is systematically structured into key components, including the research design and framework, sampling strategies, research instruments and procedures, data collection methods, profiles of informants, sources and processes for secondary data, triangulation of primary and secondary data collections, measures to ensure validity and reliability, qualitative content analysis, the process of analysing data, coding procedures for secondary data etc. Each section's details are listed below:

#### **3.2 Research Design**

This study used a Qualitative Research Approach to investigate the research questions and objectives connected to the phenomenon under study. Scholars like Leedy and Ormrod (2001) pushed for qualitative methodologies for researching human and societal concerns, particularly those affecting marginalized and underprivileged groups around the world. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2001), the qualitative technique promotes research into local knowledge, social processes, and contextual factors influencing marginalized people.

Given that the phenomenon under study covers sensitive human and societal issues affecting underprivileged Baloch people in Pakistan's Balochistan area, a qualitative research approach seemed the most suitable methodology for this study. This strategy

allowed the researcher to collect and assess informants' experiences and perspectives through in-depth interviews (Stake, 2010).

Furthermore, Denzin and Lincoln (2005) defined qualitative research as a comprehensive technique that includes interpretive and naturalistic elements. This complication allowed researchers to have a comprehensive grasp of the phenomenon. In this approach, the researcher's primary goal was to understand the meanings that informants assigned to their conditions (Smith, 2005).

This study used an exploratory and descriptive research methodology, which allowed the researcher to portray the informants' experiences while also presenting on-the-ground realities, facts, and truths (Ferreira et al., 1998). This technique aided in a better understanding of the meanings behind informants' experiences, the unique nature of the situation, and the repercussions of the issue (Meyer, 2001).

### **3.2.1 In-Depth Interviews**

In this study, the researcher used in-depth interviews as the primary data collection method. Potter (1996) underlines the value of interview techniques in qualitative research. In-depth interviews are often regarded as the best method for gathering information about people's beliefs, viewpoints, and experiences, especially when dealing with sensitive issues.

The interview technique allows informants to express themselves in their own words, encouraging talks on difficult subjects (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006), such as those experienced by the Baloch population in Balochistan. Indeed, the in-depth interviewing method allowed the researcher to delve into the complexity and nuances of the situation through direct engagement with informants.

Furthermore, the researcher used a semi-structured interview protocol. According to Alshenqeeti (2014), qualitative researchers typically employ the semi-structured interview technique to gather information through in-depth interviews. Varying researchers have recommended varying numbers of informants for conducting in-depth interviews.

Padilla (2003) and Polkinghorne (1989) proposed that the size of informants might range from 1 to 25. Dukes (1984) suggests a sample size of 3 to 10 people, whereas Edwards (2006) recommends 33 participants. Creswell (2014) proposed that 20 informants could provide detailed information regarding the phenomenon.

This study performed 17 in-depth interviews based on the recommendations of the experts mentioned above.

### 3.2.1.1 Research Instruments

The researcher employed the following research instruments for conducting the primary data in shape of face-to-face interviews with informants:

**Interviewer:** The researcher treated himself as an interviewer and conducted interviews from informants. He took all the interviews individually in a private setting. Creswell (1994) stressed the role of the researcher in gathering data during qualitative research.

**Audio Recorder:** While conducting the interviews, the researcher used an audio-video instrument to record the informants' interviews. This strategy not only offered tangible evidence of the conversations, but it also improved the validity and reliability of the research findings. Both the researcher and the informants chose appropriate sites and times for the interviews, with the researcher prioritizing the informants' convenience.

**Question Guides:** The researcher developed structured interview question guides for a variety of themes, categories, and subtopics. This group allowed informants to freely express their opinions. The same questions were asked in every interview, regardless of the informants' backgrounds.

Before field deployment, the researcher sought the advice of two professionals to double-check and evaluate the question outlines. One expert was a lecturer at Universiti Utara Malaysia's School of Multimedia Technologies and Communication (SMMTC). The other expert was a retired professor from Punjab University's public communication department who is now working for an English-language daily newspaper in Lahore, Pakistan.

### **3.2.1.2 Details about Informants**

The researcher conducted seventeen in-depth interviews, the majority of which were with male informants; only one female informant participated in the study. Despite inviting over 50 experts, both male and female, from various fields based in Balochistan, Pakistan, and elsewhere, each with at least 15 years of professional experience and extensive knowledge of Balochistan perspectives, the researcher only conducted 17 interviews.

The informants talked in Balochi and Urdu languages. Transcriptions were properly prepared and then translated into English. The translation process from Balochi and Urdu to English was complex and required close attention to guarantee an accurate depiction of the informants' intended meanings. Prof. Dr. Manzur Baloch, Head of the Brahvi Language Department at the University of Balochistan in Quetta, Pakistan, verified and authenticated the transcripts in Balochi and Urdu respectively. The

following table provides information about the informants, such as their professional fields, localities, and ethnic backgrounds:

Table 3.1.

*Informant's details*

No.	Profession	Codes	No of Informants	Details/justifications
01	<b>Journalists and News Editors</b>	JE	6	Journalists and editors are prominent voices in the media and journalism industries, moulding public narratives, notably on Balochistan-related topics. This research included famous journalists and editors with considerable expertise of the region. The six participants included two from the Quetta Press Club in Balochistan, two from the Karachi Press Club in Sindh, one from Sweden, and one from the United States. These participants came from a variety of ethnicities, including Baloch, Sindhi, Pashtun, and Punjabi, and provided a wide



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range of opinions.

- |                                     |    |   |  |
|-------------------------------------|----|---|--|
| 02. <b>Human Rights Activists</b>   | HR | 2 | Human rights defenders and activists are significant sources of qualitative and in-depth data because of their firsthand experience with issues of law, justice, and human rights. This study featured two Balochistani human rights specialists who have substantial practical expertise. One participant was of Baloch ethnicity, while the other was Hazara, ensuring that distinct regional voices were represented. |
| 03 <b>Intellectuals and Writers</b> | IW | 2 | Intellectuals and writers make substantial contributions to public discourse by writing books, essays, and opinion pieces that examine societal and public concerns. Their visionary thoughts and persuasive powers could  |



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inspire societal transformation and direct communities toward positive action. To get a more nuanced view of Balochistan's geopolitical scene, this study combined the perspectives of two Quetta-based intellectuals and writers who represent the Baloch and Pashtun ethnicities.

04 **Academics and Researchers** AR 2



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Academics and researchers, especially those from the social sciences, have extensive knowledge and skills in academic and investigative pursuits. Many actively contribute to journalism and media studies research, creating publications that cover Balochistan-related issues. For this study, the researcher recruited two intellectuals—one from the University of Balochistan and the other from I.T. University Quetta—with

varied ethnic backgrounds, one Pashtun and the other Punjabi.

05 **Media Owners** MO 2

Media organizations have an important role in moulding public discourse since their editorial teams make decisions that impact whether news coverage emphasizes commercial interests or accurately represents public opinions. To investigate this dynamic, the researcher interviewed two media officials, one in Karachi and the other in Turbat, Kech, Balochistan. This approach resulted in a more balanced understanding of regional and national media practices.

06 **Politicians and Parliamentarians** PP 3

Politicians and Parliamentarians are vital to the political environment because they serve as the foundation of



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governance. They participate in politics, join the ruling class, represent the public, and argue for the rights of the people and their land through public forums, parliamentary processes, and media platforms. To achieve a thorough grasp of the region's political dynamics, this study includes the opinions of three Balochistan politicians and parliamentarians (PPs) with varied political affiliations and ethnic origins, including Baloch, Pashtun, and Punjabi.



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**Total**

**17**

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### **3.2.2 Qualitative Content Analysis for Secondary Data**

The researcher used content analysis to assess secondary data. Leedy and Ormrod (2001) said that content analysis helps academics to evaluate and interpret diverse types of content. In the nineteenth century, scientists used this strategy to investigate items such as newspapers, periodicals, essays, advertisements, and political speeches (Harwood & Garry, 2003). In the current day, it is widely employed by scholars in communication, journalism, sociology, psychology, and business. The content

analysis tool made it easier to build codes and summarise large amounts of data, themes, and categories from secondary sources.

### **3.2.2.1 Sources and Time Frame for Secondary Data**

This study focused on the video contents/video stories of Pakistan's two biggest private television channels, Geo Television News and ARY Television News. The decision was based on the idea that television is a powerful and extensively consumed information source (Shim et al., 2015). In this context, Khan (2016) stressed the importance of private television networks in engaging Pakistani viewers and shaping public conversation. Geo TV News and ARY News are among Pakistan's leading news networks (MediaVoir, 2023), known for their large audience reach, comprehensive coverage, and effect on public opinion (Media Ownership, 2019).

The study's goal in assessing how these TV stations tackled crucial issues, particularly to determine the amount and type of the coverage related to sensitive human rights issues in the province. The video contents/video stories related to Balochistan offered more information about sensitive issues of the Baloch people.

The secondary data in shape of video contents/video stories from Geo TV News and ARY TV News collected for a two-year period starting from January 1, 2022, to December 31, 2023. The date range was chosen because it reflects a recent period that could provide useful insights into how these channels depicted current challenges confronting the Baloch people in Balochistan. During this time, a significant amount of video contents/video stories were discovered, allowing for full data mapping and analysis. The researcher found total 68 video contents/video stories related to Balochistan, among them, 35 collected from ARY News TV and 33 from Geo TV News.

It was the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, which significantly impacted society around the world, including Pakistan. The epidemic presented enormous hurdles, with many offices closed and a general unwillingness to engage on data collection activities. Despite these challenges, the researcher filed numerous formal inquiries to key departments on both television stations and visited their offices in Karachi and Islamabad. Unfortunately, these attempts resulted in minimal cooperation, which complicated data collecting. As a result, obtaining sufficient data proved difficult, causing major delays in secondary data collecting. The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the research, interrupting the time frame and delaying the entire procedure.

### **3.3 Population, Sample, and Sampling**

In this study, Balochistan is the 'sample,' and 'people' represent the features of sampling. Black and Champion (1976) define a 'sample' as a subset of a population that represents the chosen territory. Marshall and Rossman (2015) identified four dimensions of sampling, people, activities, events, and processes. Following this approach, the study chose 'the people' as a sample aspect and conducted seventeen interviews with varied informants who reflect this segment of the Balochistan community.

The Purposive Sampling Method was used in this study to select 'people' intentionally. This non-random technique enables the researcher to describe what is required and find informants eager to contribute information based on their skill and experience (Bernard, 2002). The Purposive Sampling approach was chosen because qualitative researchers frequently select interviewees based on specific qualities (Palinkas et al., 2015) or expertise that is likely to give rich, relevant insights into the phenomenon

(Etikan et al., 2016). Creswell and Clark (2011) stated that the sampling procedure comprises discovering and choosing knowledgeable individuals who can provide educated judgments about a phenomenon.

In line with this, the researcher sought informants with at least 15 years of professional experience in their domains in Balochistan, as well as extensive knowledge and information about the study's subject (Freedman et al., 2007). Informants contributed based on their availability and specialized talents, expertise, qualities, attributes, and experiences.

### **3.4 Procedure for Data Collection**

This section describes the study's technique and methodology for collecting primary and secondary data. It also emphasizes the efforts done for data validation to boost the study's credibility. The steps that have been taken for collecting both the primary and secondary data, are given below:

#### **3.4.1 Ethical Consideration**

The researcher carefully addressed ethical concerns both before and during the data collection process. The Awang Had Saleh Graduate School (AHS GS) approved data collecting in Balochistan via an official letter, with a sample included in the appendix.

To engage informants, invitation letters were written to over fifty people in Balochistan and overseas; a sample of these letters is included in the appendix. Invited informants were given a "Consent to Participate in the Interview" form, which detailed the study's aim, objectives, and ethical issues, including the secrecy of their identities and opinions. Informants consented by signing a hard copy of the form. The researcher

safeguarded the confidentiality of the informants' participation by assigning coded IDs for anonymity, such as PP (for politicians and parliamentarians) and JE (for journalists and editors), with additional anonymization by numerical labels (PP-1, PP-2, etc.).

It was mentioned in the consent form that informants were voluntarily participating, and could withdraw at any time throughout the interviews. Two informants invoked their right to have their data excluded from the study. Furthermore, an audio tape of one informant's interview was destroyed; the researcher instantly contacted the informant, apologized, and sought a rescheduled appointment, but the informant did not express a willingness to participate again. The researcher informed informants of the anonymity of their thoughts and stated that the findings may be published in a book, academic journals, or presented at conferences. Finally, informants were given contact information for the researcher's supervisor and institution in case they needed to verify or raise any issues.

#### **3.4.2 Process for Collecting Primary Data (*in-depth interviews*)**

To conduct in-depth interviews, the researcher used a question interview guide/outline (included in the appendix I), which Patton (1987) recommends for in-person contacts. This guide interviews adhere to the study's guidelines (Wenden, 1982).

The researcher conducted seventeen (17) in-person interviews, including phone interviews, as well as online interviews via Skype and WhatsApp with informants living abroad. The interviews began with open-ended questions on the informants' professional backgrounds and understanding of Balochistan's current difficulties.

Subsequent questions focused on the news sources they accessed for information about Balochistan, as well as the role of mainstream media in addressing human rights violations against the Baloch people.

Additional in-depth questions were asked to get detailed information and insights. During these open-ended interviews, techniques recommended by specialists such as Charmaz (2006) were used. Each informant participated in a single session lasting 40 to 50 minutes.

The researcher asked one question at a time, allowing for unfettered expression of opinions and reducing interpretation constraints on informants. Sensitive queries that may cause discomfort were avoided, in accordance with Cicourel's (1964) observations. Probing was used as needed to acquire in-depth data, and all informants indicated pleasure in expressing their thoughts on Balochistan.

The 17 in-depth interviews resulted in data saturation. Similar themes reoccurred, with no new ideas or insights identified. Most informants shared similar views on the phenomena, resulting in data redundancy. As a result, the researcher opted to terminate data collecting because 17 interviews were sufficient for this study. The conclusion on extra data collecting is consistent with the advice of Fusch and Ness (2015), who define data saturation as the moment at which additional data no longer generates new or useful information.

Similarly, Saunders et al. (2018) argue that obtaining saturation guarantees that the data sufficiently represents the phenomenon under inquiry, hence supporting the validity and trustworthiness of the research findings.

### **3.4.3 Analysis of the Primary Data (*In-depth Interviews*)**

The study used Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step framework for Thematic Analysis to write and describe the study's findings, which are listed below.

#### **Step 1: Familiarization**

The researcher frequently read the documents for many times and then developed familiarity with the vast data. He wrote notes, keywords and summarized it into coding.

#### **Step 2: Generate initial codes**

During this stage, the data was organized, and analysis boxes were created depending on various sections and sub-sections. Each participant's data was segregated and organized in accordance with the question guide and research aims. The researcher used inductive analysis, using line-by-line coding to extract ideas from each line, which aided in the distillation of dense data into summaries.

#### **Step 3: Generating themes**

During this step, patterns between words and phrases were detected, allowing themes to be developed. Multiple codes were merged to create summaries or themes with obvious meanings.

#### **Step 4: Theme Review**

Preliminary topics were adjusted and expanded by gathering necessary data. New themes were added, while repeated ones were eliminated as needed.

#### **Step 5: Identifying Themes**

The researcher improved their grasp of the topics by constructing them based on their meanings and features, structuring them into expanded summaries, and dividing them into separate boxes.

## **Step 6: Documenting the Data**

The researcher started assessing, transcribing, writing, and amending the data. Each study topic had its own headline, and the data was examined accordingly. The primary and secondary data analyses, findings, debates, and conclusions will be presented in chapters 4 and 5.

This study used an interpretive paradigm to elicit new insights and understandings from thematic analysis. Miles and Huberman (1994) emphasized the interpretive strategy for qualitative data processing, which allowed the researcher to capture and properly reflect the informants' voices, emotions, and behaviours. Creswell (1998) states that new findings frequently emerge from the interaction between the researcher and informants, which guides the interpretation of the interviews.

### **3.5 Process for Secondary Data Collection (*Content Analysis*).**

The researcher used Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) for transcribing and evaluating video contents/video stories collected from Pakistan's two major television channels, Geo TV News and ARY TV News. The video contents/video stories collected were gathered throughout two years, from January 1, 2022, to December 31, 2023.

The video content varied in length, from 30 seconds to 50 minutes. The researcher was able to collect 68 video contents/video stories broadcast throughout two years (January 1, 2022, to December 31, 2023). These videos were taken from each television network's YouTube feeds. Among 68 video contents, 35 were collected from ARY TV News and 33 from Geo TV News.

The secondary data were divided into several themes based on the content of each story. A coding sheet (available at Appendix 7) was created to ensure methodical categorization, and percentages were produced to estimate the frequency of themes across both media outlets. The following information was gathered while collecting news and video content from both TV channels:

- 1) **Title of the story**
- 2) **Link**
- 3) **Release date**
- 4) **Duration**
- 5) **Summary of the story**

The researcher divided video contents into the following themes and categories, based on the nature of stories and titles:

- 1) **Enforced Disappearances issues:**

- a. Missing Persons,*

- 2) **Human Rights issues:**

- a. Right to Life and Liberty*

- 3) **Political issues:**

- a. Dialogue and Negotiations,*

- b. Conflict Resolution*

- c. Insurgency and instability,*

- 4) **Social issues:**

- a. Social Disruption and Inequality,*

- b. Marginalization,*

- c. Deprivation,*

- d. Social protection and recognition,*

**5) Economic issues:**

*a. Economic Exclusion and Disparities,*

**6) Health issues:**

*a. Health inequality,*

*b. Healthcare Crises,*

**7) Military issues:**

*a. Honouring Soldiers,*

*b. Military Actions and Operations,*

*c. Counterinsurgency Operations,*

**8) Security issues:**

*a. Instability and Threats,*

*b. Insurgency,*

*c. National Security Threat*



**3.5.1 The Coding System**

This study assessed the reliability and validity of secondary data using a coding system based on a coding sheet (available at Appendix 7). Doris A. Graber provided helpful advice to academics on building effective coding methods in media and communication studies, emphasizing the significance of reliability, validity, and objectivity. According to Graber (2004), content analysis necessitates a systematic and consistent coding method, which commonly employs a coding sheet. The researcher created a coding sheet and distributed all 68 video contents/video stories taken from ARY News and Geo TV News to two qualified coders.

The first coder worked as a senior news editor at Pakistan Television Network (PTV), while the second coder was a senior lecturer in the Department of Media and Journalism at the University of Balochistan in Quetta. The coding sheet (included in the Appendix 7) comprises the following information:

- The total amount of videos broadcast on Geo News and ARY News in the past two years.
- Total number of video content created by each TV channel during the period. Total video material grouped by theme.
- The percentage of video content produced by each TV channel. The percentage of video content categorized by theme.

Coders 1 and 2 individually assessed all 68 stories, reaching a consensus on 66. The agreement to categorize video contents/video stories were based on headlines or titles that clearly identified the concerns covered by each television channel.

Furthermore, this study used Holsti's technique to calculate Intercoder Reliability (ICR) that measures coder's agreement. Experts such as Krippendorff (2018) claimed that Holsti's method is commonly recognized and used in content analysis studies.

Therefore, this study used Holsti's formula for intercoder reliability, which is described and calculated below:

**Holsti's Formula:**  $\text{Reliability} = \frac{M}{N_1 + N_2} =$

Where:

- **M** = the number of agreements between the coders
- **N<sub>1</sub>** = the number of coding units by Coder 1

- $N_2$  = the number of coding units by Coder 2

For this study:

- $M$  = 66 (agreed stories)
- $N_1$  = 68 (Coder 1's total coded stories)
- $N_2$  = 68 (Coder 2's total coded stories)

Plugging the values into the formula:

$$\text{Reliability} = 66 \times 66 \div 68 + 68 = 132 \div 136 = 0.9706$$

**Inter-coder reliability** = 0.9706 or 97.06 %

Thus, the calculated inter-coder reliability by two coders or experts, emerged as **0.9706, or 97.06%**, which indicated agreement of both coders.

### 3.5.2 Triangulation of Primary and Secondary Data

To improve the dependability and comprehensiveness of this thesis, the researcher used the Data Triangulation Method, which combines primary and secondary data sources. Jick (1979) and Denzin (1978) both support this method, emphasizing the necessity of triangulating multiple data sources to validate findings and improve study robustness.

To answer the research questions, this study incorporated data from in-depth interviews with key informants with a content analysis of video materials and news stories from Geo News and ARY News, collected between January 1, 2022, and December 31, 2023. The purpose was to enhance the findings by evaluating how mainstream media portrays and engages with the serious issues facing the Baloch

people in Balochistan. The following two Research Questions were selected for triangulation:

RQ1: How does the mainstream media of Pakistan portray the pressing issues of the Baloch people in Balochistan?

RQ2: How does the mainstream media of Pakistan fulfil its democratic and watchdog role in reporting the pressing issues of the Baloch people in Balochistan?

The analysis of the primary data or in-depth interviews highlighted recurring themes such as media bias, exploitation, propaganda, agenda setting, business interests, coverage gaps, and the contextual constraints of Balochistan reporting. These themes provided qualitative insights, focusing on stakeholders' perspectives and lived experiences as impacted by Pakistani mainstream media narratives.

The study investigated 68 video materials and news items from Geo News and ARY News, which were categorized into topics such as enforced disappearances, human rights issues, political, social, economic, health, military and security issues.

The content analysis intended to investigate the frequency and character of coverage on critical topics facing the Baloch community as well as evaluating media coverage to ensure it aligns with democratic and watchdog duties. Each story was coded to identify prevalent themes and keywords, resulting in quantitative insights into coverage trends and a qualitative knowledge of the media's framing strategies.

Chapter Four delves deeply into the triangulation findings, demonstrating a complicated interplay between media narratives and stakeholder perceptions.

### **3.5.3 Techniques for Data Analysis**

Both primary and secondary data were analysed manually, using programs like Canva and MS Office to create visual representations such as pie charts and do computations. The researcher chose not to employ software such as NVivo due to its complexity and lack of knowledge, instead preferring manual analysis, which was simpler and more suited with their skill set.

Interviews with 17 informants were transcribed verbatim, and thematic analysis was performed by thoroughly reading and rereading the transcripts to find recurring themes and patterns. To ensure consistent data categorization, a formal coding scheme was created, and reliability was verified through periodic transcript reviews. Similarly, the content analysis of the 68 news pieces was done manually, allowing for in-depth interaction with the data and the detection of themes and patterns that would have gone unnoticed otherwise.

### **3.6 Summary of the Chapter**

This study employed a qualitative research methodology to explore the complex societal and human rights issues faced by the marginalized Baloch community in Balochistan, Pakistan. Guided by the perspectives of scholars like Leedy and Ormrod, qualitative research was selected for its suitability in examining nuanced human experiences within marginalized settings. The approach incorporated both exploratory and descriptive elements, allowing for a holistic understanding of the phenomenon by emphasizing local knowledge, social dynamics, and the lived realities of informants. In-depth interviews served as the primary data collection method, conducted in a semi-structured format that balanced a guided inquiry with the flexibility to capture informants' unique perspectives. A total of 17 informants, primarily experienced male

professionals with over 15 years of expertise in Balochistan's issues—were selected from an initial pool of over 50 experts, aligning with qualitative research standards for depth and insight.

To ensure robust data collection, a combination of tools was used. The researcher conducted and recorded all interviews, prioritizing informants' convenience and comfort. Interviews were conducted in Balochi and Urdu, then transcribed and translated into English with careful attention to preserving original meanings. These translations were verified by Prof. Dr. Manzur Baloch of the University of Balochistan to maintain linguistic accuracy. Question guides used during interviews were developed and validated by academic experts from Universiti Utara Malaysia and Pakistan's Punjab University, ensuring fieldwork effectiveness. In parallel, qualitative content analysis (QCA) was used for the secondary data, which involved transcribing and analysing 68 news stories and video reports from Geo TV News and ARY TV News, collected between January 1, 2022, and December 31, 2023.

The collected video content, varying from 30 seconds to 50 minutes, was categorized thematically across issues such as enforced disappearances, human rights, and political, social, and economic conditions in Balochistan. Each story was documented with metadata including title, duration, release date, and a brief summary. A coding sheet, developed following Doris A. Graber's framework, supported systematic analysis, and two independent coders achieved a 97.06% inter-coder reliability using Holsti's formula. Thematic analysis of interviews was complemented by a detailed content analysis of the news materials, integrating both primary and secondary data sources through triangulation. Basic digital tools such as Canva and MS Office were used for data visualization and calculations, enhancing clarity and rigor in presenting findings.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA ANALYSIS & FINDINGS**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, the researcher provides a comprehensive analysis of the findings obtained from both primary and secondary data collection methods. As discussed in chapter three, primary data was collected through interviews, while secondary data was analysed using content analysis. The Authoritarian Theory of the Press is employed to examine how state institutions in Pakistan maintain control over journalistic practices in Balochistan, manipulating the media landscape to downplay or overlook human rights abuses in the region.

Furthermore, the chapter assesses the role of Pakistan's mainstream media in marginalizing Baloch voices, under authoritarian theory of the press. This study employed the following research objectives:

RO1: To investigate the reporting of the pressing issues of the Baloch people in Pakistan's mainstream media.

RO2: To evaluate the democratic and watchdog role of the Pakistan's mainstream media in reporting the pressing issues of the Baloch people in Balochistan.

RO3: To analyse the coverage of critical issues related to the Baloch people in locally published newspapers, international media, and social media platforms.

RO4: To investigate the impacts of the narrative presented by Pakistan's mainstream media on the Baloch population.

The research objectives of the study will be described and interpreted one by one in the following pages. However, before doing this, it is pertinent to mention details about the informants who contributed to this study. As stated earlier, the researcher conducted a total of seventeen (17) in-depth interviews from informants with diversified professional, ethnic, and geographical backgrounds.

Below is given their list along with the assigned codes:

Table 4.1

*List of Informants*

<b>No</b>	<b>Profession</b>	<b>Nos of Informants</b>	<b>Assigned Codes</b>
01	Journalists & News Editors	6	JE
02	Human Rights Activists	2	HR
03	Intellectuals & Writers	2	IW
04	Academics & Researchers	2	AR
05	Politicians & Parliamentarians	3	PP
06	Media Owners	2	MO
	<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	

#### **4.2 Findings of the Primary Data Collection (*In-depth Interviews*)**

This section includes the findings and analyses from primary data collection. The researcher assessed the study's outcomes in relation to the research questions and objectives. The data was thematically categorized into themes, and sub-themes, which provide new insights and interpretations of the phenomenon under consideration.

A summary of some informant's perspectives and remarks is provided below. This sample represents the pattern utilized in the investigation. The fundamental reason for not including extensive thoughts is to protect the confidentiality of the material and prevent excessive length. Incorporating all the perspectives would greatly expand the thesis.

The researcher used the box structure shown below, assigning codes to each informant and presenting their responses to the main topic.

*Table 4.2*

*Summary of informant's opinions*

<b>Main Question</b>			
	<b>Answers</b>	<b>Themes</b>	<b>Keywords</b>
<b>Informant-1 (PP-1)</b>	“I believe mainstream media hide to report issues of Balochistan. Media focus to Punjab, Lahore, and Karachi...”	Balochistan is ignored	Discrimination Exploitation,
<b>Informant 4 (IA-1)</b>	“Balochistan is not in the agenda setting of Pakistani media outlets and journalists.....”	Control and Authority on media,	Agenda-setting, Media interests
<b>Informant 6 (HR-1)</b>	“Mainstream media do not represent people of Balochistan. TV channels show very tiny issues of Punjab but ignore if people are killed and abducted in Baluchistan”.	Priority to tiny issues of Punjab	Partisan Journalism, Biasness in media
<b>Informant 8 (AR-1)</b>	“Mainstream media promote state narrative and in return get financial gains.....”	Media promote state narrative,	State Narrative,

		Government secure media's interests,	Business Interests,
<b>Informant 10 (MO-1)</b>	“National media only report government activities, gives projection to its mega projects, and do not report human rights issues in Balochistan.....”	Projection to ruling elites,	Violation of Journalism Ethics,  Truth is hidden,
<b>Informant 13 (JE-2)</b>	“Mainstream media break tiny stories about Punjab but ignore very sensitive issues about Balochistan.....”	Ethnic control on media,  Marginalization through media,	Media Ownership,  Marginalization of Balochistan
<b>Informant 17 (JE-6)</b>	“Media portray football stadium in Gwadar because it was built by the military but hides to disclose that there is no drinking water, proper health, education, roads, and other basic facilities for people.....”.	Military's involvement in media,  Military controls media and communication system,	Authoritarian media system,  Absence of Public-Centric Media,

The above-mentioned descriptions and interpretations were drawn from the broad opinions of informants and served as samples to demonstrate to readers how the interviews were performed and what responses were provided in return. Because of their complexity and sensitivity, full opinions are kept private. Based on the themes and keywords that emerged, the researcher investigated the study's research objectives.

The informants' opinions were thematically analysed and organized according to the key themes and subthemes that emerged from the extensive data collected. The thematic analysis is structured sequentially, aligned with the research questions.

The below sections will present the thematic analysis and findings of each research question and will align with each research objective.

#### **4.2.1 How Pakistan's Mainstream Media Report Balochistan?**

Since the first research question focused on how Pakistan's mainstream media reported the pressing issues of the Baloch people in Balochistan, therefore, thematic analysis related to research question one is presented below. Moreover, the research question one will also achieve the study's first research objective.

##### **Theme: Bias, Exclusion and Discrimination**

##### ***Subtheme: Prioritization of Punjab***

Informants argued that mainstream media often fail to report truthfully on critical issues such as deprivation, poverty, security, enforced disappearances, killing and abductions of the Baloch political activists, students, and human rights violations in Balochistan. Human Rights (HR-1) believed that the mainstream media remain biased. He said,

*"I have never witnessed the media addressing critical issues such as education, health, economics, poverty, deprivation, human rights abuses, political, or other forms of social injustices in Balochistan".*

HR-2 pointed out that human rights violations in the province have reached an alarming level, yet the media fails to report them. He noted that despite the people of Balochistan being disadvantaged and lacking access to resources, such profound issues are ignored by the media. HR-2 expressed his discontent by saying:

*"Media groups are hypocrites and discriminate against the people of Balochistan."*

HR-2 further elaborated that Pakistani authorities are primarily interested in exploiting the natural resources of Balochistan without caring for its people. Similarly, mainstream media focuses on its financial interests and avoids challenging the state for the sake of Balochistan's people. HR-3 argued that TV channels report on minor incidents involving actresses in Punjab but disregard news about the killings of Baloch people. He said,

*"December 10 is Human Rights Day, celebrated worldwide, but Pakistani mainstream media report nothing about human and civil rights violations in Balochistan."*

Media Owners (MO) group explained that national media mainly cover government-related activities, promote Chinese-funded projects, and focus on the Prime Minister or international delegations. However, they neglect sensitive issues and human rights violations in Balochistan. MO-2 argued that mainstream media operate with bias and prioritize Punjab province, as the owners of media organizations, elites, and the ruling class primarily hail from there. The focus tends to be on urban centres like Islamabad, Lahore, and Karachi, while the voices and issues of the Baloch people are neglected.

Further, PP-3 emphasized that while minor issues in Punjab often receive extensive media coverage, severe human rights violations in Balochistan remain overlooked. PP-3 said,

*"When people protest for their rights, the ruling class uses mainstream media to divide and control them, reinforcing state narratives".*

Informants characterized mainstream media as puppets of state agencies and the military, perpetuating their interests and fail to provide fair and accurate coverage of the region's issues and to offer platforms for local journalists, writers, and analysts to

discuss the critical challenges facing Balochistan. IA-2 in this regard said, *"Journalists rarely visit Balochistan independently due to disinterest and financial constraints from media outlets. Simply put, Balochistan is not on the agenda of Pakistani media outlets."*

JE-2 further explained by saying,

*"As poverty and deprivation deepen in Balochistan, mainstream media fail to report on these issues"*.

The informants remarked that editorial columns in Quetta's mainstream newspapers are often authored by columnists from other provinces, focusing on national rather than local issues. As a result, local audiences avoid reading these newspapers.

Journalists and Editors (JE-1) remarked that despite the media revolution that began in 2002, no TV channel has truly served the interests of Balochistan or its people. While mainstream media fully represents other regions like Karachi, Lahore, and Punjab. They prioritize trivial stories over Balochistan's pressing issues. Coverage is often limited to cultural festivals or events organized by the Pakistani military.

The JE group further disclosed that the military filters and controls all information regarding Balochistan. Negative stories related to Balochistan are highlighted and military narratives are upheld. According to JE-2:

*"People in other provinces perceive Baloch individuals as dangerous warriors because it has been told through media that they kill Punjabis and the Pakistani army"*.

JE-2 further explained,

*"If local journalists attempt to present the truth, they are labelled as traitors or Indian agents."*

JE-6 observed that the silence of the media regarding atrocities in Balochistan pleases authorities in Islamabad. He said,

*"Mainstream media extensively cover issues in Kashmir but avoid reporting on the severe cruelties in Balochistan, they highlight struggles in Palestine and Afghanistan but ignore injustices in Balochistan."*

### **Theme: Lack of Ethical Journalism**

#### ***Subtheme: Manipulation through Funding***

Informants argued that national journalists lack ethical responsibility and fail to contribute to opinion-building. They revealed that Balochistan does not feature prominently in the agenda-setting of Pakistani media. According to AR-1,

*"Most mainstream TV channels and newspapers operating in Balochistan are owned by settlers (non-locals) who support the government's narrative and, in return, receive financial incentives".*

AR-1 further explained,

*"Since they are outsiders, they do not have sympathy with the people of Balochistan."*

HR-1 highlighted that national journalists must conduct more research on Balochistan, gain knowledge, and broaden their vision, than create rumours and baseless assumptions. Informants revealed that the marketing departments of major television channels produce editorial content. Intellectuals (IA) and Journalists (JE) stressed that

media houses prioritize business models, ratings, and profits over journalistic missions or their commercial gain over public interests. Journalists and Editors (JE) group criticized mainstream media for avoiding critical, investigative reporting, especially on Balochistan. Journalists (JE), and Academicians (AR) confirm that mainstream media neglects people-centric stories from Balochistan. This group stated that mainstream media uphold government's development narratives, for instance, promoting Gwadar port without addressing the people's deprivation.

**Theme: Information Isolation**

***Subthemes: Negative Portrayal of Balochistan, Threats, Discrimination, and Censorship***

Informants conveyed concerns regarding the lack of interest shown by media outlet owners and national journalists in covering Balochistan-related issues. Informants stated that mainstream media frequently portray Balochistan negatively, leading other provinces' populations to perceive Baloch people as criminals, violent, or traitorous. This negative stereotyping further alienates Balochistan and its people from the rest of the country.

Additionally, findings of primary data highlight that national journalists often lack awareness and understanding of Balochistan's problems. Informants asserted that the mainstream media often exaggerates and portrays a negative image of Balochistan and its political leaders. PP-1 in this context said,

*"I am not a journalist, but I believe journalism is about truth-telling. Media professionals report the truth, no matter if they sacrifice. Journalists in Islamabad must embrace this courage."*

Informants disclosed that limited access to both national and international media exacerbates the information gap for Balochistan residents, further violating their fundamental human rights.

The Intellectuals and Authors (IA) group emphasized that local journalists in Balochistan treat journalism as a mission and courageously report sensitive issues despite facing threats to their lives. IA-1 in this regard said,

*“Many journalists have been abducted or killed within Balochistan and even abroad. However, they criticized national journalists for treating journalism merely as a livelihood, aligning themselves with the privileged class”.*

HR-2 explained that while some local journalists in Balochistan are eager to highlight critical issues, but mainstream media do not broadcast, creating a information blackhole. HR-2 said,

*“Many journalists who expose atrocities and human rights abuses in Balochistan have been killed”.*

Further, JE-5 in this regard said,

*“Forces abduct our reporters. Many remain missing, and we have not been able to locate them. We work under constant fear, unlike journalists in Islamabad, who are protected”.*

JE-6 said,

*“We lack representation in the National Union of Journalists, which is another form of discrimination.”*

MO-2 added that senior analysts and journalists from Balochistan are often excluded from national TV channels and publications. She argued that this happens because these individuals speak courageously and convey the truth, something mainstream media in Islamabad cannot tolerate.

JE-5 disclosed that many journalists have stopped reporting on Balochistan, as their efforts often go unnoticed by mainstream news outlets. JE-5 said:

*"I questioned mainstream editors and media owners about this neglect, but they argued that Balochistan does not generate income for them, unlike Lahore, Faisalabad, Islamabad, or Karachi."*

**Theme: Media Control by State Institutions**

***Subthemes: Authoritarian and Colonial Legacy***

Informants strongly alleged that journalism practices in Balochistan are tightly controlled and monitored by various Pakistani state institutions, including the military, Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), Military Intelligence (MI), Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), Frontier Corps (FC), and Federal Investigation Agency (FIA). Informants pointed out that the State of Pakistan and its institutions utilize mainstream media to propagate their narratives regarding Balochistan. This manipulation of narratives creates divisions in public perceptions and opinions about Balochistan's socio-political, economic, geographical, and geopolitical realities.

The opinion and the feedback of informants indicated that mainstream media adopt a state-oriented rather than a public-oriented reporting style. Overall, informants expressed the view that mainstream media operate under the control of authoritarian regimes and state institutions, which regulate the content emerging from Balochistan.

In this regard, PP1 argued that mainstream media prioritize Islamabad because it is the capital city. It hosts the establishment, ruling elites, bureaucracy, judiciary, parliament, and other powerful institutions. PP-1 said,

*“These entities not only monitor and control the media but also decide the fate of the entire country, including Balochistan.”*

In the opinion of PP-2,

*“The media in Pakistan is under strict control, akin to how authoritarian regimes suppressed media in weaker nations during the twentieth century. The only difference is that we face similar control in the twenty-first century.”*

Intellectual and Author (IA-1) group said that ISPR and government promote fabricated image of development in Balochistan, which starkly contrasts with the reality of widespread poverty and resource deprivation. AI group further explained that the DGPR (Directorate General of Public Relations) faced criticism for channelling substantial funds, such as tenders and advertisements, to media outlets, influencing and shaping media narratives to favour the state's interests. IA-2 said,

*“Government activities and state-sponsored projects dominate media coverage, as journalists are often guided by institutions like ISPR, MI, ISI, FC, and other intelligence agencies”.*

AR-1 asserted that journalistic activities in Balochistan have historically been restricted and prohibited, initially by Britain during the colonial period. AR-1 said,

*“At present, the state of Pakistan and its powerful military are implementing similar policies to control media operations in Balochistan”.*

Media Owner (MO) group disclosed that local reporters face threats if they boldly disclose injustices. MO-1 further said,

*"Pakistani state agencies have created groups that they use to pressure, abduct, and kill local journalists who speak about the rights of the people and this land".*

MO group revealed that these agencies control almost all towns and villages in Balochistan, closely monitoring journalism and communication activities. MO-1 also disclosed that local journalists are forbidden to report on topics like human rights violations, enforced disappearances, poverty, deprivation, or political injustices. He said,

*"They threaten us through phone calls or interrogate us personally."*

Journalists and Editors (JE) group collectively believed that Balochistan remains blacked out in Pakistan's mainstream media. According to them, the General Headquarters (GHQ) exercises significant control over national media. Some editors in Balochistan suggested covering sensitive issues, but their head offices grew anxious and directed them to adopt a softer stance. When they attempt to address serious matters, their reports are either suppressed or excluded from publication.

This group revealed that editors face immense pressure, threats, and censorship. Mainstream media only reports on explosions, killings, and other violent events, neglecting issues such as enforced disappearances and other human rights violations and poverty. JE-3 observed,

*"Security forces violate the law by invading homes and disrespecting women and families, yet the media remains silent".*

The above-mentioned thematic analysis and opinion of informants raise critical questions about the reasons behind such control by these state institutions over journalism in Balochistan. Moreover, it prompts an inquiry into why the mainstream Pakistani media and Islamabad-based journalists do not hold these institutions accountable and fail to perform their watchdog role. These questions will be explored and discussed in detail in the subsequent chapters.

#### **4.2.2 Media's Democratic and Watchdog Role**

Media scholars and experts generally agree on the primary role of the press and journalists is to tell the truth, uncover atrocities, expose injustices, and hold those in power accountable by acting as watchdogs. Against this backdrop, the researcher aimed to explore the second research question such as: How Pakistan's mainstream media fulfils its democratic and watchdog role in its reporting of the issues of the Baloch people in Balochistan?

This section presents an analysis of the views expressed by informants on the issues and evaluates the media's role in addressing the concerns of the Baloch population as well as monitoring the role of the state institutions and ruling elites in terms of blackout journalism practices in Balochistan. The second research question also investigates and achieves this study's second research objective. The following themes and subthemes emerged from the informants' opinions and are summarized and analysed below:

**Theme: Lack of Genuine Democracy**

**Subthemes: Military-led Government,**

Almost all the informants agreed on these arguments that the genuine democracy does not exist in Pakistan. They said that while there is an apparent democratic structure,

including the parliament, real power is held by the Pakistani establishment, such as Pakistan's military. According to informants, the media in Pakistan operates under military control. PP-1 said,

*"Given the lack of genuine democracy, how can institutions like the journalism industry play a responsible or democratic role?"*

The Academic and Research (AR) group highlighted that Pakistan's democratic model does not align with global standards. In genuine democracies, citizens' views are respected, and the media plays a crucial role in upholding those views. However, in Pakistan, democracy remains overshadowed by military influence. In this context, AR-1 said,

*"Democratic institutions exist only in name, while powerful institutions manipulate election outcomes, thereby denying people the right to choose their representatives."*

According to JE-4, the state's power in Pakistan does not belong to democratic regimes or the parliament. Despite the elected prime minister's pledge to address injustices in Balochistan, he does not have the power to make significant decisions. JE-4 said,

*"The political system has failed in Pakistan. Meanwhile, most parliamentarians are from Punjab, and they have little interest in initiating constitutional amendments that would benefit Balochistan."*

JE-4 further elaborated that media owners and staff predominantly come from Punjab and make excuses for not covering Balochistan's issues, reasoning security concerns. JE-5 stated that real democracy does not exist in Pakistan or in Balochistan. State institutions select ruling elites and establish governments according to their

preferences. He remarked that discussions about democracy or the role of the media in promoting democratic norms are futile.

