

# **Representation of Indigenous People in Pakistan**

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## **Abstract**

Indigenous people are also referred as tribal. Pakistan's census (1998) does not take into account the tribal population of the country. There is a perception of absence of liaison between indigenous populace and mainstream society. How media depicts indigenous individuals and issues is an important variable affecting the link of indigenous people with mainstream society. This research is based on both qualitative and quantitative methods. Using quantitative content analysis, this study analyzes the representation of indigenous people and issues through news stories in three mainstream Pakistani English newspapers: *The News International*, *Dawn* and *The Nation* for a period of three months (1 April 2016 to 30 June 2016). Lack of representation along with negativity associated in news stories reflect that Pakistani press discriminate and marginalize indigenous people. Further, telephone interviews from 24 journalists of these three newspapers revealed valuable information regarding the news value and barriers in covering issues related to indigenous people. Finally, open ended inquiry from these journalists gave important suggestions on how reporting on issues concerning indigenous people in Pakistan can be improved.

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## **Introduction**

Representation of indigenous people has a significant value in preserving, disseminating and adaptation of traditional values and culture. However, Pakistani mainstream media fails to give substantive representation, coverage and information about indigenous people and their issues which, as a result, endangers the survival of very valuable information.

Media in Pakistan has ability to alter public opinion, community norms and create and realize self-identity of masses. In this context, the fair portrayal of ethnic, racial, geographical and religious minority groups is an essential issue of examination. As media is expected to perform a critical function of informing the masses about minority groups and building public perception of indigenous groups, a research

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inquiring how and why mainstream media in Pakistan is not giving fair coverage to issues associated to indigenous communities is essential.

Majority of people with non-indigenous backgrounds come to learn about cultural artifacts, languages and issues of indigenous people through the image created by media coverage. The public-indigenous-government nexus is build by media primarily because media does not just inform public about the issues faced by indigenous groups but it also has a vital role in the social construction and recognition of who to be seen as indigenous.

The purpose of the current study is to discover the media representation of indigenous people of Pakistan in selected prominent newspapers over a period of three months and to analyze the response of journalists working in these newspapers regarding representation of indigenous people. The objective is to find out the extent of the media representation and whether this portrayal is positive, negative, or neutral in representing indigenous people's issues. Which issues are covered most frequently will also be examined further.

Wagha<sup>1</sup> states that Pakistan's government does not recognize indigenous people but refers to them as tribal. According to Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (1998), the population consists of several main ethnic groups: Punjabis (44.15%), Pashtuns (15.42%), Sindhis (14.1%), Seraikis (10.53%), Muhajirs (7.57%), Balochis (3.57%), and others (4.66%). This does not take into account the tribal population of the country.

The census (1998) brings up tribes in the category of 'others'. Tribes comprise *Jhabels*, *Kihals*, *Mores* and *Kutanas*. The major groups of tribal people are the tribal fishing people, the pastoral groups of the Middle Indus Valley, the Baloch tribes, fisherfolk of coastal areas, tribal people of Sindh, tribal people of Gilgit-Baltistan, tribal people of Chitral valley, tribal people of Potohar region, and the tribal people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) and FATA.

The absence of any political or academic discussion on the tribal people in Pakistan makes their recognition a complicated assignment. Wagha<sup>2</sup> further state that Pakistan does not have any national policies about indigenous people. The only international convention related to indigenous people consented by Pakistan is the ILO Convention 107 on Indigenous and Tribal Populations in 1960. Pakistan gave vote for the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People by the UN General Assembly in 2007 which

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<sup>1</sup> W. Wagha, *Country Technical Notes on Indigenous People's Issues: Islamic Republic of Pakistan*, International Fund for Agricultural Development, 2012.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

recognizes that *indigenous people have the right to own, use, develop and control the lands, territories and resources that they possess.*

A World Bank<sup>3</sup> report hails that indigenous people live in a diverse and varying circumstances so a unanimously acknowledged definition of indigenous people could not be formulated. In different countries indigenous people may possibly be considered by such terms as aboriginals, hill tribes, scheduled tribes, minority nationalities, indigenous ethnic minorities, or tribal groups.

Everywhere, throughout the world, development ventures have occurred without the free, earlier and educated assent of indigenous people groups, prompting mass removals and relocation to the city. Wagha<sup>4</sup> depicts that the issues confronted by indigenous and tribal people in Pakistan incorporate poverty, insufficient occupation opportunities, endangered culture, environmental deprivation, gender inequity, absence of access to fundamental government services, deficiency of water, absence of sanitation, deprived health, ignorance, absence of foundation and absence of interest in basic leadership forms and decision making.

A considerable range of research inspects not just what information about ethnic and racial minorities is incorporated into the media depiction of these groups, but also what information about indigenous groups is absent from media scope.<sup>5</sup> Media critics contend that the news media are controlled by gatekeepers who figure out what occasions or parts of occasions are newsworthy and what occasions are barred.<sup>6</sup>

## Literature review

Battiste<sup>7</sup> noted that the United Nations has not used a definition of indigenous people, but instead has made a contemporary comprehension

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<sup>3</sup> *Revised Operational Policy on Indigenous People* (Washington, DC: The World Bank, 2005).

<sup>4</sup> W. Wagha, *op.cit.*

<sup>5</sup> A. Fleras, 'Media and Minorities in a Post-multicultural Society: Overview and Appraisal', *Ethnicity and Culture in Canada: The Research Landscape*, 1994, pp.267-92.