Moreover, JE-6 in this context said:

*“Politicians and their parties are ‘the B teams’ of the military and intelligence agencies. Meanwhile, the judiciary needs a stronger role. Civil martial law exists, and civil liberties are not respected.”*

The AR group criticized the media for failing to educate the public or foster an informed and stable society. The popular slogan 'selected Prime Minister' reflects how hegemonic elites undermine electoral integrity, sidelining the will of the people.

Further this group argued that journalism ethics, which are meant to defend democratic values, are not practiced in Pakistan. Instead, the media supports powerful, non-democratic institutions, further eroding democratic processes. AR-1 in this regard said,

*“Intelligence agencies manipulate Balochistan’s political landscape by creating puppet political parties overnight, further undermining democratic principles. Media remains silent and does not advocate for democracy”.*

Media Owners (MO) group said that the federal and provincial governments in Pakistan are not fully sovereign, as military control undermines democracy. Journalists from Balochistan often struggle to report local issues, and their efforts are frequently silenced, leading to a sense of disillusionment within the profession.

Journalists and News Editor group showed their disappointment with Pakistan’s democratic environment and believed the corrupt and controlled democratic environment undermines journalistic integrity and motivation. JE-1 said,

*“A puppet democratic system exists in Pakistan, which the establishment creates to show the world that Pakistan has a parliamentary system and democracy, but there is no true democracy”.*

JE-6 further elaborated the issues by saying,

*“In Balochistan, a military captain is more powerful than the chief minister. How can the media play a democratic role if a military captain rules a province?”*

The JE group further argued that people in India, Bangladesh, Iran, Afghanistan, and the United States may not know the names of the military chiefs of their countries, but every child in Pakistan knows a 22-grade Chief of Army Staff. Despite being a public employee, this officer holds more power than the elected prime minister. Further, JE-2 said,

*“Journalists are taken by ISPR on helicopters to various areas of Balochistan and given briefings at army-controlled places. Journalists do not dare to ask cross-questions.”*

**Theme: Media's Failure in Watchdog Journalism**

**Subthemes: Lack of Investigative Journalism, Undemocratic Media**

The opinion of informants revealed that Pakistan’s mainstream media often exhibited undemocratic tendencies in reporting the issues faced by the Baloch people. This included selective coverage, censorship of dissenting voices, marginalization of Baloch narratives, and a failure to uphold the principles of free and fair journalism. Instead of fostering an open dialogue, media practices frequently suppressed or distorted critical issues, reflecting a broader pattern of exclusion and bias. The

informants of PP group argued that, rather than promoting the truth and representing marginalized communities, Pakistan's mainstream media reinforces authoritarian norms, thereby contradicting democratic principles.

PP-2 pointed out that journalism, on a global scale, has always been a mission to resist totalitarianism and expose injustices, but this mission has failed in Pakistan. He remarked,

*"TV anchors and journalists focus solely on their popularity and financial gains, avoiding risks for the sake of the people of Balochistan."*

PP-3 conveyed that corrupt mafias within Pakistan's political system influence public opinion, and the media is complicit in this manipulation. PP-3 said,

*"Mainstream journalists deliberately ignore Balochistan and support discriminatory state policies."*

Informants from the Intellectual and Authors group asserted that, in democratic societies, the media's central role is to challenge existing systems for the welfare of society and its people. However, in Pakistan, the media refrains from questioning practices in Balochistan. According to IA-1, critical thinking, a crucial tool for societal transformation and the strengthening of democracy, is notably absent from Pakistan's media landscape. He explained,

*"Critical thinking is essential to expose wrong practices across institutions, but the media lacks the authority or willingness to drive societal change or hold powerful actors accountable."*

IA-1 further discussed the concept of 'creative destruction,' which fosters innovation and societal progress, and how it is stifled in Pakistan's traditional society. He argued,

*"The media must identify and address malpractices while educating society on adopting new ideas, reforms, and trends."*

Human Rights (HR) group argued that the mainstream media must have represented all social, ethnic, and religious communities, including amplifying the severe issues of the Baloch people as well as exposing the injustices faced by these communities. They believed the media should have promoted dialogue and acted as a reformative force, helping to resolve conflict in Balochistan responsibly. However, HR group noted that the media often prioritizes the state's narrative over addressing public concerns and ignores to raise the voices of deprived Baloch people. These practices go against democratic role and responsibilities of media and journalism.

The Media Owners (MO) group in Balochistan expressed concerns about the lack of dedicated coverage for the province in Pakistan's mainstream TV channels. They stated that, while brief reports are broadcast in the event of incidents such as bomb blasts, attacks on military or police, or the death of government officials, the media fails to investigate people-centric stories.

The Journalists and Editors (JE) class believed that the mainstream media in Pakistan does not have a responsible or democratic role when it comes to reporting on Balochistan. They argued that the media fails to report on issues in a way that aligns with the true essence of journalism and does not follow the core values and ethics of the profession. Many members of the JE community expressed their disappointment

with the industry, stating they are only part of it to support their families. JE-1 in this context said,

*“In this situation, the media cannot be democratic and cannot fulfil its social responsibility role without the consent of state authorities”.*

JE-1 further expressed his opinion in detail, and said,

*“Generally, the role of the media should be to fight against the authoritarian system. However, in Pakistan, those in the profession do not dare to fight against autocracy or authoritarianism and do not have the courage to make sacrifices for their mission.”*

JE-2 critiqued mainstream journalists for not fulfilling their responsibility to provide investigative journalism and for failing to represent journalists from Balochistan. JE-2 said,

*“Most journalists have strong ties with government and state agencies, and I have never seen a journalist from Islamabad visit Balochistan for reporting purposes.”*

#### **Theme 4: Ethical and Professional Decline in Journalism**

##### **Subtheme: Compromise of Journalistic Integrity**

Informants noted that the media in Pakistan is controlled by Islamabad-based journalists and media owners, whose priorities are largely driven by business and commercial interests. IA-2 highlighted a significant disparity in media narratives by saying,

*“For over 20 years, TV channels have claimed that Gwadar will transform into a modern city like Singapore, yet its residents remain deprived of basic facilities like clean water and employment. This false narrative exploits the public.”*

PP-1 further emphasized how the media portrays Gwadar as a symbol of development and an international gateway, while the local population struggles with basic needs such as access to drinking water. PP-1 said,

*"The Pakistani media conceals such realities. This behaviour is far from being responsible."*

AR group remarked that media owners and senior journalists, mainly from Punjab, align with state narratives, leaving Balochistan underrepresented. Informants also criticized the media's hiring practices, noting that the industry is dominated by inexperienced individuals with little formal training related to journalism ethics, integrity, and how to play responsible role while exposing the truth. These owners and their editorial teams, who are focused on issues relevant to their own regions, neglect the concerns of Balochistan.

JE-2 argued that journalists affiliated with Islamabad's media industry are not professional. Media owners and chief editors discourage and undermine the talents and competencies of young journalists from Balochistan. While renowned columnists from Punjab publish their work, they rarely address sensitive issues in Balochistan. JE-3 believed that journalists in Pakistan do not treat journalism as a mission but rather as a source of income. According to JE-3,

*"The majority of news outlets and journalists focus on money and personal interests. Journalists have become millionaires, and the concept of investigative journalism is virtually non-existent, as no one wants to risk getting into trouble."*

JE-3 further said, *"Balochistan is not their headache."* JE-3 also noted that media owners are driven by business interests. He said,

*“News outlet media owners are primarily business minded. The marketing departments of media groups are more powerful than the heads of news and current affairs departments”.*

JE-3 further criticized the lack of knowledge-based debates on TV channels, which have instead introduced infotainment hosted by famous actresses. These programs feature light-hearted content, and the hosts, who often lack substantial knowledge, serve as symbols of commercialism rather than offering any valuable information about society. JE-3 argued that these shows increase ratings, benefiting the marketing department, but fail to fulfil the media's democratic and responsible role.

JE-5 argued that anchors on Pakistani TV channels lack proper qualifications and a genuine journalistic spirit. They criticized news directors, editorial boards, and staff for prioritizing the interests of their media outlets over journalistic ethics. JE-5 said:

*“There is a widespread belief that if journalists, anchors, or analysts manage programs in favour of state institutions and the Pakistan military, the ISPR appreciates them and elevates their status. They are considered true journalists and loyal to Pakistan.*

JE-5 elaborated these issues by saying,

*“However, if journalists or analysts advocate for the public, expose injustices, or hold the regime accountable, they are branded traitors or anti-state elements. As a result, no one dares to speak out against the atrocities in Balochistan.”*

JE-6 argued that Pakistani mainstream media lacks diversity and equity, and especially, there is no representation of Balochistan in mainstream media of Pakistan. There are only bureau offices in Balochistan that are controlled by their head offices.

#### **4.2.3 Role of Local Newspapers, Foreign Press and Social Media**

This section examines the perspectives of informants regarding the third research question, which was: What have been the role of social media, local newspapers, and international media in reporting the pressing issues of the Baloch people in Balochistan? This research question will also investigate and achieve this study's third research objective. The viewpoints are categorized based on themes and subthemes. The analysis below outlines the findings in detail.



##### **Theme 1: Role of Local Newspapers**

##### **Sub-themes: Relatively Better Coverage of Local Issues**

The informants indicated that local newspapers provide more effective and consistent coverage of regional issues compared to national media. They expressed a preference for local newspapers such as *Daily Intikhab*, *Azadi*, and their online platforms, citing their more accurate representation of Balochistan's problems.

These outlets, despite facing considerable risks, are more successful in covering critical local matters. PP-1 said,

*“Local newspapers often bring to light grave incidents that may otherwise go unnoticed, even though local journalists face threats and violence, with many having lost their lives in the pursuit of this work”*

## **Theme: Constraints on Coverage**

### **Subtheme: Commercialization and Decline in Quality**

Intellectuals and Authors (IA) group expressed a more nuanced view of local newspapers, acknowledging that these outlets cover local issues more frequently but critiquing their tendency to avoid discussing sensitive or controversial topics.

The Academicians and Researchers (AR) group expressed cautious optimism about the role of local newspapers in covering Balochistan's issues. They noted that while these outlets provide essential local coverage, their ability to address sensitive or controversial topics is constrained by the political and social climate. Academics argued that local media often shy away from investigating deeper systemic problems due to fear of government retaliation or losing access to resources like advertising revenue.

Media Owners (MO) group provided a critical view of the local media landscape in Balochistan, describing local newspapers as financially dependent on government advertisements and tenders. This reliance on state resources, they argued, limits the ability of local outlets to report independently or investigate sensitive topics. Media owners acknowledged that local media does a good job of covering daily events and socio-political issues but often fails to tackle deeper, systemic problems due to financial constraints and the need to maintain favourable relationships with the government.

Journalists and Editors (JE) group offered mixed opinions on the role of local newspapers. Some appreciated the courage shown by local outlets like *Daily Intikhab*, which have covered issues such as human rights violations and corruption, despite facing risks. Others, however, expressed concerns about the increasing

commercialization of local media, with many outlets prioritizing profit over impartiality and objectivity. JE-3 said,

*“Some local newspapers are now effectively “business ventures,” run by families that prefer to avoid contentious issues in favour of more commercial content”.*

IA group argued that the scope of local media is often limited by social and political pressures, which prevent them from addressing complex or critical issues. For many intellectuals, personal networks and informal sources of information become essential for forming independent opinions on the situation in Balochistan.

Human Rights group provided a grim portrayal of the challenges faced by local journalists in Balochistan. They reported that local media personnel are often subjected to threats, violence, and harassment for reporting on human rights violations and other sensitive topics. The HR group highlighted the growing trend of self-censorship within the local media, as journalists face increasing pressure from both the state and other powerful entities. According to HR-2,

*“Local journalists who take bold stances on human rights issues are at risk of physical harm or worse, and some have even been killed in retaliation for their work”.*

**Theme: Role of International Media**

**Subthemes: Limited Coverage, Dependence on Local Stringers**

On the role of international media, informants acknowledged the involvement of foreign correspondents from agencies like BBC Radio, Voice of America, and Deutsche Welle (DW) in covering Balochistan. However, they pointed out that these correspondents face severe limitations in terms of mobility due to security concerns.

The opinion of informants has shown that international journalists attempting to report on Balochistan must undergo extensive security checks and often find their access restricted. They are frequently unable to travel freely within the region, and obtaining No Objection Certificates (NOCs) is a major hindrance, further limiting their ability to report openly. Such constraints also compel international journalists to adopt secretive means of reporting, sometimes posing as tourists or utilizing other covert strategies to gather information.

Concerning international media, the IA group observed that while international correspondents sometimes report on Balochistan, their coverage remains sporadic and insufficient due to access restrictions imposed by the government. IA group lamented the lack of comprehensive international media engagement in Balochistan, highlighting that media outlets like Al Jazeera and BBC occasionally touch on the issues but fail to provide in-depth reporting due to logistical challenges and limited resources on the ground.

International media was viewed by HR group as playing an important role in bringing attention to the region, although its presence in Balochistan is limited due to security constraints. The activists praised organizations like BBC Radio for their occasional coverage of human rights issues in Balochistan, despite the dangers involved for foreign journalists. Activists noted that the Pakistani government's restrictions on foreign correspondents and journalists are often justified under the guise of security concerns, but these measures significantly hinder independent reporting.

On the matter of international media, Academicians and Researcher (AR) group largely agreed with the views of other informants, stressing that foreign coverage of Balochistan is sporadic at best. While some international outlets like Al Jazeera and

BBC do report on Balochistan, their coverage is often superficial, relying on external sources or stringers who lack the resources to carry out comprehensive investigations. International media's coverage, therefore, remains limited and often fails to capture the full complexity of the region's issues.

Regarding international media, MO group explained that foreign media outlets are seldom able to cover Balochistan in-depth due to the challenges of reporting in the region. International journalists are often dependent on local stringers or reports from outside the province, which hinders the ability to engage in investigative journalism. Media owners also observed that the Pakistani government's restrictions on foreign correspondents contribute to the lack of international media presence in Balochistan.

With regard to international media, JE group confirmed that international coverage of Balochistan remains minimal. They noted that international journalists rarely report from the region, often relying on local stringers for information. Journalists attributed this lack of coverage to both security concerns and the logistical challenges of reporting from such a remote and underreported region.

**Theme: Role of Social Media**

**Subthemes: Platform for Amplifying Marginalized Voices,  
Government Control and Surveillance**

Informants highlighted the growing importance of social media as a platform for people who lack access to traditional media outlets. Although concerns regarding the spread of misinformation on social media were raised, respondents viewed it as a tool for amplifying the voices of the people, enabling them to express concerns about their issues. The viral nature of social media content helps bring attention to matters that might otherwise be ignored by mainstream media.

Informants talked about the challenges posed by government control over digital platforms, especially with the introduction of laws like the Cyber Crime Bill of 2016, which restricts freedom of expression on the internet. Furthermore, internet and electricity shortages, particularly in rural areas, hinder the effectiveness of social media as a tool for advocacy in less developed regions of Balochistan.

Informants acknowledged social media's potential to raise awareness and engage more people in discussions about Balochistan's challenges. However, they criticized social media for lacking the ethical standards and journalistic rigor that are expected from traditional media. Informants were concerned about the prevalence of unverified and sometimes misleading information circulating on these platforms, which undermines their credibility as reliable sources of news.

Social media was identified by HR group as a crucial tool in documenting and exposing human rights violations. Many activists use social media to disseminate videos and images of abuses, providing a platform for those affected to share their stories. However, activists also pointed out the limitations of social media, particularly in rural areas where access to the internet and electricity is unreliable. The activists cautioned that while social media can be an effective tool for raising awareness, it also faces significant challenges in terms of regulation and oversight, as government authorities often clamp down on dissenting voices by targeting online activists and censoring content. According to the AR group social media represents a powerful tool for raising awareness and mobilizing support for Balochistan. However, they also emphasized the need for greater professionalism and ethical standards in online reporting.

Informants collectively expressed concern over the unregulated nature of social media, where misinformation and sensationalism can spread easily. They noted that while social media offers a platform for people to discuss and share information, its unchecked nature often diminishes its value as a reliable source of news.

On the role of social media, media owners were somewhat sceptical. While they acknowledged its potential for raising awareness, they criticized social media platforms for their lack of journalistic standards and the prevalence of sensationalism. Media owners also pointed out that the Pakistani government has implemented various controls over social media, making it a less effective tool for independent reporting.

On social media, JE group highlighted its potential for engagement and information sharing but also expressed concerns about its reliability. They noted that social media often lacks objectivity and can become a platform for spreading misinformation or engaging in online conflicts. Furthermore, the government's surveillance and control of social media platforms limit their effectiveness as a tool for free expression and independent reporting.

#### **4.2.4 Media's Reporting Impacts on the Baloch Population**

This section assesses the research question number four, which was: What has been the impact of mainstream media of Pakistan on the perception of Balochistan and its people? The informants provided diverse perspectives on how the Pakistan's mainstream media coverage in Balochistan influenced public opinion within the region. Research question number four also investigated and achieved this study's research objective number four. The findings of primary data related to research

question four are summarized and categorized into themes and subthemes below, highlighting the varying impacts of media reporting on the Baloch population:

**Theme: Distrust Toward Mainstream Media**

**Sub-theme: Loss of Credibility and Trust**

Almost all the informants have had a deep mistrust and even hatred toward mainstream Pakistani media. Journalism has been seen as biased, unreliable, and disconnected from realities of Balochistan and the Baloch population. PP emphasized that the mainstream media has significantly damaged the trust of Balochistan's people. According to PP-1,

*“The public harbours deep distrust towards the national media and often expresses disdain for journalistic practices in Pakistan”.*

PP-1 further elaborated,

*“People do not trust national media, and they even hate the journalism practices in Pakistan.”*

IA-2 highlighted that the reporting practices of mainstream media have fostered an environment of mistrust, discrimination, and prejudice. He said,

*“People hate and do not rely on mainstream news media; they are going against the state and fighting with the state institutions. People boycotted the media and press in Balochistan several times due to their discriminatory role.”*

According to HR-1, Balochistan's people are increasingly turning to alternative media platforms, such as social media, due to their lack of trust in national media. However, even these alternative channels face significant restrictions. HR-1 recalled an

experience with a television channel in Islamabad that pressured him to avoid criticizing the state during a live broadcast. He said,

*“A television channel in Islamabad invited me to participate in their live show, but they forced me not to criticize the system and to be positive because powerful authorities monitor them.”*

AR-1 in this context said:

*“News media created sorrowful and hateful emotions in our minds. The journalism industry has lost its trust and credibility in Balochistan.”*

AR-2 pointed out that mainstream newspapers have become increasingly unpopular in Balochistan due to their failure to represent the public, resulting in declining circulation figures.

**Subtheme: Discriminatory and Biased Reporting**

**Subtheme: Media’s Role in Exacerbating Ethnic Divisions**

The opinion of informants revealed that media coverage exacerbates ethnic tensions, particularly between Baloch and Punjabis. Furthermore, PP-1 contended that the media's portrayal of ethnic issues exacerbates divisions within the country, particularly between the Baloch and Punjabis. He argued that Balochistan’s people perceive the ethnic groups controlling the state, including the media, as neglectful of their concerns. PP-1 said,

*“I believe the reporting attitude of mainstream media is threatening the integrity and cohesion of Pakistan.”*

According to PP-1, the predominant ethnic composition of media ownership, largely controlled by powerful Punjabi interests, fosters a sense of marginalization among the Baloch population. This dynamic results in widespread resentment, with Baloch citizens perceiving an intentional oversight of their issues by the national media. The lack of representation is particularly disheartening for Baloch youth, who seek media coverage of their concerns but are instead confronted with systemic exclusion.

PP-2 also criticized the political and communication systems in Pakistan for perpetuating ethnic discrimination, which is continuously worsening. He stressed that both policymakers in Islamabad and media owners need to adopt more inclusive approaches to media coverage of Balochistan. He argued that the mainstream media's bias further entrenches social, political, and ethnic divides. IA group expressed similar concerns regarding the mainstream media's role in deepening the divide between Balochistan and the rest of Pakistan.

JE-3 noted that despite requests from political leaders in Balochistan, the issues of the region are often ignored by national media outlets. He concluded that the mainstream media's refusal to address Balochistan's issues has contributed to growing anger and division between the federal government and the provinces. JE-3 remarked,

*“I can see that the media has lost its importance and credibility. Every political leader and person from every school of thought talks against Pakistani media. This has created anger and differences between the federation and provinces.”*

JE-6 reinforced the sense of exclusion felt by the Baloch population, stating,

*“People living in Balochistan are disappointed with the media and its attitude towards them.”*

These findings suggest that the mainstream media's failure to adequately represent the struggles and grievances of the Baloch population has contributed to widespread distrust and alienation. The media's ethnocentric bias, compounded by censorship and the exclusion of critical issues, has further deepened the divide between Balochistan and the rest of Pakistan.

### **Theme: Fuelling Rebellion and Resistance**

The opinion of informants disclosed that mainstream media's silence on injustices in Balochistan fuels anger, resistance, and rebellion among Baloch population. IA-1 argued that the media not only exacerbates the rift between Islamabad and Balochistan but also fuels negative emotions, uprisings, and resistance among the Baloch people.

AI-1 said,

*“Baloch people are disappointed and possess bad feelings”.*

AI-1 further stated that media do not show enforced disappearances issues, human rights violations, or economic, social, and political deprivation in Balochistan, and even ignore the Baloch women, children, and girls who march thousands of kilo meters for their civic rights. However, he said,

*“Media immediately report minor issues in Lahore or Punjab, which is discriminatory”.*

AI-1 further explained that people in Balochistan sense these biases and believe that the powerful classes in Islamabad intentionally overlook journalism practices in Balochistan, leading to widespread hate.

Human Rights activists provided further evidence of the media's negative influence on the Baloch population's relationship with the state and its institutions. HR-1 explained that the Pakistani news media is creating societal divisions that weaken the fabric of the country. HR-2, echoing similar sentiments, criticized the media for failing to reflect the perspectives of the Baloch people, a flaw they argued was rooted in the media's ethnocentric ownership. HR-2 stated that Balochistan's escalating unrest, and the growing violence are in part due to the mainstream media's disregard for the region's issues. HR-2 said:

*“We are disappointed with mainstream media's attitude. Human Rights organizations often raised their reservations against media giants, but they did not care about us.”*

HR-2 noted that the Baloch people are increasingly frustrated with the mainstream media, no longer watching national news channels or reading national newspapers. The growing discontent is fuelled by the perception that media coverage from Punjab or Islamabad is biased and disconnected from the realities of Balochistan.

Academics and Researchers group emphasized that mainstream media outlets in Pakistan are controlled by tycoons, businessmen, and other powerful figures who do not represent the interests of the public. AR-1 remarked that the mainstream media has generated feelings of sorrow and anger among the Baloch population, contributing to the erosion of trust and credibility within the journalism industry in the region.

Media Owners (MO) group acknowledged the growing resentment against mainstream media in Balochistan. MO-1 noted that political parties and student organizations in the region have repeatedly protested against the discriminatory practices of national media.

**Theme: Lack of Representation and Voice**

**Subtheme: Information Vacuum**

PP-3 highlighted the near-total absence of Balochistan in national media reports, creating an information vacuum that prevents the dissemination of critical narratives regarding the region's ongoing injustices. This media blackout, PP-3 suggested, is a substantial barrier to global awareness of the challenges faced by the people of Balochistan. PP-3 explained:

*“People’s voices are controlled and do not reach the world level, which is a big loss. People have become rebellious against the Pakistani state; they neither trust the federal system nor the mainstream news media.”*

JE-2 emphasized that although journalism is widely respected in Western countries, the situation in Pakistan is quite different. He explained that journalists in Balochistan are frequently subjected to pressure and censorship from powerful military and governmental institutions. JE-2 said,

*“Nowadays, talking about real issues of Balochistan is like blasphemy. If someone talks, agencies come and interrogate them. Pakistani agencies cannot afford it if anyone talks against CPEC and Gwadar projects. Such journalists are declared Indian agents.”*

**Theme: State Surveillance and Suppression**

**Subtheme: Psychological Impact on Local Journalists**

JE-5 shared that many people in Balochistan no longer watch national news media because they feel it offers no coverage of the region's suffering. He lamented,

*“I sometimes cry because I am unable to report cruelties and atrocities. Media outlets do not publish them. Our women carry water on their heads and walk many kilometers, but no one is there to highlight their poverty and deprivations.”*

JE-4 observed that many local journalists in Balochistan are facing psychological challenges due to their inability to report freely. He said,

*“Our skills are destroyed. We want to contribute to the field but are not allowed to”.*

He further talked in detail and said, *“We cannot properly serve the people and society, and we are not contributing with true essence to the journalism industry because we do not have a liberal and free press platform.”*

Journalists and Editors (JE) group agreed that the mainstream media’s credibility in Balochistan has been severely compromised. JE-1 said:

*“In these circumstances, we are disappointed and feel too bad. Many colleagues left their jobs, and some changed their professions.”*

According to MO-1, journalists in Balochistan are often discouraged from engaging in meaningful reporting due to pressure from government-controlled unions and media monopolies. He stated that these unions are manipulated by governmental forces that stifle the independence of local journalists. MO-1 explained by saying:

*“The government wants to promote something other than local media; there is no communication or media policy in Balochistan.”*

MO-2 further lamented that many educated Baloch journalists and activists have been forced to emigrate due to safety concerns. He observed that the Pakistani state is

largely indifferent to the migration of Baloch talent, as it serves the interests of those in power. He said, “*Balochistan’s educated writers, journalists, and activists have travelled to Europe, the USA, and Canada and sought asylum. The state is happy that the talent of Balochistan is migrating abroad.*”

The findings indicated that the mainstream media’s biased reporting, ethnic favouritism, censorship, and failure to highlight the socio-political and human rights issues of Balochistan have fuelled widespread resentment, rebellion, and mistrust among the Baloch population. Journalists themselves are disillusioned, often censored, and in many cases, forced to leave the country. The media, instead of bridging the gap between Balochistan and the rest of Pakistan, has inadvertently widened it.

#### **4.2.5 Sources of News in Balochistan**

The researcher asked individual informants about the types of news sources they rely upon to stay informed about issues in Balochistan. This inquiry generated significant interest and allowed informants to express their trust in preferred news sources. Their responses shed light on how people navigate a media landscape often hindered by restricted access to information and censorship. The thematic analysis of the opinion of the informants regarding their preferred source of information is detailed below:

##### **4.2.1.1 Hal O Ahwal (*People-to-People Interaction*)**

**Theme: Traditional and Community-Based Information Sharing**

**Subtheme: Networks and Source of Trust**

Almost all the informants revealed that they primarily depend on Haal Ehwaal, a traditional method of people-to-people communication deeply entrenched in Baloch culture. This practice is viewed as an authentic, confidential, and trustworthy source of information. Haal Ehwaal involves individuals sharing news and insights while

traveling within regions, a practice that has persisted despite the rise of digital communication. IA-1 said, *"Haal Ehwaal is not just a tradition; it's a lifeline for many of us in remote areas. It is through personal interactions that we learn the truth."*

Further, PP-2 said,

*"In Balochistan, people carry knowledge like water—with care and trust. This is why Haal Ehwaal remains the most reliable source for us."*

Digital tools like telephones, WhatsApp, and Messenger have enhanced this traditional approach, facilitating easier interactions and information exchange. Informants often discuss sensitive topics, grievances, and community issues through these interpersonal communications.

Human Rights group emphasized that, even with the advent of digital media, Haal Ehwaal remains the most credible communication method in Balochistan. HR-1 in this context said,

*"At the grassroots level, the depth of knowledge and the eagerness to share it is unparalleled. Even when digital media fails, people trust Haal Ehwaal because it is grounded in cultural authenticity."*

Journalists and Editors group indicated that they often depend on information from reporters, correspondents, social workers, politicians, activists, and members of civil society to cross-verify facts. Politicians acknowledged that information flows from party workers, constituents, and public interactions.

Overall, informants underscored the importance of their networks and civil society institutions as vital sources of reliable information, aligning under the broader category of Hal O Ahwal.

#### **4.2.1.2 Local Newspapers (*Publish within Balochistan*)**

**Theme: Importance of Local Press**

**Sub-theme: Limitations and State Influence**

Informants recognized local newspapers, such as Daily Intekhab and Daily Azadi, address issues of Balochistan. These newspapers provide both print and digital editions to deliver timely updates. Their editorial sections often feature in-depth columns and critical stories, particularly surrounding human rights violations. Despite their challenges, local newspapers maintain a broad readership across the province, including remote areas, where delays in distribution can occur. JE-4 said,

*"Even when newspapers reach us after several days, they remain an essential source of information, especially for their editorials and in-depth columns on Balochistan."*

However, some informants also pointed out certain limitations and stated that local papers frequently focus on general political matters and are reluctant to touch sensitive topics. JE-3 said,

*"Most local newspapers are closely aligned with the Directorate General of Public Relations (DGPR), a government agency that ensures financial stability via advertisements. Consequently, these publications often hesitate to report stories that could provoke the state."*

Despite these limitations, some informants commended local journalists for their bravery in tackling sensitive issues, acknowledging the risks involved. In this context, AR-1 said,

*"There are a few devoted journalists in Balochistan who raise critical issues despite threats to their lives and families."*

The lack of professional training, resources, and security poses significant challenges for Balochistan based local journalists. JE-4 said,

*"The tragic deaths of Sajid Hussain, Editor of Balochistan Times in Sweden in 2021 and Karima Baloch, female journalist and political activist in Canada in the same years, exemplify the dangers faced by those reporting on Balochistan's issues".*

#### **4.2.1.3 Social Media**

**Theme: Social Media as an Emerging Yet Risky Platform**

**Subthemes: Fear of Repercussions, Connectivity Challenges**

The reliance on social media as a news source is significant, with approximately one-third of informants indicating that platforms like Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, and Twitter facilitate the swift spread of information, including text, images, and videos. However, many informants expressed concerns about sharing sensitive information, citing strict monitoring and surveillance by state agencies of Pakistan as a deterrent.

The Cyber Crime Bill in Pakistan, promulgated in 2016, has intensified state control over digital platforms, which informants feel jeopardizes their safety when discussing politically sensitive topics. HR-2 in this matter said,

*"Social media is fast and accessible, but it comes with a price. People fear being traced, arrested, and labelled as anti-state for posting controversial content."*

Informants also pointed to limited internet access in many areas of Balochistan, where basic electricity is often unavailable, making internet connectivity a rare practice. There were allegations that state authorities deliberately disabled internet services to stifle information during protests or civil unrest. For example, in December 2023, internet services were shut down in many areas of Balochistan, amid long march led by Dr Mahrang Baloch who marched from Karachi to Islamabad. The unavailability of internet left those in other regions uninformed about the events.

#### **4.2.1.4 International Media**

**Theme: International Media as a Secondary Source**

**Subtheme: Perception of Higher Credibility**

Regarding international media, some informants referred to outlets like Al Jazeera, RTA, and the BBC as occasional reliable news sources about Balochistan. However, they acknowledged that international coverage of the area is infrequent. JE-3 in this context said,

*"BBC reports are more professional and unbiased".*

In conclusion, insights from 17 key informants reveal a marked distrust in Pakistan's mainstream media regarding information on Balochistan. In contrast, they favour alternative sources such as Haal Ehwaal, local newspapers, and, to a lesser degree, social media, and international outlets. However, social media and local newspapers come with their own challenges, such as state surveillance, censorship, financial manipulation, lack of security, and connectivity issues. This complex and cautious

information ecosystem reflects the broader realities of restricted media freedom and civil liberties in Balochistan.

#### **4.3 Monopoly of the State Institutions of Pakistan**

While conducting in-depth interviews, the researcher found that all the primary informants, on one hand, blamed the state institutions of Pakistan for controlling and monopolizing journalism practices in Balochistan. On the other hand, they also blamed news media owners and mainstream journalists who intentionally ignore Balochistan because of their belonging to Punjab. As stated in the previous pages that almost all the informants stated that state institutions such as the Pakistani military, Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), Military Intelligence (MI), Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), and Frontier Corps (FC) control journalism practices and threaten local journalists by different ways.

Moreover, the informants disclosed that media owners and mainstream journalists prioritize their own specific interests, which prevent them from highlighting the critical issues faced by the Baloch people and Balochistan.

In response to this feedback, the researcher promptly revised the interview process during individual sessions by adding two new questions to the interview guide and asked the informants to share their views on them. The two additional research questions are outlined below:

1. Why do Pakistani state institutions control journalism practices in Balochistan?
2. Why do mainstream journalists and news outlets neglect the pressing issues of the Baloch people in Balochistan?

The feedback and opinions of informants related to these questions are analysed and interpreted below:

#### **4.3.1 Reasons for Journalism control in Balochistan?**

The research question concerning why Pakistani state institutions control journalism practices in Balochistan has been particularly sensitive, and the researcher anticipated that informants might hesitate to speak openly. To address this, the researcher assured the informants of strict confidentiality and the protection of their privacy, emphasizing that their opinions would never be disclosed. To further safeguard their identities, each informant was assigned a symbolic label, such as Politicians and Parliamentarians (PP) or Journalists and Editors (JE), instead of using real names.

However, they boldly expressed their views on the matter without fear. Below is given thematic analysis of their feedback and opinion:

##### **Theme: Colonial and Authoritarian Mindset**

PP-2 argued that during the colonial period, the Bolshevik Revolution spread to different parts of the world. As it spread from Eastern Europe to London, the colonial powers wanted to control its expansion. To achieve this, they divided people and regions, including the Indian subcontinent, and created Pakistan. The authoritarian class in Pakistan inherited the colonial mindset and has never been willing to grant the Baloch people their due rights. The military and other state agencies maintain direct control over Balochistan and its people across all sectors.

PP-3 believed that the Pakistani military imposes domination and significant control on people's voices in Balochistan. They do not want the voices of the people to be heard, as it would expose the real issues facing them. PP-3 said,

*"If the global news media were to report on the atrocities in Balochistan, Pakistan would face many problems."*

Intellectuals and Authors (IA) group believed that Pakistani media is controlled by the powerful institutions of Pakistan, a problem stemming from the mindset inherited from colonial rulers who governed the region for centuries. IA-1 said, *"Balochistan has been a tribal land and a warrior zone. When Britain colonized this land, they sought to control Balochistan and its people through policies like the Sandeman Policy, Forward Policy, and English Policy."*

He further talked on the issue in detail and said,

*"These policies divided the land and its tribes. They created the Goldsmith Line, the Durand Line, established agencies, political agents, and introduced the FCR to control the region."*

IA-1 noted that in 1947, after India was divided, Pakistan occupied Balochistan by force. The people of Balochistan are culturally different from the people of Punjab and Sindh, with a historical connection to Persian and Iraqi Kurdish civilizations. While Balochistan became part of Pakistan, significant cultural differences remained. People in Balochistan think differently from the rest of Pakistan, and the power structures in Pakistan have never accepted this difference.

AI-1 argued that the Pakistani military continues to use the same tactics towards the Baloch people that the British adopted in the 18th century. PP-1 also stated that the Pakistani establishment uses collaborators in Balochistan, who lack political strength or popularity, to maintain control over the region's natural resources and political activism, though they face strong resistance from the people of Balochistan.

PP-1 explained two theories adopted by different nations: the 'Pushing Theory' and the 'Pulling Theory.' The 'Pushing Theory' involves colonial masters and dictators disregarding the participation of the people in state affairs and maintaining control by pushing them away from political processes. In contrast, democratic societies and reformists adopt the 'Pulling Theory,' which focuses on involving people in state affairs, development, and policymaking. IA-1 said,

*"The Pakistani authorities impose the 'Pushing Theory' in Pakistan, where the state pushes the people of Balochistan away from state affairs, and the media follows the same approach by not giving the people proper representation in coverage."*

IA-1 also stated that Punjab (the dominant ethnic group in Pakistan, including in the media sector) applies the same 'Pushing Theory,' wherein they do not hire media professionals from Balochistan because they do not align with their attitudes and understandings.

**Theme: Enforcement of State Narrative**

**Subtheme: Glorification of Development Projects**

Informants stated that the security institutions of Pakistan prioritize state interests and aim to build a positive image of Balochistan both within the country and globally. They are not willing to tolerate foreign press exposing the truth related to Balochistan, including the portrayal of human rights violations, poverty, backwardness, deprivation, and other injustices. PP-1 explained his opinion in detail by saying,

*"Military think that they are developing Balochistan through mega projects and people are happy. Pakistan receives a lot of funding, development grants, and advertisements from global organizations to be used in social and development sectors, including addressing deprivation, poverty, and years of backwardness in Balochistan."*

PP-1 shared his views on this pressing issue very seriously. He said,

*“However, the truth is that it is a corrupt mafia that wastes money for its own interests. If the media exposes their corrupt practices and the truth, the world will know the actual situation, and donor organizations will not only stop funding Pakistan but will take serious notice”.*

AI-1 stated that due to these reasons, the government's narrative is to present Balochistan as a key land for investment opportunities, rather than showing it as a deprived and poor region.

Informants argued that state actors and government institutions control media circulation, monitor the transmission of information, and enforce censorship. These actors promote a specific narrative through mainstream Pakistani media. AR-1 said, *“They transmit through media that the tribal chiefs in Balochistan are nomadic, warriors, and cruel. Moreover, they are held responsible for the region's backwardness and deprivation. The media portrays these chiefs as enemies of development and social change, accusing them of committing violence and torture in Balochistan.”*

AR-1 stated that mainstream media promote this narrative while ignoring the actual ground realities and the truth in Balochistan.

MO-1 explained that state institutions use media to promote a narrative that everything is fine in Balochistan, where people are content with mega-projects and the region's daily development. MO-1 said,

*"They want the media to uphold their initiatives and development projects. They cannot tolerate negative reporting about Balochistan, even when the military is attacked by militants. They hide the actual casualties and losses."*

Journalists and Editors (JE) group remarked that the military aims to portray itself as a bringer of development and prosperity in Balochistan, focusing on initiatives such as the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the operation of the Gwadar port, construction of highways, sports events, and free medical camps. They wish to create a positive image of the military through the media and pressure journalists to suppress reports of atrocities and human rights violations. Mainstream media suggests that the Baloch people welcome the military and are happy with the federal government, with only a few tribal chiefs speaking out due to their own interests.

**Theme: Suppression of Rights**

**Subthemes: Resource Exploitation, Strategic Interests**

Informants emphasized that Balochistan is rich in natural resources, but its people remain poor and deprived. The issue of ownership of these natural resources is a major concern for the state, and Pakistan does not want this issue to be publicly discussed. The state silences those who raise their voices, including the news media and journalists, if they dare to report on these issues. PP-1 further said,

*"Mainstream media and national-level journalists lack the courage to speak the truth about Balochistan".*

MO-2 noted that state agencies control the entire system in Pakistan, including the media. They particularly covet Balochistan for its natural resources. MO-2 emphasized that news outlets conceal real public issues and refrain from exposing them due to the

state's control over the media. Media outlets avoid confrontation with government or state institutions to ensure smooth operations.

JE-2 asserted that the media blackout stems from the military's refusal to allow any detachment from its narrative in Balochistan, portraying it as a land of insurgency and asserting that Baloch people are disloyal to Pakistan. JE-2 said,

*"The military claims that RAW is involved in every political activity, supporting Baloch insurgents to destabilize Pakistan. They argue that the country's security and sovereignty are under threat, necessitating the suppression of people deemed disloyal."*

JE-3 argued that the authorities seek to portray tribal chiefs in Balochistan as the primary cause of the region's deprivation, while simultaneously presenting the military as a saviour and force striving to remove poverty, deprivation, and backwardness. They exert pressure on the media to report that the military is working to help the Baloch people overcome long-standing challenges. PP-1 also expressed the similar views saying that Islamabad, and the people of Punjab continue to treat the people of Balochistan as tribal, warrior-like, and nomadic.

JE-4 explained that reporting from Balochistan is hazardous because intelligence agencies and the military manipulate the narrative. Journalists and media outlets often avoid covering Balochistan-related issues for fear of threats. Journalists in Balochistan, many of whom are from the Punjab province, are less motivated to expose injustices in the region. Security forces control and monitor the news, giving orders to journalists and reporters. Consequently, editors and journalists often choose not to report on Balochistan for security reasons.

JE-5 stated that the government aims to showcase Balochistan as a peaceful place, boasting development projects to attract international investors. The government conceals real issues and prevents the media from exposing atrocities to a global audience. While they highlight fake projects, the ground reality is far from this image. Corruption is rampant, yet the media remains silent about corruption within government institutions. The national policy is to perpetuate the deprivation and backwardness of the Baloch people. JE-6 said,

*“The military and intelligence agencies in Pakistan have a deliberate strategy to create a false narrative that all is well in Balochistan”.*

JE-6 believed that media is used as a tool on covering government delegations, mega projects, and visits of the Prime Minister, President, and other VVIPs. State agencies adorn streets, roads, and cities, organize cultural events, and hire people, all in an effort to project an image of a peaceful and developed Balochistan to the world.

IA-2 stated that the Pakistani media is controlled by military and state institutions. The powerful military and intelligence agencies control the voices of the people, abducting local journalists who raise the truth, torturing them, or even killing them. Pakistan lacks democracy, and elections are not free and fair. Military representatives are appointed, and the political system, including the media, is under their control, especially in Balochistan, where they also manipulate the electoral process. Baloch people are not treated as equal citizens.

HR-1 believed that the state and media groups have deep interests in Balochistan's natural resources, but they do not care about the people. The Pakistani establishment

wants the people of Balochistan to remain poor, politically and economically weak, and immobilized so that they can be easily controlled and ruled. HR-1 said,

*"They do not want the Baloch people to become free, educated, intellectual, or equal partners in the global civilized society. They fear that educated people will become powerful and demand their rights, self-determination, and ownership."*

HR-1 also argued that the state has created fake journalists and the journalism industry in Pakistan. The state offers financial support in exchange for journalists promoting their stance. The media portrays Balochistan as a developed region, but in reality, it remains the most deprived.

**Theme: Ethnic Bias and Colonial Legacy**

**Theme: Manipulation, Propaganda and Constructed Narratives**

HR-2 stated that mainstream media discriminates against Balochistan because most media professionals are from Punjab. The media focuses on minor issues in Punjab while ignoring the serious and sensitive issues in Balochistan. The Pakistani authorities are primarily interested in Balochistan's natural wealth, not the welfare of its people.

HR-3 argued that the state's policy involves blacking out Balochistan in the media. The official narrative is that Baloch tribal chiefs and politicians are responsible for the region's backwardness, while the military is attempting to bring prosperity. ISPR directly interferes with and gives directions to all media groups, insisting on showing a positive image of Balochistan.

### **Theme: State Fear of International Attention**

Informants collectively stated that state institutions are in status of fear, if human rights violations and abuses done by the Pakistani military are exposed globally. The government is afraid that if the global community learns of the poverty, deprivation, and human rights violations, organizations like the UN and European bodies will exert pressure on Pakistan or stop funding.

Overall, the responses from various informants (politicians, intellectuals, HR activists, journalists, academics, media owners) reveal a deep-seated, multi-layered system of control where the Pakistani military and state institutions dominate the media space. This control is motivated by economic, political, and security interests, all at the expense of truth, human rights, and Balochistan's representation.

#### **4.3.2 Why Mainstream Media and Journalists Ignore Balochistan?**

This section presents the thematic analysis of the opinions of the informants regarding why mainstream media of Pakistan and Islamabad-based journalists ignore to report the pressing issues of the Baloch people in Balochistan. the role of news media owners and mainstream journalists in Pakistan. In response, the informants expressed their views and perspectives on this crucial issue, which is given below in the shape of themes and subthemes:

#### **Theme: Media's Commercial Priorities over Journalism Ethics**

IA-1 stated that media became a commercial entity run by commercial tycoons. Their focus is to earn money and gain ratings for their network. Balochistan has a low

population. This land does not have a market for media as people do not give any share in the media's rating or a revenue boost. IA-1 said,

*“Balochistan is not on the agenda of media outlets and journalists. Government and state forces provide them luxurious life, protocol, popularity, and comfort, which they need to live. They do not follow global media ethics to expose cruelties in Balochistan”.*

AR-1 stated that getting support from the government is the primary goal of media groups because commercials and advertisement are their primary source of income. They do not earn any income from Balochistan. As a result, they don't need to show interest in Balochistan's society. AR-1 said,

*“I do not see a communication mechanism in this country. The media groups in Islamabad do not follow ideological journalistic values and do not work with real essence. This field has become a good business industry in Pakistan.”*

MO-1 said that there is no trustworthy journalism in Pakistan. Journalists and media men working in the field have personal interests.

MO-1 said,

*“They do not like to live on a mission; instead, they earn money to have a good and luxurious life in Islamabad. Media owners also make money and hide serious issues. The government sponsors media, and state organizations support and help media owners financially. Representatives from the security forces personally visit bureau offices and pressurise bureau chief and reporters.*

MO-1 further added,

*"If we report ground realities, they label us anti-state and RAW agent."*

MO-2 mentioned that the media owners do not get income from Balochistan, so they do not spend money to report on Balochistan. Similarly, journalists and reporters must have a journalistic vision, courage, and state-of-the-art training.

Meanwhile, TV producers, editors, and desk staff must be better. There needs to be quality in reporting. Mainstream media do not hire staff from Balochistan for their Islamabad news desk. National-level owners have a specific policy; they follow state policies. They do not report stories if sent by local reporters from Balochistan.

JE-4 contended that media owners avoid addressing the real issues in Balochistan. Powerful media groups treat the province as insignificant compared to larger cities in Punjab. They claim they would cover Balochistan if the provincial government offered financial support, but otherwise, they prioritize cities like Lahore, Faisalabad, Islamabad, and Karachi because these regions bring in more business.

JE-4 emphasized that journalists in Islamabad must take responsibility and seek knowledge about Balochistan. They often act cowardly when confronted with the province's issues and have never travelled there to understand the ground realities. JE-4 said,

*"How can they be called journalists if they do not know this province? Mainstream media shows zero interest in its people, though they are deeply interested in its geography and natural resources."*

JE-6 argued that mainstream media outlets in Islamabad need to pay more attention to issues in Balochistan. The media industry is monopolized, with owners primarily

concerned with their own financial interests. All institutions, including the media, have collapsed due to personal and organizational greed. PP-3 stated that media ethics do not exist in this country. There is not a single mainstream journalist who can talk in favour of the people of Balochistan.

**Theme: Ethnic and Regional Bias**

**Subtheme: Punjabi Dominance in Media Ownership and Staffing**

PP-1 believed that a single community in Pakistan holds domination in Pakistan, including in the media. The media owners from that community hire workers and staff from their community. PP-1 said,

*"I do not have any hesitation in mentioning that media owners, journalists, and analysts belong to the Punjabi community because they don't create trouble for them and their businesses for the sake of Balochistan".*

PP-1 further explained and said, *"The forces of the country, intelligence agencies, military, and powerful institutions belong to this community; therefore, they do not show interest in Balochistan. Meanwhile, Baloch people do not have any representation in media."*

**Theme: Absence of Journalistic Integrity and Courage**

**Subtheme: Suppression and Manipulation, Fear and Blackmailing**

PP-1 argued that mainstream journalists must have journalistic courage to counter the state and its institutes. PP-1 said,

*"I do not see courageous and journalistic values and ethics in Islamabad-based journalists. They do not choose journalism as a mission but as a source of income or*

*to blackmail others for personal gains. They do not anger the government or powerful forces, which goes against journalism values."*

IA-1 stated that journalists don't have opinion-building and responsible roles in society. IA-1 said,

*"They do not have a vision, thirst, sympathy, passion, or craziness for journalism missions and investigative reporting"*.

HR-2 believed that mainstream media in Islamabad do not care about the people of this land. National-level journalists and analysts need to learn about Balochistan. He said,

*"Balochistan supplies natural gas to the people of Punjab, but they do not know where the gas comes from."*

AR-2 believed that mainstream media does not give a platform to ordinary people. Journalists' unions are also puppets that have a dead role. They even do not protest in favour of their colleague journalists. Further, AR-2 said,

*"When poor or middle class go to press clubs to raise their voices in the shape of the press conference, very few journalists sit there to note down their stories, and most of the chairs remain empty"*

AR-2 stated that if any minister has a powerful personality, or anyone from the government goes, all chairs are filled by journalists. This response clearly shows that they support the powerful class and ignore the weak and poor class. Moreover, AR-1 stated that the media is also a powerful mafia that does not give representation to ordinary people. AR-1 said,

*"We are under cultural suffocation due to uncivilized behaviours and attitudes. We do not have moral values. Our society has become violent. People's behaviours are violent, including journalists"*

AR-1 shed more light on these issues by saying,

*"Media outlets and journalists have become blackmailers. Two sons of a senior journalist in the Khuzadar area of Baluchistan were abducted and killed, but the journalist was unable to disclose the names of the killers despite he knew them".*

JE-5 explained that the media in Pakistan predominantly highlight issues in Punjab because the staff, head offices, and media owners are based there. Naturally, they focus on Punjab's concerns while neglecting the smaller provinces. Atrocities in Balochistan are secondary for them. The sorrows of the people do not matter. For example, if an officer from Punjab is killed, the media cover it extensively, but when significant killings occur in Balochistan, they receive minimal coverage. This bias illustrates the discrimination against Balochistan.

### **Theme: Exclusion of Baloch Community**

PP-1 stated that national-level journalists do not have any sympathy with the Baloch ethnic group and their serious issues, which goes against media's integrity and ethics. PP-2 argued that Pakistan TV channels run 24 hours, but they do not give a single minute to issues of Balochistan. They sometimes break stories related to Pakistan military activities, the prime minister's visits to Balochistan, and the inauguration of any mega project. They even propagate against Baloch leaders to divide people's opinions, making them confused about the facts. PP-2 said,

*"As a result, people from other provinces think that we are tribal, cruel, uneducated, and uncivilized."*

IA-2 argued that Balochistan is a disadvantaged area where poverty is widespread. The media does not generate any income in Balochistan and as a result media outlets do not spend on reporting. IA-2 said that the BBC reporters and correspondents travel to the corners of Balochistan, spending money, facing difficulties, and getting involved to report problems responsibly. IA-2 said,

*"Mainstream media do not bother sending their reporters to Balochistan for independent reporting, because they do not want to spend money. Likewise, journalists do not bother getting themselves into trouble for the Baloch people".*

JE-3 acknowledged that while some local journalists in Balochistan are passionate and dedicated, they face restrictions and fear. Additionally, many local journalists and editors are partisan, aligning themselves with various political parties, intelligence agencies, government bodies, or military groups. There is a need to educate them about professional journalism standards and ethics.

**Theme: Media-Military-Political Nexus**  
**Strategic Collaboration for Narrative Building**

Informants revealed that ruling elites, media organizations and senior journalists have a nexus. They support each other's interests. Informants believed that the media's focus is to earn revenues through advertisements and commercials, and this can only be possible if media houses maintain smooth ties with government and state institutions.

JE-5 stated that ISPR take journalists freely on helicopters to various places of Balochistan for reporting purposes. Journalists follow the directions of ISPR, and report whatever dictated by them. JE-5 said that this practice clearly shows how ISPR fulfils its own agenda and narratives. IA-2 said,

*"News outlets and journalists' unions are willing to compromise and don't like to put themselves in trouble for Baloch people. Even they don't invite us to participate in live shows."*

HR-1 argued that the Pakistani mainstream media is partial. There are currently mafias in Balochistan, and national journalists are part of these mafias. Media has engineered and planted reporting. Media groups invite pro-government and pro-military analysts to promote their narratives. Such experts document fake history and realities and pressure the audience to assume everything is fine and beautiful in Balochistan. HR-1 said, *"International journalists and intellectuals worldwide should visit Balochistan and report the facts"*.

HR-3 argued that journalists and capitalist media portray elites, not poor and deprived communities. The government protects the press, and the media protects government interests. Since the beginning of the media landscape in Pakistan. Media owners, anchors, and analysts have become billionaires, particularly after the opening of numerous TV channels from 2002 and onwards.

AR-2 stated that media groups and anchor persons proudly announce that the government and media industry have excellent and stable relationships. How is it possible that the media create good ties with the government? Is this allowed in journalism ethics? AR-2 said,

*"As far as I know, journalists make government institutions and rulers accountable. During this process, both never maintain good ties to one another."*

JE-1 argued that journalism in Pakistan lacks its essential nature, as seen in Europe, America, and Canada. Pakistani media often promote the government's stance because it financially supports them. They can survive and sustain their outlets only if they align with the government's position.

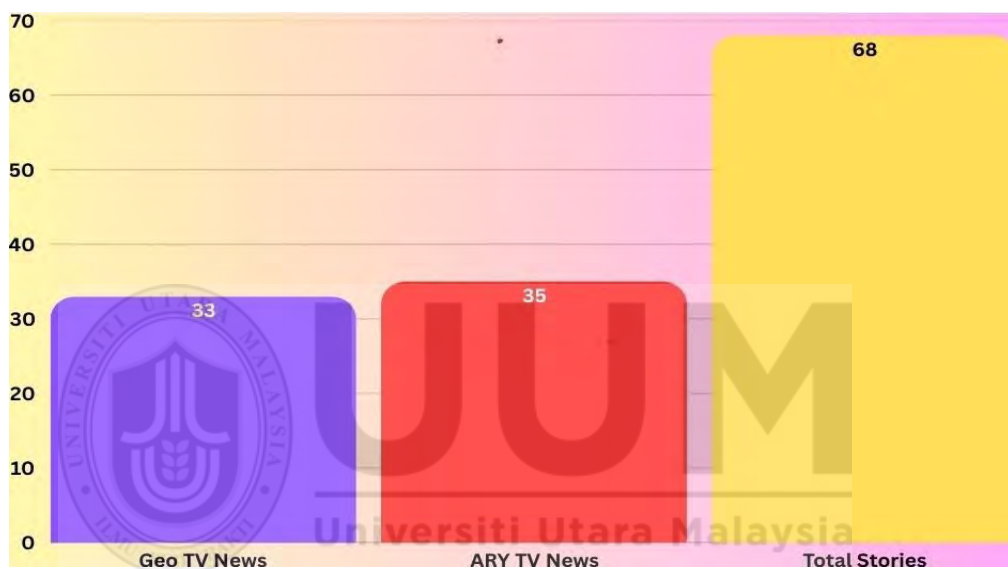
Raising the issues of diversity, JE-2 noted that there is a lack of diversity in mainstream media in Pakistan, specially there is no representation of Balochistan based desk editors, journalists in head offices in Islamabad. The Punjab based management, and all types of staff show little interest or motivation regarding the issues in Balochistan. They do not advocate for the people of Balochistan.

#### **4.4 Describing Secondary Data (*Content Analysis*)**

The researcher encountered significant challenges while attempting to obtain secondary data from the archives of Geo TV Network and ARY News Network. Despite spending over two years awaiting a response from the archives departments of both TV channels, delays were further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, the researcher was unable to access secondary data directly from the offices of either TV channel. However, after extensive search, the researcher discovered 68 stories/video materials between January 1, 2022, and December 31, 2023, on the YouTube channels of both networks. Of these, 33 stories were broadcast on Geo TV News, and 35 on ARY News.

The researcher developed a Coding Sheet (attached in Appendix-7) to organize and record all relevant details of the stories broadcast on both TV channels. This sheet includes data such as the number of stories aired by each channel, the themes of the stories, the number of stories related to each theme, the titles of the stories, and the percentage representation of each TV channel and theme.

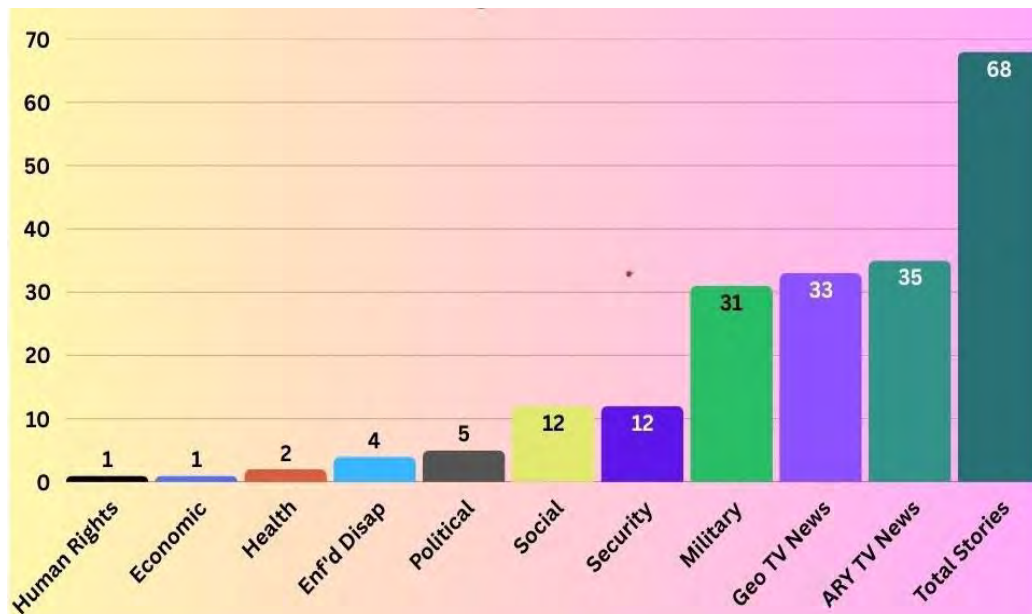
The following Bar Chart provide related details:



Bar Chart 4.1: (Comparison of stories produced by Geo TV News & ARY News TV)

The themes of the above-mentioned stories from both television channels, such as enforced disappearances, human rights, political, social, economic, health, military, and security, were derived from the titles of the stories. Additionally, each theme was further broken down into various keywords that reflected the essence of the respective topics. The secondary data was then categorized according to these themes.

The following Bar Chart (4.2) illustrates the breakdown of stories by theme, as well as the number of stories produced by each TV channel related to each theme:

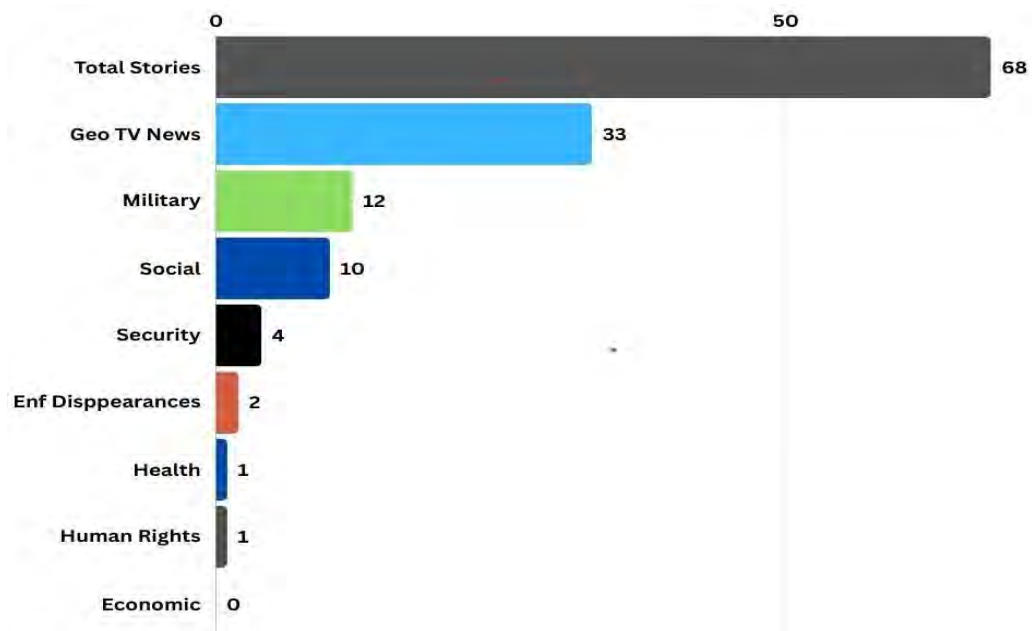


*Bar Chart: 4.2 (Number of stories produced by ARY and Geo TV News in Two-Years)*

Upon further dividing the stories produced by each TV channel, the themes were categorized as: *Enforced Disappearances, Human Rights, Political, Social, Economic, Health, Military, and Security.*

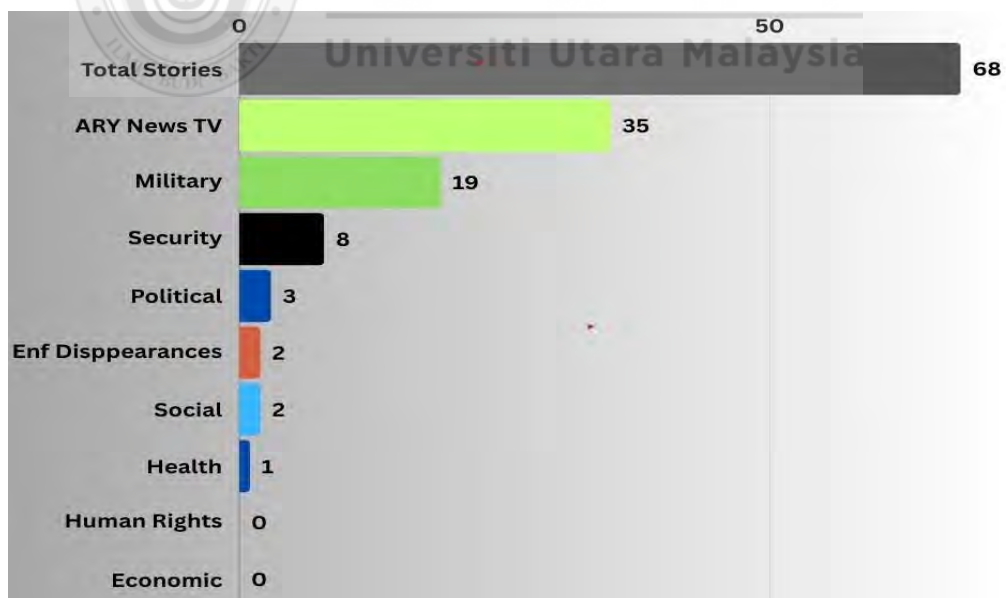
It is pertinent to note that the researcher could not find any stories related to the “Human Rights” and "Economic" themes produced by ARY News. Therefore, the calculation for ARY News under the Human Rights and Economic theme is 0.

The Bar Chart below (4.3) reflects the distribution of the 33 stories produced by Geo TV News in a two-year period across various themes.



Bar Chart: 4.3 (Number of stories produced by Geo TV News in Two years)

Whereas the below Bar Chart (4.4) displays the distribution of the 35 stories produced by ARY News across the different themes, except for the "Human Rights" and "Economic" themes.



Bar Chart: 4.4 (Number of stories produced on ARY TV News)

In conclusion, the analysis provides a detailed breakdown of how each news channel covered various themes relevant to the situation in Balochistan. This categorization

aids in understanding the media's focus and potential biases related to the region's pressing issues.

After conducting a thorough content analysis of the video materials from both Geo TV News and ARY News, several key themes emerged, which are reflected in the following graph. To ensure accuracy and consistency in the categorization, the researcher developed specific keywords and categories that closely align with each theme.

The themes, along with their respective keywords/categories, were reviewed and validated by two expert coders to ensure reliability and objectivity in the analysis. The validation process involved the coders cross-referencing the themes and ensuring that the selected keywords were appropriate and reflective of the content under each theme.

*Table 4.3: The identified themes and keywords*

---

**1. Enforced Disappearances,**

*a. Missing Persons,*

**2. Human Rights**

*a. Right to Life & Liberty,*

**3. Political**

*a. Dialogue and Negotiations,*

*b. Conflict Resolution,*

*c. Insurgency and instability,*

**4. Social**

*a. Social Disruption and Inequality,*

*b. Marginalization,*

*c. Deprivation,*

*d. Social protection and recognition,*

**5. Economics**

*a. Economic Exclusion and Disparities,*

## 6. Health

- a. Health inequality,
- b. Healthcare Crises,

## 7. Military

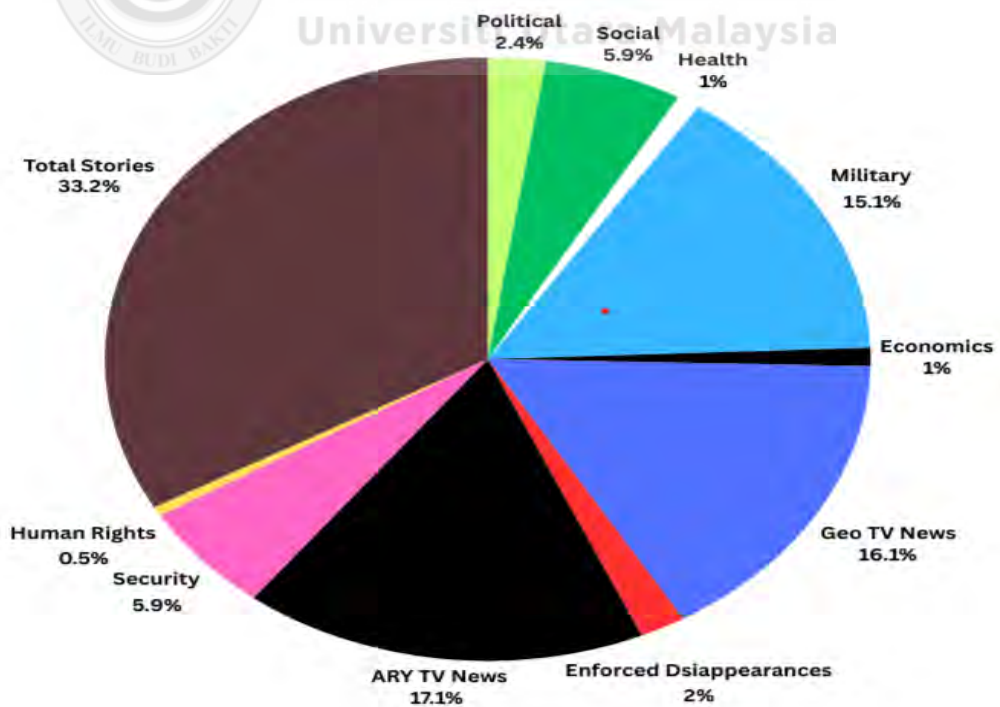
- a. Honouring Soldiers,
- b. Military Actions and Operations,
- c. Counterinsurgency Operations,

## 8. Security

- a. Instability and Threats,
  - b. Insurgency,
  - c. National Security Threat,
- 

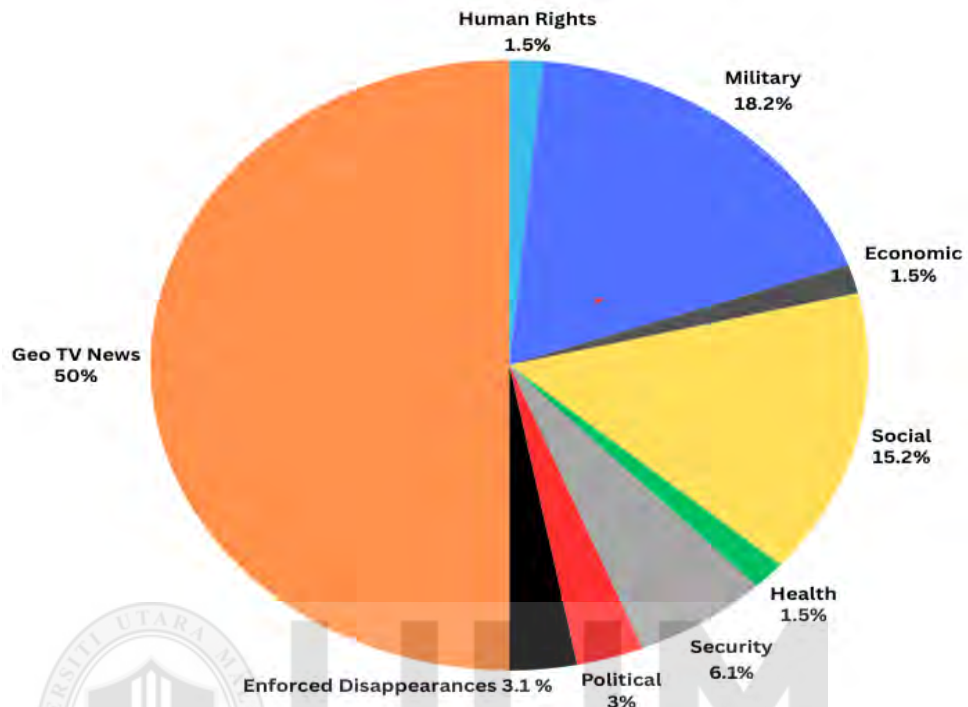
### Percentage of Coverage for each Theme

This study also calculated the percentage of stories by theme-wise covering both TV channels together over the two-year period. The pie charts below, illustrating the extent to which both Geo TV News and ARY News have reported on the pressing issues faced by the Baloch people in Balochistan.



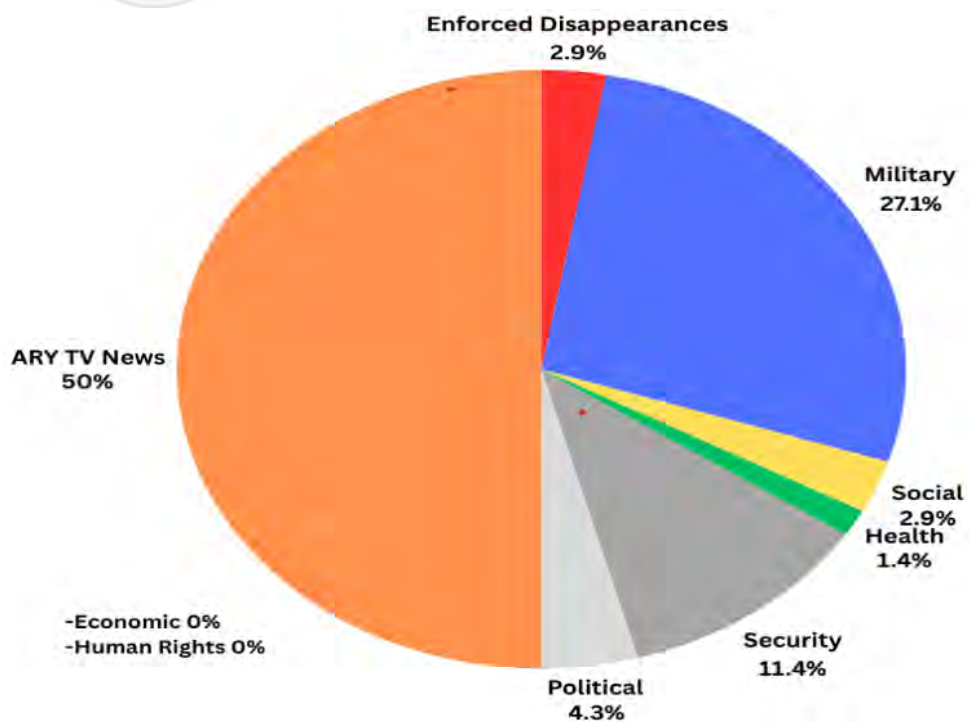
Pie Chart 4.5 (Thematic percentage of coverage for ARY and Geo TV News)

Meanwhile, the percentage of each television channel is also given separately. Below is the thematic percentage of stories produced on Geo TV News:



Pie Chart 4.6 (Thematic percentage of stories produced on Geo TV News)

Whereas below is given thematic percentage of stories produced on ARY TV:



Pie Chart 4.7 (Thematic percentage of stories produced on ARY TV News)

The above-mentioned Pie Charts provide a detailed breakdown of how each television channel addressed the key issues.

Notably, ARY TV News did not broadcast any stories related to *economic* and *human rights* themes during the two-year period. As a result, the percentage for these themes either does not appear or remains zero in the respective calculations. The emerged themes were not only crucial to understanding the coverage of Balochistan's issues but also to evaluating the media's focus and bias towards different aspects of the region's struggles. The expert coders ensured that these themes were categorized accurately to reflect the content's true nature.

### **Tone Analysis of Television Coverage**

Additionally, the tone of the coverage was assessed and classified as positive, negative, or neutral, providing insights into the editorial perspectives of the channels. The analysis of tone in news stories highlights the following distribution:

#### **Positive Tone: 61**

- Upholding state and state institutions: 44
- People-centric stories: 17 stories

#### **Negative Tone: 3**

- Against State Institutions: 0
- Against the people: 3

#### **Neutral Tone: 4**

- Neutral for both sides: 4 stories

Among the 17 public-centric stories, Geo TV News produced 15 stories that focused on social, economic, and health issues. In contrast, ARY TV News broadcasted only 2 positive stories, both related to social and health topics. However, Geo TV News also

aired one negative story against the people of Balochistan, while ARY TV News produced two negative stories. This trend indicates a tendency by both channels to present one-sided narratives that often undermine ground realities and exaggerate issues.

Regarding neutral coverage, both channels produced two neutral stories each, which neither supported the state nor addressed the concerns of the people of Balochistan. This analysis underscores the varying editorial focus of these channels, with noticeable differences in their approach to public and state-related matters. For instance, Among the 61 positive-toned stories, both Geo TV News and ARY TV News produced 44 stories that upheld the military and security forces.

Both television channels consistently used terms such as "martyrdom" to describe the deaths of soldiers, a practice that raises ethical concerns about journalistic impartiality. However, in stark contrast, the same channels used the term "killing" when reporting incidents where citizens were targeted by their own military forces, highlighting a notable bias in language and framing.

Additionally, the TV channels displayed a high level of specificity and caution in reporting statements issued by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), often adhering closely to the official language. This approach reflects a significant degree of editorial control and influence, aligning with tendencies indicative of authoritarian media practices.

### **Analysis of Themes and Keywords of Video Contents**

While analysing the video contents of the secondary data, the researcher tried to use three to four keywords in themes because using up to three relevant keywords ensures

focus, avoids redundancy, and maintains consistency in analysis without overcomplicating the coding process. Krippendorff (2018) stated that the importance of choosing relevant keywords and maintaining consistency in content analysis coding, which aligns with the idea of limiting keywords to maintain clarity. The following table (4.4) shows analysis of the themes, and keywords:

Table 4.4: Analysis of Themes and Keywords:

No of stories	Themes	Geo TV News	ARY News
4	<p><b>Enforced Disappearances</b></p> <p><b>Keywords:</b></p> <p><i>Missing Persons,</i></p>	<p><b>The issue of missing persons is not being taken seriously</b></p> <p>Analysis-keyword that reflects the theme of enforced disappearance is 'missing persons.</p> <p><b>In the case of missing persons, who is oppressed and who is poor?</b></p> <p>Analysis-keyword that reflects the theme of enforced disappearance is 'missing persons.</p>	<p><b>Balochistan government forms commission on missing persons</b></p> <p>Analysis-keyword that reflects the theme of enforced disappearance is 'missing persons.</p> <p><b>False and misleading propaganda on Baloch missing persons exposed</b></p> <p>Analysis-keyword that reflects the theme of enforced disappearance is 'missing person'.</p>
1	<p><b>Human rights</b></p> <p><b>Keywords:</b></p> <p><i>Right to Life and Liberty</i></p>	<p><b>Student of law got emotional – Worst condition of Balochistan, what is the hope?</b></p> <p>Analysis-Right to life and liberty as a keyword suits the best with the theme of human rights in this title.</p>	None
5	<p><b>Political</b></p> <p><b>Keywords:</b></p> <p><i>Dialogue and Negotiations,</i></p> <p><i>Conflict Resolution</i></p> <p><i>Insurgency and instability,</i></p>	<p><b>Balochistan's problems can be resolved without violence: Ex-BNA commander</b></p> <p>Analysis-Word without violence reflects the keywords dialogues and negotiations</p> <p><b>Analysts' Opinion - What steps should be taken to establish peace in Balochistan?</b></p> <p>Analysis-Conflict resolution is the best keyword that suits with the political theme through which peace can be maintained.</p>	<p><b>Who is Sarfaraz Bengalzai? - Big News</b></p> <p>Analysis-This title reflects the keyword insurgency and instability, which closely relates to the political theme.</p> <p><b>I am the part of negotiation process and also support it, Gulzar Imam Shambay</b></p> <p>Analysis-The word negotiation process reflects the keywords dialogues and negotiations in this title.</p> <p><b>What is the biggest problem of Balochistan?</b></p> <p>Analysis-Conflict and instability are the best keyword that reflects the political theme in this title.</p>

<p>12</p>	<p><b>Social</b></p> <p><b>Keywords:</b></p> <p><i>Social Disruption and Inequality,</i></p> <p><i>Marginalization,</i></p> <p><i>Deprivation,</i></p> <p><i>Social protection and recognition,</i></p>	<p><b>Balochistan has three positions, but why is there still a sense of deprivation?</b></p> <p>Analysis-The keyword deprivation reflects the social theme in this title.</p> <p><b>Kisi ke anay ya kisi ke janay se Balochistan ki Ehsaas Mehroomi nahi khatam hogi (Regime change in Pakistan would not bring any change in term of removing deprivation in Balochistan)</b></p> <p>Analysis-The keyword ‘deprivation’ reflects the social theme in this title.</p> <p><b>Balochistan faces acute shortage of drinking water</b></p> <p>Analysis-This title reflects towards social disruption and inequality, which is closely relevant with the social theme.</p> <p><b>A unique area of Balochistan, neither electricity nor water shortage</b></p> <p>Analysis-This title also reminds about social disruption and inequality, which is closely relevant with the social theme.</p> <p><b>(Flood Affected Areas in Balochistan ) Special show by Hamid Mir from Jaffarabad district of Balochistan</b></p> <p>Analysis-This title reminds about ‘deprivation’ that reflects the social theme.</p> <p><b>What was the role of Surinder Lake in saving Lasbela from further destruction in Balochistan</b></p> <p>Analysis-The keyword social and community protection suits in this title as it reflects the theme.</p> <p><b>Most of the roads and bridges in Balochistan broke down quickly due to poor material</b></p> <p>Analysis-Marginalization could be the best keyword for this title.</p> <p><b>National hero Faisal Baloch makes an appearance at Geo Pakistan</b></p> <p>Analysis-This title reminds about ‘social protection and recognition’.</p> <p><b>Shouldn't the Chief Minister of Balochistan have visited the flood victims?</b></p> <p>Analysis-Marginalization could be the best keyword for this title.</p>	<p><b>Balochistan ke barhty huwe masail (Problems of Balochistan are increasing)</b></p> <p>Analysis-Marginalization could be the best keyword for this title that reflects the theme.</p> <p><b>Selab Say Balochistan Mein Tabah Kariyan, Bachun Mein Beemariyan Phelnay Lagin (Flood caused severe destruction in Balochistan. Diseases spread among children)</b></p> <p>Analysis-This title reflects towards social disruption and inequality, which is closely relevant with the social theme.</p>
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		<p><b>Faisal Baloch, a truck driver who risked his life to save many lives</b></p> <p>Analysis-The keyword social protection and recognition suits in this title as it reflects the theme.</p>	
1	<p><b>Economic</b></p> <p><b>Keywords:</b></p> <p><i>Economic Exclusion and Disparities,</i></p>	<p><b>With Few Job Options, Balochistan Residents Turn to Smuggling</b></p> <p>Analysis-The title reflects the keyword 'economic exclusion and disparities', which comes under economic theme.</p>	None
2	<p><b>Health</b></p> <p><b>Keywords:</b></p> <p><i>Health inequality,</i></p> <p><i>Healthcare Crises,</i></p>	<p><b>Young doctors strike (in Balochistan)</b></p> <p>Analysis-Healthcare inequality can be the best keyword in this title that reflects the theme of health.</p>	<p><b>Lack of health, medical facilities causing severe difficulties in Balochistan</b></p> <p>Analysis-Healthcare crises can be the best keyword in this title that reflects the theme of health.</p>
31	<p><b>Military</b></p> <p><b>Keywords:</b></p> <p><i>Honouring Soldiers,</i></p> <p><i>Military Actions and Operations,</i></p> <p><i>Counterinsurgency Operations,</i></p>	<p><b>Terrorists martyr 10 soldiers in Balochistan</b></p> <p>Analysis-Honouring Soldiers as a keyword suit in this title that reflects the military theme.</p> <p><b>Soldier embraces martyrdom during clearance operation in Balochistan</b></p> <p>Analysis-Honouring Soldiers as a keyword suit in this title that reflects the military theme.</p> <p><b>Balochistan govt forms judicial commission to probe Ziarat operation</b></p> <p>Analysis-The title indicates keyword of military actions and operations that reflects the theme.</p> <p><b>Helicopter crash near Sassi Punnu Shrine reported</b></p> <p>Analysis-The title indicates keyword of military actions and operations that reflects the theme.</p> <p><b>Very sad incident in Balochistan, Pakistan Army helicopter crashed</b></p> <p>Analysis-Honouring Soldiers as a keyword suit in this title that reflects the military theme.</p> <p><b>Six Pakistan Army officials embraced martyrdom in Balochistan helicopter crash: ISPR</b></p>	<p><b>Balochistan Main Dehshat Gardon Ka Hamla,10 Jawan Shaheed: ISPR (10 military persons Martyrdom in a attack by militants in Balochistan)</b></p> <p>Analysis-Honouring Soldiers as a keyword suit in this title that reflects the military theme.</p> <p><b>Four terrorists killed as security forces repulse attacks in Balochistan's Nushki, Panjgur</b></p> <p>Analysis-The title indicates keyword of counterinsurgency operations that reflects the theme.</p> <p><b>20 Terrorists Killed as Nushki, Panjgur Clearance Operation Ends: ISPR</b></p> <p>Analysis-The title indicates keyword of counterinsurgency operations that reflects the theme.</p> <p><b>Passionate statement of Panjgur Army soldier</b></p> <p>Analysis-Honouring Soldiers as a keyword suit in this title that reflects the military theme.</p> <p><b>Chief of Army Staff General Qamar Javed Bajwa Visited Panjgur, Balochistan</b></p> <p>Analysis-Honouring Soldiers as a keyword suit in this title that reflects the military theme.</p>

	<p>Analysis-Honouring Soldiers as a keyword suit in this title that reflects the military theme.</p> <p><b>Harnai Balochistan situation update – ISPR</b></p> <p>Analysis-The title indicates keyword of military actions and operations that reflects the theme.</p> <p><b>Balochistan - Big operation by security forces</b></p> <p>Analysis-The title indicates keyword of military actions and operations that reflects the theme.</p> <p><b>Operation of security forces in Balochistan – ISPR</b></p> <p>Analysis-The title indicates keyword of military actions and operations that reflects the theme.</p> <p><b>Two military personnel, including major, martyred in Balochistan attack: ISPR</b></p> <p>Analysis-Honouring Soldiers as a keyword suit in this title that reflects the military theme.</p> <p><b>4 soldiers martyred, 5 injured in 'dastardly' Zhob attack: ISPR</b></p> <p>Analysis-Honouring Soldiers as a keyword suit in this title that reflects the military theme.</p> <p><b>Terrorist attack on Zhob Garrison in Balochistan, 4 soldiers martyred</b></p> <p>Analysis: Honouring Soldiers as a keyword suit in this title that reflects the military theme.</p>	<p><b>Security forces kill six terrorists in Balochistan's Buleda : ISPR</b></p> <p>Analysis-The title indicates keyword of counterinsurgency operations that reflects the theme.</p> <p><b>Operation on report of terrorists presence in Kohlu area of Balochistan</b></p> <p>Analysis-The title indicates keyword of counterinsurgency operations that reflects the theme.</p> <p><b>Helicopter crash near Sassi Punnu Shrine reported</b></p> <p>Analysis-Honouring Soldiers as a keyword suit in this title that reflects the military theme.</p> <p><b>Pakistani army helicopter crashed near Lasbela, Balochistan 6 martyred</b></p> <p>Analysis-Honouring Soldiers as a keyword suit in this title that reflects the military theme.</p> <p><b>Two soldiers martyred, one injured in Balochistan terrorist attack</b></p> <p>Analysis-Honouring Soldiers as a keyword suit in this title that reflects the military theme.</p> <p><b>COAS Asim Munir vows to make all-out efforts for Balochistan peace</b></p> <p>Analysis-The title indicates keyword of military actions and operations that reflects the theme.</p> <p><b>Army captain, four soldiers martyred in Balochistan incident, ISPR</b></p> <p>Analysis- Honouring Soldiers as a keyword suit in this title that reflects the military theme.</p> <p><b>Balochistan IED blast: Martyred captain laid to rest</b></p> <p>Analysis-Honouring Soldiers as a keyword suit in this title that reflects the military theme.</p> <p><b>Security forces operation in Kohlu area of Balochistan, ISPR</b></p> <p>Analysis-The title indicates keyword of military actions and operations that reflects the theme.</p>
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			<p><b>Eight terrorists killed in Kech, Balochistan</b></p> <p>Analysis-The title indicates keyword of counterinsurgency operations that reflects the theme.</p> <p><b>Security Forces holds big operation in Balochistan's Khushab</b></p> <p>Analysis-The title indicates keyword of military actions and operations that reflects the theme.</p> <p><b>Funeral Prayers offered of Balochistan Khushab' martyrs: ISPR</b></p> <p>Analysis-Honouring Soldiers as a keyword suit in this title that reflects the military theme.</p> <p><b>CTD kills eight terrorists in Balochistan</b></p> <p>Analysis-The title indicates keyword of counterinsurgency operations that reflects the theme.</p> <p><b>14 soldiers martyred as terrorists ambush army vehicles in Balochistan</b></p> <p>Analysis- Soldiers as a keyword suit in this title that reflects the military theme.</p>
12	<p><b>Security</b></p> <p><b>Keywords:</b></p> <p><i>Instability and Threats,</i></p> <p><i>Insurgency,</i></p> <p><i>National Security Threat,</i></p>	<p><b>Aaj Shahzeb Khanzada Kay Sath  Security Situation in Balochistan</b></p> <p>Analysis-The keywords instability and threats relate with this title that reflect the security theme.</p> <p><b>Gulzar Imam appeared before the media after his arrest</b></p> <p>Analysis-The keyword insurgency has close relevancy with this title that reflects the theme.</p> <p><b>Terrorists active again in Balochistan, Caretaker government's blunt stance</b></p> <p>Analysis-The keywords instability and threats relate with this title that reflect the security theme.</p> <p><b>Impact of Negative campaign on social media on Balochistan incident</b></p> <p>Analysis-The keywords instability and threats relate with this title that reflect the security theme.</p>	<p><b>Connection of Industrial Revolution in Pakistan with Balochistan attacks</b></p> <p>Analysis-The keyword insurgency has close relevancy with this title that reflects the theme.</p> <p><b>Outlawed BLA Majeed Brigade's Member, Woman Arrested In Turbat</b></p> <p>Analysis-The keyword insurgency has close relevancy with this title that reflects the theme.</p> <p><b>Outlawed Baloch National Army founder apprehended in IBO: ISPR</b></p> <p>Analysis-The keyword insurgency has close relevancy with this title that reflects the theme.</p> <p><b>India behind the terrorist activities of arrested Gulzar Imam alias 'Shambay' exposed</b></p>

			<p>Analysis-The keywords National Security Threat suits with this title that also reflect the theme.</p> <p><b>How was Gulzar Imam Shambay, main terrorist of banned organization, arrested?</b></p> <p>Analysis-The keyword insurgency has close relevancy with this title that reflects the theme.</p> <p><b>How terrorist Gulzar Imam Shanbe was arrested?</b></p> <p>Analysis-The keyword insurgency has close relevancy with this title that reflects the theme.</p> <p><b>Indian journalist links with militant groups in Balochistan exposed</b></p> <p>Analysis-The keywords National Security Threat suits with this title that also reflect the theme.</p> <p><b>Banned Baloch group commander Bungulzai surrenders</b></p> <p>Analysis-The keyword insurgency has close relevancy with this title that reflects the theme.</p>
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#### **4.5 Analysis of the Secondary Data (*Content Analysis*)**

The researcher provides a content analysis of the video contents or materials, collected from the Geo TV News, and ARY TV News, presenting their descriptions and summary in theme-wise. Each story, related to each theme maintains clarity and focus. First, the researcher provides a detailed analysis of the video stories or video contents of Geo TV News over a two-year period.