<sup>6</sup> E.S. Herman and Noam Chomsky, 'Manufacturing Consent: A Propaganda Model', *Manufacturing Consent*, 1988. Retrieved from <https://chomsky.info/consent01/>

<sup>7</sup> M. Battiste, 'Research Ethics for Protecting Indigenous Knowledge and Heritage: Institutional and Researcher Responsibilities', *Ethical Futures in Qualitative Research: Decolonizing the Politics of Knowledge*, ed., Norman K. Denzin and Michael D. Giardian (Walnut Creek, Calif.: Left Coast Press, 2007), p.111.

of this term based on having a historical connection with pre-colonial or pre-settler societies; strong relation to territories and neighboring natural resources; distinctive economic, social or political systems, distinctive culture, language and beliefs form other parts of society, and resolve to preserve and replicate their inherited environments and systems as distinctive people and communities.<sup>8</sup>

Minority Rights Group International<sup>9</sup> stated that indigenous population includes First nations containing divergent cultural, linguistic and ethnic customs and backgrounds. Indigenous is about culture, descent, upbringing and life experiences.

World Health Organisation investigation of poor health for Australian indigenous people established that these unequal situations for indigenous groups are a result of governance issues, poor social strategies, and unjust financial arrangements.<sup>10</sup>

Calma<sup>11</sup> suggested that the poor condition of indigenous Australians is an after effect of an inability to understand the right to health for indigenous Australians. Hearn and Wise<sup>12</sup> study of health advancement for indigenous people inferred that the torment and outrage that have come about because of the isolation and protectionist arrangements of the past are still present in the lives of Australian indigenous individuals.

Brown<sup>13</sup> examined the financial elements of intra-state disagreement. At the point when the state neglects to secure an individual's rights and freedoms to keep up evenhanded open doors among different groups, marginal identities have a tendency to see state

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<sup>8</sup> UNFPII.

<sup>9</sup> *State of the World's Minorities and Indigenous People 2015*, Minority Rights Group International, 2015. London. Retrieved from [www.minorityrights.org/publications](http://www.minorityrights.org/publications)

<sup>10</sup> *Closing the gap in a generation: Health equity through action on the social determinants of health: Final report of the Commission on Social Determinants of Health*, World Health Organisation, 2008. Retrieved from [http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2008/9789241563703\\_eng.pdf](http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2008/9789241563703_eng.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> T. Calma, 'Indigenous health is a matter of human rights', 2013. Retrieved from <http://www.theage.com.au/federal-politics/society-and-culture/indigenous-health-is-a-matter-of-human-rights-20091027-higk.html#ixzz2aP1ETN9I>

<sup>12</sup> S. Hearn and M. Wise, 'Health Promotion: A Framework for Indigenous Health Improvements in Australia', eds., R. Moodie and A. Hulme, *Hands on Health Promotion* (Melbourne: IP Communications, 2004), pp.323-25.

<sup>13</sup> E.S Brown, 'Racialization in a 'Homogenous' Society? The Case of Buraku People in Japan', *Asian Ethnicity*, 14:1 (2013), pp.1-28.

foundations and laws as unfair or repressive. This situation gets further disturbed when various ethnic groups are not included into the mainstream. It expands their segregation from the state structure and makes ethnic clashes.

Minor cultural elements feel undermined by the domination of bigger powerful ethnic groups. As Eriksen<sup>14</sup> stated that when migrants contact with individuals of a distinct culture, conventions and characters, both of them (migrants and local people) attempt to hold the power structure of the state. This circumstance leads towards ethnic inconsistencies in most developing heterogeneous social orders.

Shehzad<sup>15</sup> argued that embracing solid plans of assimilation may turn into a reason for resistance from those ethnic groups who are not willing to surrender their ethnic identities. In some cases, minor ethnic groups feel that their social identities are being converged into state driven national identities as a result of fewer opportunities in the state structure. They see themselves to be distanced from the general political procedure, society and institutions.

Dudgeon et al.<sup>16</sup> gave an extensive overview of what group implies for indigenous individuals. They recognize that the idea of a community has a political motivation for the state, whereas indigenous individuals were moved into locales, for example, stores, missions and periphery camps as a component of the procedures of colonization, dispossession and dispersal, and later for bureaucratic comfort.

### Indigenous people and media

The capacity of media to persuade public opinion has been reported all around.<sup>17</sup> Van Dijk<sup>18</sup> states that the part of the media in strengthening and

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<sup>14</sup> T.H. Eriksen, 'In which sense do cultural islands exist?', *Social Anthropology*, 1:1b (1993), pp.133-47.

<sup>15</sup> A. Shehzad, 'The Issue of Ethnicity in Pakistan: Historical Background', *Pakistan Vision*, 12:2 (2011), p.124.

<sup>16</sup> P. Dudgeon, J. Mallard, D. Oxenham and J. Fielder, 'Contemporary Aboriginal Perceptions of Community', *Psychological Sense of Community*, Springer, 2002, pp.247-67.

<sup>17</sup> F. Henry and C. Tator, *Discourses of Domination: Racial Bias in the Canadian English-language Press*, University of Toronto Press, 2002; A. Fleras and J.L. Kunz, *Media and Minorities: Representing Diversity in a Multicultural Canada*, Thompson Educational, 2001; A. Fleras, *op.cit.*

<sup>18</sup> T.A Van Dijk, *Elite Discourse and Racism*, Vol.6 (Los Angeles: Sage, 1993), pp.241-278. Retrieved from <http://www.discourses.org/OldBooks/Teun%20A%20van%20Dijk%20%20Elite%20Discourse%20and%20Racism.pdf>

replicating racism is as important as their role in political, social and ideological multiplication in modern society. The media is generally recognized as an effective tool with the capacity to educate, entertain, and impact demeanors and convictions to form social standards and to spread information.<sup>19</sup> Elite who owns media utilize the media to practice their power and manipulation, look for legitimating and manufacturing consensus.<sup>20</sup> Further, Dijk<sup>21</sup> portrayed that media is particularly imperative in molding minority/dominant connections in light of the fact that general society frequently has no alternative information about minority groups, and stereotype reporting of those groups turns into the sole source from which majority finds out about minorities.

Research into the media representation of indigenous people has demonstrated that criminal conduct and financial and social discrimination are regularly connected with this group.<sup>22</sup> Nairn et al.<sup>23</sup> studied the media portrayal of indigenous people groups in New Zealand and highlighted that media propagated racist discourse by utilizing that framed stories in a specific way.

Shah<sup>24</sup> portrayed that the press, magazines and movies further degenerate the psyches of youngsters and grown-ups by exhibiting the aboriginal tribes of India and Pakistan in a way unreliable and decidedly biased. In remote aboriginal people group, limited media access has made what some have called ‘monopoly of silence’.

Bullimore<sup>25</sup> analyzed the reporting of indigenous issues and voices by media, in his discourse analysis of articles and news stories published in two popular mainstream Australian newspapers. He established that there is a significant absence of indigenous

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<sup>19</sup> A. Fleras and J.L. Kunz, *op.cit.*

<sup>20</sup> T.A Van Dijk, *op.cit.*, p.8.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.251-2.

<sup>22</sup> F. Henry and C. Tator, *Discourses of Domination: Racial Bias in the Canadian English-language Press* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002); A. Fleras, ‘Media and Minorities in a Post-multicultural Society: Overview and Appraisal’, *Ethnicity and Culture in Canada: The Research Landscape*, 1994.

<sup>23</sup> R. Nairn, F. Pega, T. McCreanor, J. Rankine and A. Barnes, ‘Media, Racism and Public Health Psychology’, *Journal of Health Psychology*, 11:2 (2006), pp.183-96.

<sup>24</sup> H.M. Shah, *Aboriginal Tribes of India and Pakistan: The Bhils & Kolhis* (Karachi: Sindhi Kitab Ghar, 1900). Retrieved from <https://archive.org/details/cu31924075257943>

<sup>25</sup> K. Bullimore, ‘Media Dreaming: Representation of Aboriginality in Modern Australian Media’, *Asia Pacific Media Educator*, 1:6 (1999), p.7.

representation. Australian media frequently distort their reporting of aboriginal issues towards common stereotypes, infuriating aboriginal people. The paper profoundly analyzed how apathetic representation of such voices are either dismissed or 'balanced out' by elite voices. However, by proposing that mediated representation of indigenous opinions is racist, the researcher did not provide any data or literature to prove.

Recent studies recommend that visible minorities are consistently depicted, in Canadian daily papers, in an exceptionally negative and stereotypical way.<sup>26</sup> Harding<sup>27</sup> investigation of three Canadian daily papers established that indigenous issues are encircled in ways that effectively deny or stigmatize the intrinsic privileges of aboriginal individuals. Media applies a direct impact on open strategy towards them and indirectly on their lives.

Henry and Tator<sup>28</sup> applied procedures of critical discourse analysis to news of prominent stories including aboriginal individuals. They found that aboriginal individuals are often depicted as a 'critical danger to the social order' or as 'problem people groups who have either issues or make issues'.

Media scope of minority gatherings appear to be much deficient, regularly negative, and by and large cliché.<sup>29</sup> Henry, et al.<sup>30</sup> contends that media imitate and strengthen supremacist belief system through negative stereotyping of racial minorities by focusing on news that isolate or criminalizes them.

Hooks<sup>31</sup> articulated that a stereotypical comprehension of minority individuals is created through media and, serving as a replacement for the truth, is anticipated onto the 'other'. Maslin<sup>32</sup> analyzed two Saskatchewan every day daily papers to explore how the thought of 'native people' is socially built in the media. The outcomes uncover that aboriginal people are frequently depicted as problematic;

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<sup>26</sup> A. Fleras and J.L. Kunz, *op.cit*; F. Henry and C. Tator, *op.cit*; T.A Van Dijk, *op.cit*.

<sup>27</sup> G.S. Harding, *Surviving in the Hour of Darkness: The Health and Wellness of Women of Colour and Indigenous Women*, University of Calgary Press, 2005.

<sup>28</sup> F. Henry and C. Tator, *op.cit*.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*; T.A Van Dijk, *op.cit*, pp.241-78.

<sup>30</sup> F. Henry and C. Tator, *op.cit*.

<sup>31</sup> M. Bell Hooks Childers, 'A Conversation about Race and Class', *Conflicts in Feminism* (New York: Routledge, 1990), pp.60-81.