##### **4.5.1 Analysis of Video Contents of the Geo TV News**

The video contents or video stories are categorized thematically, with 'Enforced Disappearances' being the first theme discussed below:

#### **4.5.1.1 Theme: Enforced Disappearances**

##### **Story-1 (Jul 5, 2022)**

In July 2022, two consecutive reports on Geo TV shed light on the issue of missing persons in Balochistan, focusing on personal struggles and institutional accountability. The first report featured the emotional account of a woman who has spent 13 years seeking justice for her abducted father. She expressed frustration with the inefficiency of Pakistan's power corridors, pointing to ignored Supreme Court orders and a lack of national awareness about the trauma experienced by families in Balochistan.

She called for the inclusion of affected families in government dialogues and judicial processes, emphasizing that outsiders cannot fully understand their pain. Her appeal was directed to officials, including the federal minister for law and justice, who were present during the program.

##### **Story-2: (Jul 6, 2022)**

The following day, a TV host confronted the Federal Interior Minister about a recent court directive to disclose the status of missing persons, warning that non-compliance might lead to the Prime Minister being summoned. The Minister acknowledged the limitations of civilian power, arguing that the military establishment and judiciary held the real authority to resolve the issue.

He criticized the systemic hypocrisy and suggested that these institutions could resolve the crisis swiftly if they genuinely committed to doing so. Both reports highlighted the ongoing suffering of families, the lack of progress in addressing enforced disappearances, and the institutional barriers preventing resolution.

#### **4.5.1.2 Theme: Human Rights**

##### **Story-1 (March 9, 2023)**

This report highlighted the frustrations of young Pakistanis, particularly from Balochistan, over the country's instability and lack of media attention on their issues. Law students at a Lahore university expressed despair, with many considering emigration abroad for a better future. A student from Balochistan, emotional and near tears, lamented the neglect of his province, calling for media coverage. A lecturer shared his harrowing experience of abduction and torture for advocating rights. The story shed light on the dire need for balanced media representation and support for those striving for change in Balochistan.

#### **4.5.1.3 Theme: Political**

##### **Story-1 (May 24, 2023)**

In May 2023, a report revealed the arrest of a leader from a banned Baloch militant group by Pakistan's security forces. The individual, responsible for targeting military personnel, installations, and Chinese workers, expressed regret for his past actions during a media appearance. He apologized to the public and the state, seeking reintegration into mainstream society. The operation, praised for its complexity, was the result of years of intelligence work, earning recognition from the Prime Minister and high-level officials, including the Director-General of the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI).

##### **Story-2: (July 15, 2023)**

This TV program discussing peace in Balochistan featured analysts offering solutions to the region's instability. One expert highlighted the need for Pakistan's "power corridors" to address the region's economic and social deprivation, while another

criticized the state's failure to engage local voices effectively. This analyst argued that peaceful resolution requires political collaboration with local communities and politicians, rather than relying solely on force. The discussion stressed the importance of inclusive and comprehensive approaches to establishing lasting peace in Balochistan.

#### **4.5.1.4 Theme: Social**

##### **Story-1** (*June 14, 2022*)

This story reports that a Baloch truck driver became a national hero when he saved countless lives by preventing a catastrophic fire caused by a burning oil tanker. Despite the obvious danger, he drove the tanker over three kilo meters to an empty plot, averting a major disaster.

##### **Story-2** (*August 14, 2022*)

Geo TV once again invited this young guy in their live show. He shared his story of bravery, hailing from a poor background, expressed his appeal for further government assistance, as he lacked his own home.

##### **Story-3** (*August 1, 2022*)

A TV host reported that the Chief Minister (CM) of Balochistan had not visited the flood-affected areas. When the CM's spokesperson was invited to explain, the reason given was that the CM had sustained an injury. The spokesperson also mentioned that the CM had been dissatisfied with the bureaucracy's lack of dedication. This piece reflects political detachment from the region's urgent needs, where leadership seems disconnected from the suffering of the people, raising questions about the political class's priorities.

**Story-4 (September 6, 2022)**

A popular tv host Hamid Mir visited the flood-affected areas in Lasbella, Balochistan, and reported on the devastation. The report highlighted the poor infrastructure and the widespread criticism of the government's inadequate response, including corruption in aid distribution. Locals expressed frustration with the lack of action from both the government and other relevant authorities.

**Story-5 (September 6, 2022)**

Another segment from the same day, broadcast on September 6, 2022, focused on a local expert discussing the potential benefits of constructing storage dams to mitigate future flooding in Balochistan. The expert's input emphasized the lack of adequate flood management infrastructure, which exacerbates the region's vulnerability to natural disasters.

**Story-6 (March 22, 2023)**

A segment shed light on the growing water crisis in Balochistan, emphasizing the dwindling water resources due to climate change and droughts. Despite the increasing urgency, authorities were criticized for their inaction and failure to implement policies addressing water scarcity. This story underscores the broader environmental challenges facing Balochistan, where the lack of effective governance further compounds the region's vulnerability to climate-related issues.

**Story-7 (September 14, 2022)**

A popular TV host visited a flood-affected region in Balochistan, where local residents described their hardships, including a lack of shelter, food, clean water, and medical supplies. Residents expressed frustrations with the government's inattention to their

needs, focusing instead on elections and political manoeuvring. This segment highlights the ongoing neglect of the most vulnerable populations in Balochistan, where political leaders seem preoccupied with power struggles rather than addressing the immediate needs of their constituents.

**Story-8** (*January 24, 2023*)

A political leader from Balochistan discussed the development progress in his town, particularly improvements in water facilities, schools, and roads. He attributed that such progress is possible when strong intentions are backed by action. This story offers a glimpse of hope, showcasing that positive change can occur through local governance, even in a region facing numerous challenges.

**Story-9** (*August 26, 2023*)

A political leader expressed scepticism about the impact of Balochistan's representatives in high political offices (Prime Minister, Chief Justice, and Senate Chairman). He argued that the entrenched political and military mindset that controls governance in Pakistan remains unchanged, preventing substantial change in Balochistan. This critical view reinforces the notion that Balochistan's issues cannot be resolved merely by political representation but require systemic change across the entire governance structure.

**Story-10** (*December 2, 2023*)

A young minister responsible for Youth Affairs, Sports, and Culture in Balochistan shared his efforts to promote unity and development in the region through sports and cultural initiatives. He emphasized his work to bridge cultural gaps and foster a sense of togetherness.

#### **4.5.1.5 Theme: Economic**

##### **Story-1 (July 2, 2023)**

A report titled "With Few Job Options, Balochistan Residents Turn To Smuggling" was broadcast, highlighting the severe economic challenges facing the residents of Balochistan. The report, which ran for 2:37 minutes, revealed that many locals are turning to smuggling as a means of survival, primarily smuggling oil through the Iran-Pakistan border. The report detailed how limited job opportunities, few industries, and a lack of private businesses in the region have led people to engage in this illegal activity. Locals explained that without smuggling, widespread hunger would likely grip the province, as there are no viable employment options. The smuggled oil, along with other goods such as groceries from Iran, is distributed throughout Pakistan, providing a vital livelihood for many Balochistan residents struggling to make ends meet. This story underscores the deep-rooted economic issues in the region, where desperation has driven people to seek alternative means to support themselves and their families.

#### **4.5.1.6 Theme: Health**

##### **Story-1 (January 29, 2022)**

Geo TV aired a 9-minute 34-second report on a strike by young doctors in Balochistan, which disrupted OPD services and left poor patients without adequate care. The report criticized the government's lack of urgency in addressing the issues behind the strike, such as the absence of essential healthcare facilities. It highlighted the deadlock in negotiations, despite the health department's claims of efforts to resolve concerns. The report focused on the public's suffering and questioned the government's inability to resolve the crisis and improve healthcare conditions.

**Story-2 (August 2, 2022)**

Two hosts discussed the dire situation in Balochistan, where people lack basic facilities, particularly in the health sector. The hosts pointed out that while the privileged enjoy their comforts, common people, especially women, suffer greatly. Health issues were highlighted as particularly serious, with a significant shortage of medical professionals, including female doctors and gynaecologists. Due to this shortage, many women die during pregnancy or childbirth, often while traveling from remote areas to the cities in search of medical care. According to the report, one woman dies every three hours in Balochistan due to these complications. A doctor from Balochistan was invited to shed light on the issue. He explained that the lack of healthcare facilities and qualified professionals, particularly female doctors and gynaecologists, is leading to the loss of many lives. Women who are seriously ill often face severe consequences, including death, as they are unable to receive timely medical attention. The doctor acknowledged that solving this issue is complex but emphasized that it must be addressed urgently to save lives and improve healthcare in the region.

**4.5.1.7 Theme: Military****Story-1 (January 27, 2022)**

This story runs for 31 seconds. It focuses on a militant attack targeting a security forces' camp in Balochistan, which resulted in the martyrdom of 10 personnel. One militant was killed, and three were captured during the operation as security forces intensified their efforts to maintain safety in the area.

**Story-2 (February 22, 2022)**

This story highlights a clearance operation in District Kohlu, Balochistan. During the operation, Captain Haider Abbas was martyred in a gunfire exchange with terrorists.

The report also covers his funeral in Karachi, conducted with full military honours, and mentions casualties inflicted on the militants.

**Story-3** (*July 27, 2022*)

This story details the Balochistan government's formation of a judicial commission to investigate the Ziarat operation. This operation followed the abduction of military officers by militants, leading to the deaths of nine individuals, including militants, in a rescue mission.

**Story-4** (*August 1, 2022*)

It reports on a helicopter crash in Balochistan, which tragically claimed the lives of senior military officials, including the corps commander. The story delves into the ongoing investigation and the nation's collective grief over the incident.

**Story-5** (*August 2, 2022*)

This report sheds light on the healthcare crisis in Balochistan. It focuses on the alarming shortage of female doctors and gynaecologists, leading to a maternal death every three hours. A local doctor calls for immediate solutions, especially for women in remote regions.

**Story-6** (*August 2, 2022*)

This story covers another helicopter crash during flood relief efforts in Balochistan. The incident resulted in the martyrdom of six officers, including the corps commander. The report discusses the challenges of delivering aid in rugged terrain and the tributes paid to the victims.

**Story-7** (*August 6, 2022*)

This story features a retired general's commentary on the tragic helicopter crash involving senior officers, including General Sarfaraz. The general attributes the crash to poor weather conditions and denounces speculative narratives on social media, labelling them foreign-funded efforts to destabilize Pakistan.

**Story-8** (*August 14, 2022*)

This story details a military operation in Balochistan. A Major was injured during a clearance mission targeting militants, following an attack on a military camp. The military reaffirmed its commitment to ensuring peace in the region.

**Story-9** (*December 26, 2022*)

It highlights a mine blast during a clearance operation in Balochistan, resulting in the martyrdom of four soldiers and injuries to an officer. The story condemns the attack, linking it to funding from Afghanistan, while paying tribute to the martyrs.

**Story-10** (*February 10, 2023*)

This story covers a clearance operation in Balochistan where two officers lost their lives. It emphasizes the security forces' dedication to eliminating militant threats and restoring peace to the region.

**Story-11** (*July 3, 2023*)

This story discusses a militant attack in Balochistan that resulted in the deaths of two security personnel and injuries to another. It highlights the sacrifices made by the security forces in their mission to ensure stability.

**Story-12** (*July 12, 2023*)

This story describes an attack on a military camp in Zhob, Balochistan. Four personnel were martyred, and five others injured, while security forces eliminated three militants and launched a clearance operation. The incident underscores their resolve to stabilize the region.

#### **4.5.1.8 Theme: Security**

##### **Story-1** (*February 3, 2022*)

This 45-minute-long special program, hosted by a prominent news anchor, delved into the ongoing security challenges in Balochistan. It reported on the Pakistani army's operations in Nushki and Panjgur to counter increasing militant activities. The Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) claimed responsibility for recent attacks on military camps, with the host emphasizing the rising threat such incidents pose to national stability. The federal Interior Minister appeared on the program, alleging ties between militants and external actors in Afghanistan and India, while lauding the bravery of the Pakistani army. However, the discussion overlooked the loss of Pakistani security forces in the conflict. The Provincial Minister of Balochistan also joined the program, accusing Afghanistan and India of destabilizing the province. The analysis provided a comprehensive view of the intertwined national and regional tensions fuelling unrest in Balochistan.

##### **Story-2** (*May 24, 2023*)

This report, lasting 58 seconds, highlights the arrest of Gulzar Imam, a highly sought-after terrorist. The Prime Minister of Pakistan congratulated the ISI and its Director General, Nadeem Anjum, for executing the operation during a national security meeting. Expert in this tv show praised the ISI's strategic efficiency in targeting

militant networks, with the operation being hailed as a landmark achievement in Pakistan's counterterrorism efforts. This report stated that this milestone is seen as a significant step toward dismantling terrorism in the country.

**Story-3** (*July 15, 2023*)

This program featured journalists and analysts discussing the pursuit of peace in Balochistan. One expert highlighted the need for Pakistan's leadership to address the region's socio-economic disparities, which they argued contribute to persistent unrest. Another analyst criticized the lack of clear policy and commitment to engaging local stakeholders, emphasizing that force alone cannot resolve the issue. Instead, they called for inclusive political solutions involving local politicians and communities to foster lasting stability in the province.

**Story-4** (*November 6, 2023*)

This segment featured a discussion between two TV hosts and the Balochistan Minister of Information regarding escalating terrorist activities in the region. The minister attributed these incidents to alleged interference by neighbouring countries, particularly India and Afghanistan. He claimed that while the Pakistan Army has effectively dismantled militant networks, leading to a decline in attacks, exaggerated media reports often misrepresent the security situation. The discussion also touched on cross-border challenges, with the minister blaming Balochistan's porous borders with Afghanistan and Iran for allowing militants to operate. He assured viewers that security forces are intensifying efforts to strengthen border security and curb such movements.

Geo TV's video coverage of Balochistan reflects a complex media narrative that attempts to navigate between state perspectives, humanitarian concerns, and public accountability. Compared to more overtly state-aligned channels, Geo's reporting exhibits a relatively more nuanced approach, bringing attention to social justice issues while also maintaining alignment with national security imperatives.

One of the most significant aspects of Geo TV's reporting is its direct engagement with themes of enforced disappearances and human rights. Geo limitedly, highlights the voices of victims' families and openly questions institutional inaction. In multiple segments, it showcases emotional testimonies and holds government representatives accountable, even spotlighting the judiciary and military as potential barriers to justice. This signals a modest editorial willingness to challenge the status quo and amplify suppressed narratives.

Social and humanitarian coverage also stands out in Geo's content. Stories of local heroism, flood devastation, and environmental neglect are not only documented but contextualized within broader governance failures. The network features critical voices, journalists and locals alike, calling out the disconnect between political leadership and ground realities. Importantly, these stories are not always isolated incidents; they are tied to systemic neglect, suggesting an editorial commitment to linking individual suffering with institutional dysfunction.

The economic and health-related segments reveal deep structural problems in the region, from joblessness leading to smuggling to maternal deaths due to the absence of female medical professionals. These issues are presented not merely as statistics, but as part of a broader narrative of exclusion and marginalization.

Nevertheless, the channel still reaffirms the military's central role in matters of security. Its stories about operations, martyrdom, and counter-terrorism efforts are framed within a nationalistic and valorising tone. While the coverage often includes expert analysis and commentary, the dominant message emphasizes the armed forces' sacrifices and capabilities. This duality, criticizing civilian governance while praising military action, reveals the constraints within which Pakistani media operate.

Similarly, the theme of foreign interference, particularly allegations against India and Afghanistan, features prominently in the security segments. By attributing unrest to external actors, the channel aligns with state narratives that de-emphasize local grievances and root causes of conflict. While political analysts occasionally call for dialogue and socio-economic investment, such calls are often overshadowed by securitized framing and a focus on arrests, military campaigns, and border control.

#### **4.5.2 Analysis of Video Contents of ARY TV News**

Now, the researcher provides a detailed analysis of the video stories or video contents of ARY TV News over a two-year period. The selected stories/contents are categorized thematically, with 'Enforced Disappearances' being the first theme discussed below:

##### **4.5.2.1 Theme: Enforced Disappearances**

###### **Story-1 (December 30, 2022)**

This report covers the establishment of a commission for missing persons in Balochistan following orders from the High Court of Balochistan. The provincial minister for interior and law initiated the commission, which is tasked with evaluating and uncovering the facts surrounding cases of missing persons. The report highlights

the significance of this initiative as a step towards addressing the issue and bringing clarity to these cases.

#### **Story-2 (April 20, 2023)**

This report focused on individuals in Balochistan allegedly exploiting the issue of missing persons to misinform the public. The segment revealed that these individuals are spreading propaganda and disinformation through social media platforms. The report emphasized that foreign actors are actively leveraging these platforms to manipulate and incite the Baloch population against the state, deepening divisions and unrest in the region. This misuse of social media, according to the report, is distorting facts and exacerbating tensions in Balochistan

#### **4.5.2.2 Theme: Human Rights**

Research could not find any story related to this theme during the selected period.

#### **4.5.2.3 Theme: Political**

##### **Story-1 (January 14, 2023)**

In this interview, a TV host explored the story of Sarfraz Bangulzai, posing the question: “*Who is Sarfraz Bangulzai?*” Bangulzai revealed that he worked for Balochistan's Food Department from 1991 to 2009 before joining a militant group. He attributed his transition to early involvement in student organizations promoting Baloch nationalism. When asked about foreign influences, Bangulzai alleged that “*India is directly involved*” in supporting militant groups through Afghanistan, urging them to produce videos targeting the Pakistani army. He claimed foreign entities manipulate social media with fake accounts to foster anti-Pakistan sentiment.

The host raised concerns about the disparity between militant leaders' affluent lifestyles and the struggles of ordinary people. Bangulzai remarked,

*“Leadership enjoys luxury while locals suffer,”*

asserting that foreign funding enriches leaders at the expense of grassroots militants. Bangulzai exposed the groups' financial practices, including extortion, smuggling, narcotics, and obstructing development projects. He also criticized the exploitation of women in these operations, calling it *“a sad and unfortunate practice.”*

### **Story-2 (July 15, 2023)**

This report covered the "Balochistan: A Peaceful Land" conference, uniting civil society members, politicians, ministers, Islamic scholars, and other stakeholders. Senator Anwar, a participant, emphasized the need for dialogue to resolve issues caused by militant violence, stating, *“The state holds legitimate power to protect its people but prefers dialogue as the way forward.”* The host inquired about the participation of Gulzar Imam, recently arrested by Pakistani intelligence, whose statement reinforced the initiative's importance. Senator Anwar called it *“a golden opportunity for militants to reconsider their actions”* and urged them to embrace peace, asserting that small factions could not undermine the state.

### **Story-3 (December 3, 2023)**

In a debate hosted by a popular TV anchor, journalists from Balochistan were invited to discuss the pressing question: *“What is the problem of Balochistan?”* One journalist pointed out that the people of Balochistan are not given due importance, facing numerous challenges while successive governments fail to address their concerns. The discussion highlighted issues such as federal neglect, poverty, deprivation, lack of

education and healthcare facilities, financial marginalization, and pervasive corruption. Another journalist emphasized the absence of true public representation in Islamabad, stating that no one boldly raises the pressing issues of Balochistan at the federal level.

#### **4.5.2.4 Theme: Social**

##### **Story-1 (*August 7, 2022*)**

This report sheds light on the devastation caused by heavy floods in Balochistan, which not only destroyed infrastructure but also led to widespread diseases, particularly affecting children. Remote areas suffered severe damage, with residents lacking shelter, basic necessities, and access to medicines. Local interviews revealed the frustration of women and other community members, who blamed authorities for inadequate support, corruption, and bureaucratic inefficiencies in distributing aid. The report featured scenes of displaced families living in open areas without proper shelter and highlighted the rising prevalence of diseases such as malaria. Visits to free medical camps and local hospitals showcased the efforts of medical professionals trying to manage the crisis despite limited resources. However, the overwhelming demand for medical care continues to exacerbate the already critical situation.

##### **Story-2 (*June 28, 2023*)**

This report centres on a discussion program that explored the geopolitical and geostrategic significance of Balochistan. A participant commended the efforts of Pakistan's military in maintaining peace and stability in the region. The discussion highlighted the province's vast natural resources and its strategic importance. Analysts credited the military for its role in combating smuggling, ensuring security, and fostering stability. They also noted the military's involvement in regional development

through various initiatives and infrastructure projects, including significant improvements along the borders. The discussion underscored the military's pivotal role in the security and socio-economic advancement of Balochistan.

**4.5.2.5 Theme: Economic:** Researcher could not find any story related to economics theme

#### **4.5.2.6 Theme: Health**

##### **Story-1 (February 22, 2022)**

This report discusses the dire state of healthcare in Balochistan, where people, especially women, face severe challenges due to inadequate medical facilities. Hosts highlighted the stark inequality, with the privileged enjoying comforts while common people lack access to essential services. The critical shortage of female doctors and gynaecologists was emphasized as a major issue, leading to high maternal mortality rates. It was revealed that one woman dies every three hours in the province due to pregnancy or childbirth complications, often while traveling long distances from remote areas to cities for medical care. A doctor from Balochistan joined the discussion to underline the urgency of the issue. He elaborated on how the absence of adequate healthcare and qualified professionals contributes to the loss of lives. Women in critical condition often face tragic outcomes due to the lack of timely medical intervention. While the doctor acknowledged the complexity of resolving these issues, he stressed the necessity of addressing them urgently to save lives and improve the healthcare system in the region.

#### **4.5.2.7 Theme: Military**

##### **Story-1 (February 2, 2022)**

A violent attack was launched by Baloch militants on army camps in Nushki and Panjgur. In a swift response, Pakistani security forces managed to repel the attack, killing four militants. Tragically, one soldier lost his life during the operation. The military pledged to continue its efforts to combat militancy and restore peace and stability in Balochistan. Additional operations were planned to track and neutralize any remaining militants in the area.

**Story-2 (February 5, 2022)**

Another operation took place in Panjgur and Nushki as part of a broader clearance effort following the attack on the army camps. The operation resulted in the deaths of 20 militants, including four security personnel and one officer in Nushki. In Panjgur, five soldiers died, while three terrorists were killed during the operation. Security forces also seized a substantial cache of arms and ammunition used by the terrorists. This successful operation was a direct response to the growing threat of militant activity in the region, with the military reaffirming its commitment to bringing peace to Balochistan.

**Story-3 (Feb 8, 2022)**

This report discusses Prime Minister Imran Khan's visit to Quetta, Balochistan, where he expressed solidarity with the armed forces and announced a 15% salary increase for them. Hosts and analysts explored the potential for an industrial revolution in Balochistan, emphasizing agreements made to attract investors to the region. However, analysts cautioned that hostile forces might resist this economic transformation. They highlighted the armed forces' readiness to defend the region and the sacrifices made by military personnel, many of whom have attained martyrdom while protecting the area.

**Story-4 (February 10, 2022)**

A popular TV host visited a military cantonment in the Panjgur area, where Baloch militants had previously carried out an attack. During the visit, an Army officer provided detailed insights into the tactics employed by the militants. The officer explained how the terrorists infiltrated the military base, describing their methods of breaching security and the types of weapons used during the assault. The visit offered a deeper understanding of the scale of the attack and the military's response to such threats.

**Story-5 (February 12, 2022)**

The Army Chief visited Panjgur in Balochistan, where he met with soldiers stationed in the region. During his visit, the Army Chief highlighted the pivotal role of the military in eradicating militancy and ensuring the restoration of peace and stability. He reassured the troops that the military would take strong actions against those supporting militants and vowed to secure the region, emphasizing the importance of safeguarding the nation's peace and sovereignty.

**Story-6 (February 16, 2022)**

Breaking news reported that the Pakistan military had carried out a successful operation in Balochistan, resulting in the death of six militants involved in criminal activities. The military affirmed its commitment to eliminating any attempts to destabilize the country and stressed its ongoing efforts to fight terrorism and protect national security.

**Story-7 (February 21, 2022)**

Reports emerged of a targeted attack by Baloch militants that resulted in the death of a Pakistani Army intelligence officer. Following the attack, security forces launched a clearance operation, although the terrorists managed to flee into the mountains. The military vowed to continue pursuing the militants until they were neutralized, reinforcing its determination to dismantle such threats in the region.

**Story-8** (*August 1, 2022*)

A tragic helicopter crash occurred on August 1, 2022, in Balochistan, claiming the lives of senior military personnel, including the core commander and six other officers. The incident is under investigation, with safety concerns remaining a priority. A retired general was invited for an analysis of the crash, offering prayers for the personnel involved. The general emphasized the high standards of military equipment and personnel, noting the tragic loss but praising the soldiers' dedication and commitment to their duties.

**Story-9** (*August 2, 2022*)

The missing helicopter, which had been part of a flood relief operation, was found in the Winer area near Musa village in Lasbella. The helicopter crash had claimed the lives of six officers, including the core commander. The hosts expressed deep sorrow for the officers' sacrifice and interviewed a retired officer who fondly remembered the core commander and praised the officers for their heroic efforts, despite the challenging weather conditions. The retired officer described the loss as a testament to the soldiers' unwavering commitment to serving the nation.

**Story-10** (*August 14, 2022*)

Baloch militants once again targeted an army camp in Balochistan, killing two soldiers and injuring one major. The military swiftly responded, reaffirming its resolve to prevent any group from destabilizing the region. The army's commitment to fighting terrorism and ensuring peace in Balochistan remained strong.

**Story-11** *(December 10, 2022)*

The Army Chief visited Balochistan for a two-day trip, during which he emphasized the military's ongoing efforts to ensure socio-economic development in the region. The visit included discussions with local officials and military personnel on improving security and addressing the region's development challenges. The Army Chief underscored the importance of stability for fostering long-term growth and improving living conditions for the people of Balochistan.

**Story-12** *(December 25, 2022)*

A security forces operation in Balochistan resulted in the tragic death of one captain due to a mine explosion, with four other personnel injured. The report paid tribute to the fallen soldiers, honouring them as martyrs and highlighting the sacrifices made by the military in its ongoing efforts to ensure the country's security and stability.

**Story-13** *(December 26, 2022)*

A report covered the martyrdom of a military captain killed by Baloch militants. The captain was laid to rest with full military honours in Rawalpindi, recognizing his sacrifice for the nation. His biography was shared, focusing on his dedication and exemplary service, and his bravery was celebrated as a reflection of the sacrifices made by Pakistan's military personnel in defending the country.

**Story-14** *(February 10, 2023)*

Breaking news reported the deaths of an Army Major and Captain in Balochistan following a mine explosion. The tragic incident occurred during an intelligence-based operation carried out by the military. The report paid tribute to the officers' sacrifices and highlighted the continued efforts of the armed forces to secure the region and ensure national stability.

**Story-15** (*July 3, 2023*)

Security forces launched an operation in Balochistan's Hoshab area, which resulted in the deaths of two majors and injuries to another officer. The fallen officers were remembered for their bravery, with their biographies shared in the report. The news emphasized that their sacrifices, along with those of their comrades, were part of the ongoing mission to defend the country and protect its sovereignty.

**Story-16** (*July 3, 2023*)

Breaking news highlighted the funeral prayers for the Pakistan Army officers who had been killed in an attack by Baloch militants in Balochistan. The fallen officers were laid to rest with full military honours in their respective hometowns. The report stressed the unwavering commitment of the Pakistan Army to defend the nation, pledging that such sacrifices would not deter their efforts to safeguard the country.

**Story-17** (*February 23, 2023*)

Militants targeted a Pakistan military convoy, but after a swift military response, the militants fled. The operation led to the deaths of eight militants, with security forces continuing their commitment to ensuring peace and eliminating militancy in the region.

**Story-18** (*September 3, 2023*)

The Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) successfully carried out an operation in Balochistan, resulting in the killing of eight terrorists. The operation also led to the rescue of an abducted person. Some of the militants had ties to Daesh, making this a significant success in the ongoing fight against terrorism and a crucial step toward ensuring security in the region.

**Story-19** (*November 3, 2023*)

A tragic attack by Baloch militants on a Pakistan Army convoy in Balochistan resulted in the deaths of 14 soldiers. The report highlighted the solemn dedication of the Pakistan Army, emphasizing their continued efforts to combat terrorism and bring peace to the region, despite the sacrifices made by their personnel.

**4.5.2.8 Theme: Security**

**Story-1** (*May 18, 2022*)

This report covers a live media briefing where the spokesperson for the Balochistan government announced the arrest of a woman suspected of planning suicide bombings against the state and security forces. She was allegedly part of a broader militant effort to use women and girls in suicide attacks. The spokesperson accused foreign agents of exploiting women for violent purposes and vowed that such actions against Pakistan's sovereignty would not be tolerated. A separate disclosure revealed that one woman admitted to receiving financial support from a foreign country for these activities.

**Story-2** (*Jan 14, 2023*)

In an interview, Sarfraz Bangulzai shared his journey from working in Balochistan's Food Department to joining a militant group. He alleged foreign involvement from Afghanistan and India, stating that India supports militants financially and through social media manipulation. Bangulzai described the luxurious lives of militant leaders

compared to the suffering of ordinary people and revealed their methods of extortion and sabotage. He condemned the exploitation of women in militant operations as a tragic practice.

**Story-3** *(April 7, 2023)*

This report highlights the arrest of a Baloch militant group leader through a long-running intelligence operation. The militant leader, who had travelled to India, pledged support for the state and joined the mainstream political narrative. Analysts likened this success to the Kulbhushan Jadhav case, praising the intelligence efforts involved and emphasizing the need for peace and reconciliation in the region.

**Story-4** *(April 8, 2023)*

A TV report claims India's involvement in destabilizing Pakistan, using Gulzar Imam's case as an example of Indian support for Baloch militants. The hosts criticized India's accusations against Pakistan, asserting that Pakistan's citizens remain resilient against foreign interference.

**Story-5** *(May 23, 2023)*

This report focuses on the successful capture of Gulzar Imam, a major terrorist leader, by Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). The operation, which took years of planning, led to Imam admitting that he was misguided and should have pursued a political struggle for rights. The report underscores ISI's strategic approach in achieving this breakthrough in counterterrorism.

**Story-6** *(May 24, 2023)*

The arrest of a high-profile Baloch militant in Balochistan, facilitated by ISI, is highlighted in this report. Analysts praised the operation, drawing comparisons to the

capture of Osama bin Laden and detailing the suspect's foreign connections and militant activities. The operation's success was lauded as a major achievement in counterterrorism.

**Story-7 (June 2, 2023)**

This report discusses allegations of Indian journalists being used as spies in Balochistan. The case of one journalist, allegedly connected to militant groups, was highlighted. Analysts criticized India's involvement in the region, emphasizing that only a small percentage of Baloch people engage in terrorism, while most pursue peaceful advocacy for the region's development.

**Story-8 (December 20, 2023)**

The arrest of BLA leader Sarfraz Bangulzai is reported as a major development in countering militancy in Balochistan. Bangulzai admitted to killing civilians and revealed the foreign funding behind militant activities. He expressed regret for his actions and pledged support for the Pakistani state, bringing 70 men with him.

The analysis of ARY TV's coverage reveals a dominant narrative framework centred on national security. It consistently projects the region through a securitized lens, highlighting military operations, sacrifices of army personnel, and intelligence successes against insurgent threats. While themes like political unrest and social hardship occasionally surface, coverage largely sidelines human rights and economic dimensions. This media portrayal consolidates a securitized and state-centric discourse, reinforcing dominant narratives while leaving limited space for alternative or grassroots perspectives, underscoring broader patterns explored throughout this chapter.

Political narratives are selectively included, often showcasing voices that align with the state's position or discredit separatist elements by exposing their alleged foreign affiliations and exploitative practices. The theme of social suffering, particularly in floods and inadequate healthcare, does emerge but is often couched within narratives that praise state or military efforts. Notably, themes such as human rights and economic grievances remain underrepresented, indicating a lack of balanced exploration of the structural and developmental challenges faced by the Baloch population.

The recurring depiction of militants as externally funded actors and the portrayal of Baloch discontent because of misinformation campaigns serve to delegitimize grassroots concerns. This not only narrows the spectrum of public discourse but also contributes to a portrayal of Balochistan that aligns closely with the state's counterinsurgency priorities.

In sum, ARY TV's content constructs a narrative that prioritizes security, valorises the military, and marginalizes dissenting or critical voices. This selective storytelling not only reflects institutional alignments but also shapes public understanding of the region in ways that sideline complex socio-political dynamics. This media representation aligns with broader patterns in this chapter, illustrating how national media reinforces dominant state-centric narratives.

#### **4.6 Summary of the Chapter**

The chapter presents a detailed analysis of how Balochistan is portrayed in the media, drawing from both interviews and content analysis. Primary data was collected through interviews, revealing that people in Balochistan often rely on traditional communication methods like Haal Ehwaal and local newspapers such as Daily

Intekhab and Daily Azadi due to their cultural relevance and trustworthiness, despite issues like limited circulation and state influence. While social media is used for quicker communication, its effectiveness is curtailed by internet restrictions and state surveillance. International media like Al Jazeera and BBC are occasionally referenced, though their coverage of Balochistan remains sparse.

Informants pointed to the heavy control of media by state institutions such as ISPR and ISI, noting that reporting on Balochistan is often superficial and biased. They criticized the media for perpetuating state narratives while ignoring significant issues like poverty and human rights abuses. The research highlights that Pakistan's media fails to fulfil its democratic duties, often marginalizing Baloch voices and prioritizing political or financial interests over ethical journalism. Instead of serving as a platform for accountability, the media has become a tool of suppression.

The study further explores how Balochistan's marginalization is systematically maintained through selective reporting and institutional biases. Even local and foreign journalists face numerous challenges, including threats, bureaucratic hurdles, and poor infrastructure. The researcher encountered delays in accessing archival data and turned to YouTube, analysing 68 news stories that revealed a strong focus on security and military topics, with little attention given to social or economic issues. Ultimately, the chapter reveals a deliberate strategy to control the media narrative in Balochistan, obscuring the region's real challenges from both national and international audiences.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This section discusses, and interprets the findings of this thesis, and relates these findings with research objectives, and research questions. Importantly, the study successfully achieved its research objectives, which were framed through the lens of the Authoritarian Theory of the Press. This theory posits that the media in authoritarian states, where the government holds significant control, tends to serve the interests of the state and ruling elites, suppress dissent, and control public discourse (Siebert et al., 1956). The findings of this study demonstrate how the Pakistani mainstream media, influenced by the state and military, aligns with the tenets of authoritarian media systems. This study investigated the following research objectives:

RO1: To investigate the portrayal of the pressing issues of the Baloch people in Pakistan's mainstream media.

RO2: To evaluate the democratic and watchdog role of the Pakistan's mainstream media in reporting the pressing issues of the Baloch people in Balochistan.

RO3: To analyse the coverage of critical issues related to the Baloch people in locally published newspapers, international media, and social media platforms.

RO4: To investigate the impacts of the narrative presented by Pakistan's mainstream media on the Baloch population.

#### **5.2 Summary of the Key-Findings**

The first research objective was achieved by examining the portrayal of Balochistan in mainstream media, revealing a consistent alignment with the narrative of state

institutions, mainly the military of Pakistan. The findings of the primary data collection method reflect the authoritarian theory of the press, where media coverage is shaped to promote military interests and suppress narratives that challenge them. Propaganda, discrimination, exploitation, and biasness emerged as the key themes, as mainstream media prioritize the perspective of state agencies, over that of the Baloch people. The media in Pakistan tends to marginalize Baloch voices and frame Balochistan as a region in need of state intervention, aligning with the authoritarian model where the press serves as an instrument for maintaining power rather than offering a space for diverse opinions. This suppression of alternative viewpoints fits within the concept of state-controlled media.

The second research objective was deeply interconnected with the democratic conditions of Pakistan and the media's role in upholding the principles of democracy. The findings of this study demonstrate that Pakistan's mainstream media fails to fulfil its democratic and watchdog role when it comes to monitoring the ruling elites and state institutions about how they deal with the Baloch people or Balochistan. Despite the constitutional guarantees of equality, freedom of expression, and media independence, the media often disregards these principles, especially when it comes to portraying the pressing issues of Balochistan. This can be attributed to the authoritarian conditions that prevail in the country, where the media is heavily controlled by the state and military.

The third research objective analysed how different media platforms, such as locally published newspapers within Balochistan, foreign press and social media, report the pressing issues of the Baloch people. While local newspapers are constrained by state influence and commercial gains, international press provides more independent reporting but often fails to delve deeply into the complex issues faced by the Baloch

population. This reflects the influence of authoritarian media systems, where even international outlets may face pressure from state actors to enter Balochistan, and addressing sensitive issues. Social media, on the other hand, offers a platform for alternative voices but is also subject to state surveillance and censorship.

The fourth objective explored how the mainstream media's narrative contributes to the devastation of the Baloch population. The study found that the media's lack of Baloch-centric reporting not only widened ethnic differences between the Baloch and Punjabi, but also created hostility, and hatred in the Baloch population against the country, and Punjab in general, and against military in particular.

Additionally, this study examined the reasons of persistent neglect of Balochistan by the mainstream media. The neglect of mainstream media with Balochistan's pressing issues can be attributed to several factors, including the centralized structure of media ownership predominantly based in Punjab, the monopolization of journalistic activities by Punjab-based journalists, the reinforcement of military narratives to secure state interests, and the absence of both courage and dedication in Islamabad-based journalists to uphold the true mission of journalism, especially when it comes to Balochistan.

The dynamics are discussed in detail in the following sections:

### **5.3 How Pakistan's Mainstream Media Report Balochistan**

The study's primary and secondary data findings illustrate a stark and consistent alignment with the Authoritarian Theory of the Press. The study found that mainstream media systematically ignore issues like enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings, socio-political, economic, and human rights violations in Balochistan, and when they are covered, they are often portrayed with bias, exaggeration, or outright distortion.

Instead, media outlets focus on narratives that serve the interests of the military and promote state-sponsored geopolitical agendas. This directly reflects the authoritarian theory in practice, where the press, instead of serving as a check on power, becomes an active tool for propaganda, information manipulation, and political control.