<sup>32</sup> C.L. Maslin, 'Social Construction of Aboriginal People in the Saskatchewan Print Media (Doctoral dissertation), 2002.

either as having issues themselves, or as bringing about issues for non - aboriginal people.

In Scott's<sup>33</sup> investigation of the print media's reporting regarding the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) for more than four years it was found that prejudice was not a noticeable element of media coverage of indigenous issues, however inferential racism was huge.

Based on two case studies – health worker training in Ontario and the Inuit Broadcasting Corporation, Castellano<sup>34</sup> contends that mainstream institutions and media are inconsistent with or deficiently receptive to local native needs. Semantic contrasts, social conventions and social and physical confinement distress add to the production of self-decided structures. This procedure is frustrated by the standard organisation's restraining infrastructure of assets and by the general condition of reliance.

The capacity of gatekeepers to control what occasions are 'newsworthy' gives the media the capacity to develop some of the distorted pictures of ethnic and racial minorities, and to impact public opinion. By reporting just those occasions that fit the gatekeepers' profile, various occasions and points of interest of occasions are prohibited, giving decontextualized, ethnocentric, overstated or one-dimensional records of occasions.<sup>35</sup>

Hall's (1980, 1992)<sup>36</sup> work investigated the representation of indigenous individuals and minorities in the media, and his work with regards to why and how such representations have been executed and propagated in the public arena.

Trigger<sup>37</sup> recommended the press produces conformity inside general society over pictures of aboriginality. He found that the part of the media in speaking to aborigines was especially crucial on the grounds that numerous non-aboriginal had practically zero contact with

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<sup>33</sup> L. Scott, 'Negative Exposure: A Snapshot of ATSIC in Australia's Mainstream Print Media', *Melbourne Journal of Politics*, Vol.31, 2006, p.75.

<sup>34</sup> M.B. Castellano, L. Davis and L. Lahache (eds.), *Aboriginal Education: Fulfilling the Promise* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2000), p.22.

<sup>35</sup> F. Henry and C. Tator, *op.cit.*

<sup>36</sup> S. Hall, 'The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power', *The Indigenous Experience: Global Perspectives*, 1992, pp.165-73.

<sup>37</sup> D.S. Trigger, 'Everyone's Agreed, the West is all you Need: Ideology, Media and Aboriginality in Western Australia', *Media Information Australia*, Vol.75, 1995, pp.102-22.



aborigines and framed their thoughts regarding them from the data they acquired through the media.

Ewart<sup>38</sup> in his investigation of the columnists' self-depicted practices, demonstrated that indigenous were not considered as news by this present daily paper's article editorial hierarchy. Most journalists showed that they were composing less stories about indigenous as a result of the publication editorial's absence of enthusiasm for such issues. Publication administration and columnists said they had settled on a conscious choice to maintain a strategic distance from such articles due to a conviction that the all inclusive community was not keen on them.

These studies give a look at the landscape of the framing of messages and media around indigenous issues. However, the influence of the role of media about indigenous issues and reporting should be further measured. Past exploration demonstrates that media depictions of minority groups are discriminatory and partial. The way indigenous people groups are portrayed is the focal point of several anthropological studies, since it interfaces the politics of identity, from one perspective, with the capacity of people to be perceived as indigenous by states, the worldwide group, media, and other.

### **Theoretical framework**

The social construction of race theory proposes that race is not naturally grounded but rather that racial partitions are socially decided which depends on the diffusion of information about racial groups.<sup>39</sup> The second theory that deals with media coverage is of hegemony which states that the ruling class subordinates others by utilizing philosophy, both specifically and by implication, to shape mainstream assent. The ruling class can form prominent ideology since it holds control on the media used to disperse philosophy.<sup>40</sup> Thirdly media gate-keeping theory states that the structure of news creation is outfitted towards propagation of the force of elite class regarding access, power, distinction, sentiments, definitions and apprehensions.<sup>41</sup> News is socially built, taking into account the choice of newsworthy occasions.<sup>42</sup> It is the

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<sup>38</sup> J. Ewart, 'The Scabsuckers: Regional Journalists' Representation of Indigenous Australians', *Asia Pacific Media Educator*, 1:3 (1997), p.7.

<sup>39</sup> J. Rex, *Race Relations in Sociological Theory* (New York: Schocken Books, 1970).

<sup>40</sup> T. Gitlin, *The Whole World is Watching: Mass Media in the Making & Unmaking of the New Left*, University of California Press, 1980.

<sup>41</sup> T.A Van Dijk, *op.cit.*, pp.241-278.

<sup>42</sup> B. Troynas, 'Media and Race Relation', E. Ellis Cashmore, *Dictionary of Race and Ethnic Relations* (London etc.: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984).

capacity of the media to channel the news, and the hegemonic philosophy driving media, which serves to constrain the pictures of minority groups in the media and, thus, to socially build the representation of indigenous people in the media.