### **5.3.1 Media as a State-Controlled Instrument**

The study's primary data reveals that the military and state institutions such as the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) play a dominant role in shaping media narratives. The interviews with informants highlighted a pervasive sense of censorship, state control, and media manipulation that extends far beyond ordinary editorial oversight. As PP-1 said,

*“The media in Pakistan is like a mouthpiece for the military; the narratives you see are controlled and filtered by them, often with no room for opposing viewpoints.”*

The propaganda model described by Herman and Chomsky (1989), is evident in the state's portrayal of Balochistan. Through state-controlled media, the government propagates the narrative that Balochistan's underdevelopment is due to tribal conflicts and resistance to modernization, rather than state neglect or exploitation. This approach aligns with the authoritarian goal of deflecting blame from the state while marginalizing dissenting voices.

The selective use of language, which shows in the content analysis on page 161, referring to state forces as "martyrs" while labelling Baloch activists as "militants", illustrates the media's role in framing narratives to favour the state. Such biases, including demographic and structural biases, ensure that the grievances of the Baloch population remain invisible while reinforcing stereotypes that justify state actions.

Almost all the informants pointed out that the mainstream media in Pakistan lacks the courage to challenge the military's involvement in Balochistan, nor does it question the legitimacy of the state's actions. As JE-5 said, *“The military’s role in Balochistan is unquestionable in the media. Any journalist who dares to raise questions about military actions is either censored or silenced.”*

### **5.3.2 Media Ownership and Punjab’s Dominance**

One of the significant findings of this study relates to the ownership of the media in Pakistan, which plays a crucial role in shaping the narratives and coverage of regional issues, including the marginalization of Balochistan. The study reveals that most mainstream media outlets in Pakistan, particularly television networks, anchors, reporters, and editors, predominantly belong to Punjab. Thus, they are less inclined to report on issues that directly concern Balochistan or the Baloch people.

This regional concentration of media ownership has profound implications on how the issues of other provinces, such as Balochistan, and the people of other provinces, such as the Baloch, are portrayed. This ownership concentration creates a structural bias in how information is reported and what issues receive attention. As the study finds, Balochistan and its people, despite their socio-political and human rights struggles, receive no coverage or are presented in a highly distorted manner. JE-6 said,

*“Journalists from Punjab often lack the understanding or empathy for Baloch issues. They don’t have the lived experience or knowledge of the situation, so they ignore it or misrepresent it.”*

The biased media coverage in Pakistan, where the small issues of Punjab are disproportionately highlighted while the serious and sensitive issues of Balochistan are overlooked, mirrors the broader critique made by the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)

countries in the global context, which has been discussed in chapter one. The NAM countries, which advocated for a more equitable international media and information order in the 1960s, have long complained that Western powers use media as a tool to shape narratives that serve their own interests, and misuse them against the countries in the Global South. Similarly, within Pakistan, Punjab-based media owners, exploits the Baloch population by neglecting their concerns and promoting state-driven narratives that serve the interests of the ruling elite. This ethnic and regional disconnect results in insufficient and biased coverage of Balochistan, leaving the region underrepresented and misunderstood in the national media narrative.

### **5.3.3 Business Interests and Priorities**

Another significant aspect of media ownership in Pakistan is the business interests that shape editorial decisions. Media owners, driven by commercial motives, often prioritize stories that attract the largest audiences and generate the most revenue. This leads to selective coverage, where issues in Balochistan, are overlooked in favour of topics that have a wider appeal or resonate more with the political and economic power centres of Punjab. The study reveals that media owners, who often have business interests tied to government contracts, corporate sponsors, or state institutions, are less likely to report on human rights abuses in Balochistan. This is because Balochistan's issues do not align with the financial interests of these media conglomerates.

Moreover, some media owners may have direct or indirect political affiliations with the government, particularly with political parties that have strong Punjab-based power bases. This political alignment further complicates the coverage of Balochistan, as the media outlets deliberately censor news coverage if those criticize the state's actions or expose the exploitation of Baloch resources. IA-1 said,

*"The media outlets have clear business incentives to avoid controversial topics. Issues in Balochistan don't generate ratings or attract advertisers in the same way that issues from Punjab do."*

The prioritization of business interests and the neglect of Baloch issues create an environment where ethnic discrimination is institutionalized in the media, further marginalizing the Baloch ethnic group.

#### **5.3.4 Propaganda, and Agenda Setting**

The media amplifies agenda-setting that support development projects like Gwadar and China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), portraying them as symbols of national progress while ignoring their adverse effects on Baloch population. This selective narrative exaggerates the benefits of such projects and masks the realities of dispossession, poverty, and systemic neglect faced by the people of the region. Under the authoritarian model, such narratives are not incidental but intentional, serving to promote state objectives and suppress alternative viewpoints. The authoritarian approach is further evident in how the media reinforces stereotypes about Balochistan, perpetuating a cycle of marginalization

Lacking access to independent media platforms, the Baloch people are left without the means to counter propaganda, exploitation, and exaggerated narratives propagated by Islamabad-based outlets. The media's role as a tool for exploitation under an authoritarian system exacerbates the socio-political marginalization of Balochistan, deepening inequalities and suppressing calls for justice and equality.

#### **5.3.5 Narrative Construction and Public Perception**

Informants highlight how Pakistani security agencies, particularly the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), dictate narratives, portraying Baloch people as 'dangerous,'

and 'anti-state.' These negative stereotypes align with the authoritarian press' role in defending the state against perceived threats, reinforcing a distorted image of Balochistan and its people. This framing not only fosters public mistrust but also further isolates Balochistan on both national and international levels, contributing to its marginalization.

Additionally, the ISPR uses its resources to influence media coverage by taking Balochistan or Islamabad-based journalists to remote areas of the province, where they are presented with state-led narratives. These narratives are often one-sided, and journalists, without questioning or seeking alternate viewpoints, accept and release stories based on the information provided by the military. This practice ensures that only the state's narrative is disseminated, sidelining local voices and perspectives. The secondary data in form of content analysis from page 154 to 177 supports the opinion of informants.

The ISPR and Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) also organize seminars and conferences in Islamabad, Gwadar and Quetta (CPEC, 2023), and (Bozdar, 2016), inviting favoured journalists, anchors, and analysts to discuss topics like, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), and the development of Gwadar (Shah, 2016). These events serve to promote the state's projects and narratives, with no critical questions raised about the true intentions behind such gatherings.

The absence of independent scrutiny is notable, as these seminars rarely invite independent analysts, particularly Baloch analysts from Balochistan, whose perspectives might challenge the military and China's involvement in the region. By excluding these voices, the state ensures that its own version of events is the dominant narrative, effectively silencing opposition and critical discussion. For instance, Director General ISPR stated that the locals were overjoyed with the progress of the

CPEC project (Shah, 2016). No one is there, including journalists, to ask; how could he say that locals overenjoyed. Did he conduct any household research survey in Balochistan or did he have any scientific or academic proof?

### **5.3.6 Absence of Courageous Journalism**

An important dimension of the media's biased coverage is the lack of courage among journalists, especially those from Punjab and Islamabad to challenge state institutions or hold those in power accountable. Almost all the informants in the study emphasized how journalists in Pakistan, particularly those in influential media outlets, do not possess the courage to pursue objective, independent journalism that questions the status quo. JE-3 highlighted the issue by stating,

*“Journalists from Punjab and Islamabad are part of a privileged system. They lead comfortable lives, earn well, and don’t want to jeopardize their status by criticizing the military or state institutions. They’re not willing to face the hardships and difficulties that come with defending Balochistan”.*

This aligns with the broader findings that these journalists often lack the moral courage to report on state abuse or to expose injustices in Balochistan. Instead, they prioritize self-preservation and avoid confronting the powerful military and political elites that influence the national narrative. The privileged position of these journalists makes them complicit in the censorship and manipulation of information, as they are more concerned with personal gains and maintaining their status than addressing the systematic oppression of Balochistan.

In this context, JE-2 said,

*“The comfortable lives of these journalists prevent them from understanding or caring about the suffering in Balochistan. They don’t want to risk their luxurious lifestyle or*

*business interests for the Baloch cause. They are far removed from the struggles of the Baloch people.”*

This disconnects from the harsh realities faced by the Baloch population reveals the elitist mentality within Pakistan’s media, where journalists prefer to protect their privileges rather than pursue truthful journalism that would expose state violence and discrimination against Baloch people, and Balochistan.

### **5.3.7 Absence of Public-Centric Reporting**

In ethical journalism, the media is expected to focus on the issues that matter most to the public and concerns of society, particularly those of marginalized groups. Critical thinking, accountability, and questioning authority are core principles of ethical journalism, which should be reflected in the media’s approach to reporting on issues. However, the media in Pakistan, particularly when it comes to Balochistan, has largely failed to provide people-centric reporting.

The centralized control over media outlets, the reluctance to address sensitive issues, and the intolerance towards critical perspectives from Balochistan have all contributed to a media environment that stifles debate and discourages meaningful discourse on the region’s problems. Many informants expressed frustration with the media’s unwillingness to engage with critical issues or challenge the status quo. Creative destruction—the notion that questioning traditional practices and behaviours can lead to societal improvement—is largely absent in Pakistan’s social system, especially when it comes to Balochistan. This absence is symptomatic of a broader societal intolerance toward dissenting voices, particularly those from marginalized communities like the Baloch. The media, which should serve as a platform for education and social change, has instead reinforced prevailing power structures and silent voices that challenge these structures.

The state's heavy-handed response to dissent, particularly through threats and violence against activists, journalists, and intellectuals, has also contributed to the suppression of critical voices. Those who dare to raise questions about the state's policies, especially in Balochistan, often face intimidation, enforced disappearances, or even death. The mainstream media's failure to provide a platform for these voices further exacerbates the situation, leaving many Baloch activists, political leaders, and journalists in a state of fear and silence.

### **5.3.8 Media's Partisan Journalism practices**

In an authoritarian system, partisan journalism is not merely tolerated but actively encouraged to serve the interests of the ruling elites. According to the opinion of informants, the mainstream media in Pakistan is a stark example of this dynamic, as it often aligns itself with state agencies and political parties. The opinion of informants clearly shows that the media's ignoring policy to the issues of Balochistan reflects this partisan alignment, promoting pro-state narratives while marginalizing or vilifying local voices. A significant number of reporters, journalists, and analysts maintain close ties with institutions such as ISPR, ISI, ruling elites, government, and other state entities. This connection fosters a one-sided narrative, favouring military perspectives and discrediting the political struggles of the Baloch people, who advocate for equal rights over their natural resources and autonomy for their province.

Similarly, the content analysis of the secondary data gives clear examples refereeing page no 228, in which television channels (Geo TV and ARY TV News) mostly highlighted incidents involving military officers or soldiers being killed in Balochistan, yet they remain silent on cases where the Baloch civilians, including students and journalists, are abducted or killed by state agencies (BBC, 2016). This gesture of mainstream television channels showcases clear examples of partisan

journalism. Moreover, this sort of selective or partisan reporting by news editors, owners, or reporters of respective television channels, perpetuates the state's narrative while ignoring the human rights violations faced by the Baloch population.

### **5.3.9 Absence of Purposeful Journalism**

According to experts Kovach and Rosenstiel (2021), the purpose of journalism is to play an essential role in people's lives by providing them with accurate, reliable information under journalism ethics. In this context, the findings of both primary and secondary data reveal that the mainstream media in Pakistan has largely failed to fulfil journalism purpose as well as following journalism ethics in Balochistan. The core principles of ethical journalism, such as truth and accuracy, fairness and impartiality, independence, and accountability, have often been disregarded in favour of promoting a narrow, state-approved narrative.

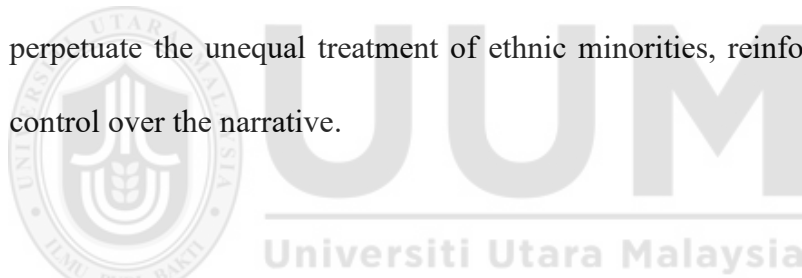
- i. *Truth and Accuracy:* According to the Authoritarian Theory, the media is expected to serve the state's interests, and this can often come at the expense of truth and accuracy. As noted by Kovach and Rosenstiel (2021), journalism's purpose is rooted in informing the public with truthful and accurate reporting. However, the findings of in-depth interview show that the truth and accuracy is absent in Balochistan, as Pakistan's mainstream media distorts or exaggerates stories related to Balochistan issues. Even, often ignoring the ground realities and presenting biased, government-approved narratives. This serves to reinforce the state's power by suppressing truthful accounts, such as those concerning poverty, deprivation, and human rights violations in the region.
- ii. *Fairness and Impartiality:* The Authoritarian Theory argues that the media is often biased in favour of the ruling power. Findings of both the primary and

secondary data revealed that Pakistani media only presents one-sided narratives, promoting the government's agenda while sidelining alternative views from the Baloch people or politicians. The media's lack of impartiality is a clear indication of its role as a mouthpiece for the state rather than a neutral platform for diverse opinions.

- iii. *Independence:* Under the Authoritarian Theory, media independence is severely restricted, and journalists are often pressured to conform to state ideologies. The findings underscore that journalists in Pakistan's mainstream media fail to work independently, fearing repercussions for reporting on sensitive issues in Balochistan. Instead, they follow the directives of military institutions like the ISPR, producing stories that promote pro-government, pro-military, and pro-China narratives. This lack of independence in journalism is a direct manifestation of the authoritarian control over media in the region.
- iv. *Humanity:* The principle of humanity in journalism requires that journalists avoid publishing harmful or hurtful content. However, the findings of both the primary and secondary data collections suggest that the media in Pakistan intentionally hides issues of poverty, state-sponsored violence, and human rights abuses in Balochistan. This selective reporting serves to protect the state's image while disregarding the impact on the lives of the Baloch people. By concealing these issues, the media supports the state's agenda of maintaining control and suppressing dissent, a key element of authoritarian regimes.
- v. *Accountability:* The Authoritarian Theory also holds that media outlets are complicit in upholding the power of the state by failing to hold state institutions accountable. In this case, the findings reveal that mainstream Pakistani media

refrains from criticizing or holding the military and state agencies accountable for their actions in Balochistan. This aligns with the authoritarian model where the press does not challenge the government or expose its wrongdoings but instead contributes to the state's narrative and propaganda.

- vi. *Equality and Representation:* The findings indicate a profound lack of representation of the Baloch people in mainstream media, with their issues sidelined in favour of narratives that benefit the state's interests, particularly those of the military and political elites. This selective representation is characteristic of the Authoritarian Theory, which often marginalizes groups that challenge the state's authority while amplifying the voices of those who support it. By failing to report on Balochistan's struggles, the media helps to perpetuate the unequal treatment of ethnic minorities, reinforcing the state's control over the narrative.



### **5.3.10 Core Principles of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

Under the authoritarian model, diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives are often suppressed or ignored by state-aligned media systems, as such initiatives threaten the status quo. Media controlled or influenced by the state, such as in Pakistan, fail to prioritize DEI principles. The inclusion of underrepresented groups, like the Baloch people, would challenge the state's narrative of unity and homogeneity. Instead of creating equitable representation, media systems reinforce state ideologies by excluding marginalized voices from decision-making roles and public discourse.

For instance, Pakistan's mainstream media has systematically ignored to appoint producers, reporters, journalists in their head offices. There is an absence of editorial roles from Balochistan. Therefore, this exclusion aligns with the authoritarian

principle of maintaining centralized control over media narratives, thus preventing intellectuals from Balochistan from participating in discussions about global or national politics. The lack of representation ensures that the grievances and perspectives of the Baloch remain unheard, enabling the state to project a singular, homogenized view that serves its political objectives.

### **5.3.11 Absence of Human Rights Journalism**

Authoritarian states often suppress independent journalism, particularly when it comes to human rights violations. Human Rights Journalism, which seeks to expose abuses and give voice to victims, is incompatible with the state's desire to control narratives. In the context of Balochistan, the authoritarian theory explains the media's reluctance to report on enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings, and other atrocities committed by state agencies. Mainstream Pakistani media avoids addressing these issues, as doing so would highlight state oppression and undermine its legitimacy. By sidelining human rights journalism, the state ensures that media remains a tool for propaganda rather than a platform for accountability. The authoritarian press functions to conceal the truth, portraying the state as a protector rather than a perpetrator of human rights violations.

### **5.3.12 Absence of Trauma and Conflict Journalism**

True journalism practices often confront authoritarian regimes and report trauma and conflict related stories, despite facing life threats. There are many examples in this context. For instance, journalists in Myanmar faced significant trauma while reporting on human rights abuses following the military coup (Fishbein, 2022). The killing of journalist Sander Thoenes in East Timor remains unresolved, highlighting the dangers faced by reporters in conflict zones (Financial Times, 2024). Le Monde has been

extensively covering the Israel-Hamas war, despite challenging working conditions due to restricted access (Le Monde, 2024).

The above-cited references underscore the resilience and dedication of journalists reporting under oppressive regimes in conflict zones. Similarly, business-oriented news outlets often prioritize profit and may align with state authorities to maintain favourable conditions for their operations. Such news outlets may focus more on content that please ruling elites or state institutions, rather than delving into trauma or conflict stories that might challenge state narratives or jeopardize their financial interests. McChesney (2004) in this context, stated that business-oriented news outlets frequently focus on revenue generation and support state authority, often sidelining stories of trauma and conflict to align with their profit-driven motives.

In terms of trauma or conflict journalism reporting in Balochistan is concerned, the in-depth interviews of informants as well as the content analysis on page (154-177) show that the mainstream media never produced a single story about Balochistan conflict or to interviewing with the families of the missing persons. Even mainstream media ignores to cover protests, such as the sit-ins protests in front of the Quetta Press Club (Jalil, 2024), which was conducted by the families of the missing persons in 2010, reflect the state's intent to silence dissenting voices (Jalil, 2024). Meanwhile, reporting to the public in violent conflict requires reliable and unbiased information, additional journalistic skills, and a deeper understanding of what causes conflict and how it develops and ends (Mohammed, 2019).

The in-depth interviews with informants and the content analysis reveal that trauma and conflict journalism are not incorporated into Pakistan's mainstream media. Over the course of two years, the researcher found no evidence of any story in which reporters, anchors, or journalists from mainstream television channels visited the

families of missing persons or covered issues related to trauma and conflict in Balochistan. This gesture shows that the mainstream television channels, and state ensures that media coverage remains one-sided, perpetuating its narrative and concealing the scale of suffering in Balochistan.

The lack of trauma and conflict journalism in Pakistan's media, especially concerning Balochistan, aligns with the authoritarian goal of avoiding narratives that could fuel dissent or mobilize resistance. Reporting on trauma and conflict, such as the suffering of families of the missing persons affected by enforced disappearances or violence, would humanize victims and delegitimize the state's authority. Therefore, authoritarian regimes censor trauma and conflict journalism practices.

### **5.3.13 A Media Blackout in Balochistan**

The lack of coverage of Balochistan, coupled with the media's selective approach to reporting, contributes to a blackout of critical issues affecting the province. The opinion of in-depth interviews reveals that the media blackout not only keeps the Baloch people out of the national discourse but also prevents the broader public from understanding the realities of life in Balochistan. The failure to report on the ongoing human rights abuses, military operations, and ethnic discrimination suffered by the Baloch people ensures that these issues remain hidden from global audiences. JE-2 in this matter said,

*“It's as if Balochistan does not exist in the media. When it is covered, it's through the lens of state-controlled narratives, and even then, the coverage is often biased and incomplete.”*

This media silence regarding the challenges of Balochistan reinforces the status quo of state control, where the military and Punjab-based elites dictate what is said and

shown to the public. The marginalization of Balochistan in the media, therefore, becomes part of a larger strategy to maintain political and economic power in the hands of the dominant ethnic group, the Punjabis, and exclude other ethnic groups, such as the Baloch, from the national narrative.

#### **5.4 Media's Democratic and Watchdog Role**

The findings of the primary data collections in shape of the in-depth interviews shed light on the challenges that the media in Pakistan faces in fulfilling its democratic and watchdog role. The informants expressed a deep concern about the lack of genuine democracy in the country, with Pakistan's political system under significant control by the military, which has historically been involved in governance for much of the nation's history. As Sayeed (1959) stated that there has been a collapse of democracy in Pakistan. This entrenched military influence poses serious barriers to the media's ability to function independently, thereby undermining its role in fostering democratic principles such as transparency, accountability, and the representation of diverse voices.

As Hashim and Fatima (2020) stated that Pakistan is an elitist state, where its ruling elites such as military, civilian bureaucracy, landlords, business tycoons, and religious elites, use their social, economic, and political resources, not for the stability and development of Pakistan but only for their personal benefits.

##### **5.4.1 Lack of Democratic Media in Pakistan**

A fundamental theme emerging from the study is the notion that Pakistan lacks true democracy, a condition that severely hampers the media's capacity to act as a pillar of democracy. As the opinion of the informants, as well as findings of the content analysis reveal, the military, particularly through its control of the state apparatus, exerts

substantial influence over political processes and governance (Hashmi & Fatima, 2020), including the media. Informants highlighted that despite being a self-proclaimed democratic nation, Pakistan is often described as having a “puppet democracy,” (Ahmad et al, 2014) with the real power lying in the hands of unelected state actors.

Scholars, such as Ahmad et al, (2014) disclosed that the democracy in Pakistan has never functioned efficiently since its independence in 1947. Political leaders, including the Muslim League (ML) remained a puppet in the hands of military dictators. This observation aligns with the findings of analysts such as Baloch (2022), who highlighted the extensive involvement of the military and intelligence agencies in the country's political affairs.

Informants stated that a military officer often holds more power than the Chief Minister of Balochistan, and that the Pakistani army chief is seen as more powerful than both the judiciary and the elected prime minister. In this context, JE-3, said, *"People in India, China, the UK, the USA, and many other countries do not know the name of their military chiefs, but every child in Pakistan knows the name of the Pakistani military chief because they interfere in the country's political affairs."*

These opinions show that there is lack of genuine democracy in Pakistan that severely affects the media's role in promoting democratic norms. The media, instead of holding power accountable, is often aligned with the military's interests. Journalists are under pressure to conform to the military's directives, particularly from the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), and thus frequently fail to report critically on the actions of state institutions. Instead of promoting democratic values such as pluralism, freedom of speech, and transparency, the media in Pakistan has largely been complicit in perpetuating authoritarian norms and state-sponsored narratives (Amnesty, 2018).

#### **5.4.2 Media Representation and Inclusivity**

The in-depth interviews, and content analysis found significant lack of representation of diverse social groups, such as the Baloch reporters, or analysts in the mainstream television channels of Pakistan. No single story of the content analysis proves whether any analyst or reporter from Balochistan were ever given a chance to talk on the issues of Balochistan.

The findings of the primary data through interviews indicated that most media content is dominated by voices from the Punjab province, which further exacerbates the under-representation of smaller provinces and their issues. One of the key problems highlighted by informants is the lack of government and parliamentary initiatives aimed at reforming the media to ensure more equitable representation in mainstream media. Muhammad (2023) stated that the ruling elites, parliament, and political parties have failed to create a media landscape that ensures representation for all religious and ethnic groups.

Despite the constitutional promises of freedom and inclusivity, the informants indicated that Pakistan's parliament has failed to introduce necessary reforms that would address issues such as the marginalization of minority groups. This failure can be attributed to the fact that most parliamentarians, coming from the largest and most powerful province, Punjab, have little political incentive to advocate for the needs and concerns of smaller provinces like Balochistan. Furthermore, many of the parliamentarians are either directly or indirectly aligned with the military, rendering any media reforms unlikely, as the military's influence extends to all levels of governance.

The study findings of Burfat and Oad (2024) support the above-cited arguments, who contends that the constitution-making process in Pakistan resembled a game of musical

chairs involving the people, the ruling elite, and the federating units. Unfortunately, the consistent winners were the military-backed alliance of the bureaucracy and the landed elite. This dynamic ultimately shaped the current parliament, reflecting the historical dominance of institutions, particularly those favouring a single province, Punjab.

#### **5.4.3 Media Upholds Authoritarian Narratives**

The close relationship between the media and state institutions, particularly the military, creates an environment where the media is often complicit in promoting state-approved narratives. This relationship undermines the media's capacity to act as a check on power or provide the public with a platform to express dissenting opinions. The findings of the in-depth interviews reveal that much of the media's content aligns with the interests of the military and the government, particularly when it comes to sensitive issues like national security, foreign policy, and regional autonomy movements.

The secondary data refers to pages 154 to 177 proving the opinion of informants. The coding sheet of the secondary data reveals that out of 68, 43 video contents are related to military and security matters. This dynamic results in a media landscape that serves as a mouthpiece for the state rather than an independent institution that promotes democratic values and freedoms.

Informants in this study indicated that the media's alignment with state institutions results in a lack of journalistic independence and an unwillingness to address serious issues, such as the human rights abuse occurring in regions like Balochistan. The media's failure to adequately cover these issues reflects its broader role in promoting a pro-state narrative, which is often in stark contrast to the needs of the public. As noted by Akhtar and Pratt (2017), government-media relations in Pakistan are

primarily driven by commercial interests and state control, which ensures that media outlets align with the state's objectives rather than fostering independent, investigative journalism.

This situation is indicative of the authoritarian media model, which prioritizes loyalty to the state over the public's right to information. The press, rather than acting as an independent watchdog, acts more as a tool for promoting government and military-sponsored projects and narratives. This is in direct contradiction to the social responsibility theory of the press, which posits that media should serve the public interest, uphold ethical standards, and promote a diversity of views and voices.

#### **5.4.4 The Growth of Corporate Journalism**

A particularly concerning aspect of the media landscape in Pakistan is the increasing commercialization of journalism. The findings of primary data suggest that media outlets in Pakistan, particularly television channels, are more focused on commercial success and ratings than on fulfilling their journalistic duty to inform the public. This shift towards corporate journalism undermines the integrity of the press, as media outlets prioritize profit-making over the ethical obligations of journalism. As the study points out, media houses in Pakistan are often owned by a small number of wealthy families, leading to a concentration of media power in the hands of a few elites. This concentration of media ownership limits the diversity of voices and perspectives that are presented to the public, further diminishing the media's role in promoting democratic values.

The findings of Warrich et al. (2020) reveal that media organizations in Pakistan are often owned by non-journalistic business entities that shape editorial policies to safeguard their business interests. These entities have taken a questionable approach by promoting individuals without journalism experience as journalists. Such

individuals have played a significant role in transforming the landscape of Pakistani media (Warrich et al., 2020).

The study also highlights the role of government subsidies and advertising in reinforcing the media's dependence on state institutions. Many media outlets rely heavily on government advertising and other forms of financial support, which gives the government leverage over media content. As a result, media houses are often incentivized to align with the state's interests, particularly on issues related to military spending, foreign policy, and regional autonomy movements. This financial dependence further erodes the media's ability to serve the public's interest and fulfil its democratic role.

#### **5.4.5 Media Information Literacy (MIL)**

In recent years, particularly with the rise of digital media, disinformation, information disorder, and fake news have grown at an unprecedented rate, leading to dysfunction in the public domain (Yelubayeva & Gabdullina, 2024). Dysfunction refers to a state where relationships within a society, community, or family fail to function properly (Mansoor, 2024).

Mansoor (2024) identifies two primary forms of communication dysfunction: first, when media outlets fail to fulfil their societal roles and responsibilities, and second, when media outlets actively harm society through negative effects. Overcoming dysfunction requires efficient and effective communication, achievable through Media and Information Literacy (MIL).

Experts like Balcytiene (2020) emphasize the importance of MIL in empowering individuals to resist disinformation and monitor institutional performance effectively. Similarly, over a century ago, Walter Lippmann argued that the public often exists in

pseudo-environments shaped by stereotypes and distorted symbols, which are manipulated through propaganda and deception. He criticized the press for failing to present the truth, suggesting it was influenced by advertisers and dominant powers that manufacture consent to manipulate public opinion (Mansoor, 2024). Lippmann advocated for education and the development of citizens' critical abilities as solutions to these issues (Lippmann, 2017).

One significant finding of this study is the lack of Media Information Literacy (MIL) among the public, especially in Pakistan, to understand crucial issues such as propaganda, framework of media, manipulation, exploitation and agenda setting. Editors and journalists' group in this study emphasized that MIL is crucial for individuals to critically engage with media content and understand the role of journalism in democracy. In the case of Pakistan, where media content is often shaped by state interests and commercial concerns, MIL is essential for enabling the public to discern fact from fiction, particularly in the face of widespread disinformation.

The study suggests that enhancing MIL would empower citizens to critically evaluate media messages, challenge state-sponsored narratives, and engage in meaningful discussions about the issues that affect them. As noted by Muratova et al. (2019), the role of MIL in promoting democratic dialogue and understanding cannot be overstated. In a media landscape where disinformation is rampant, MIL can serve as a tool for combating false narratives and ensuring that the public has access to accurate and reliable information.

#### **5.4.6 Brown Envelope Journalism and Ethical Compromise**

Journalism, like any other societal institution, has not been immune to corruption and bribery, commonly referred to in scholarly discourse as Brown Envelope Journalism

(BEJ). This practice involves offering cash, gifts, freebies, or incentives to journalists to influence their reporting. Such activities compromise the quality of news and undermine the core principles of journalism (Lamwaka, 2022). BEJ operates on a personal level, often with a degree of confidentiality, forming an informal agreement between the source and the journalist, where both parties fulfil certain obligations.

Informants revealed that journalists in Pakistan frequently receive bribes or other benefits from state institutions, political parties, and private actors in exchange for favourable coverage. In Urdu, the term *lifafa* (envelope) is used pejoratively to describe this practice. Senior journalist and analyst Imtiaz Alam has lamented the rise of *lifafa* journalism in Pakistan, describing it as a regrettable development. According to Alam (2018), many political leaders, military officials, and intelligence agencies are implicated in this practice, with some agencies even placing journalists on payrolls.

In the past, the Ministry of Information, following a Supreme Court order, disclosed a list of 282 journalists who had received payments and gifts from the ministry's secret fund (Tribune, 2013). Reportedly, 300 million Pakistani rupees were allocated to a private television channel. Such instances of journalistic corruption not only undermine the media's role as the fourth estate but also strengthen the influence of state and corporate elites over the press.

As highlighted in the findings, envelope journalism significantly erodes the media's capacity to serve the public interest and hold power accountable. Journalists engaged in this practice often avoid covering critical issues such as human rights abuse and injustices, particularly in marginalized regions like Balochistan. This trend reflects deeper issues of media commercialization and a lack of journalistic integrity in Pakistan. Scott Pelley's observation encapsulates the gravity of this issue: "There is no democracy without journalism, and the quality of our democracy is bound tightly to

the quality of journalism” (Balch, 2024). However, in countries like Pakistan, where mainstream media often prioritizes business interests, political affiliations, or personal gain, the role of journalism in promoting democracy becomes compromised.

The media landscape is heavily influenced by profit motives, government pressures, and military control, weakening its ability to function independently. This creates significant challenges for the media in fulfilling its democratic role. The failure of Pakistani media to address key issues, such as military intervention and political repression, and its reluctance to inform citizens about their rights and societal injustices, weakens democracy. When journalists are subject to the influence of political elites or state institutions, their ability to challenge power, expose wrongdoing, and foster a free and informed public discourse is severely restricted.

## **5.5 Media's Impacts on the Baloch Population**

Informants in this study expressed the view that the people of Balochistan are denied fundamental rights such as the right to information, the right to free expression, the ability to form independent opinions, and the ability to challenge the state and its institutions over injustices and unequal treatment. The Baloch people are not allowed to voice their concerns, and there is no platform to ensure that their voices are heard at the global level. Mainstream news media fail to provide the democratic respect necessary to maintain social norms and democratic values within society.

The blackout of media coverage on Balochistan has several negative impacts on the Baloch population in the region. The factors are discussed below:

### **5.5.1 Balochistan: *Silenced and Overlooked***

The findings of the primary data revealed that the most significant impact is the invisibility of Balochistan on the global stage. Hence, the Baloch population remains

largely unseen and unheard by international audiences, leading to a lack of global awareness about their struggles and human rights violations. Due to limited media coverage, the serious human rights violations, atrocities, and injustices perpetrated by Pakistani state agencies against the Baloch people are largely unknown to the world. This leads to a failure to address the region's systemic abuse.

Lack of media representation contributes to the continued neglect of Balochistan's issues by international community, including the UN, International Court of Justice, International Criminal Court, many other institutions, and human rights organizations. The international community is not adequately informed about the region's needs and grievances. Both local and foreign journalists face significant challenges, including threats and restrictions, when attempting to report on sensitive issues in Balochistan. This hampers the ability of the global media to provide comprehensive coverage of the region's crises.

Without international media coverage, the region remains politically and socially isolated, with little to no pressure on authorities to address the grievances of the Baloch population. The lack of media attention also delays or prevents timely responses from humanitarian organizations, and other global actors who could otherwise intervene in the region's crises. This prolongs the suffering of the Baloch people. The absence of a platform for the Baloch population in global discourse results in the continued neglect of critical issues, such as political autonomy, economic inequality, and the protection of basic human rights.

### **5.5.2 Survival of Journalism Practices in Balochistan**

Another negative impact is that the survival of independent journalism in Balochistan is under threat. There is no growth and future of journalism. Findings of in-depth interviews show that Balochistan-based journalists are willing to contribute, however,

they face not only professional stagnation but also the real threat of losing their lives. Many have been killed for addressing local issues, while others have been forced to migrate abroad (Ahmed, 2017). High-profile cases like those of Karima Baloch, a prominent human rights activist, was found dead in Toronto, Canada, under mysterious circumstances (BBC, 2020), and Sajid Hussain, a journalist and activist from Balochistan, was found dead in Sweden in April 2020 (BBC, 2020). Likewise, more than 43 local journalists were in Balochistan between 2010 to 2016 while reporting in conflict zones (Ahmed, 2017).

Despite their willingness to report on sensitive issues, Balochistan based journalists lack access to national or international media platforms. Without free press platforms, their stories remain unheard, and the region's critical issues do not receive the attention they deserve. Journalists in Balochistan are closely monitored, and they face the threat of retaliation if they transmit information to foreign press outlets.

The arguments of Zurutuza (2023) endorses the findings of this study who stated that the security forces threaten journalists by phone if they attend press conferences held by Baloch leaders or report on regional issues. This surveillance restricts the flow of information and stifles independent journalism in the region. Local newspapers in Balochistan have limited readership and influence, mainly reaching local readers. As a result, even if these newspapers publish important issues, they fail to attract attention from national or international media.

### **5.5.3 Sense of Marginalization and Frustration**

The absence of their issues from mainstream narratives has led to a sense of marginalization and social alienation. The media, in this context, fails to provide the democratic space necessary for the people to engage in discourse and advocacy for their rights. Informants in this study also pointed out that the media blackout in

Balochistan has created severe consequences, including widespread frustration, anger, and feelings of rebellion among the local population. This blackout, combined with the biased reporting of mainstream media outlets, has further alienated the people of Balochistan, creating a significant gap between the mainstream media and the local population, between Islamabad and Balochistan, and between Baloch and Punjabi. Likewise, the reporting style of mainstream media only exacerbates divisions, causing agitation, uprising, stress, and violations, particularly among the youth of Balochistan as well as in local journalists.

The increasing opposition to the State of Pakistan is evident, yet the media has failed to mediate and minimize these rising tensions. The media's inability to bridge the gap between the people and the state has contributed to growing discontent. People, including journalists in Balochistan, are disillusioned and harbour negative perceptions of Islamabad because they feel neglected and alienated within a fractured federal system.

#### **5.5.4 Mistrust on Pakistan's Mainstream Media**

The opinions expressed by informants of the primary data suggest that mainstream media is not seen as a reliable source of news for the people of Balochistan. The inhabitants of Balochistan have expressed deep resentment towards ethnic groups in Islamabad and Punjab that control the media. The reporting style of mainstream media provoked people against the national press as student organizations and political parties often boycotted the press circulation in Balochistan.

The results show that people do not trust the media and TV channels, and as a result, the mainstream media has lost credibility with the public. The biased attitude of the media has had negative societal consequences, and people appear to be polarised, intolerant, and segregated. The findings of this study closely link to the previous

arguments of Mohammad (2019) that stated that instead of promoting dialogue and understanding, the mainstream media has often acted to deepen divisions among ethnic and social groups. The media's role in promoting social harmony and peace has been compromised by biased reporting that reinforces ethnic and cultural divisions rather than fostering unity (Mohammed, 2019).

#### **5.5.5 The Federal System Loses Trust**

Pakistan is a federal state, home to a variety of social and ethnic groups residing in different provinces, each with distinct cultural norms and values. One of the primary responsibilities of the federal system is to unite these diverse social and ethnic groups under one nation, ensuring they are afforded equal rights in all areas of life. Failure to fulfil this duty can lead to instability and present serious threats to national unity. The media plays a pivotal role in fostering peaceful relations and harmony among these groups by promoting unity through thoughtful discussions and programming. It is essential for the media to focus on issues that enhance social cohesion and unity, rather than issues that create division and lead to societal conflict (Mohammed, 2019).

The situation in Balochistan, where conflict and instability already pose a serious threat to the integrity of the state, has been exacerbated by the media's failure to address the grievances of the Baloch people. Instead of acting as a mediator and promoting peace, the mainstream media has contributed to growing divisions, further alienating the Baloch population and heightening their frustration. As a result, the youth in Balochistan are increasingly resorting to violent forms of resistance, and the media has failed to play a constructive role in addressing these issues. The findings suggest that the attitudes of Pakistani mainstream media have undermined the federal system, peacebuilding efforts, social unity, and national cohesion.

### **5.5.6 Mistrust on Law and Justice System**

Moreover, the failure to investigate crimes against journalists in Balochistan has raised serious concerns about the effectiveness of law enforcement and judiciary in the region. As stated above, from 2010 to 2016, more than 43 journalists were either killed, kidnapped, or went missing in Balochistan (BBC, 2016), but no meaningful investigations have been carried out, and the perpetrators remain unpunished. This culture of impunity has further undermined the credibility of the media in Pakistan, with journalists worldwide failing to act in response to these grave violations of press freedom (Hammarberg, 2011). The global community has taken steps to protect journalists, with initiatives like the US Shield Law and the European Union's draft law on the safety of journalists and the Committee to Protect Journalists (Hammarberg, 2011).

The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) is an American independent, nonprofit organization based in New York that promotes press freedom worldwide, defends the right of journalists to report the news safely and without fear of reprisal. CPJ has highlighted that most murders of journalists are linked to their reporting on sensitive issues, and yet most cases go un-investigated, leaving the perpetrators free to continue their crimes. The lack of action from the Pakistani media institutions and the government has contributed to the media's growing disrepute and distrust among the public (Mijatovic, 2022).

### **5.5.7 Disappointment in Balochistan-based journalists**

The partisan practices and centralized media system disappointed local journalists and reporters in Balochistan. For them, journalism has become a causeless profession. The opinion of Journalists and Editors of the in-depth interviews show that journalists and local editors have become mentally and psychologically sick and live in a state of fear

because head offices undermine their contributions, skills, and talent. The State institutions treat Baloch journalists and analysts as traitors or unloyal to the state (Civicus, 2024). This perception means that the journalism industry in Balochistan has lost its reputation and credibility as an institution, which creates a serious threat to the survival of this profession. The underrepresentation of Balochistan in the national media has also created significant gaps in knowledge and information, leaving the world largely unaware of the true conditions faced by the people of Balochistan.

### **5.5.8 Mobilization, Activism, and Resistance**

Despite disappointment, and many challenges, a positive outcome of the media blackout in Balochistan has been the increased political activism among local population through public rallies, protests and social media platforms. Although social media is also under the control of authorities, somehow, local population managed to expand their thoughts, issues, and scenarios by different means. This mobilization has created serious threats and challenges for Pakistani security agencies, and mainstream media. One hand, it has become very difficult for the security agencies to handle political resistance created by highly educated youths, but on other hand, mainstream media lost its trust and credibility, not only with the Baloch population, but other parts of the country. Youths of Balochistan raised hidden issues and exposed the lies of mainstream media and ruling elites through social media.

Likewise, neglect by mainstream media further mobilized local journalists in Balochistan to address sensitive issues and expose human rights abuses in the region. These journalists are determined to continue their work despite the risks and threats they face. However, the situation remains dire, as journalists in Balochistan continue to face abductions, torture, and killings at the hands of state actors. The mainstream

media's failure to report on these atrocities has led to international outrage, but the lack of accountability for such crimes remains a serious concern.

*Solutions Journalism (SJ)* is a practice in which journalists critically and lucidly examine and explain how people try to solve widespread problems. Reporters and journalists record the thoughts and reactions of the public and bring them to the attention of state institutions and governments for solving. SJ focuses on responding to various issues, providing insight, seeking evidence, and reporting limitations (IJNET, 2022).

### **5.6 Role of Local Newspapers, International and Social Media**

This thesis reveals a media blackout in Balochistan, where Pakistan's national media deliberately ignores the region. This raises the question of what alternatives exist for people in such a situation. Tatum (2023) proposed alternative media platforms for presenting dissenting viewpoints that differ from those in mainstream, and government-controlled media. Antonio Gramsci's Theory of Cultural Hegemony challenges dominant cultural beliefs and advocates for counter-hegemonic ideas through alternative platforms (Lievrouw, 2011).

Alternative media can also include traditional media such as newspapers and magazines, radio, television and films; Internet websites or social media are considered to be the most innovative form of alternative media in the current digital world (Tatum, 2023). Alternative media serve as non-commercial channels that represent marginalized groups, such as the poor, political and ethnic minorities, working-class populations, and LGBT communities (Atton, 2022). Today, social media platforms are considered the most innovative forms of alternative media, allowing individuals to access and share views that challenge mainstream narratives. The rise of online news

platforms reflects a shift toward alternative media, where trust in mainstream outlets declines as people turn to alternative news sources for more relevant or aligned content (Andersen et al., 2021).

The researcher sought to understand how informants perceive the role of social media, local newspapers, and international media in highlighting Balochistan's issues. The responses varied, reflecting diverse perspectives on the effectiveness and impact of these media platforms in portraying the region's challenges. Detailed accounts of their opinions are presented below.

### **5.6.1 Balochistan-based Newspapers**

While journalism was once limited to traditional forms like newspapers, the rapid advancement of technology has altered media landscapes. Despite the global digital transformation, Balochistan still relies on local newspapers with limited readership. These newspapers are seen as vital by the people, as they reflect local issues daily. Local journalists are praised for their ambition, courage, and commitment to their profession, often at great personal risk. Their passion for journalism stems from a deep sense of deprivation, compelling them to shed light on Balochistan's issues.

However, local journalists face significant threats and restrictions, particularly when addressing sensitive topics such as military or intelligence agency involvement. They are often pressured not to expose these issues, under the threat of severe consequences. Despite these obstacles, local journalists continue their work, striving to garner attention to Balochistan's plight on national and international stages. They seek greater resources, training, and editorial support, as well as national and international platforms to amplify their coverage. But the reach of local newspapers is largely confined to the province, making it challenging for Balochistan's issues to gain global attention.

Local newspapers, despite their limited circulation, play a crucial role in highlighting Balochistan's issues by publishing articles, columns, and press statements from various social and political groups. These outlets allow citizens to voice concerns and pressure local authorities.

However, the restricted reach of local newspapers means that their influence is limited to provincial audiences, and Balochistan's issues require wider, global attention, which can only be achieved through national and foreign media. Journalists in Balochistan face serious security risks, including threats from security forces, as described by Zurutuza (2023). Despite the risks, international outlets like the BBC and Al Jazeera occasionally report on human rights violations in Balochistan.

Journalists and Editor class (JE) of the primary data revealed that many local newspapers are effectively controlled by the government, prioritizing financial survival over reporting on sensitive issues. The government withheld advertisements, putting pressure on newspapers to avoid coverage of contentious topics. Commercial interests often compromise the independence of these outlets, making it harder for local journalists to report the truth.

### **5.6.2 Social Media**

In contrast to traditional media, social media has become a powerful tool for disseminating information in Balochistan. Despite limited access to electricity and the internet, social media has gained popularity, enabling Balochistan's youth to engage in participatory journalism and citizen journalism. Social media exposes corruption and injustice, giving marginalized communities a platform to voice their concerns. However, the government of Pakistan controls, including the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act Cyber Crime Act of 2016, monitor and limit these activities, posing challenges to free expression (Amnesty, 2025). The ruling elites in Pakistan have been

amending Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA) since 2016. Amnesty International named it as draconian law and stated that it heavily controls digital landscape in Pakistan.

Aggarwal et al. (2020) emphasized how social media platforms enable individuals and groups to share stories and discuss issues globally. While social media has opened new avenues for communication, the lack of regulation and the spread of misinformation remain challenges.

### **5.6.3 International Press**

International media also struggle to report on Balochistan due to government-imposed restrictions. The Pakistani government controls the entry of foreign journalists and often intimidates them. According to the opinion of the primary data, Pakistan's Ministry of Interior has made it exceedingly difficult for international media to cover Balochistan by creating a convoluted No Objection Certificate (NOC) process, which discourages foreign journalists from attempting to report from the Balochistan (Baloch & Andresen 2020).

In addition, the expulsion of international NGOs in 2015 has further isolated Balochistan, preventing the international community from understanding its people's grievances (Perlman, 2017). Without a strong international presence, foreign media outlets rely on stringers or exiled activists for information, limiting their ability to provide comprehensive coverage of the region. Despite these obstacles, occasional reports from organizations like BBC, CNN, and Voice of America (VoA) manage to expose human rights violations in the region.

Ultimately, the lack of access to Balochistan by international media contributes to the limited global attention to its issues. Some informants argued that international media

focus on security and political issues of Pakistan and neglect the broader, ongoing struggles of Balochistan's population. Additionally, Chinese media, despite significant investments in Balochistan through the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), never address the concerns of the Baloch people, as their focus remains on economic and political interests rather than human rights.

### **5.7 The Main Sources of News in Balochistan**

Before asking the informants about how the mainstream media in Pakistan portrays the issues of Balochistan, the researcher first wanted to understand which news sources they rely on for information about Balochistan's serious and sensitive matters. Almost all informants disclosed that they trust *Haal Ehwal* (People-to-People interaction in face-to-face setting) for obtaining information about incidents, problems, and issues of different areas of Balochistan. The primary reason they gave for this preference was their greater trust in this direct, and community-based source of communication.

The Haal Ehwaal or Hal O Ahwal written by Dashti (2007); is a Balochi language word, which has historically been a traditional method of sharing or exchanging information among individuals or group of people in the Baloch culture. According to Dashti (2007), Hal O Ahwal means news and views. This practice facilitates the dissemination of news and community insights, especially in rural and remote regions of Balochistan. Hal O Ahwal represents a long-standing communal practice through which information is exchanged within communities and the local population.

The significance of Hal O Ahwal in Balochistan is aligned with the work of Kameda et al. (2003), who interlinked people-to-people interaction with social interaction, and suggest that social interaction is a means of sharing and influencing opinions,

particularly on serious or sensitive issues. In this context, Hal O Ahwal or people-to-people interaction in face-to-face setting among individuals or groups is a powerful tool for not only conveying information but also ensuring it is well-received and acted upon. This traditional tool of communication remains the cornerstone of communication in the Baloch population, even as digital platforms have augmented its scope. It is regarded as authentic and dependable due to its deeply ingrained roots in the social fabric of Balochistan.

In the digital era, while communication has evolved through tools like mobile phones, social media apps (e.g., WhatsApp, Messenger, Viber, Telegram, Skype, Zoom), the foundational concept of people-to-people interaction in face-to-face setting remains largely unchanged in Balochistan. Even though the digital platforms boosted Hal O Ahwal and enabled people to share information confidentially in private settings through digital media platforms. As Baron et al. (2008) explain, digital communication complements traditional methods by allowing for greater connectivity and faster transmission of information across larger distances. However, communication through digital media platforms affects physical or face-to-face interaction. Informants stated that the physical presence in the past facilitated deeper interpersonal connections, which is something the digital medium cannot fully replicate.

Balochistan's historical reliance on people-to-people interaction for information sharing underscores the cultural significance of direct communication in overcoming geographic barriers. As people used to travel between villages and regions, they not only exchanged goods but also shared critical information, and ideas about tribal, local and regional matters. The face-to-face interaction was not only considered as an interesting means of communication in which the population used to enjoy telling stories or discussing matters, but this tradition also built trust among local people and

communities. Tribal chiefs, or leaders of communities used to ensure that *the Haal* (information) has reached out to other communities throughout Balochistan. Even with the advent of digital technologies, this tradition persists in Balochistan, though the speed and reach of information transmission have undoubtedly increased.

Moreover, the findings indicate that Baloch communities both within and outside Balochistan—such as those residing in Sindh and Punjab—rely on these traditional communication practices to stay informed about the challenges facing their population. The vast network of Baloch people scattered across the country serves as an informal yet effective news network, ensuring that issues of Balochistan reach various regions and are discussed widely.

The study further highlights the variety of sources relied upon by different groups within Baloch society. Politicians, for example, gather information from party workers and student organizations, while intellectuals turn to writers, scholars, and poets to stay informed. Human rights activists often rely on legal experts, NGOs, and social workers for their knowledge, and editors and journalists rely on their reporters, and correspondence that live and share events and incidents in a private setting. Each group's perspective on the news is shaped by their access to specific networks, which contributes to the diversity of information within Balochistan.

The local newspapers, such as Daily Azadi and Daily Intikhab, emerge as the second sources of news after Hal O Ahwal, as they provide stories that resonate more closely with the experiences of the local population. It is concerning that despite the existence of national and international media platforms, Balochistan remains underrepresented, leading to a situation where local and informal sources—such as Hal O Ahwal or people-to-people interaction become the primary means of staying informed. This lack of media attention is a failure of national, and international press to fulfil its journalistic

responsibility, which is to provide equitable coverage to all regions, including marginalized and underserved communities like the Baloch.

While modern media tools have undoubtedly altered the way information is disseminated, traditional forms of communication, such as Hal O Ahwal continue to play a central role in the region's news ecosystem. This reflects the deep-rooted cultural practices in Balochistan, where social interaction and the sharing of information have been paramount to community life for generations.

## **5.8 Why Pakistani Media and Journalists Ignore Balochistan**

Based on the opinion of the in-depth interviews, the marginalization of Balochistan by Pakistan's mainstream media cannot be fully understood without acknowledging the deep-seated fears and strategies of the Pakistani state and its military establishment. The discussion presented below is based on the perspectives derived from the findings and opinions of informants through the primary data and the content analysis which was collected through secondary data:

### **5.8.1 Fear of International Scrutiny**

One of the primary reasons for the media blackout in Balochistan is the state's acute fear of international scrutiny and potential intervention. Historically, Balochistan has been a focal point of attention for global human rights organizations and international bodies. For instance, in 2012, the U.S. Congress held discussions on the human rights situation in Balochistan, highlighting issues such as enforced disappearances, military operations, and the denial of the Baloch people's rights over their natural resources (Congressional Research Service, 2012). This international spotlight alarmed the

Pakistani government and military, raising concerns about possible repercussions on global platforms.

Adding to these concerns, during a panel held parallel to the 19th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) in Geneva on March 12, 2012, British human rights activist Peter Tatchell condemned Pakistan's intensified repression in Balochistan. Tatchell called for the United Nations to send a fact-finding mission to investigate the atrocities in the region. Furthermore, he urged the International Criminal Court (ICC) to issue arrest warrants for Pakistani leaders responsible for human rights violations. He also emphasized the need for military de-escalation and proposed a negotiated political settlement to resolve the Balochistan conflict (Tatchell, 2012).

Such international pressure severely affects Pakistan's global reputation, as the ongoing conflict in Balochistan continues to be a source of criticism from the international community. The Pakistani state and military, fearing further intervention by global institutions like the UN, ICC, or International Court of Justice (ICJ), have taken measures to suppress dissent and control the narrative surrounding Balochistan. This includes ensuring that mainstream media avoids reporting on the region's pressing issues and aligns with state-approved rhetoric (Shah, 2014).

By controlling journalism and the flow of information, the Pakistani state seeks to portray Balochistan as peaceful and prosperous on both national and international levels, while labeling dissenting voices as anti-state actors or foreign agents. However, such measures only deepen the mistrust and exacerbate the grievances of the Baloch people, further tarnishing Pakistan's standing on the global stage.

### **5.8.2 The Military's Prosperity Narrative**

The Pakistani military has positioned itself as a force for peace and development in Balochistan, framing the province's challenges as the result of tribal resistance and militancy. According to the military's narrative, tribal leaders and insurgents oppose development projects, fearing a loss of their traditional power. The military argues that it is working to bring prosperity, stability, and peace to Balochistan through infrastructure projects and counterinsurgency operations.

However, this narrative is widely disputed. As noted by several informants, anyone who advocates for the rights of the Baloch people, especially regarding control over natural resources, is quickly labelled as anti-state or a foreign agent. HR-1 said that such individuals are often targeted, harassed, or even killed. The state's labelling of activists and political leaders as "militants" or "traitors" serves to delegitimize genuine demands for autonomy and resource control, allowing the military to maintain its grip on the province under the guise of maintaining order.

### **5.8.3 Suppression of Local Voices**

The fear of international intervention and the military's desire to project a narrative of progress have led to the systematic suppression of local voices in Balochistan. As MO-1 said,

*"Reporting the ground realities in Balochistan often results in journalists and media outlets being branded as anti-state".*

The fear environment discourages journalists from covering critical issues such as human rights abuses, enforced disappearances, and resource exploitation. Instead, the media focuses on state-sponsored narratives that highlight development projects and military efforts to combat insurgency. For example, IA-2 said,

*“Islamabad-based journalists are willing to visit Balochistan only when escorted by the military or when reporting within the parameters set by ISPR”*

This controlled reporting creates an illusion of prosperity and stability, obscuring the struggles and grievances of the Baloch people.

#### **5.8.4 Resource Exploitation and Resistance**

At the heart of the Balochistan issue lies the question of natural resources. Balochistan is rich in resources such as natural gas, coal, and minerals, yet its people see little benefit from this wealth. HR-2 pointed out the irony that while Balochistan supplies natural gas to other provinces, particularly Punjab, many areas within the province lack basic access to gas and electricity. This exploitation of resources without fair compensation fuels resentment among the Baloch people. The state’s response to this resistance has been harsh. PP-2 emphasized that those who demand a fair share of Balochistan’s resources or question the exploitation of their land are silenced, often through force.

For instance, Nawab Akbar Bugti, a former Governor-General, Chief Minister of Balochistan, and prominent political leader, was killed by the Pakistani military in August 2006. He was one of the many activists and leaders advocating for Balochistan's right to self-determination. These individuals are not only labelled as anti-state but are also accused of being foreign agents working against Pakistan's interests. This narrative serves to delegitimize local demands for justice while justifying the military’s heavy-handed approach.

#### **5.8.5 Media as a Tool of Suppression**

To maintain its narrative, the Pakistani state exercises strict control over journalism in Balochistan and suppress the voices of the Baloch population. AR-2 said that the

media's primary goal is to maintain good ties with the government and military, as this relationship ensures financial stability through advertisements and state support. Consequently, journalists and media owners avoid covering sensitive issues that could jeopardize these ties.

The lack of independent reporting from Balochistan means that the province's realities remain hidden from the rest of the country and the international community. JE-4 criticized this trend, stating that mainstream journalists in Islamabad rarely visit Balochistan and show little interest in understanding its issues. This ignorance perpetuates stereotypes and prevents meaningful engagement with the province's struggles.

#### **5.8.6 The Fear of International Pressure**

The fear of international involvement is a recurring theme in the state's approach to Balochistan. The 2012 discussions in the U.S. Congress and the interest of human rights organizations highlighted the potential for global attention to pressure Pakistan on its treatment of the Baloch people. This fear drives the state to suppress dissenting voices and maintain tight control over the media. HR-1 called for international journalists and human rights organizations to visit Balochistan and report on the ground realities, arguing that such exposure could help hold the state accountable.

#### **5.8.7 The Human Cost of Suppression**

The cost of this suppression is borne by the Baloch people, who continue to face poverty, underdevelopment, and human rights abuses. HR-3 noted that the media's focus on elite interests leaves marginalized communities like the Baloch without a voice. The systematic neglect of their issues not only alienates them from the rest of

Pakistan but also deepens their sense of injustice. Furthermore, the risks faced by journalists in Balochistan underscore the severity of the situation. As JE-3 said,

*“Local journalists often face harassment, abduction, and even assassination for reporting on sensitive issues. This culture of fear ensures that critical stories remain untold, allowing the state to maintain its narrative of stability and progress”.*

### **5.8.8 Ethnocentric Media Ownership & Workforce**

Ethnocentric biases within the media industry further exacerbate Balochistan's marginalization. PP-1 argued that the majority of media owners, journalists, and analysts belong to the Punjabi community, which dominates Pakistan's political and economic landscape. This lack of diversity in the media workforce leads to a natural focus on Punjab's issues while ignoring smaller provinces like Balochistan. JE-2 in this context said,

*“ No single TV anchor-persons, news editor, or news desk staff come from Balochistan.”*

This lack of representation results in a lack of understanding and empathy for the struggles of the Baloch people.

### **5.8.9 Bias and Discrimination**

The systemic bias against Balochistan is evident in the way media outlets allocate their resources and attention. For instance, informants stated that crimes or tragedies in Punjab are often given extensive coverage, while sensitive issues and severe human rights incidents in Balochistan receive no attention. This discrimination perpetuates the perception that Baloch lives are less valuable than those in other provinces. This bias is further reflected in the lack of invitations for Baloch intellectuals or activists to participate in media discussions. The voices of Baloch people are systematically

excluded from national debates, leaving their concerns unheard. Furthermore, stereotypes portraying the Baloch as tribal, backward, and uncivilized persist unchallenged, perpetuating a narrative that alienates the province from the rest of the country.

#### **5.8.10 Media as a Profit-Driven Industry**

One of the most prominent reasons for Balochistan's exclusion from mainstream media coverage is the commercial nature of the media itself. According to IA-1,

*“Media has transformed into a "commercial entity run by tycoons" whose primary goal is to maximize revenue. Since Balochistan has a smaller population and lacks a significant advertising market due to widespread poverty and underdevelopment, it offers little financial incentive for media houses”.*

This focus on profitability means that the concerns of regions like Balochistan, which contribute little to the media's revenue streams, are deemed unimportant. Additionally, MO-2 highlighted that media owners prioritize coverage of urban centres like Lahore, Karachi, and Islamabad because these regions are economically vibrant and attract corporate advertisements. Balochistan, lacking industrial development, does not fit into the revenue model of profit-oriented media organizations.

#### **5.8.11 Dependency on Government Support**

Many media organizations rely on government advertisements and financial support to sustain their operations. To maintain these revenue streams, media outlets often avoid reporting on issues that might anger the government or state institutions. This dependency creates a culture of compliance, where journalists prioritize state-approved narratives over independent reporting.

In the case of Balochistan, this means that stories critical of government policies or actions are unlikely to be covered. Media owners and journalists prefer to maintain good relations with the government rather than risk losing financial support by highlighting the province's problems. Moreover, IA-2 pointed out that mainstream media outlets are unwilling to invest resources in sending reporters to Balochistan for independent reporting. Logistical and financial challenges, combined with the risks, deter media organizations from prioritizing the province. Instead, they rely on state-sponsored trips organized by institutions like ISPR, which restrict journalists to reporting within pre-defined parameters.

#### **5.8.12 Lack of Journalistic Courage and Ethical Reporting**

The lack of journalistic courage and adherence to ethical standards emerged as a critical concern raised by participants. PP-1 criticized Islamabad-based journalists for their failure to uphold "journalistic values and ethics," accusing them of prioritizing personal gain over professional responsibilities. He observed that many journalists treat their profession as a means to secure a comfortable lifestyle rather than as a mission to uncover the truth, particularly when it comes to the pressing issues faced by the Baloch people in Balochistan.

This indifference, according to PP-1, is rooted in the tendency of individuals from other cultural groups to avoid engaging with the sensitive issues of marginalized communities, especially when doing so might jeopardize their personal comfort or create risks for themselves and their families. Mainstream journalists from Punjab and Islamabad, he argued, are often unwilling to sacrifice their comfortable lives or risk straining ties with powerful elites for the sake of truth-telling.

Similarly, AR-2 highlighted that Pakistan's mainstream media has transformed into a "business industry" that prioritizes maintaining favourable relationships with the

government rather than fulfilling its role of holding it accountable. This shift undermines the integrity of journalism, particularly in regions like Balochistan, where uncovering the truth requires boldness and the willingness to challenge powerful state institutions.

#### **5.8.13 Neglect of Human Rights Issues**

The media's focus on elite interests and urban-centric stories leaves little room for the voices of marginalized communities. HR-3 noted that the media prioritizes the concerns of the wealthy and powerful, often ignoring the plight of the poor and deprived. This bias is particularly evident in Balochistan, where issues such as lack of education, inadequate healthcare, and human rights abuse receive no coverage. JE-5 provided a striking example of this disparity, stating that if an officer from Punjab is killed, the media covers it extensively, but when significant killings occur in Balochistan, they receive minimal attention. This unequal treatment reflects the systemic discrimination against Balochistan and its people.

#### **5.8.14 Collapse of Journalistic Institutions**

The collapse of journalistic institutions in Pakistan has further marginalized Balochistan. AR-2 noted that journalists' unions, which are supposed to advocate for press freedom and professional standards, have become "puppets of state institutions" with little influence to create at country level. They fail to protest in favour of their colleagues or the marginalized communities they are supposed to represent. This institutional decay leaves Balochistan without a platform to voice its concerns within country, or a global level.

## **5.9 The Secondary Data (*Content Analysis of GEO TV & ARY TV*)**

This section examines secondary data in the form of video content collected from two of Pakistan's largest television channels, ARY TV News and GEO TV News, over a two-year period (January 1, 2021, to December 31, 2023). The analysis is organized thematically and discussed in detail below.

### **5.9.1 Theme: Enforced Disappearances**

Enforced disappearances, often referred to as the "missing persons issue," remain one of the most critical human rights concerns in Balochistan. Despite calls from the Baloch population for media coverage to highlight this issue and capture global attention, a content analysis of two major Pakistani television channels, GEO TV and ARY News, reveals an alarming neglect. Over two years, both channels produced only four stories combined on this subject, reflecting the marginalization of Balochistan's issues in Pakistan's mainstream media.

GEO TV aired two reports, one on July 5, 2022, and another on July 6, 2022, on enforced disappearances. In the first story a girl (Samee Deen Baloch, who now became a popular political activist), was invited who had spent 13 years seeking justice for her abducted father. She openly criticized Pakistan's institutions for failing to implement Supreme Court orders and called for affected families to be included in government dialogues and judicial processes. Another report produced on July 6, 2022, featured a TV host confronting the Federal Interior Minister of Pakistan, who admitted that civilian authorities lacked the power to resolve the issue, attributing responsibility to the military and judiciary. While these reports highlighted critical aspects, their coverage remained limited, lacking depth and sustained focus.

ARY News also broadcasts two reports related to enforced disappearances issue. The first produced on December 30, 2022, and another on April 20, 2023. Both reports framing aligned more closely with state narratives. One report discussed the establishment of a commission for missing people in Balochistan, while the other alleged that the issue was being exploited to spread propaganda through social media, allegedly manipulated by foreign actors. This framing downplayed the grievances of affected families and shifted the focus to state security concerns, undermining the urgency of the missing person's issue.

### **5.9.2 Theme: Human Rights**

Another significant theme explored was Human Rights, focusing on how both TV channels reported violations, crimes, and atrocities faced by the Baloch population. GEO TV aired only one story related to this theme on March 9, 2023, which lasted less than a minute. In this brief report, a law student from Balochistan expressed frustration over the neglect of the province and called for greater media attention. Alarming, this solitary report from GEO TV was the only instance of coverage on human rights violations in Balochistan during the two-year period.

Even more concerning, ARY News did not produce a single story on this critical issue over the same time frame. Despite human rights violations being a pervasive and routine reality for the Baloch population, both channels demonstrated an appalling lack of attention and responsibility toward the region. Informants' opinions strongly corroborate these findings. For instance, the opinion of HR-1 reminds here who said, *“Media is either silent or controlled by the state when it comes to Balochistan”*.

Likewise, PP-1 Said,

*“Media houses are more concerned with gaining state approval than addressing human rights violations in Balochistan”.*

Similarly, JE-2, said,

*“There is no follow-up, no investigative effort, and no consistent focus on human rights violations in the region”.*

This glaring omission by both TV channels aligns with these comments and highlights the marginalization of Balochistan’s issues in Pakistan’s media landscape. The lack of substantive reporting not only reflects media neglect but also reinforces the systemic silencing of the Baloch people’s struggle against injustices.

### **5.9.3 Theme: Political**

The political theme in the content analysis of Geo TV and ARY News reveals significant biases and selective reporting, underscoring the limitations of mainstream media in addressing the real political dynamics and conflicts in Balochistan. Geo TV produced only two programs related to political issues in Balochistan over two years. The first program aired on May 24, 2023, featured a former militant leader who expressed regret for his past actions, apologized to the public, and sought reintegration into mainstream society. While such stories are important, they predominantly align with the state narrative, presenting a one-sided view. The fact that Geo TV focused on giving a platform to a repentant Baloch militant, one who supports the state, underscores the selective nature of its coverage. Key political figures advocating for Baloch rights or those critical of the state and military’s involvement in Balochistan’s affairs are systematically excluded.

For instance, figures like Dr. Mahrang Baloch, a young female doctor and prominent political voice in Balochistan, were not invited to share their perspectives. This

exclusion aligns with the findings of informants, who criticized mainstream media for refusing to engage independent and critical voices. By providing special solo interviews to individuals who uphold the state narrative, such as the former militant leader, the channel essentially reinforces the military's perspective while suppressing broader, more nuanced debates about the conflict in Balochistan.

The second program aired on July 15, 2023, included political representatives to discuss peace in Balochistan.

However, the selection of panellists was heavily skewed toward state-supported leaders, neglecting voices representing the broader Baloch population. While one guest emphasized the need for Pakistan's power corridors to address the region's deprivation, and another highlighted the necessity of collaboration with local communities, the overall discussion lacked depth. The absence of independent analysts, local political leaders, or representatives from marginalized communities illustrates a clear intent to limit critical discourse.

The nature of such programs further reflects the criticism by key informants, who stated that mainstream media in Pakistan does not invest resources in field reporting or investigative journalism in Balochistan. Instead, these programs are often conducted in controlled environments, such as five-star hotels, with government sponsorship, ensuring that the narrative aligns with state interests. This further demonstrates the lack of willingness by the media to engage directly with communities or investigate the root causes of political unrest in the province.

ARY News broadcasted three programs on political themes, yet all strongly supported the state narrative. The first program aired on January 14, 2023 prominently featured a former militant leader, who alleged that "India is directly involved" in supporting militant groups in Balochistan. This narrative is a recurring theme in state-sponsored

media, used to deflect criticism of Pakistan's policies in Balochistan by externalizing the problem. By focusing on allegations of Indian involvement, ARY News avoided addressing the real grievances of the Baloch people, such as the exploitation of natural resources, political marginalization, and human rights violations.

Additionally, the program gave significant attention to the militant leader's criticism of Baloch separatist leaders and their alleged exploitation of women. While such topics may hold relevance, their selective presentation indicates an attempt to discredit the Baloch resistance movements while simultaneously bolstering the state's achievements in reintegrating former militants. This aligns with the informants' views that mainstream media in Pakistan acts as a tool to propagate state-centric narratives, sidelining genuine political concerns.

The second program aired on July 15, 2023, highlighted a conference organized by a state-supported senator from Balochistan, focusing on resolving issues caused by militant violence through dialogue. However, the representatives invited were all state-supported figures, reflecting a lack of diversity in political opinions. The absence of discussions on real political problems, such as interference by intelligence agencies in elections, electoral rigging, and the unequal distribution of resources, demonstrates the superficial nature of ARY News's political coverage.

The third program aired on December 3, 2023, attempted to analyse "What is the problem in Balochistan?" by inviting journalists to share their experiences. While the discussion touched upon federal neglect, poverty, deprivation, and corruption, it avoided more sensitive issues such as enforced disappearances, human rights violations, and the military's involvement in the region. The selective framing of issues demonstrates a conscious effort to avoid challenging the state and military

establishment. The absence of dissenting or critical voices further undermines the credibility of such discussions.

Both Geo TV and ARY News fail to provide balanced or investigative reporting on political issues in Balochistan. Their focus on state-supported narratives, exclusion of independent voices, and lack of in-depth field reporting point to a systematic bias. The programs highlight surface-level issues without delving into the root causes of political unrest, such as structural inequalities, interference by intelligence agencies, and the suppression of local governance.

As stated by JE-1, *"Mainstream media does not invest resources in investigating or reporting from Balochistan"*.

The reliance on controlled environments, like conferences sponsored by the government, further illustrates the disconnect between the media and the realities on the ground. This lack of effort to explore and present the broader political context perpetuates the marginalization of Baloch voices and their legitimate political concerns.

#### **5.9.4 Theme: Social**

The analysis of the social theme in the content produced by Geo TV and ARY News reveals stark differences in their approach, scope, and focus. While Geo TV attempted to engage with a range of social issues in Balochistan, ARY News offered minimal coverage, and even within this limited reporting, the focus leaned heavily toward upholding military. Geo TV produced 10 stories on social issues in Balochistan over a two-year period, reflecting a relatively stronger commitment to highlighting the province's socio-economic challenges. The video produced on Geo TV on social

issues revealed that the province and its people face severe deprivation, and lack of basic facilities and infrastructure.

Geo TV's two programs aired on June 14, 2022, and August 14, 2022, celebrated the heroic actions of a young Baloch truck driver who prevented a major catastrophe by driving a burning oil tanker to a safe location. By portraying him as a hero, Geo TV offered a rare moment of acknowledgment and pride for the Baloch people. This positive representation not only showcased courage but also countered the prevalent stereotyping of Baloch individuals in the media, fostering a sense of inclusion.

Geo TV demonstrated a notable effort in covering the flood crisis in Balochistan, producing four stories on the topic. The presence of a prominent journalist like Hamid Mir in flood-affected areas marked a significant moment for the people of Balochistan, who had rarely seen such mainstream media engagement at the grassroots level. The reports aired on September 6, 2022, and September 14, 2022, highlighted poor infrastructure, corruption in aid distribution, and the dire living conditions faced by locals. Through interviews with affected families, Geo TV offered a platform for Baloch voices to express their grievances, shedding light on the neglect of provincial and federal authorities. The emphasis on real-life struggles, such as the lack of shelter, clean water, and medical supplies, added authenticity and humanized the plight of Baloch communities.

Geo TV also covered topics like water scarcity caused by climate change and the underdevelopment of infrastructure in Balochistan. In some programs, Geo TV combined social issues with political commentary, such as the scepticism expressed by an influential political leader about the effectiveness of Balochistan's representation in high political offices. This integration of social and political themes

allowed for a broader critique of systemic governance failures, presenting a more holistic narrative of Balochistan's challenges.

ARY News produced only two stories on social issues in Balochistan during the same period, revealing a glaring lack of focus on the province's socio-economic realities. ARY's first story aired on August 7, 2022, on the devastating floods in Balochistan highlighted the destruction of infrastructure, the rise of diseases, and the suffering of displaced families. While the report acknowledged the hardships faced by women and children and exposed corruption in aid distribution, it lacked the depth and grassroots engagement seen in Geo TV's coverage. ARY's approach appeared more procedural, capturing the event without delving into the systemic neglect and structural inequalities that exacerbate such crises.

ARY's second story aired on June 23, 2023, shifted focus to the military's role in maintaining peace and stability in Balochistan, presenting a one-dimensional perspective. Analysts credited the military for combating smuggling, ensuring security, and contributing to socio-economic development. However, this narrative overshadowed the social grievances of Baloch communities and ignored the complex interplay of military involvement and local governance failures. By prioritizing state-centric narratives, ARY News demonstrated a lack of interest in addressing Balochistan's social issues. The channel's minimal reporting not only reflected a disregard for the province but also revealed a tendency to align with state narratives. Its reliance on military-centric discourse further alienated Baloch communities and reinforced perceptions of neglect and bias.

### **5.9.5 Theme: Economic**

Geo TV produced only one story aired on July 2, 2023, related to economic issues in Balochistan during the two-year period. The report, which ran for just 2:37 minutes,

highlighted the dire economic conditions of the province. The story focused on the increasing reliance of Balochistan's residents on smuggling, particularly oil smuggling across the Iran-Pakistan border, as a survival mechanism. This illegal activity is not a matter of choice but of necessity, driven by the absence of industries, businesses, and job opportunities in the region. The locals interviewed in the story expressed their desperation, noting that smuggling was their only means of livelihood to avoid widespread hunger.

This story served as a microcosm of the broader economic crisis in Balochistan, where residents are denied access to the wealth of natural resources in their own land. The situation is emblematic of systemic neglect, where Balochistan's economic potential remains untapped, leaving its people marginalized and impoverished. Despite the province's vast reserves of natural gas, coal, and minerals, its residents live in poverty. Geo TV's coverage, limited as it was, at least touched upon this glaring contradiction, highlighting the stark disparity between Balochistan's resource wealth and the economic deprivation of its people.

In stark contrast, ARY News did not produce a single story on economic issues in Balochistan during the two-year period. This absence is deeply troubling and indicative of the channel's negligence and disregard for the region's struggles. By ignoring Balochistan's economic issues, ARY News missed an opportunity to shed light on the systemic inequities and structural barriers that perpetuate the province's marginalization. Issues such as the unfair distribution of resources, the denial of provincial rights over natural wealth, and the inequities in the National Finance Commission (NFC) award deserved attention but were entirely overlooked. ARY News' complete silence on the economic struggles of Balochistan reflects a broader failure of Pakistan's mainstream media to fulfil this responsibility. This negligence

reinforces the perception of bias and exclusion, deepening the disconnect between the people of Balochistan and the rest of the country.

Balochistan is a land of abundant natural resources, yet its people live in poverty and deprivation. The province generates significant revenue for the federal government through its natural gas reserves, coal, and minerals, but the benefits rarely reach the local population.

Issues such as the gas development surcharge, resource allocation, and the lack of provincial autonomy over economic matters remain unresolved. This paradox deserved comprehensive media coverage to bring attention to the systemic inequalities and drive policy change. Stories about the province's exclusion from development projects, the misuse of funds, corruption, and the lack of investment in infrastructure and industries could have provided valuable insights into the root causes of economic deprivation.

#### **5.9.6 Theme: Health**

Balochistan, which spans more than 44% of Pakistan's total land area, faces severe health challenges that are exacerbated by its underdeveloped infrastructure, extreme weather conditions, and vast, inaccessible terrain. These factors contribute to a public health crisis characterized by the high mortality rates of pregnant women, a lack of medical professionals and facilities, and widespread diseases stemming from unsafe drinking water and inadequate sanitation. Despite these grave issues, media coverage has been alarmingly sparse, revealing an absence of commitment to addressing the pressing health needs of the province.

Geo News produced only two stories in two years on health issues. One report aired on January 29, 2022, emphasized the acute shortage of healthcare professionals in Balochistan, particularly female doctors and gynaecologists, leading to alarming

maternal mortality rates. The story presented a stark statistic: one woman dies every three hours in Balochistan due to complications related to pregnancy or childbirth. This tragic reality underscores the systemic failures in healthcare infrastructure, including the lack of medical facilities in remote areas and the challenges faced by women traveling long distances to seek care.

The second story aired on August 2, 2022, covered the strike by young doctors in Balochistan, which led to the suspension of outpatient department (OPD) services and left countless poor patients without medical attention. The show criticized the government's inaction and inability to resolve the crisis, highlighting the suffering of the public.

ARY News' complete failure to produce a single story on health issues in Balochistan during the two-year period reflects its disregard for the province's pressing concerns. By ignoring the health crisis in Balochistan, ARY News demonstrated a troubling lack of interest in covering issues that directly impact the lives of ordinary people. Instead, the channel appears preoccupied with national political controversies, partisan narratives, and discussions that prioritize elite interests over marginalized communities. Its silence on Balochistan's health issues is a clear failure to fulfil this responsibility. By not covering these critical issues, the channel contributes to the invisibility of the province's struggles in the national discourse, perpetuating the marginalization of its people.

#### **5.9.7 Theme: Military**

In analysing the secondary data, it becomes clear that the military has emerged as a dominant theme in the coverage of Balochistan's issues on both Geo TV and ARY News. Over a two-year period, the two channels produced a total of 31 stories related to military matters, with Geo TV contributing 12 episodes and ARY News a significant

19 episodes. This heavy emphasis on military coverage raises several concerns about media bias, ethical responsibilities, and the implications for public understanding of the situation in Balochistan.

Geo TV's coverage is largely centred on military operations, including clearance missions, militant attacks, and the military's role in maintaining peace. The channel covered incidents such as helicopter crashes resulting in the deaths of core commander Balochistan, military personnels, the sacrifices of soldiers, and the military's efforts to combat militant threats and restore stability in Balochistan. Notably, Geo TV's stories frequently use the term "martyrdom" when reporting on the deaths of military personnel, a terminology that is not applied to civilians or those opposing the state. This discriminatory language creates a sharp contrast between the way the military's sacrifices are presented and how the loss of life among civilians, particularly in conflict zones, is reported.

The use of martyrdom elevates military personnel to a revered status, framing them as heroes and further ingraining the military's importance in the public's perception. However, this kind of narrative presents ethical concerns, particularly for journalism, as it undermines objectivity and fairness. The consistent portrayal of military actions as heroic or righteous, without offering alternative perspectives or highlighting the civilian impact, distorts the complexity of the conflict in Balochistan.

Similarly, ARY News demonstrated a pronounced focus on military issues, producing 19 stories centred on military operations and the role of the armed forces in Balochistan. The channel often featured reporter Laiq, who regularly praised the military and referred to fallen soldiers as "martyrs." The tone of his reports suggested that Laiq's role was not that of an independent journalist, but rather a spokesperson for the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the military's public relations wing. This

kind of reporting is a blatant conflict of interest and raises questions about journalistic independence.

ARY News also displayed a lack of impartiality in its coverage of the conflict in Balochistan, especially in how the military's actions were presented. It became evident that the channel did not seek to offer a balanced view of the insurgency, or the human rights violations committed by various actors, including the military. Reports about abductions, killings, and the plight of Baloch intellectuals and activists were either downplayed or entirely absent from the mainstream narrative. This omission reflects an inherent bias towards the military and a failure to hold all parties accountable for their actions in the region.

The overwhelming focus on the military by both Geo TV and ARY News raises significant ethical questions. By publishing 31 out of 68 total stories related to the military, the channels arguably gave disproportionate weight to the state's narrative of military heroism, while largely sidelining civilian suffering and human rights violations. This skewed coverage not only limits the diversity of perspectives presented to the public but also reinforces the dominance of the military narrative in the media landscape.

Moreover, both channels exhibited a compliance-based approach to reporting military news, with a tendency to reproduce official ISPR press releases verbatim. This practice raises serious concerns about the channels' independence and their role in critical reporting. Rather than engaging in investigative journalism, both outlets essentially act as conduits for the state's official messaging.

The imbalance in military reporting, coupled with the disregard for civilian issues, serves to deepen the marginalization of Balochistan in mainstream media discourse. The consistent focus on military success and the heroic portrayal of security forces

distracts from the real challenges faced by Baloch people, including disappearances, human rights abuses, economic deprivation, and healthcare and education crises.

Additionally, the media's overwhelming reliance on state-approved narratives stifles critical thought and debate, reinforcing a monolithic understanding of the conflict.

### **5.9.8 Theme: Security**

The analysis of the security theme in the media coverage produced by Geo TV and ARY News over a two-year period reveals a narrow and one-dimensional portrayal of the security challenges in Balochistan. Both television networks produced 12 stories related to security issues—Geo TV covering 4 stories and ARY News covering 8. These reports, while addressing some elements of Balochistan's security concerns, overwhelmingly focus on external factors and the military's efforts to stabilize the region. However, there is a striking absence of in-depth exploration of the root causes of the region's security problems or the grievances of the Baloch people themselves.

Geo TV's coverage on security challenges in Balochistan primarily revolves around the role of external actors, particularly India and Afghanistan. One of the key segments aired on February 3, 2022 on GEO TV News featured the Federal Interior Minister, who emphasized the alleged ties between militants in Balochistan and external forces, particularly Afghanistan and India. The minister blamed these countries for destabilizing the province and echoed the state narrative of a "foreign hand" behind the region's insurgency. However, the program did not explore any internal factors or local perspectives that might contribute to the conflict, such as the political, economic, and social marginalization of the Baloch population. By focusing solely on external actors, Geo TV missed an opportunity to address the internal dynamics that have led to Balochistan's instability.

Furthermore, another story produced by Geo TV aired on May 24, 2023, focused on the inclusion of a former Baloch militant into the Pakistani mainstream. This story framed the inclusion as a positive step and praised the role of the ISI and its Director General for successfully targeting militant networks in the region. While the ISI's efficiency in counterterrorism efforts is acknowledged, the report does not question or critique the military's long-standing presence and operations in Balochistan, which many argue has contributed to the escalating insurgency. The absence of local Baloch perspectives or independent analysis in these reports makes it clear that the coverage was more about promoting the military's narrative rather than providing a comprehensive understanding of Balochistan's security issues.

Additionally, Geo TV hosted a program aired on July 15, 2023, featuring journalists and analysts discussing peace in Balochistan, but once again, no Baloch analyst or local voice was invited to share insights or perspectives. Instead, the program featured a discussion with the Balochistan Minister of Information, who attributed the region's escalating terrorist activities to the alleged interference of India and Afghanistan. This again reflects the absence of local input, and the conversation remained heavily centred around the state's perspective.

ARY News also produced a series of stories that similarly framed the security issues in Balochistan through a lens that largely mirrored the military's perspective. For instance, one story aired on May 18, 2022, covered the arrest of a woman allegedly involved in planning suicide bombings against the state and security forces. The spokesperson in the report accused foreign agents of exploiting women for violent purposes, further emphasizing the narrative of external interference.

ARY News also produced stories that focused heavily on the military's role in maintaining safety and peace in Balochistan. A prominent aspect of ARY News'

coverage was its focus on the arrest of Baloch militants and its praise for the ISI's counterterrorism efforts. Another report aired on January 14, 2023, praised the ISI for the arrest of a high-profile Baloch militant, with military analysts drawing comparisons to the capture of Osama bin Laden, framing it as a major success in the war on terror. This one-sided portrayal reinforces the idea that the military is the sole protector of peace and stability in Balochistan, while sidelining the socio-political factors that have led to the insurgency in the first place.

ARY News also produced multiple stories that depicted the military's operations in a positive light, emphasizing their success in capturing Baloch militants, with the involvement of the ISI. In one story aired on April 7, 2023, the military's operation was linked to the broader narrative of counterterrorism, and the arrest of a Baloch militant was reported as a major breakthrough in Pakistan's efforts to combat insurgency. Analysts frequently praised the ISI's strategic approach to addressing militant networks, but, again, these reports failed to address why Baloch militants are fighting in the first place.

Furthermore, ARY News consistently failed to cover the human rights violations and political repression that have fuelled the insurgency in Balochistan. The reports ignored the widespread issues of enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings, and the political marginalization of the Baloch population. By focusing almost entirely on military successes and dismissing the grievances of the local population, ARY News' coverage was heavily one-sided and failed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the region's security challenges.

One of the most critical shortcomings in both Geo TV and ARY News' coverage is the absence of Baloch voices in the discussions on security. Despite the ongoing insurgency and the fact that much of the conflict is driven by the marginalization and

disenfranchisement of the Baloch people, neither channel made an effort to invite local Baloch political leaders, analysts, or activists to speak on the issues that directly impact them. The lack of representation of the Baloch population in the media further reinforces the narrative that the concerns and grievances of the Baloch people are not considered legitimate or worthy of discussion in mainstream media.

Moreover, while both channels gave ample airtime to state officials and military spokespersons, there was little critical analysis of the military's role in the ongoing conflict. The consistent praise for the ISI and military operations in the region ignored the fact that the military's heavy-handed tactics have contributed to the deepening mistrust and alienation of the Baloch people. Instead of questioning the military's presence and its impact on the region, the coverage promoted the state's narrative of military-led stability and security, ignoring the broader socio-political context that fuels the insurgency.