One of the early communication researchers Denis McQuail<sup>43</sup> recapped the essential standards of social responsibility theory. In this regard, media ought to acknowledge and satisfy certain commitments to society. These commitments are chiefly to be met by setting professional norms of disseminating information, truth, objectivity and parity. In tolerating and applying these commitments, media ought to act naturally directing inside the structure of law and established frameworks. The media all in all ought to be pluralist and mirror the assorted distinct qualities of their general public, offering access to different perspectives and privileges to response. The principal recognized theory of social responsibility of the press was formed by Siebert, Peterson and Schramm in 1956. This made a reasonable connection surprisingly between flexibility of the press and 'social obligation', which means a commitment to give dependable and important news and data and additionally open doors for differing voices to be heard in general society.<sup>44</sup>

### Research methodology

A mix method sequential approach is used in this research which included quantitative content analysis at first phase and then situational telephone survey interviews comprising both closed and open ended questions from journalists. Content analysis is used for three leading Pakistani English newspapers; *The News International*, *Dawn* and *The Nation* from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2016. Hansen et al,<sup>45</sup> Turner, cited in Neuendorf<sup>46</sup> defined content analysis as quantitative method whose purpose is to calculate and identify the occurrences of particular

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<sup>43</sup> D. McQuail, *Media Accountability and Freedom of Publication* (USA: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp.119-139.

<sup>44</sup> F.S. Siebert, T. Peterson and W. Schramm, *Four Theories of the Press: The Authoritarian, Libertarian, Social Responsibility, and Soviet Communist Concepts of what the Press should be and do*, University of Illinois Press, 1956.

<sup>45</sup> A. Hansen, S. Cottle, R. Negrine and C. Newbold, 'Content Analysis', *Mass Communication Research Methods*, Macmillan Education UK, 1998, pp.91-129.

<sup>46</sup> Kimberly A. Neuendorf, *The Content Analysis Guidebook* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2002, pp.25-27.

proportions of texts which helps to determine representations of such texts along with their large social implication.

### **Population and sampling**

The content under study comprised all news items related to indigenous issues in the time period from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2016 in three selected Pakistani English newspapers: *The News International*, *Dawn* and *The Nation*. The research sample contains all news stories that were related to operationalized indigenous or tribal people issues in the specified newspapers during the selected time frame.

Population for the telephone interviews comprises all the journalists of Lahore Press Club affiliated with *The News*, *Dawn* and *The Nation*. A sample size of 24 journalists (n=24) was selected with eight journalists each from three newspapers through purposive sampling. From 50 journalists contacted, we got 24 valid responses whose answers were taken in notes. Respondent 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 were editor, senior correspondent, senior staff reporter, senior reporter, sub editor, copy writer and researcher respectively from *The News*. Average experience of these journalists was 10 years. Respondent 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 & 16 were reporter, editor, assignment editor, copy writer, correspondent and junior staff reporter respectively from *Dawn* newspaper. Average experience of these journalists was 9 years. Respondent 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23 and 24 were feature writer, sub-editor, researcher, senior reporter, editor and assignment editor respectively from *The Nation*. Their average experience was 12 years.

### **Research questions**

- R1: How much coverage was given to indigenous people in *The News*, *Dawn* and *The Nation* in selected horizon?
- R2: What topics were covered most frequently related to indigenous people?
- R3: How much prominence to the news was given to stories about indigenous people?
- R4: How positively or negatively were indigenous people represented?
- R5: What is the knowledge of journalists working in these newspapers about indigenous people in Pakistan?
- R6: Are negative stereotypes of indigenous groups being furthered by the media?
- R7: Do indigenous people have no news value?
- R8: Is there a professional code of conduct for these news organisation reflecting the principles of equality and diversity for indigenous and minority groups?

R9: What are the obstacles in reporting issues of indigenous people in Pakistani media?

R10: How can reporting on issues concerning indigenous people be improved?

### Operational definitions

*Indigenous people:* In this research indigenous people refer to the tribal fishing people of coastal areas, the pastoral groups of the Middle Indus Valley (particularly Jhabels, Kihals, Mores and Kutana of Sindh), the Baloch tribes (especially Buzdars of the de-excluded area of Sulaiman Mountains), tribal people of Gilgit-Baltistan and Chitral Valley (i.e. Hindkowans, Kalash, Ismailis, Burusho, Brahui, Khowar, Shina, Turwalis and Dardic etc), tribal people of Potohar Region and the tribal people of Kyber Pukhtunkhwa province.

*Media representation:* Chandler<sup>47</sup> argued that media representations are the extent and ways through which the media represent specific groups, communities, experiences, ideas, or topics from a particular ideological or value standpoint. In this research media representation refers to the news stories published during the selected period (1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2016) in three leading Pakistani English newspapers. The number of stories related to indigenous people will be referred as degree of representation.

### Content analysis

Following results were obtained from the content analysis of three newspapers:

**Table 1: Frequency of coverage**

|                   | Frequency | %     | Valid % | Cumulative % |
|-------------------|-----------|-------|---------|--------------|
| <i>The News</i>   | 53        | 34.4  | 34.4    | 34.4         |
| <i>Dawn</i>       | 60        | 39.0  | 39.0    | 73.4         |
| <i>The Nation</i> | 41        | 26.6  | 26.6    | 100.0        |
| Total             | 154       | 100.0 | 100.0   |              |

The answer of R1 can be seen in the Table 1 which shows that a total of 154 stories were published which were directly related to indigenous people in all three newspapers over a period of three months. If we analyze the newspaper wise representation, *The News* published only 53 stories in three months which is 34.4 per cent of total stories. *Dawn* published a slightly higher number of stories i.e. 60 with a percentage of

<sup>47</sup> D. Chandler, *Semiotics: The Basics* (New York: Routledge, 2007).