#### **5.10 Triangulation of Primary & Secondary Data Methods**

This study utilized a triangulation methodology to enhance the reliability, validity, and depth of the findings by integrating primary and secondary data methods. The methodology aimed at addressing the following research questions:

RQ1: How does the mainstream media of Pakistan report the pressing issues of the Baloch people in Balochistan?

RQ2: How does the mainstream media of Pakistan fulfil its democratic and watchdog role in reporting the pressing issues of the Baloch people in Balochistan?

The integration of both data sets revealed that the secondary data validated and reinforced the authenticity of the perspectives shared by informants directly through

the primary research. By combining these methods, the study ensured comprehensive, credible, and nuanced insights into the complex dynamics of media representation and state-controlled narratives. Below is an analysis that synthesizes both data sets, emphasizing their intersections and broader implications.

### **5.10.1 Triangulation on Reporting Pressing issues of Baloch people**

The triangulation of research question one is given below:

How does mainstream media portray the pressing issues faced by the Baloch people in Balochistan?"

#### **Primary Data: Informant's Perspectives**

The primary data revealed that Pakistan's mainstream media operates under the significant influence of state institutions, including the military, ISPR (Inter-Services Public Relations), and ISI (Inter-Services Intelligence). Key findings from the primary data (In-depth Interviews) are analysed below:

**Engineered Media Framing:** Informants consistently highlighted how state authorities engineer media framing to portray Balochistan as a well-developed province under the military's pioneering efforts. The narratives suggest that tribal chiefs and Baloch militants resist development projects initiated by the military. This framing systematically ignores the socio-economic and political injustices experienced by the Baloch population, including severe human rights abuses, including abducting, and killing of activists who talk for the rights on their natural resources.

**Ground Realities and Military Exploitation:** Informants emphasized the stark contrast between state narratives and ground realities. They pointed to increasing poverty, deprivation, and socio-political marginalization, driven by military control

over natural resources and economic projects. Locals gain little to nothing from these initiatives, while the province remains under military and ISI dominance.

**Neglect of Pressing Issues:** Informants addressed the systematic neglect of enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings, and human rights violations in media coverage. When these issues are addressed, they are framed with bias or outright distortion to align with state-sponsored geopolitical agendas.

**Ethnic and Regional Bias:** The primary data highlighted significant ethnic and regional biases in media coverage. Journalists and media owners predominantly from Punjab displayed a lack of empathy for Baloch issues. Punjab's relatively minor concerns receive disproportionate media attention compared to the serious issues faced by Balochistan.

**Security Agency Narratives:** Informants revealed that security agencies heavily influence media narratives. Journalists are often taken to remote areas by ISPR and presented with one-sided, state-led narratives. This practice marginalizes local voices and reinforces public mistrust towards the Baloch population.

**Economic and Political Exploitation:** The military's control over natural resources and economic projects, such as Gwadar and CPEC (China-Pakistan Economic Corridor), was a recurring theme. Media narratives amplify the benefits of these projects as symbols of national progress while ignoring their adverse impacts on the Baloch population.

### **Secondary Data: Content Analysis**

The content analysis of 68 video stories from Geo TV and ARY News over two years provided complementary insights into the primary data. Emerging themes included

enforced disappearances, human rights violations, socio-economic issues, military, security, and political instability. Key findings are as follows:

**Focus on Military Narratives:** Of the 68 stories analysed, 43 were centred on military and security-related issues, such as attacks on military personnel, conflict with Baloch militants, and military strategies. Enforced disappearances and human rights violations, which is the most pressing issue, received no coverage. This aligns with the primary data's findings of a state-controlled media narrative.

**One-Sided Political Representation:** Political stories primarily highlighted individuals who rejoined mainstream politics and spoke against the Baloch people's struggle for self-determination. No stories addressed the historical, genuine, and ongoing political grievances faced by Balochistan since its annexation with Pakistan in the 1940s.

**Neglect of Socio-Economic Issues:** Geo TV and ARY News showed limited interest in addressing the socio-economic challenges faced by Balochistan. For instance, Geo TV produced only one story on economic marginalization, while ARY News did not cover the issue at all. Stories on health issues, such as the lack of medical facilities and women's health conditions, were similarly sparse.

**Promotion of State-Driven Agendas:** The media emphasized state-driven narratives supporting projects like Gwadar and CPEC. These projects were portrayed as symbols of national progress, disregarding their socio-economic, political, and cultural consequences for the local population.

**Marginalization and Deprivation:** Stories on social issues, such as marginalization and deprivation, were either non-existent or superficially addressed. This further

supports the primary data's findings that media coverage systematically excludes the voices and concerns of the Baloch population.

**Selective Coverage:** Content analysis revealed selective coverage practices, prioritizing stories that align with state and military's interests and neglecting those that highlight injustices. This selective approach reinforces the authoritarian theory, where the press functions as a tool for propaganda rather than as a watchdog of power.

In certain reports by ARY, anchors and reporters were taken by the military to their bases in Balochistan that had been attacked by Baloch militants. These reports showcased detailed coverage, including how militants entered the area, opened fire, used weapons, and destroyed military bases, and finally, how the army countered the attackers.

However, such stories glaringly omit any engagement with the affected families of the missing persons or coverage of incidents involving killings and abductions of Baloch people. This selective reporting prioritizes military narratives while ignoring the human rights violations and grievances of the Baloch population, thereby presenting a one-sided perspective that aligns with state-driven agendas. This neglect reinforces the state's narrative of progress and stability while obscuring ground realities.

### **5.10.2 Triangulation on Media's Watchdog and Democratic Role**

The second Research Question was:

How does mainstream Pakistani media fulfil its democratic and watchdog role in reporting the pressing issues of the Baloch people in Balochistan?

The researcher triangulated both the primary data and the secondary data collection methods, which are concluded as below:

### **Primary Data: Informant's Perspectives**

Informants expressed concerns about the lack of genuine democracy in Pakistan, which has resulted in a media landscape unable to function independently. Rather than promoting democratic norms such as transparency, accountability, and diversity, the media is often co-opted into supporting state-sponsored narratives.

### **Media's Democratic and Watchdog Role**

The entrenched power of unelected state actors, particularly the military and intelligence agencies, has created an environment where journalists are pressured to conform to directives from entities like the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR). As a result, the media often fails to hold power accountable, thereby perpetuating authoritarian norms instead of fostering democratic values.

### **Media Representation and Inclusivity**

The findings also highlight significant gaps in the representation of the Baloch people. Informants stated that the media largely focuses on narratives aligned with the interests of the Punjab-based ruling elite, leaving the concerns of smaller provinces like Balochistan underrepresented. This lack of inclusivity is exacerbated by the absence of government initiatives aimed at reforming media practices to ensure fair representation of all social groups, which is a key element of democratic norms.

### **Media's Role in Supporting Authoritarian Narratives**

Primary data findings suggest that the media in Pakistan is often complicit in promoting state-approved narratives, particularly on sensitive issues like national security and regional autonomy movements. Instead of acting as a watchdog, the media frequently aligns with the interests of the military and government. This dynamic is

particularly evident in the lack of coverage of human rights abuses in Balochistan, where the media prioritizes pro-state narratives over the public's right to information.

### **Commercialization and Corporate Journalism**

Informants also expressed concerns about the increasing commercialization of journalism in Pakistan. The media's focus on profit-making and ratings undermines its ability to fulfil its democratic role. Wealthy elites own most media outlets, resulting in a concentration of power that limits diversity and independence in media coverage. This commercialization further aligns media content with state interests, as financial dependence on government advertising incentivizes media outlets to avoid controversial topics like the exploitation of Baloch resources or the military's role in the province.

### **Secondary Data: Content Analysis**

#### **Failure of media to give voice to public**

As stated previously in chapter one that the role of media and journalists should be to create knowledgeable citizens and informed societies, to uphold democracy, and to give a voice to marginalized and weaker groups. Just as democracy advocates public rights and interests, the media must also support and represent the public. Moreover, the media is tasked with monitoring the activities of ruling elites and authorities, minimizing atrocities, and holding state institutions accountable for their actions.

However, forty-three (43) stories related to military and security clearly show that both TV channels are failing to give voice to public oriented issues, rather portray military-led stories, which are against democratic norms and values.

## **From Watchdogs to Propaganda**

Instead of acting as watchdogs of power or amplifying the voices of the Baloch population, mainstream media channels have become instruments of military and state propaganda. These channels fail to serve public interests or promote a democratic and accountable society. As a result of this systemic failure, the Baloch people are compelled to rely on alternative sources such as Haal Ehwaal (people-to-people interactions), locally published newspapers, and social media to access and disseminate information about their region.

## **Media Blackout and Information Void in Balochistan**

The triangulation of primary and secondary data underscores how Pakistan's media landscape, particularly regarding Balochistan, sustains a substantial information gap both within the country and on an international level. Content analysis of 43 out of 68 stories related to military and security from Geo TV and ARY News reveals clear evidence of conflict and unrest in Balochistan. However, the public and the global community remain largely unaware of the realities on the ground. This information void results from military-controlled journalism practices and the reluctance or lack of courage among Islamabad-based journalists and media owners to pursue investigative reporting on the region.

Primary data reinforces this argument, highlighting how mainstream media systematically blackouts Balochistan, leaving its issues unaddressed and invisible to the wider public. Participants in the study expressed that they neither trust nor rely on mainstream media for information about Balochista

The secondary data reinforces the above-cited perspective by showing that over two years, the content from the two largest TV channels in the country failed to adequately

cover the pressing issues of Balochistan. This glaring omission validates the opinions of primary informants who stated that mainstream media systematically excludes Balochistan from its narrative, effectively silencing the region on national and international platforms.

The primary and secondary methods align and support each other through a process of triangulation, reinforcing the reliability and depth of the findings.

The primary data, derived from participant perspectives, offers firsthand insights into the lived realities of media manipulation and the socio-political marginalization of the Baloch population. Participants consistently emphasized issues such as engineered media framing, ethnic bias, neglect of human rights violations, and the military's control over natural resources, which formed the foundation of the study's key observations.

Likewise, the secondary data, through content analysis of 68 video stories, complements and corroborates these primary findings. For instance, the overwhelming focus on military narratives and the neglect of socio-economic and human rights issues in mainstream media aligns closely with participant accounts of state-controlled media framing. Similarly, the selective coverage practices and promotion of state-driven agendas in secondary data reinforce participants' observations of biased reporting and marginalization of Baloch voices.

Moreover, the triangulated analysis underscores a grim reality: the Pakistani mainstream media fails to fulfil its democratic and watchdog roles concerning Balochistan's pressing issues. The combined findings reveal a media landscape heavily influenced by state narratives, suppressed dissent, and exclusion of marginalized voices, all compounded by the commercialization of journalism.

Together, the primary and secondary findings align to demonstrate that the blackout of Balochistan in mainstream media creates a severe knowledge gap, compelling the local population to seek alternative sources of information.

### **5.11 Conclusion**

The study clearly illustrates that the media's coverage of Balochistan adheres closely to the Authoritarian Theory of the Press, where the media does not act as an independent check on power but rather serves as a tool for reinforcing state control and promoting state agendas. The media's systematic neglect of Balochistan's socio-political struggles, including enforced disappearances, human rights violations, and extrajudicial killings, reflects the military's significant influence over the national narrative, shaping public perception to favour state interests.

A central theme in the findings is the media's role as a mouthpiece for state institutions, particularly the military, intelligence agencies, and political elites. These institutions manipulate media narratives to deflect attention from the state's exploitative practices and redirect blame toward Baloch tribal conflicts and resistance to modernization. The study reveals a clear pattern of censorship, self-censorship, and a pervasive fear among journalists to question the military's involvement in Balochistan. Journalists from Punjab, detached from the realities of Balochistan, frequently ignore or misrepresent the region's concerns, contributing to an entrenched media bias that further marginalizes the Baloch population.

Moreover, the regional concentration of media ownership in Punjab plays a critical role in shaping the media's selective coverage. This dominance ensures that issues of national importance, especially those affecting Balochistan, receive insufficient

attention. Business interests, political affiliations, and the financial ties of media owners to the state further skew coverage, reinforcing a narrative that serves the interests of the elite, particularly those in Punjab, while sidelining the grievances of the Baloch people.

The study also highlights the absence of courageous journalism, with journalists in Pakistan largely unwilling to challenge the state's narrative for fear of repercussions. The lack of independent, public-centric reporting reflects the authoritarian nature of the media system, where critical and alternative viewpoints are suppressed. The failure of the media to engage with human rights issues, provide coverage of trauma and conflict, and offer a platform for marginalized voices directly contributes to the media blackout surrounding Balochistan. This silence effectively isolates the region, leaving the public uninformed about the severity of the challenges faced by the Baloch people. The absence of ethical journalism principles, such as truth, fairness, and accountability, underscores the extent to which the media has become an instrument of the state. This manipulation of information perpetuates the marginalization of Balochistan, denies the Baloch people a voice in the national discourse, and prevents the broader public from fully understanding the complex socio-political issues of the region.

Informants in this study highlighted that the people of Balochistan have been denied essential democratic rights, such as the right to information, free expression, and the ability to challenge the state and its institutions over injustices. The Baloch people lack a platform where their voices can be heard, both within the country and globally. Mainstream media, instead of serving as a democratic forum, neglects the issues of the Baloch population, failing to uphold the democratic values necessary to ensure that all voices are heard and respected in a pluralistic society.

The portrayal of Balochistan as a prosperous and developed region, as seen in some mainstream media narratives, undermines journalistic ethics and democratic principles. The stark contrast between this narrative and the real conditions on the ground—where Balochistan remains underdeveloped and impoverished—undermines democratic values and perpetuates misinformation. These misleading portrayals, often categorized as stereotypes, misrepresent the marginalized group and reinforce false perceptions about the region's reality. Such practices contradict the media's duty to provide an accurate and balanced portrayal of all communities, especially those in need of representation and advocacy.

Media plays a vital role in fostering debate, enabling citizens to express their views and influence political decisions. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights supports the right of all individuals to express opposing opinions. In fragile states like Pakistan, the media should act as a forum for discussion, offering a space for meaningful dialogue and engagement with institutions. However, the media in Pakistan, influenced by state power, is unable to serve this role effectively. Whistleblowers and reports indicate that the media lacks the capacity to act as a democratic platform due to the authorities' interference, which stifles any attempt to hold them accountable. The mainstream media's role in Pakistan's coverage of Balochistan has been marked by a consistent failure to adhere to the core principles of ethical journalism.

From the underrepresentation of Baloch voices to the spread of misinformation and the failure to provide people-centric reporting, the media's coverage of Balochistan has largely served the interests of the state and military rather than the public. This ethical deficit not only undermines the role of the media in fostering democracy and social justice but also contributes to the deepening marginalization of Balochistan and

its people. The media's reluctance to challenge the status quo, expose human rights abuses, and provide a platform for Baloch voices has perpetuated the injustices faced by the people of Balochistan and hindered the possibility of meaningful dialogue and reconciliation. The need for ethical, inclusive, and people-centred journalism in Balochistan has never been more urgent.

This research emphasizes the gap between democratic principles and the reality of media practices in Pakistan, which have significant implications for the Baloch people's rights. The failure of the mainstream media to uphold its democratic responsibility to report the issues of the Baloch people and to give them a voice in the national discourse reflects broader issues of constitutional inequality and state dominance over media narratives. A truly democratic media system should act as a counterbalance to the powers that be, holding those in authority accountable for their actions, especially in relation to marginalized groups. However, the current state of media in Pakistan, under the influence of the military and political elites, fails to achieve this, denying the Baloch people the opportunity to assert their constitutional rights and participate in a fair and democratic society.

The weakening of democratic institutions, including judiciary, contributes to the failure of the media to fulfil its democratic duties. In Pakistan, the failure of democracy and the rule of law leaves the media compromised, unable to provide citizens with the information and debate necessary to hold those in power accountable. This further marginalizes the Baloch population, denying them a voice in both national and international discussions, thus eroding the democratic fabric of the country.

The news sources in Balochistan reveal a unique and complex media landscape, where traditional methods of communication, such as Haal Ehwaal (people-to-people interaction), remain central despite the growing influence of digital platforms. This

deep-seated practice reflects the community's trust in personal, face-to-face exchanges for accurate and reliable information, particularly regarding sensitive regional issues. While digital tools have expanded the reach and speed of information, they have not replaced the culturally ingrained tradition of direct communication. Local newspapers, such as *Daily Azadi* and *Daily Intikhab*, further complement this informal network, providing news more closely aligned with the local population's experiences.

In conclusion, the findings of this study emphasize the profound challenges that the people of Balochistan face due to the severe media blackout and the systemic marginalization within Pakistan. The lack of media coverage and representation has led to the invisibility of the Baloch population on the global stage, preventing international awareness and action regarding their human rights violations. The absence of a robust journalistic presence in the region has not only resulted in the continued neglect of the Baloch people's issues but has also severely impacted the development of independent journalism in Balochistan. Journalists who attempt to address these issues face constant threats, violence, and persecution, further silencing crucial local narratives.

This lack of media attention has created a profound sense of frustration, alienation, and resistance among the Baloch people. With their voices absent from mainstream media outlets, the gap between the state and the population has widened, exacerbating political instability and social division. The media's inability to act as a bridge between the marginalized Baloch population and the central government has contributed to growing dissatisfaction, which is particularly evident among the youth, who increasingly resort to violent forms of protest. Additionally, the mistrust of mainstream media by the people of Balochistan has only deepened divisions within the nation, weakening national cohesion and undermining the principles of democracy and unity.

Furthermore, the failure of law enforcement and the judicial system to protect journalists and address crimes against them has further eroded confidence in both the media and the state. The impunity surrounding the attacks on journalists in the region highlights the inability of the Pakistani government and media institutions to safeguard freedom of expression and uphold press freedom. This failure has left Balochistan without a platform for meaningful discourse, and the critical issues facing the region remain largely unaddressed.

However, despite the significant obstacles, the study also highlights a positive trend in the form of increased political activism and resistance within Balochistan. The rise of social media and local grassroots movements has provided a new avenue for the Baloch population to voice their concerns, challenge the dominant narratives, and expose human rights abuses. This form of activism, while fraught with risks, demonstrates the resilience of the Baloch people and their determination to fight for their rights. Yet, the situation remains dire, with journalists continuing to face threats and violence in their pursuit of truth and justice.

Ultimately, this study calls for urgent attention to the plight of Balochistan, emphasizing the need for independent, inclusive journalism that upholds the democratic principles of transparency, accountability, and free expression. As media plays a crucial role in shaping public discourse and fostering social cohesion, it is essential that the media in Pakistan—and globally—take responsibility for addressing the injustices faced by the Baloch people. Only through a concerted effort to promote media freedom, protect journalists, and ensure equitable representation can the media begin to fulfil its true democratic role in Pakistan.

## **5.12 Contribution of the Study**

This study provides substantial theoretical, practical and methodological contributions to several key academic and non-academic fields. The details are given below:

### **5.12.1 Theoretical Contributions**

One of the main contributions of this study is that it offers a critical examination of the Authoritarian Theory of the Press within the context of Pakistan, particularly focusing on Balochistan. While the authoritarian theory traditionally describes how media serves the state to control narratives, this study extends it by showcasing how the military and state elites manipulate media discourse to marginalize an entire ethnic group and suppress public discussion of human rights violations. It elaborates on how this theory operates in conflict zones, where the media not only serves as a tool for state propaganda but also silences voices of dissent and marginalized communities.

The findings significantly enhance theories of media in conflict regions by adding empirical data about how media in Pakistan is used to suppress information about the realities in Balochistan. The study expands on how media systems in authoritarian regimes are actively complicit in reinforcing power structures, and how this relationship exacerbates political and social divides. By examining media neglect and misrepresentation in Balochistan, the research contributes to the understanding of media's role in reinforcing or challenging dominant state narratives in conflict-affected regions, which is critical for scholars of media and conflict.

The study enriches representation theories, particularly in media studies, by providing new insights into how media bias and the lack of representation of marginalized groups (like the Baloch) create a distorted public perception. It deepens our understanding of how the media can perpetuate stereotypes and misrepresentations, and how these false portrayals, such as depicting Balochistan as a prosperous region despite its dire

conditions, work to reinforce the state's control. The research highlights the disconnect between media portrayals and the lived realities of marginalized communities, showing how biased media reporting can entrench social inequalities.

The study also advances theories on ethical journalism in authoritarian settings. It examines the lack of ethical principles in Pakistan's media, particularly regarding issues like truth, fairness, and accountability. By detailing how journalists engage in self-censorship and avoid covering critical issues in Balochistan, the study provides a theoretical basis for understanding how journalistic ethics are compromised in oppressive political climates, and the consequences of such compromises on the overall functioning of democracy.

The study contributes to discussions of the democratic deficit in media systems in authoritarian regimes. It offers a detailed theoretical analysis of how media systems, rather than acting as a counterbalance to the power of the state, actively reinforce state narratives and undermine democratic principles. This has significant implications for understanding how media failures in terms of representation, inclusivity, and human rights advocacy contribute to broader societal and political issues, particularly in fragile democracies.

In media studies, it adds a nuanced understanding of how media systems in authoritarian contexts (specifically Pakistan) can function as instruments of state power rather than independent entities that hold authority accountable. The study extends existing literature on media and democracy, media bias, censorship, and the role of the press in conflict zones by exploring how media neglects or misrepresents marginalized groups like the Baloch.

In political science, the research provides insights into the interplay between state power, media systems, and the control over national narratives, especially in regions

facing socio-political unrest. The study's application of the Authoritarian Theory of the Press also enriches scholarly discussions on media's role in reinforcing political agendas and undermining democratic norms in fragile states. The findings are valuable for understanding the state-media relationship in authoritarian regimes and offer a comparative framework for analysing media practices in other conflict-prone regions. For human rights scholars, the study provides critical insights into how media inaction contributes to the continued violation of human rights in Balochistan, and it underscores the need for ethical journalism that highlights issues of justice, equity, and accountability. The research contributes to the field by showing how media can either perpetuate or challenge the status quo when it comes to addressing human rights abuses.

Additionally, this research offers valuable knowledge for sociologists, particularly those studying marginalization, ethnic conflict, and media representation. It enriches theoretical discussions on how media can shape perceptions and public opinion, and how the lack of media representation can exacerbate social and political tensions, leading to increased alienation and resistance.

### **5.12.2 Practical Contribution**

One of the key practical contributions of this study is its ability to inform journalists working in politically sensitive or conflict-prone areas about the challenges they face in reporting truthfully and independently. Journalists operating in Balochistan, for instance, are often under immense pressure from the military and political elites, and the study provides a detailed look at the obstacles they face, such as threats of violence, censorship, and persecution. The findings advocate for the protection of journalists' rights and offer recommendations for building resilience in journalism through

training programs, advocacy, and protection mechanisms. It highlights the need for journalists to foster independent reporting, even when state authorities seek to control or manipulate the narrative.

The research emphasizes the need for ethical journalism and underscores the importance of independent media. It provides practical recommendations for media organizations in Pakistan, particularly those based in Punjab, to challenge their ties to the state and business interests that influence their editorial independence. By advocating for people-centred reporting that highlights marginalized voices—such as the Baloch—the study calls on media organizations to resist the state’s influence and take responsibility for promoting truthful, balanced, and accountable journalism. It also highlights how media owners and journalists must collaborate to build a more inclusive and diverse media landscape that accurately represents all communities, particularly those living under state repression.

For policymakers and the Pakistani government, this study provides critical policy recommendations for media reforms. It suggests that policies should focus on creating an environment that fosters media freedom, reduces censorship, and promotes journalistic integrity. It calls for the establishment of independent oversight bodies to ensure that media organizations are held accountable for fair representation, particularly of marginalized groups like the Baloch. The study also advocates for the protection of journalists from violence, intimidation, and state persecution, ensuring that they are free to investigate and report without fear of retaliation.

The study also highlights the importance of supporting local media outlets, such as Daily Azadi and Daily Intikhab, that have the potential to provide more accurate and context-specific reporting on Balochistan. The findings advocate for capacity-building in local journalism, encouraging the development of regional networks that can serve

as a counterpoint to the state-controlled national media. The study also suggests that these local media outlets can play a crucial role in connecting the Baloch community with the broader Pakistani public, thus fostering national dialogue and understanding. Further, the findings offer practical insights for Baloch political leaders and activists, urging them to capitalize on alternative media and social media platforms to mobilize support for Balochistan's causes. The study provides evidence of the impact of social media activism, which can be used to counter the mainstream media narrative that silences Baloch voices. The findings suggest that a more inclusive approach to media representation and advocacy can help create greater political momentum for Balochistan's autonomy and rights, as well as increase international solidarity.

For students in the fields of media studies, political science, communication, and journalism, this thesis provides a valuable case study on the intersection of media, power, and society. It highlights the challenges faced by journalists in politically repressive environments and offers practical examples of how media can serve as both a tool of oppression and a space for resistance. Students will find the research useful for understanding the dynamics of media in conflict zones, the ethical responsibilities of journalists, and the role of media in shaping democratic discourse.

For researchers in the domains of media studies, political communication, and human rights, this thesis presents a comprehensive analysis of the relationship between state control, media practices, and the marginalization of ethnic groups. It provides empirical data and theoretical insights that can guide further research on authoritarian media systems, the role of journalism in conflict regions, and the political economy of media. Researchers can build upon this study by exploring other marginalized regions or examining the evolving role of digital media and grassroots movements in challenging state narratives.

On the international level, the study provides a compelling call for global actors, including international media organizations, human rights groups, and diplomatic bodies, to take a more active role in highlighting the Balochistan crisis. It encourages global platforms to engage in media advocacy and use international pressure to demand greater press freedom, media diversity, and human rights protection in Pakistan. The study's findings serve as a foundation for global media to pay more attention to the underreported issues in Balochistan and help bring global attention to the human rights violations that the region continues to face.

This thesis provides valuable lessons for media organizations both within Pakistan and internationally. It stresses the importance of ethical journalism and the need to prioritize people-centric reporting, especially in regions like Balochistan, where the state's agenda often dominates the media narrative. The research highlights the consequences of media complicity in promoting misinformation and perpetuating social divides. It calls on media organizations to uphold democratic values, provide accurate reporting, and create space for marginalized voices in their coverage.

For policymakers and the government of Pakistan, this research offers a critical lens through which to assess the role of media in fostering social cohesion and political stability. It highlights how state control over media coverage exacerbates ethnic and political tensions, particularly in Balochistan. The study can inform policies that aim to promote media independence, freedom of expression, and accountability in the media sector. It also advocates for inclusive policies that address the grievances of marginalized communities like the Baloch, particularly in relation to economic development, human rights protection, and political participation.

For leaders from Balochistan, this thesis underscores the vital need for stronger advocacy for Balochistan's socio-political struggles in national and international

media. The study highlights how media neglect has contributed to the region's invisibility on the global stage and calls for proactive efforts to ensure that the voices of the Baloch people are amplified in public discourse. The research provides valuable insights into how local political leaders can collaborate with civil society organizations and media outlets to highlight the injustices faced by the Baloch people.

For journalists and editors, this study serves as a wake-up call about the dangers of censorship, self-censorship, and the need for journalistic integrity, especially in conflict zones. The findings emphasize the ethical duty of journalists to question state narratives, investigate human rights abuses, and ensure that marginalized voices, particularly from regions like Balochistan, are heard. It calls for greater editorial independence and the need for media organizations to support courageous journalism, even in the face of threats and violence.

For media owners, this study emphasizes the influence of ownership concentration on media coverage and how economic and political affiliations can skew reporting, especially when it comes to sensitive issues like Balochistan. The findings challenge media owners to reconsider their corporate and political interests and prioritize ethical journalism over profit or political agendas. For politicians, the thesis provides insights into the role of the media in shaping public perception of political issues, especially those concerning marginalized regions. It calls on politicians to ensure transparent, inclusive, and people-centred media policies that promote democratic discourse, protect journalistic freedoms, and encourage the representation of diverse voices.

For government bodies, this research offers a roadmap for reforming media practices to ensure greater accountability, transparency, and inclusiveness in reporting. The study highlights the imperative for media reforms that protect journalists and promote ethical practices that serve the public interest. For NGOs, the findings provide valuable

insights into how media representation impacts human rights advocacy and social justice efforts. NGOs working in the region can use the study to advocate for greater media freedom and support efforts to highlight human rights abuses in Balochistan, ensuring that international bodies remain engaged with the issues facing the Baloch people.

In summary, this thesis makes significant contributions across various domains, providing valuable insights into the intersection of media, politics, and social justice, while offering practical recommendations to address the systemic issues affecting both Balochistan and Pakistan's broader media landscape.

### **5.12.3 Methodological Contributions**

This study offers a distinct methodological contribution by innovatively applying and combining qualitative research methods to examine media representation in a politically complex and under-researched context, Balochistan, Pakistan. The research advances methodological practices in several ways.

For instance, the study applies data triangulation in a novel manner by integrating in-depth interviews (primary data) with Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) of media content (secondary data) to examine media portrayals of marginalized communities. While triangulation is a well-established strategy in qualitative research, its application in this study is significant due to combining personal narratives with institutional media outputs in a high-conflict, politically sensitive environment. This dual-lens approach enhances not only credibility but also interpretive depth, contributing to the methodological literature on triangulation in conflict-affected contexts.

Researching media in Pakistan, particularly on issues related to Balochistan, poses unique challenges due to political sensitivities, censorship, and limited access. This

study demonstrates how qualitative research tools, especially interviews with key informants and interpretive analysis of publicly available content, can be used to navigate methodological and ethical challenges in closed or restricted media environments. It thus offers a model for conducting ethical, feasible, and impactful research in politically constrained settings, filling a gap in the methodological guidance available for such contexts.

By employing Qualitative Content Analysis on digital news archives (video stories from YouTube feeds of mainstream TV channels), the research introduces a flexible, scalable way of examining audiovisual content in longitudinal media studies. It illustrates how publicly accessible online media content can serve as a robust secondary data source, and how qualitative methods can adapt to digital media formats without compromising analytic depth.

Although commonly used in quantitative content analysis, applying Holsti's method to assess intercoder reliability (with a notably high agreement score of 97.06%) adds rigor to the qualitative coding process. This demonstrates that reliability checks are possible and valuable in qualitative research, especially when working with multiple coders in media studies. It contributes to the growing methodological discourse on quality assurance in qualitative data analysis.

This study showcases how thematic convergence across interview data and media content analysis can produce multi-dimensional insights. It encourages scholars to look beyond thematic coding as a linear process and instead approach it as a dialogical engagement between data types, offering an interpretive framework for cross-validating qualitative findings.

In summary, this research contributes methodologically by offering a practical, adaptable model for conducting rigorous qualitative inquiry in politically sensitive

media environments through triangulation, digital content analysis, and systematic coding reliability checks. It thus extends both the tools and strategies available to scholars working in similar complex or constrained research contexts.

### **5.13 Limitations of the Study**

This study has several limitations that affected its scope and execution. These limitations are related to the sample size, methodology, research framework, access to resources, and the researcher's expertise.

The study conducted 17 in-depth interviews with key informants, representing a sample of the broader population of Balochistan. While scholars like Creswell (2018) and Patton (2015) suggest that 5 to 20 in-depth interviews are adequate for qualitative research, concerns may still arise regarding the limitations of this sample size. Such limitations could potentially impact the study's capacity to fully capture and represent the diversity of perspectives within the Baloch population.

The study primarily used open-ended questions, which allowed participants to express their views in detail. However, there were limitations in terms of geographical access and the availability of participants, which restricted the variety of voices captured in the study. The researcher ensured that participants had enough time and space to understand the research purpose, but the limitation of the sample size may have impacted the depth and breadth of the findings.

While Balochistan has numerous human rights concerns, these issues often remain hidden from the global journalistic and academic discourse. There is a lack of prior research on the trust and distrust of media in Balochistan, as well as the role of journalists in addressing the media blackout and human rights violations in the region.

Balochistan's media landscape is underdeveloped, and research on media in the region, especially in the fields of journalism and human rights, is scarce. Universities in Balochistan lack robust research departments, especially in media and journalism, and have not adequately contributed to addressing these critical issues. This limitation underscores the need for further academic exploration of the region's media practices and human rights violations.

The study relied on self-reported data from qualitative interviews. While this data was collected carefully and presented in the participants' own words, there could be concerns about the authenticity of the responses, potential exaggeration, and the verification of the information provided. This limitation is common in qualitative research, and while the researcher made every effort to capture participants' views accurately, these issues may affect the reliability of some findings.

While the researcher has significant experience in the media industry, particularly in television production, he was relatively new to the academic research field. The researcher lacked prior experience in conducting academic research and writing scientific papers, which could have influenced the structure, writing, and presentation of the research findings. This inexperience in academic writing and research methodology may have impacted on the rigor and sophistication of the research process.

COVID-19 posed an additional challenge in collecting secondary data, as offices and newsrooms were either closed or operating at a reduced capacity. The researcher faced significant delays in accessing secondary data from news outlets like Geo TV and ARY News. Due to restrictions on direct access, the secondary data was collected primarily through YouTube channels of these television channels. This method of data collection may raise questions about the authenticity and completeness of the data, as

online platforms may not fully reflect the original broadcast content. Additionally, this approach may introduce ambiguities in the data and limit the depth of analysis, particularly when compared to direct access to newsroom archives or original broadcasts. The disruption in access to critical secondary resources due to the pandemic further exacerbated the research limitations.

In conclusion, while the study offers significant insights into the media practices and human rights issues in Balochistan, the limitations—such as the sample size, methodological constraints, lack of prior research, the use of YouTube as a secondary data source, and external disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic—may have impacted the depth of the findings and the overall scope of the research. Despite these challenges, the study offers valuable contributions to the academic discourse on media, politics, and human rights in conflict zones, particularly in Balochistan.

#### **5.14 Connection of Findings with Previous Studies**

The study findings of this thesis underscore the pervasive marginalization of Balochistan in Pakistan's most popular television channels, aligning with existing literature that highlights systemic biases and neglect by the media. Researchers like Masood and Mir (2023) have identified Balochistan as an "information blackhole," a finding this research corroborates by revealing the limited and distorted coverage of human rights violations in the region. This aligns with Chaudhary's (2022) observations of selective storytelling in the media, which excludes critical issues like enforced disappearances and resource exploitation.

The findings of this thesis also extend the arguments by Shirazi (2022) and HRCP (2023), who documented the exclusion of Baloch women and economic issues in mainstream narratives. By highlighting the role of movements like the Baloch Yakjehti

Committee and activists like Dr. Mahrang Baloch, this study sheds light on grassroots resistance and gendered perspectives, filling a gap in the literature where women's activism is largely overlooked (Malhotra, 2024).

The findings resonate with Arif's (2010) critique of media ownership and dominance by Punjabi elites, revealing how these dynamics perpetuate a narrative that favours state agendas while suppressing Baloch voices. This contributes to Braun's (2019) concept of "post-truth," where selective omissions manipulate public perception, a theme central to this study's analysis of state-controlled narratives.

The findings of this thesis further confirm and elaborates on the arguments of Kukreja (2020) and Chandrasekhar (2017) regarding the role of socio-economic disparities and political disenfranchisement in fuelling insurgencies between the Baloch people, and Pakistani state. By analysing the interplay between media coverage and the insurgency, this thesis provides a nuanced understanding of how media bias exacerbates alienation among the Baloch people.

Finally, this study contributes new insights into the impact of social media as an alternative platform for Baloch activism. Unlike previous research that predominantly focused on traditional media, the findings of this thesis explore the role of digital platforms in amplifying marginalized voices, offering a pathway to counter the "media apartheid" identified by Sarwar et al. (2022). This linkage demonstrates how this thesis both builds upon and adds to the body of knowledge on Balochistan, reinforcing the critical role of unbiased media in addressing regional grievances and fostering inclusivity.

### 5.15 Suggestions for Future Research and Recommendations

This study emphasizes the need for further research to explore critical aspects of media representation, advocacy, and resistance in Balochistan. Future studies could investigate the role of alternative media channels, such as social media and grassroots communication networks, in amplifying marginalized voices. This includes examining how digital platforms are employed for advocacy and resistance despite state censorship and repression. A particularly striking example is the rise of Dr. Mahrang Baloch, who has organized significant public gatherings, rallies, and protests against injustices in Balochistan.

Dr Mahrang Baloch's global fame and influence have largely been facilitated by social media, which has enabled her to gain recognition from international human rights organizations and participate in debates on human rights issues. The *Times Magazine* has even included her among the 100 most influential women in the world. However, mainstream media in Pakistan has often ignored such figures and their movements. Future research should investigate this neglect by posing questions such as: Who is Dr. Mahrang Baloch? What news sources have audiences used to learn about her?

Such research would help clarify whether informants relied on social media or other channels for information. Despite state-led propaganda and attempts to discredit her as "anti-state" through mainstream media, as well as government-imposed internet shutdowns during her events, Dr. Mahrang Baloch has emerged as a prominent young leader in Balochistan. Another vital avenue for research is the influence of regional media ownership, particularly the dominance of Punjab-based outlets, on the coverage of Balochistan. Comparative analyses between regional and national media coverage could reveal structural biases and disparities in representation.

Additionally, gaps in journalistic ethics and training warrant closer examination, particularly their impact on reporting marginalized issues. Research should explore how ethical journalism can be encouraged in politically sensitive contexts like Balochistan. The influence of military and state institutions on media narratives, especially in conflict zones, also requires in-depth analysis to identify mechanisms of control and strategies to counter such influence.

Studies could explore the public perception of media coverage on Balochistan, assessing how biases in reporting shape national and international opinions. Research could also evaluate the effectiveness of public awareness campaigns in addressing these biases. Furthermore, the safety and security of journalists reporting on Balochistan merit investigation, focusing on threats, violence, and self-censorship. Recommendations from such studies could address improved safety measures and international support systems for journalists working in conflict zones. The potential role of media in conflict resolution and fostering dialogue between the Baloch population and the central government is another promising area for research. Case studies of successful conflict resolution through media in other regions could inform strategies applicable to Balochistan. Research on gendered perspectives in reporting is also essential, particularly in exploring the intersection of gender, ethnicity, and marginalization to ensure more inclusive narratives.

Comparative studies with other marginalized regions globally could provide valuable insights into state influence over media narratives and strategies to overcome media blackouts. Longitudinal studies tracking the evolution of media coverage of Balochistan over time, in response to political changes, social movements, or

international pressures, would also contribute significantly to understanding the dynamics of media and conflict in the region.

This study recommends a series of measures to address the critical challenges of media representation, journalism practices, and press freedom in Balochistan. It underscores the need to establish and support independent media outlets dedicated to ethical, people-centered journalism that amplifies the voices of marginalized communities, especially the Baloch population.

The study emphasizes that mainstream news media in Pakistan must avoid the pitfalls of yellow journalism, prioritizing ethical standards over business interests, personal gains, or the flattery of state institutions and ruling elites. Instead, media outlets should focus on public-centric issues, hold state institutions accountable, and critically examine the actions of ruling elites. Islamabad-based journalists, in particular, must demonstrate bold courage in reporting human rights violations in Balochistan. They are urged to visit the families of Baloch missing persons, amplify their voices, report on the conflict in Balochistan, and accurately portray the realities on the ground.

To bring global attention to these issues, the study calls on international media watchdogs and human rights organizations to monitor and report on violations of press freedom in Balochistan. It also advocates for policy-level interventions to promote media pluralism, reduce state control over narratives, and ensure equitable representation of all regions in national discourse. These steps are essential to fostering an inclusive and democratic media landscape that upholds justice, equity, and representation for the Baloch people.

The study highlights the transformative potential of social media as a tool to bypass traditional media restrictions, amplify marginalized voices, and challenge state-controlled narratives. It also calls on mainstream media to initiate meaningful debates on conflict resolution between the state of Pakistan and the Baloch people, providing a platform for dialogue and understanding.

Moreover, the study emphasizes the need for diversity, equity, and inclusion in mainstream media. Television channels and media organizations must hire Baloch producers, reporters, editors, and other staff to reflect the region's diversity. Journalist associations should advocate for the rights of local journalists in Balochistan, giving them a platform to voice their concerns and ensuring their inclusion in key positions within Islamabad-based journalism organizations.

Additionally, the study calls for comprehensive training programs for journalists that emphasize conflict-sensitive reporting, ethical practices, and the use of digital tools to overcome censorship. It also stresses the importance of robust legal frameworks to protect journalists and ensure accountability for crimes against media professionals. Lastly, fostering collaboration between local and national media organizations is recommended to bridge gaps in understanding and improve coverage of Balochistan's socio-political realities.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix One (1): Question Guides/Outlines

Below are the Question Guides and outlines for the In-Depth interviews:

#### **Part 1: Background of the Informants**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Designation: \_\_\_\_\_

Nature of job: \_\_\_\_\_

Duration of affiliation with the field: \_\_\_\_\_

Affiliation with Organization/Party/Industry: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Part 2: The Role of mainstream media of Pakistan in Balochistan under Journalism Ethics.**

1. What news sources do you usually use for getting news about Balochistan?
2. How do you comment on the role of mainstream media of Pakistan in terms of highlighting the pressing issues of the people of Balochistan?
3. What issues of Balochistan are not usually covered by the mainstream media of Pakistan?
4. What are the interests of media owners and journalists in Pakistan?

#### **Part-3: Social Responsibility and Democratic Role of the mainstream media of Pakistan in Balochistan.**

1. How mainstream media of Pakistan follow Journalism Ethics, for example adopting; Impartiality, Objectivity, Balance and Fairness, Decency and Humanity while reporting the issues of Balochistan?
2. Can you explain how the mainstream media of Pakistan make the state institutions accountable in terms of Balochistan issues?
3. How do you comment the Democratic Role of the mainstream media of Pakistan on reporting Balochistan?

#### **Part 4: Impacts of mainstream media of Pakistan in Balochistan**

1. How do you comment on the impacts of the mainstream media of Pakistan on the Baloch population in terms of addressing or ignoring issues of Balochistan?

#### **Part 5: How the Local, International Media and Social Media report in Balochistan?**

5. How do local newspapers report the issues of Balochistan?
6. How do international media report the issues of Balochistan?
7. How do social media report the issues of Balochistan?