39. *The Nation* was lowest with a total of 41 stories related to indigenous people, culture and issues with a per cent of only 26.6. Considering the study over a nine week time span the news stories identifying with the indigenous people got little scope. This shows just 1.71 stories for every day delivered during this period concentrated on indigenous individuals, cultures and issues, across three daily papers.

**Table 2: Topics covered most frequently**

|                            | Frequency | %     | Valid % | Cumulative % |
|----------------------------|-----------|-------|---------|--------------|
| Development& Social Reform | 21        | 13.6  | 13.6    | 13.6         |
| Culture& Heritage          | 18        | 11.7  | 11.7    | 25.3         |
| Travel& Tourism            | 15        | 9.7   | 9.7     | 35.1         |
| Politics                   | 24        | 15.6  | 15.6    | 50.6         |
| Business& Economy          | 15        | 9.7   | 9.7     | 60.4         |
| Health                     | 11        | 7.1   | 7.1     | 67.5         |
| Environment                | 13        | 8.4   | 8.4     | 76.0         |
| Crime                      | 31        | 20.1  | 20.1    | 96.1         |
| Other                      | 6         | 3.9   | 3.9     | 100.0        |
| Total                      | 154       | 100.0 | 100.0   |              |

To address R2 about most frequent topics covered in these 154 stories, Table 2 shows following results. News stories related to development and social reform of indigenous people received a percentage of 13.6 with 21 stories published. Thus, making it third most published topic. Category of culture and heritage included 18 stories with a percentage of 11.7, making it fourth most published topics. Travel and tourism comprised 15 stories with only 9.7 per cent. Interestingly, second most published topic was politics which included 24 news items with a percentage of 15.6. 15 stories were related to business & economy. Important issues of health and environment received lowest frequency with a percentage of 7.1 and 8.4 respectively. Further, the topic covering highest number of stories was crime, featuring 31 stories with 20.1 per cent of total news items. Other topics include six news stories related to indigenous people.

**Table 3: Level of prominence**

|                 | Frequency | %     | Valid % | Cumulative % |
|-----------------|-----------|-------|---------|--------------|
| High Prominence | 56        | 36.4  | 36.4    | 36.4         |
| Low Prominence  | 98        | 63.6  | 63.6    | 100.0        |
| Total           | 154       | 100.0 | 100.0   |              |

Level of prominence is analyzed whether a news story appears on main pages or other less noteworthy pages of the newspaper. Table 3 indicates that only 56 stories from a total of 154 were given high prominence. But, majority of news stories were given low prominence with an overwhelming 63.9 per cent. Only 36.4 per cent of stories were given high importance. So it refers that news stories related to indigenous people are given less prominence and value in terms of placement and positioning.

**Table 4: Slant of news**

|          | Frequency | %     | Valid % | Cumulative % |
|----------|-----------|-------|---------|--------------|
| Positive | 59        | 38.3  | 38.3    | 38.3         |
| Negative | 75        | 48.7  | 48.7    | 87.0         |
| Neutral  | 20        | 13.0  | 13.0    | 100.0        |
| Total    | 154       | 100.0 | 100.0   |              |

To answer R4, the study separated the most regularly reported stories for every daily paper and the tone of those stories: positive, negative or unbiased. Amid this period, positive stories on indigenous individuals and issues concentrated on the accompanying points:

- Travel & tourism
- Culture & heritage
- Development & social reforms
- Indigenous people advocacy

While negative news consists of stories related to following topics:

- Crime
- Extremism & terrorism
- Illiteracy
- Indigenous disadvantages

Table 4 shows that only 38.3 per cent stories featured indigenous people and their issues in positive way. While, majority of news stories i.e. 75 negatively portrayed indigenous people and their issues which makes 48.7 per cent. Meanwhile 13 per cent stories covered indigenous people in a neutral way. One of another noteworthy finding was that *The Nation* covered indigenous people equally positive and negative i.e. 43.9 whereas both *Dawn* and *The News* covered their issues more negatively.

**Table 5: Topics of positive and negative news**

|                               | <b>Frequenc<br/>y</b> | <b>%</b> | <b>Valid<br/>%</b> | <b>Cumulative<br/>%</b> |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|----------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Travel & tourism              | 14                    | 9.1      | 9.1                | 9.1                     |
| Culture & heritage            | 16                    | 10.4     | 10.4               | 19.5                    |
| Development & social reforms  | 19                    | 12.3     | 12.3               | 31.8                    |
| Indigenous people advocacy    | 8                     | 5.2      | 5.2                | 37.0                    |
| Other positive news           | 2                     | 1.3      | 1.3                | 38.3                    |
| Crime                         | 24                    | 15.6     | 15.6               | 53.9                    |
| Extremism & terrorism         | 16                    | 10.4     | 10.4               | 64.3                    |
| Illiteracy                    | 15                    | 9.7      | 9.7                | 74.0                    |
| Indigenous disadvantages      | 12                    | 7.8      | 7.8                | 81.8                    |
| Other negative news           | 8                     | 5.2      | 5.2                | 87.0                    |
| Neither positive nor negative | 20                    | 13.0     | 13.0               | 100.0                   |
| Total                         | 154                   | 100.0    | 100.0              |                         |

Table 5 further shows the frequency of positive and negative news stories related to indigenous people. From 59 positive stories, 14 were related to travel & tourism, 16 culture and heritage, 19 development & social reforms and two other positive news stories. On the other hand out of 75 negatively featured news stories, crime contained 24, extremism & terrorism 16, illiteracy 15, indigenous disadvantages 12 and 8 other negative news.

### **Descriptive statistics**

|                      | <b>N</b> | <b>Min.</b> | <b>Max.</b> | <b>Mean</b> | <b>Std.<br/>Deviation</b> |
|----------------------|----------|-------------|-------------|-------------|---------------------------|
| Slant/Tone of News   | 154      | 1           | 3           | 1.75        | .672                      |
| Positive Or Negative | 154      | 1           | 11          | 6.03        | 3.257                     |
| Valid N (list wise)  | 154      |             |             |             |                           |

In above descriptive statistics, mean value of positive and negative slant of news is 6.03 which fall in the negative scale. So we infer that coverage related to indigenous people was more negative than positive. These findings are steady with Fleras and Kunz (2001) who built up that indigenous group were negatively portrayed as having issues or making issues that influence other.

### **Telephone interviews**

On the second stage of the study, following results were obtained from telephonic interviews of 24 journalists of newspapers:

**Table 6: Knowledge of indigenous people**

|           | Frequency | %     | Valid % | Cumulative % |
|-----------|-----------|-------|---------|--------------|
| Excellent | 1         | 4.2   | 4.2     | 4.2          |
| Very good | 8         | 33.3  | 33.3    | 37.5         |
| Only fair | 11        | 45.8  | 45.8    | 83.3         |
| Poor      | 3         | 12.5  | 12.5    | 95.8         |
| Very poor | 1         | 4.2   | 4.2     | 100.0        |
| Total     | 24        | 100.0 | 100.0   |              |

Table 6 gives the results for R5 regarding the knowledge of indigenous people among journalists working in three newspapers. From 24 journalists, only 1 had excellent knowledge about the indigenous people in Pakistan and their issues. Eight had very good knowledge of the subject while 11 journalists which make 45.8 per cent of total sample had only a fair knowledge about indigenous people. Three had poor knowledge about the subject while only one had very poor knowledge.

#### Descriptive statistics

|                                   | N  | Min. | Max. | Mean   | Std.<br>Deviation |
|-----------------------------------|----|------|------|--------|-------------------|
| Knowledge of<br>Indigenous people | 24 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 2.7917 | .88363            |
| Valid N (list wise)               | 24 |      |      |        |                   |

Above descriptive statistics result infer that mean value of knowledge is 2.79 so it is concluded that journalists working in *The News*, *Dawn* and *The Nation* were well informed about the indigenous people in Pakistan. However majority of them had only fair amount of knowledge.

**Table 7: Negative stereotypes of indigenous groups are being furthered by media**

|                            | Frequency | %     | Valid % | Cumulative % |
|----------------------------|-----------|-------|---------|--------------|
| Strongly agree             | 3         | 12.5  | 12.5    | 12.5         |
| Agree                      | 8         | 33.3  | 33.3    | 45.8         |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 5         | 20.8  | 20.8    | 66.7         |
| Disagree                   | 5         | 20.8  | 20.8    | 87.5         |
| Strongly disagree          | 3         | 12.5  | 12.5    | 100.0        |
| Total                      | 24        | 100.0 | 100.0   |              |

To answer R7 that what is the opinion of journalists on whether negative stereotypes of indigenous groups are being furthered by media. Table 7 shows that three journalists strongly agreed and eight agreed on the statement. So with a cumulative per cent of 45.8, most journalists agreed



with the statement. Five journalists neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement, five disagreed and three strongly disagreed.

### **Descriptive statistics**

|                      | <b>N</b> | <b>Min.</b> | <b>Max.</b> | <b>Mean</b> | <b>Std. Deviation</b> |
|----------------------|----------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| Negative stereotypes | 24       | 1.00        | 5.00        | 2.8750      | 1.26190               |
| Valid N (list wise)  | 24       |             |             |             |                       |

Statistical analysis of the results shows that mean value is 2.8750 which refer that more journalists are of the view that negative stereotypes of indigenous groups are being furthered by media.

**Table 8: indigenous people have no news value**

|                            | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>%</b> | <b>Valid %</b> | <b>Cumulative %</b> |
|----------------------------|------------------|----------|----------------|---------------------|
| Strongly agree             | 5                | 20.8     | 20.8           | 20.8                |
| Agree                      | 4                | 16.7     | 16.7           | 37.5                |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 4                | 16.7     | 16.7           | 54.2                |
| Disagree                   | 7                | 29.2     | 29.2           | 83.3                |
| Strongly disagree          | 4                | 16.7     | 16.7           | 100.0               |
| Total                      | 24               | 100.0    | 100.0          |                     |

When these journalists were asked about the news value of indigenous people, following responses were obtained: Five of them strongly agreed with the statement that indigenous people have no news value, whereas four of them agreed and four neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. A 29.2 per cent of them i.e., seven, disagreed with the statement and four strongly disagreed with the statement.

### **Descriptive statistics**

|                     | <b>N</b> | <b>Min.</b> | <b>Max.</b> | <b>Mean</b> | <b>Std. Deviation</b> |
|---------------------|----------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| News value          | 24       | 1.00        | 5.00        | 3.0417      | 1.42887               |
| Valid N (list wise) | 24       |             |             |             |                       |

As mean of the values is 3.04 which shows that more journalists disagree with the statement that indigenous people have no news value. More journalists were of the opinion that indigenous people have news value. But a higher degree of standard deviation i.e. 1.42 in descriptive analysis shows that 37.4 per cent were of the view that these people have no news value.