## Appendix Two (2): Background and justification of Informants

No.	Background/ Profession	Code	No of Informants	Details and justifications
01	<b>Journalists and News Editors</b>	JE	06	Journalists and editors serve as influential voices in the media and journalism industry, playing a crucial role in shaping public narratives, particularly on issues concerning Balochistan. This study engaged prominent journalists and editors with extensive knowledge of the region. Among the six participants, two were from the Quetta Press Club in Balochistan, two from the Karachi Press Club in Sindh, one from Sweden, and one from the USA. These participants represented diverse ethnicities, including Baloch, Sindhi, Pashtun, and Punjabi, offering a broad spectrum of perspectives.
02.	<b>Human Rights Activists</b>	HR	02	Human rights defenders and activists are valuable sources of qualitative and in-depth data, as their expertise often stems from direct engagement with issues related to law, justice, and human rights. This study included two human rights experts from Balochistan with

extensive practical experience. One participant was of Baloch ethnicity, while the other was Hazara, ensuring representation of different voices from the region.

03 **Intellectuals and Writers** IW 02

Intellectuals and writers contribute significantly to public discourse by publishing books, articles, and opinion pieces that analyze societal and public issues. Their visionary insights and persuasive abilities have the potential to inspire societal change and guide communities toward constructive actions. This study incorporated the perspectives of two intellectuals and writers based in Quetta, representing Baloch and Pashtun ethnicities, to gain a nuanced understanding of Balochistan's sociopolitical landscape.

04 **Academics and Researchers** AR 02

Academics and researchers, particularly those from social sciences backgrounds, possess significant expertise and competencies in scholarly and investigative endeavors. Many actively contribute to research in



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journalism and media studies, producing publications that address issues related to Balochistan. For this study, the researcher invited two intellectuals—one from the University of Balochistan and the other from I.T. University Quetta—representing diverse ethnic backgrounds, with one being Pashtun and the other Punjabi.

05 **Media Owners** MO 02



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Media organizations play a critical role in shaping public discourse, as their editorial teams establish policies that influence whether news coverage prioritizes commercial interests or accurately represents public perspectives. To explore this dynamic, the researcher conducted interviews with two media officials: one based in Karachi and the other in Turbat, Kech, Balochistan. This approach ensured a balanced understanding of regional and national media practices.

06 **Politicians and Parliamentarians** PP 03

Politicians and parliamentarians play a pivotal role in the political landscape as they form the

backbone of governance. They engage in politics, become part of the ruling elite, represent the public, and advocate for the rights of the people and their land through public forums, parliamentary processes, and media platforms. This study incorporated the perspectives of three politicians and parliamentarians (PPs) from Balochistan, representing diverse political affiliations and ethnic backgrounds, including Baloch, Pashtun, and Punjabi, to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the region's political dynamics.



**Total**

**17**

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### Appendix Three (3): Letter of Inviting Informants for in-depth interviews

August 2, 2021

Mr/Mrs.....  
.....  
.....

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am a PhD student at the School of Multimedia Technology and Communication (SMMTC), Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM), and undertaking research entitled, '**Investigating Barriers, Constraints, and Biases in Pakistani Mainstream Media: Balochistan Reporting**', under the supervision of Associate Professor Dr. Awan Binti Ismail.

Currently, I am in the data collection stage and would like to collect the data in shape of the in-depth interviews by interacting with experts from diverse backgrounds, including politicians, senior journalists, news editors, columnists, intellectuals, academics, human rights activists, TV anchor-persons and parliamentarians, that own thoughtful experience on the phenomenon under study.

Since you are one of the most important personalities who hold a grip and long years of experience in Balochistan; I, therefore, humbly invite you to take part in this PhD research thesis. Please find attached the consent letter and other university documents for further persuasion.

I am looking forward that my request would merit your positive response.

Thank you very much!

Sincerely,

**JAN MUHAMMAD**  
P +92 333 3583 005  
Email: [jankhoso@yahoo.com](mailto:jankhoso@yahoo.com)

## **Appendix Four (4): Informant's Consent in taking part in the study**

Title of thesis: **Investigating Barriers, Constraints, and Biases in Pakistani Mainstream Media: *Balochistan Reporting***

Researcher: Jan Muhammad

Supervisor: Associate Professor Dr. Awan Binti Ismail

Subject: **Invitation and Consent to take part in a Qualitative Research**

You are invited to participate in a research study about the role of the mainstream media of Pakistan in addressing the issues of Balochistan and its people. We sense that journalism ethics teach journalists and news media outlets to be impartial and independent from power, authority, partisanship, personal interests, commercial revenues, and politics. Likewise, the Social Responsibility Theory of the Press emphasizes media organizations and journalists being responsible socially to deliver fair information to audiences from all sides until the public gets enough information. Meaning to say, the role of mass media has been to give an equal voice to all social groups without any discrimination. In this consequence, this research aims to investigate how the mainstream media of Pakistan and national-level journalists, fulfill the above-mentioned role and responsibilities under media ethics when it comes to reporting the issues of the people of Balochistan.

### **I. Your responsibilities as a participant**

I feel you are one of the influential personalities in Balochistan, particularly in your profession that could give a very important and unique opinion on the issue under study. I, therefore, would like to invite you to express how you analyze the role of mainstream media in Balochistan. The study will involve up to 20 informants/participants from diverse backgrounds, such as; senior journalists, politicians, human rights activists, news editors, TV anchor-persons, intellectuals, researchers, authors, and parliamentarians, that must have at least 15-year thoughtful experience on Balochistan.

Participation in the study will consist of one-on-one discussion, in which you will be asked general questions on the above-mentioned topic. The interview session will take about 30 to 40 minutes. With your permission, I will use an audio recorder to record the interview, so I don't have to make so many notes. This will make it easier to store the data and describe it in text form. I am here to follow your convenience in terms of scheduling, including location and time.

## **II. Your rights as a participant**

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may decide to leave the study at any time by communicating the reasons with me. Although, your participation in the study will not provide any personal benefit to you; however, this will give you a chance to tell your stories concerning mainstream media's role in Balochistan. The study findings will benefit students, researchers, academic institutions, government bodies, national and global organizations, politicians, and to society of Balochistan as a whole. The study results will help international planners and future leaders to make communication policies according to the scenarios. Meanwhile, the research findings will help to introduce a new horizon in the media landscapes of Pakistan and will give a new path for future media professionals throughout the world in general and with the society of Balochistan in particular.

Likewise, there are no known or anticipated risks, associated with your participation in this study. Your participation, and the data collected, will be confidential and anonymous. Your name will be assigned an ID code according to your profession that will be used as a public figure. Your information will be securely stored for a minimum of three years. Only the research team will have access to study data. Later on within three years, or until my Ph.D. is completed; research data will confidentially be destroyed.

## **III. For contact, comments or queries**

Since Balochistan is the site and portion of the population for this research study and the participants are the samples; therefore, the researcher has been sent for the collection of the data by the Awang Had Salleh Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Universiti Utara Malaysia. If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact the supervisor of this study to:

*Associate Professor Dr, Awan Binti Ismail, Senior Lecturer, School of Multimedia Technology and Communications (SMMTC), Universiti Utara Malaysia, Sintok, 06010, Kedah State, Malaysia. Tel: +604 928 4075 Fax: +604 928 4081 Email: [awan@uum.edu.my](mailto:awan@uum.edu.my)*

### **Agreement:**

The nature and purpose of this research have been sufficiently explained, and I agree to participate in this study.

Participant's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study.

Name of researcher: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of researcher: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix Five (5): Consent Letter for the Data Collection



AWANG HAD SALLEH  
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES  
UUM College of Arts and Sciences  
Universiti Utara Malaysia  
06010 UUM SINTOK  
KEDAH DARUL AMAN  
MALAYSIA



Tel: 604-928 5268/5269/5299  
Faks (Fax): 604-928 5297  
Laman Web (Web): <http://ahsgs.uum.edu.my>  
Emel : [ahsgsservices@uum.edu.my](mailto:ahsgsservices@uum.edu.my)

UUM/CAS/ AHSGS/902140  
March 10, 2019

### TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam

### DATA COLLECTION FOR PROJECT PAPER/ THESIS

This is to certify that **Mr. Jan Muhammad (matric number: 902140)** is a full-time graduate student in Doctor of Philosophy(Media Management) at UUM College of Arts and Sciences.

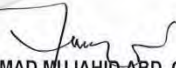
He needs to do his field study and data collection for his project paper/thesis in order to fulfill the partial requirements of his graduate studies.

We sincerely hope that your organization will be able to assist his in the data collection and the distribution of the questionnaires for his research.

Thank you.

"KEDAH AMAN MAKMUR – HARAPAN BERSAMA MAKMURKAN KEDAH"  
"KNOWLEDGE, VIRTUE, SERVICE"

Yours faithfully

  
**AHMAD MUJAHID ABD. GHANI**  
Senior Principal Assistant Registrar  
Awang Had Salleh Graduate School of Arts and Sciences  
UUM College of Arts and Sciences

Universiti Pengurusan Terkemuka  
The Eminent Management University



## Appendix Six (6): List of Video Stories/Contents for Content Analysis

No	TV Channel	Title and URLs	Release Date	Duration
1	Geo	Terrorists martyr 10 soldiers in Balochistan <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FkCdqlGHpDw">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FkCdqlGHpDw</a>	27.01.2022	31
02	ARY	10 soldiers' martyrdom in a attack by terrorists: ISPR <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MWK8nXcMhoU">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MWK8nXcMhoU</a>	27.01.2022	3:41
3	Geo	Young doctors strike <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xbYOvfHtHIY">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xbYOvfHtHIY</a>	29.01.2022	9:34
4	ARY	Four terrorists killed as security forces repulse attacks in Balochistan's Nushki, Panjgur <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4aYGcj8khQw1">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4aYGcj8khQw1</a>	02.02.2022	2:08
5	Geo	Security Situation in Balochistan <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rIGXqrsH5qI">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rIGXqrsH5qI</a>	03.02.2022	45:00
6	ARY	20 Terrorists Killed As Nushki, Panjgur Clearance Operation Ends: ISPR <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C1vwsa9Ecgw">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C1vwsa9Ecgw</a>	05.02.2022	3:14
7	ARY	Connection of Industrial Revolution in Pakistan with Balochistan attacks <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FqV4oe7zByg">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FqV4oe7zByg</a>	08.02.2022	6:07
8	ARY	Passionate statement of Panjgur Army soldier <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T2ZQMsLuF3I">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T2ZQMsLuF3I</a>	10.02.2022	26:30
9	ARY	Chief of Army Staff General Qamar Javed Bajwa Visited Panjgur, Balochistan <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HdYFoUjWz_Q">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HdYFoUjWz_Q</a>	12.02.2022	2:02
10	ARY	Security forces kill six terrorists in Balochistan's Buleda : ISPR <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sZiK2ElnxXU">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sZiK2ElnxXU</a>	16.02.2022	0:56
11	ARY	Operation on report of terrorists presence in Kohlu area of Balochistan <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M7kzuhXjRj0">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M7kzuhXjRj0</a>	21.02.2022	1:24
12	Geo	Soldier embraces martyrdom during clearance operation in Balochistan <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ByfheEZI0Rg">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ByfheEZI0Rg</a>	22.02.2022	4:08
13	Geo	Lack of health, medical facilities causing severe difficulties in Balochistan <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Zk9-RpUC_k">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Zk9-RpUC_k</a>	22.02.2022	10:24
14	ARY	Outlawed BLA Majeed Brigade's Member, Woman Arrested In Turbat <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vide4Yjh7uo">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vide4Yjh7uo</a>	18.05.2022	5:50
15	Geo	National hero Faisal Baloch makes an appearance at Geo Pakistan <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RyeHbvG3zqg">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RyeHbvG3zqg</a>	14.06.2022	7:50

16	Geo	The issue of missing persons is not being taken seriously <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GZ2fd3VeKuk">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GZ2fd3VeKuk</a>	05.07.2022	2:59
17	Geo	In the case of missing persons, who is oppressed and who is poor? <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bUvibi4Sob0">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bUvibi4Sob0</a>	06.07.2022	3:09
18	Geo	Balochistan govt forms judicial commission to probe Ziarat operation <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7dcUHisNSKA">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7dcUHisNSKA</a>	27.07.2022	0:59
19	Geo	Shouldn't the Chief Minister of Balochistan have visited the flood victims? <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bUvibi4Sob0">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bUvibi4Sob0</a>	01.08.2022	3:17
20	ARY	Helicopter crash near Sassi Punnu Shrine reported 2. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UCejezVJLH8">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UCejezVJLH8</a>	01.08.2022	9:28
21	ARY	Pakistani army helicopter crashed near Lasbela, Balochistan 6 martyred <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bi0nB3ULhgg">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bi0nB3ULhgg</a>	02.08.2022	5:53
22	Geo	Very sad incident in Balochistan, Pakistan Army helicopter crashed <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jUdIOfdJg4I">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jUdIOfdJg4I</a>	02.08.2022	1:18
23	Geo	Six Pakistan Army officials embraced martyrdom in Balochistan helicopter crash: ISPR <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Flq87sQQVw">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Flq87sQQVw</a>	02.08.2022	7:02
24	Geo	Impact of Negative campaign on social media on Balochistan incident <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CiaS-irZBzY">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CiaS-irZBzY</a>	06.08.2022	9:18
25	ARY	Flood disaster in Balochistan: Diseases in Children <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CiaS-irZBzY">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CiaS-irZBzY</a>	07.08.2022	6:2022
26	Geo	Faisal Baloch, a truck driver who risked his life to save many lives <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VeCU7zTZrss">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VeCU7zTZrss</a>	14.08.2022	3:58
27	Geo	Harnai balochistan situation update – ISPR <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XpgIQoazd4c">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XpgIQoazd4c</a>	14.08.2022	2:05
28	ARY	Two soldiers martyred, one injured in Balochistan terrorist attack <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OaTeQDn98QI">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OaTeQDn98QI</a>	14.08.2022	1:46
29	Geo	Most of the roads and bridges in Balochistan broke down quickly due to poor material <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mLnvqUhsZ5g">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mLnvqUhsZ5g</a>	06.09.2022	11:36
30	Geo	What was the role of Surinder Lake in saving Lasbela from further destruction in Balochistan? <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hJ_dypCAMA">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hJ_dypCAMA</a>	06.09.2022	3:38
31	Geo	Flood Affected Areas in Balochistan <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ppOOxIeT3pE">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ppOOxIeT3pE</a>	14.09.2022	36:02
32	ARY	COAS Asim Munir vows to make all-out efforts for Balochistan peace <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7hg76zM4clE">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7hg76zM4clE</a>	10.12.2022	0:49
33	ARY	Army captain, four soldiers martyred in Balochistan incident, ISPR <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NYFPHmAP3v0">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NYFPHmAP3v0</a>	25.12.2022	2:01

34	ARY	Balochistan IED blast: Martyred captain laid to rest <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mbta4Vlj0-A">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mbta4Vlj0-A</a>	26.12.2022	1:08
35	Geo	Balochistan - Big operation by security forces <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1zj4MTrUCpM">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1zj4MTrUCpM</a>	26.12.2022	2:47
36	ARY	Balochistan govt forms commission on missing persons <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rf4WFF6WDtQ">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rf4WFF6WDtQ</a>	30.12.2022	0:50
37	ARY	Who is Sarfaraz Bengalzai? - Big News <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gt7IfvqRUJc">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gt7IfvqRUJc</a>	14.01.2023	8:17
38	Geo	A unique area of Balochistan, neither electricity nor water shortage <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mywd-Gy9bUg">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mywd-Gy9bUg</a>	24.01.2023	6:41
39	Geo	Operation of security forces in Balochistan – ISPR <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PCIs04vWMm0">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PCIs04vWMm0</a>	10.02.2023	1:03
40	ARY	Security forces operation in Kohlu area of Balochistan, ISPR <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M7kzuhXjRj0">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M7kzuhXjRj0</a>	10.02.2023	0:46
41	ARY	Eight terrorists killed in Kech, Balochistan <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jFkf8-frffQ">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jFkf8-frffQ</a>	23.02.2023	1:20
42	Geo	Student of law got emotional – Worst condition of Balochistan, What is the hope? <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wf-z33qJsxY">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wf-z33qJsxY</a>	09.03.2023	6:25
43	Geo	Balochistan faces acute shortage of drinking water <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wXf8KZx-cUk3">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wXf8KZx-cUk3</a>	22.03.2023	2:12
44	ARY	Outlawed Baloch National Army founder apprehended in IBO: ISPR <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rop_9K5o6K4">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rop_9K5o6K4</a>	07.04.2023	06:01
45	ARY	India behind the terrorist activities of arrested Gulzar Imam alias 'Shambay' exposed <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8gT2Wb7o91A">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8gT2Wb7o91A</a>	08.04.2023	2:30
46	ARY	False and misleading propaganda on Baloch missing persons exposed <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qdzl_Mq_Z3c">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qdzl_Mq_Z3c</a>	20.04.2023	1:00
47	ARY	How was Gulzar Imam Shambay, main terrorist of banned organization, arrested <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z3sI2BAImQA">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z3sI2BAImQA</a>	23.05.2023	2:08
48	ARY	How terrorist Gulzar Imam Shanbe was arrested? <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vh9Huw-DqfE">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vh9Huw-DqfE</a>	24.05.2023	5:08
49	Geo	Gulzar Imam appeared before the media after his arrest <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HD5MnRXDMtc">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HD5MnRXDMtc</a>	24.05.2023	0: 58
50	Geo	Balochistan's problems can be resolved without violence: Ex-BNA commander <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B_teeQtIMMw">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B_teeQtIMMw</a>	24.05.2023	2:39
51	ARY	Indian journalist links with militant groups in Balochistan exposed <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CKPHWc6R6DU">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CKPHWc6R6DU</a>	02.06.2023	5:59
52	ARY	Balochistan ke barhty huwe masail <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9geq8b7pHyk">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9geq8b7pHyk</a>	28.06.2023	8:02
53	Geo	With Few Job Options, Balochistan Residents Turn To Smuggling <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aMCLDJ-ZHS8">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aMCLDJ-ZHS8</a>	02.07.2023	2:37
54	Geo	Two military personnel, including major, martyred in Balochistan attack: ISPR <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QemdprfzVA8">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QemdprfzVA8</a>	03.07.2023	0:40
55	ARY	Security Forces holds big operation in Balochistan's Khushab <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uj_nwhBxZCE">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uj_nwhBxZCE</a>	03.07.2023	1:00

56	ARY	Funeral Prayers offered of Balochistan Khushab' martyrs: ISPR <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jr83kPpN7rs">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jr83kPpN7rs</a>	03.07.2023	1:07
57	Geo	4 soldiers martyred, 5 injured in 'dastardly' Zhob attack: ISPR <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y0IAuOaCN5A">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y0IAuOaCN5A</a>	12.07.2023	1:13
58	Geo	Terrorist attack on Zhob Garrison in Balochistan, 4 soldiers martyred <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AtiWZ4Y7Hgk">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AtiWZ4Y7Hgk</a>	12.07.2023	0:42
59	Geo	Analysts' Opinion - What steps should be taken to establish peace in Balochistan? <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PeVNyGSw6oc">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PeVNyGSw6oc</a>	15.07.2023	5:48
60	ARY	I am the part of negotiation process and also support it, Gulzar Imam Shambay <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zVOT0NLANoc">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zVOT0NLANoc</a>	15.07.2023	4:40
61	Geo	Regime change in Pakistan would not bring any change in term of removing deprivation in Balochistan <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=82cFeNVSTKM">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=82cFeNVSTKM</a>	26.08.2023	4:01
62	ARY	CTD kills eight terrorists in Balochistan <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YwoqHOtlBHc">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YwoqHOtlBHc</a>	03.09.2023	0:35
63	ARY	14 soldiers martyred as terrorists ambush army vehicles in Balochistan <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a8luKEqciO4">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a8luKEqciO4</a>	03.11.2023	1:10
64	Geo	Terrorists active again in Balochistan, Caretaker government's blunt stance <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q_sFvifEtqo">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q_sFvifEtqo</a>	06.11.2023	7:17
65	Geo	Balochistan has three positions, but why is there still a sense of deprivation? <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z2aLCf4vOPo">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z2aLCf4vOPo</a>	02.12.2023	9:4
66	ARY	What is the biggest problem of Balochistan? <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WfCfSyBuXVA">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WfCfSyBuXVA</a>	03.12.2023	10:07
67	ARY	Banned Baloch group commander Bungulzai surrenders <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MiEf1FFoafg">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MiEf1FFoafg</a>	20.12.2023	3:43
68	ARY	I am the part of negotiation process and also support it, Gulzar Imam Shambay <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zVOT0NLANoc">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zVOT0NLANoc</a>	25.12.2023	4:40

## Appendix Seven (7): Coding Sheet for the Secondary Data (Content Analysis)

The coding sheet presents two years of data analyzing video content from two TV channels, spanning the period from January 1, 2022, to December 31, 2023. The researcher identified a total of 68 video materials available online from the YouTube channels of both TV networks.

- ARY News produced 35 video materials
- Geo TV News produced 33 video materials

Below is the sample of coding sheet:

Themes	Geo TV News	%	ARY News	%	Coder 1	Coder 2
<b>Enforced Disappearances</b>  <b>Keywords:</b>  <i>Missing Persons,</i>	2-stories related to this theme. Below are the titles:  1. The issue of missing persons is not being taken seriously  2. In the case of missing persons, who is oppressed and who is poor?	3.1	2-stories related to this theme. Below are the titles:  1. Balochistan govt forms commission on missing persons  2. False and misleading propaganda on Baloch missing persons exposed	2.9	Agree  Disagree  Agree	Agree  Disagree  Agree
<b>Human Rights</b>  <b>Keywords:</b>  <i>Right to Life and Liberty,</i>	Only 1-story related to this theme. Below is the title:  1. Student of law got emotional – Worst condition of Balochistan, what is the hope?	1.6	None	0	Agree	Agree
<b>Political</b>  <b>Keywords:</b>  <i>Dialogue and Negotiations</i>  <i>Conflict Resolution</i>	2-stories related to this theme. Below are the titles:  1. Balochistan 's problems can be resolved without violence: Ex-BNA commander	3.1	3-stories related to this theme. Below are the titles:  1. Who is Sarfaraz Bengalzai? - Big News  2. I am the part of negotiation process and	4.3	Agree  Agree	Agree  Agree

<i>Insurgency and instability,</i>	2. Analysts' Opinion - What steps should be taken to establish peace in Balochistan?		also support it, Gulzar Imam Shambay  3. What is the biggest problem of Balochistan?		<b>Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>
<b>Social Keywords:</b>  <i>Social Disruption and Inequality,</i>  <i>Marginalization,</i>  <i>Deprivation,</i>  <i>Social protection and recognition,</i>	10-stories related to this theme. Below are the titles:  1. Balochistan has three positions, but why is there still a sense of deprivation?  2. Kisi ke anay ya kisi ke janay se Balochistan ki Ehsaas Mehroomi nahi khatam hogi <b>(Regime change in Pakistan would not bring any change in term of removing deprivation in Balochistan)</b>  3. Balochistan faces acute shortage of drinking water  4. A unique area of Balochistan, neither electricity nor water shortage  5. (Flood Affected Areas in Balochistan ) Special show by Hamid Mir from Jaffarabad district of Balochistan  6. What was the role of Surinder Lake in saving Lasbela from further destruction in Balochistan  7. Most of the roads and bridges in Balochistan broke down quickly due to poor material  8. National hero Faisal Baloch makes an appearance at Geo Pakistan  9. Shouldn't the Chief Minister of	15.6	2-stories related to this theme. Below are the titles:  1. Balochistan ke barhty huwe masail (Problems of Balochistan are increasing)  2. Selab Say Balochistan Mein Tabah Kariyan, Bachun Mein Beemariyan Phelnay Lagin (Flood caused severe destruction in Balochistan. Diseases spread among children)	2.9	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>

	Balochistan have visited the flood victims?  10. Faisal Baloch, a truck driver who risked his life to save many lives				Agree	Agree
					Agree	Agree
<b>Economic Keywords:</b>  <i>Economic Exclusion and Disparities,</i>	Only 1-story related to this theme. Below is the title:  1. With Few Job Options, Balochistan Residents Turn to Smuggling	1.6	None	0	Disagree	Disagree
<b>Health Keywords:</b>  <i>Health inequality, Healthcare Crises,</i>	Only 1-story related to this theme. Below is the title:  1. Young doctors strike (in Balochistan )	1.6	Only 1-story related to this theme. Below is the title:  1. Lack of health, medical facilities causing severe difficulties in Balochistan	1.4	Agree	Agree
<b>Military Keywords:</b>  <i>Honouring Soldiers, Military Actions and Operations, Counterinsurgency Operations,</i>	12-stories related to this theme. Below are the titles: 1. Terrorists martyr 10 soldiers in Balochistan 2. Soldier embraces martyrdom during clearance operation in Balochistan 3. Balochistan govt forms judicial commission to probe Ziarat operation 4. Helicopter crash near Sassi Punnu Shrine reported 5. Very sad incident in Balochistan, Pakistan Army helicopter crashed 6. Six Pakistan Army officials embraced martyrdom in Balochistan	18.8	19-stories related to this theme. Below are the titles: 1. Balochistan Main Dehshat Gardon Ka Hamla,10 Jawan Shaheed : ISPR  <b>(10 military persons killed in a attack by militants in Balochistan)</b> 2. Four terrorists killed as security forces repulse attacks in Balochistan's Nushki, Panjgur 3. 20 Terrorists Killed as Nushki, Panjgur Clearance Operation Ends: ISPR 4. Passionate statement of Panjgur Army soldier 5. Chief of Army Staff General Qamar Javed Bajwa Visited Panjgur, Balochistan 6. Security forces kill six terrorists in	27.1	Agree to all.....	Agree to all.....

	<p>helicopter crash: ISPR</p> <p>7. Harnai Balochistan situation update – ISPR</p> <p>8. Balochistan - Big operation by security forces</p> <p>9. Operation of security forces in Balochistan – ISPR</p> <p>10. Two military personnel, including major, martyred in Balochistan attack: ISPR</p> <p>11. 4 soldiers martyred, 5 injured in 'dastardly' Zhob attack: ISPR</p> <p>12. Terrorist attack on Zhob Garrison in Balochistan, 4 soldiers martyred</p>		<p>Balochistan's Buleda : ISPR</p> <p>7. Operation on report of terrorists presence in Kohlu area of Balochistan</p> <p>8. elicopter crash near Sassi Punnu Shrine reported</p> <p>9. Pakistani army helicopter crashed near Lasbela, Balochistan 6 martyred</p> <p>10. Two soldiers martyred, one injured in Balochistan terrorist attack</p> <p>11. COAS Asim Munir vows to make all-out efforts for Balochistan peace</p> <p>12. Army captain, four soldiers martyred in Balochistan incident, ISPR</p> <p>13. Balochistan IED blast: Martyred captain laid to rest</p> <p>14. Security forces operation in Kohlu area of Balochistan, ISPR</p> <p>15. Eight terrorists killed in Kech, Balochistan</p> <p>16. Security Forces holds big operation in Balochistan's Khushab</p> <p>17. Funeral Prayers offered of Balochistan Khushab' martyrs: ISPR</p> <p>18. CTD kills eight terrorists in Balochistan</p> <p>19. 14 soldiers martyred as terrorists ambush army vehicles in Balochistan</p>			
<p><b>Security Keywords:</b></p> <p><i>Instability and Threats,</i></p>	<p>4-stories related to this theme. Below are the titles:</p> <p>1. Aaj Shahzeb Khanzada</p>	6.3	<p>8-stories related to this theme. Below are the titles:</p>	11.4	<p><b>Agree to all.....</b></p>	<p><b>Agree to all.....</b></p>

<p><i>Insurgency,</i></p> <p><i>National Security Threat,</i></p>	<p>Kay Sath  Security Situation in Balochistan</p> <p>2. Gulzar Imam appeared before the media after his arrest</p> <p>3. Terrorists active again in Balochistan, Caretaker government's blunt stance</p> <p>4. Impact of Negative campaign on social media on Balochistan incident</p>		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Connection of Industrial Revolution in Pakistan with Balochistan attacks</li> <li>2. Outlawed BLA Majeed Brigade's Member, Woman Arrested In Turbat</li> <li>3. Outlawed Baloch National Army founder apprehended in IBO: ISPR</li> <li>4. India behind the terrorist activities of arrested Gulzar Imam alias 'Shambay' exposed</li> <li>5. How was Gulzar Imam Shambay, main terrorist of banned organization, arrested?</li> <li>6. How terrorist Gulzar Imam Shanbe was arrested?</li> <li>7. Indian journalist links with militant groups in Balochistan exposed.</li> <li>8. Banned Baloch group commander Bungulzai surrenders.</li> </ol>			
<p><b>Total = 68</b></p>	<p><b>33 Geo TV News</b></p>		<p><b>35 ARY TV News</b></p>			

## Appendix Eight (8). Tone Analysis of Geo & ARY TV Coverage

After watching each story, the researcher developed the tone of video contents by analysing nature of the story, title, framing, and news statements or messages. Below is given the sample of tone analysis:

No	Themes	Geo TV News	ARY News
1.	<b>Enforced Disappearances</b>  <b>Keywords:</b>  <i>Missing Persons,</i>	<b>1. The issue of missing persons is not being taken seriously</b>  Analysis-keyword that reflects the theme of enforced disappearance is 'missing persons'.  <b>2. In the case of missing persons, who is oppressed and who is poor?</b>  Analysis-keyword that reflects the theme of enforced disappearance is 'missing persons'.	<b>1. Balochistan govt forms commission on missing persons</b>  Analysis-keyword that reflects the theme of enforced disappearance is 'missing persons'.  <b>2. False and misleading propaganda on Baloch missing persons exposed</b>  Analysis-keyword that reflects the theme of enforced disappearance is 'missing person'.
2.	<b>Human rights</b>  <b>Keywords:</b>  <i>Right to Life and Liberty</i>	<b>1. Student of law got emotional – Worst condition of Balochistan, what is the hope?</b>  Analysis-Right to life and liberty as a keyword suits the best with the theme of human rights in this title.	None
3.	<b>Political</b>  <b>Keywords:</b>  <i>Dialogue and Negotiations,</i>  <i>Conflict Resolution</i>  <i>Insurgency and instability,</i>	<b>1. Balochistan's problems can be resolved without violence: Ex-BNA commander</b>  Analysis-Word without violence reflects the keywords dialogues and negotiations  <b>2. Analysts' Opinion - What steps should be taken to establish peace in Balochistan?</b>  Analysis-Conflict resolution is the best keyword that suits with the political theme through which peace can be maintained.	<b>1. Who is Sarfaraz Bengalzai? - Big News</b>  Analysis-This title reflects the keyword insurgency and instability, which closely relates to the political theme.  <b>2. I am the part of negotiation process and also support it, Gulzar Imam Shambay</b>  Analysis-The word negotiation process reflects the keywords dialogues and negotiations in this title.  <b>3. What is the biggest problem of Balochistan?</b>  Analysis-Conflict and instability are the best keyword that reflects the political theme in this title.
4.	<b>Social</b>  <b>Keywords:</b>  <i>Social Disruption and Inequality,</i>	<b>1. Balochistan has three positions, but why is there still a sense of deprivation?</b>  Analysis-The keyword deprivation reflects the social theme in this title.	<b>1. Balochistan ke barhty huwe masail (Problems of Balochistan are increasing)</b>  Analysis-Merginalziation could be the best keyword for this title that reflects the theme.

<p><i>Marginalization</i> ,</p> <p><i>Deprivation,</i></p> <p><i>Social protection and recognition,</i></p>	<p><b>2. Kisi ke anay ya kisi ke janay se Balochistan ki Ehsaas Mehroomi nahi khatam hogi (Regime change in Pakistan would not bring any change in term of removing deprivation in Balochistan)</b></p> <p>Analysis-The keyword ‘deprivation’ reflects the social theme in this title.</p> <p><b>3. Balochistan faces acute shortage of drinking water</b></p> <p>Analysis-This title reflects towards social disruption and inequality, which is closely relevant with the social theme.</p> <p><b>4. A unique area of Balochistan, neither electricity nor water shortage</b></p> <p>Analysis-This title also reminds about social disruption and inequality, which is closely relevant with the social theme.</p> <p><b>5. (Flood Affected Areas in Balochistan ) Special show by Hamid Mir from Jaffarabad district of Balochistan</b></p> <p>Analysis-This title reminds about ‘deprivation’ that reflects the social theme.</p> <p><b>6. What was the role of Surinder Lake in saving Lasbela from further destruction in Balochistan</b></p> <p>Analysis-The keyword social and community protection suits in this title as it reflects the theme.</p> <p><b>7. Most of the roads and bridges in Balochistan broke down quickly due to poor material</b></p> <p>Analysis-Merginalziation could be the best keyword for this title.</p> <p><b>8. National hero Faisal Baloch makes an appearance at Geo Pakistan</b></p> <p>Analysis-This title reminds about ‘social protection and recognition’.</p> <p><b>9. Shouldn't the Chief Minister of Balochistan have visited the flood victims?</b></p> <p>Analysis-Merginalziation could be the best keyword for this title.</p>	<p><b>2. Selab Say Balochistan Mein Tabah Kariyan, Bachun Mein Beemariyan Phelnay Lagin (Flood caused severe destruction in Balochistan. Diseases spread among children)</b></p> <p>Analysis-This title reflects towards social disruption and inequality, which is closely relevant with the social theme.</p>
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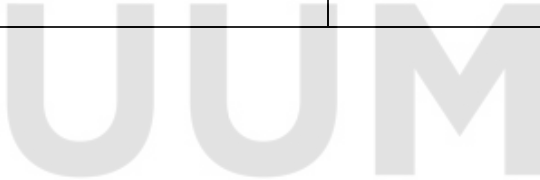
		<p><b>10. Faisal Baloch, a truck driver who risked his life to save many lives</b></p> <p>Analysis-The keyword social protection and recognition suits in this title as it reflects the theme.</p>	
	<p><b>Economic</b></p> <p><i>Keywords:</i></p> <p><i>Economic Exclusion and Disparities,</i></p>	<p><b>1. With Few Job Options, Balochistan Residents Turn to Smuggling</b></p> <p>Analysis-The title reflects the keyword 'economic exclusion and disparities', which comes under economic theme.</p>	None
	<p><b>Health</b></p> <p><i>Keywords:</i></p> <p><i>Health inequality,</i></p> <p><i>Healthcare Crises,</i></p>	<p><b>1. Young doctors strike (in Balochistan)</b></p> <p>Analysis-Healthcare inequality can be the best keyword in this title that reflects the theme of health.</p>	<p><b>1. Lack of health, medical facilities causing severe difficulties in Balochistan</b></p> <p>Analysis-Healthcare crises can be the best keyword in this title that reflects the theme of health.</p>
	<p><b>Military</b></p> <p><i>Keywords:</i></p> <p><i>Honouring Soldiers,</i></p> <p><i>Military Actions and Operations,</i></p> <p><i>Counterinsurgency Operations,</i></p>	<p><b>1. Terrorists martyr 10 soldiers in Balochistan</b></p> <p>Analysis-Honoring Soldiers as a keyword suit in this title that reflects the military theme.</p> <p><b>2. Soldier embraces martyrdom during clearance operation in Balochistan</b></p> <p>Analysis-Honoring Soldiers as a keyword suit in this title that reflects the military theme.</p> <p><b>3. Balochistan govt forms judicial commission to probe Ziarat operation</b></p> <p>Analysis-The title indicates keyword of military actions and operations that reflects the theme.</p> <p><b>4. Helicopter crash near Sassi Punnu Shrine reported</b></p> <p>Analysis-The title indicates keyword of military actions and operations that reflects the theme.</p> <p><b>5. Very sad incident in Balochistan, Pakistan Army helicopter crashed</b></p> <p>Analysis-Honoring Soldiers as a keyword suit in this title that reflects the military theme.</p> <p><b>6. Six Pakistan Army officials embraced martyrdom in Balochistan helicopter crash: ISPR</b></p>	<p><b>1. Balochistan Main Dehshat Gardon Ka Hamla,10 Jawan Shaheed: ISPR (10 military persons Martyrdom in a attack by militants in Balochistan)</b></p> <p>Analysis-Honoring Soldiers as a keyword suit in this title that reflects the military theme.</p> <p><b>2. Four terrorists killed as security forces repulse attacks in Balochistan's Nushki, Panjgur</b></p> <p>Analysis-The title indicates keyword of counterinsurgency operations that reflects the theme.</p> <p><b>3. 20 Terrorists Killed as Nushki, Panjgur Clearance Operation Ends: ISPR</b></p> <p>Analysis-The title indicates keyword of counterinsurgency operations that reflects the theme.</p> <p><b>4. Passionate statement of Panjgur Army soldier</b></p> <p>Analysis-Honoring Soldiers as a keyword suit in this title that reflects the military theme.</p> <p><b>5. Chief of Army Staff General Qamar Javed Bajwa Visited Panjgur, Balochistan</b></p> <p>Analysis-Honoring Soldiers as a keyword suit in this title that reflects the military theme.</p>

		<p>Analysis-Honoring Soldiers as a keyword suit in this title that reflects the military theme.</p> <p><b>7. Harnai Balochistan situation update – ISPR</b></p> <p>Analysis-The title indicates keyword of military actions and operations that reflects the theme.</p> <p><b>8. Balochistan - Big operation by security forces</b></p> <p>Analysis-The title indicates keyword of military actions and operations that reflects the theme.</p> <p><b>9. Operation of security forces in Balochistan – ISPR</b></p> <p>Analysis-The title indicates keyword of military actions and operations that reflects the theme.</p> <p><b>10. Two military personnel, including major, martyred in Balochistan attack: ISPR</b></p> <p>Analysis-Honoring Soldiers as a keyword suit in this title that reflects the military theme.</p> <p><b>11. 4 soldiers martyred, 5 injured in 'dastardly' Zhob attack: ISPR</b></p> <p>Analysis-Honoring Soldiers as a keyword suit in this title that reflects the military theme.</p> <p><b>12. Terrorist attack on Zhob Garrison in Balochistan, 4 soldiers martyred</b></p> <p>Analysis-Honoring Soldiers as a keyword suit in this title that reflects the military theme.</p>	<p><b>6. Security forces kill six terrorists in Balochistan's Buleda : ISPR</b></p> <p>Analysis-The title indicates keyword of counterinsurgency operations that reflects the theme.</p> <p><b>7. Operation on report of terrorists presence in Kohlu area of Balochistan</b></p> <p>Analysis-The title indicates keyword of counterinsurgency operations that reflects the theme.</p> <p><b>8. Helicopter crash near Sassi Punnu Shrine reported</b></p> <p>Analysis-Honoring Soldiers as a keyword suit in this title that reflects the military theme.</p> <p><b>9. Pakistani army helicopter crashed near Lasbela, Balochistan 6 martyred</b></p> <p>Analysis-Honoring Soldiers as a keyword suit in this title that reflects the military theme.</p> <p><b>10. Two soldiers martyred, one injured in Balochistan terrorist attack</b></p> <p>Analysis-Honoring Soldiers as a keyword suit in this title that reflects the military theme.</p> <p><b>11. COAS Asim Munir vows to make all-out efforts for Balochistan peace</b></p> <p>Analysis-The title indicates keyword of military actions and operations that reflects the theme.</p> <p><b>12. Army captain, four soldiers martyred in Balochistan incident, ISPR</b></p> <p>Analysis-Honoring Soldiers as a keyword suit in this title that reflects the military theme.</p> <p><b>13. Balochistan IED blast: Martyred captain laid to rest</b></p> <p>Analysis-Honoring Soldiers as a keyword suit in this title that reflects the military theme.</p> <p><b>14. Security forces operation in Kohlu area of Balochistan, ISPR</b></p> <p>Analysis-The title indicates keyword of military actions and operations that reflects the theme.</p>
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	<p><b>Security</b></p> <p><b>Keywords:</b></p> <p><i>Instability and Threats,</i></p> <p><i>Insurgency,</i></p> <p><i>National Security Threat,</i></p>	<p>1. <b>Aaj Shahzeb Khanzada Kay Sath  Security Situation in Balochistan</b></p> <p>Analysis-The keywords instability and threats relate with this title that reflect the security theme.</p> <p>2. <b>Gulzar Imam appeared before the media after his arrest</b></p> <p>Analysis-The keyword insurgency has close relevancy with this title that reflects the theme.</p> <p>3. <b>Terrorists active again in Balochistan, Caretaker government's blunt stance</b></p> <p>Analysis-The keywords instability and threats relate with this title that reflect the security theme.</p> <p>4. <b>Impact of Negative campaign on social media on Balochistan incident</b></p> <p>Analysis-The keywords instability and threats relate with this title that reflect the security theme.</p>	<p>1. <b>Connection of Industrial Revolution in Pakistan with Balochistan attacks</b></p> <p>Analysis-The keyword insurgency has close relevancy with this title that reflects the theme.</p> <p>2. <b>Outlawed BLA Majeed Brigade's Member, Woman Arrested In Turbat</b></p> <p>Analysis-The keyword insurgency has close relevancy with this title that reflects the theme.</p> <p>3. <b>Outlawed Baloch National Army founder apprehended in IBO: ISPR</b></p> <p>Analysis-The keyword insurgency has close relevancy with this title that reflects the theme.</p> <p>4. <b>India behind the terrorist activities of arrested Gulzar Imam alias 'Shambay' exposed</b></p> <p>Analysis-The keywords National Security Threat suits with this title that also reflect the theme.</p>

		<p><b>5. How was Gulzar Imam Shambay, main terrorist of banned organization, arrested?</b></p> <p>Analysis-The keyword insurgency has close relevancy with this title that reflects the theme.</p> <p><b>6. How terrorist Gulzar Imam Shanbe was arrested?</b></p> <p>Analysis-The keyword insurgency has close relevancy with this title that reflects the theme.</p> <p><b>7. Indian journalist links with militant groups in Balochistan exposed</b></p> <p>Analysis-The keywords National Security Threat suits with this title that also reflect the theme.</p> <p><b>8. Banned Baloch group commander Bungulzai surrenders</b></p> <p>Analysis-The keyword insurgency has close relevancy with this title that reflects the theme.</p>
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*The End*  
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