**Table 9: Code of conduct regarding indigenous people**

|            | Frequency | %     | Valid % | Cumulative % |
|------------|-----------|-------|---------|--------------|
| Yes        | 12        | 50.0  | 50.0    | 50.0         |
| No         | 1         | 4.2   | 4.2     | 54.2         |
| Don't know | 11        | 45.8  | 45.8    | 100.0        |
| Total      | 24        | 100.0 | 100.0   |              |

Table 9 shows that 50 per cent of journalists said that there is a code of conduct regarding indigenous people in their news organisation. One of them said that there is no such code of conduct in their newspaper. Surprisingly, nearly half of the journalists had no idea whether there is a code of conduct regarding indigenous people or not.

**Table 10: Obstacles in reporting of indigenous people**

|  | Frequency | %     | Valid % | Cumulative % |
|--|-----------|-------|---------|--------------|
| Audience's lack of interest              | 6         | 25.0  | 25.0    | 25.0         |
| Lack of understanding by editorial staff | 6         | 25.0  | 25.0    | 50.0         |
| Time pressures and resource challenges   | 9         | 37.5  | 37.5    | 87.5         |
| Other                                    | 3         | 12.5  | 12.5    | 100.0        |
| Total                                    | 24        | 100.0 | 100.0   |              |

When these journalists were asked to point out the major obstacle in reporting indigenous people following result was obtained: 25 per cent of them said that there is a lack of interest in general audiences which retrain them from publishing stories related to indigenous people. Further, 25 per cent were of the view that lack of understanding by editorial staff on issues concerning indigenous people results in low representation. However, 37.5 per cent of them pointed out that time pressures and resource challenges in covering these areas and issues are needed to be addressed. Further, three journalists pointed out other obstacles.

### Qualitative findings

We asked open ended question in the end that how can reporting on issues concerning indigenous people be improved. Five respondents (R1, 5 10, 18, 9) suggested that news organisations should dedicate a special reporter for the issues of indigenous and tribal people in all areas. Respondent 2 and 3 mentioned that along with resource allocation to

increase reach by media houses, an empathic awareness about indigenous people's culture should be given.

Respondent 4, 7 and 21 mentioned that in order to improve reporting on issues concerning indigenous and tribal people, the editorial heads need to relieve correspondent's burden of reporting on crime and to some extent political issues. Only then, correspondents may be asked to meet indigenous people and find out their stories and present them in media. As it needs additional effort and improved skills of writing (instead of writing stereotype stories), the correspondents need to be encouraged, motivated and offered trainings. So, it is the mindset at media head offices that needs to be changed first. Three respondents (11, 13, 24) stated that understanding of reporters as well as editorial staff regarding these people, their way of life, their traditions, cultures, etc can yield fair coverage of these groups.

Respondent 15&19 suggested that there is need to focus more on localized networks of communication that can safeguard the interests of indigenous people. Respondent 8 & 12 stated that safe access provided to media men by the government towards the habitats of indigenous people like Waziristan, Fata, interior Balochistan, interior Sindh and some areas of Gilgit Baltistan can be helpful in proper representation. Respondent 20 and 22 suggested that a funded partnership of non-government sector with media can increase representation of indigenous people. Respondent 14 and 23 emphasized that newspaper policy should be considered and changed.

### **Limitations of this study**

Due to time constraint, it was just conceivable to assess these newspapers within a three month time span. This without doubt may restrict the potential outcome of results obtained through a more extended study, in spite of the fact that this explorative undertaking is thought to be sufficiently long so as to pick up examination of indigenous issues introduced through the media. Further the second phase of the study was based on interviews from Lahore based journalists which is another limitation of the study.

### **Conclusion**

The first conclusion is not a surprise: the indigenous population is underrepresented in mainstream media. With a cumulative average of just 1.71 per cent of news stories produced daily by these newspapers. In Pakistan it is clear that indigenous-related stories are scarcely on the radar of the press. Those few stories that deal with indigenous people mostly depict them in a negative tone, as unconstructive and trouble

makers. Stories related to indigenous people receive less prominence because most of the stories deal with topic like crime, politics and culture.

Telephone interviews from the journalists working in the three newspapers revealed that journalists have only a fair amount of knowledge regarding indigenous people. Further more, journalists were of the view that stereotypes and discrimination against indigenous people is furthered by their lack of representation and negative portrayal by media. Half of the respondents said that their organisations have code of conduct concerning indigenous and minority groups but, surprisingly, half of the journalists were unaware of any code of conduct. Though more journalists stated that indigenous people have news value but 50 per cent considered general readers lack of interests and editorial staff's lack of understanding as same of the main obstacles in reporting about indigenous people.

### **Recommendations**

- News organisations should dedicate a special reporter for the issues of indigenous and tribal people in all areas.
  - Introduce special courses, training sessions and workshops for the journalists and reporters to sensitize and acclimatize them to these particular groups.
  - More focus should be on localized networks of communication that can safeguard the interests of indigenous people.
  - Government should ensure the safety of the journalists working in the tribal areas.
- NGOs and media should work together to raise the concerns of indigenous people.