

FOURTH ESTATE FRAMING OF MUSLIMS IN 21ST CENTURY: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF FOUR LEADING INDIAN NEWSPAPERS DURING CONGRESS AND BJP REGIMES

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ABSTRACT

Napoleon Bonaparte once said that four hostile newspapers are more to be feared than a thousand bayonets. There is no denying the fact that newspapers are the schoolmasters of the common man. Once appeared in Fourth Estate, it gives credence to what is being portrayed. The image of anything depends to a great extent on how it is being framed by the Fourth Estate. The fourth Estate might have a bias that favors using one frame over another. It gives priority to one kind of story. This is what we called Framing. Images appearing on Fourth Estate create stereotypes and communities hold this prism in their minds and view everything accordingly. It is pertinent to know that what type of frames Fourth Estate gave to Muslims because Fourth Estate has the ability to control, interpret and filter information. Fourth Estate has the potency to choose very selectively what world should and should not know about any happening. The broad objective was to investigate the quantum and characterization of Muslims and Muslim related issues and concomitantly the image of Muslim community in the mainstream English dailies of India during the BJP and Congress regimes in the 21st century.

The study adopted content analysis as the research methodology to study the framing of Muslims in mainstream English dailies of India. When Muslim related content was analyzed during Congress and BJP regimes, it was found that all the selected newspapers consistently in two different periods of times were statistically significant, means they gave more negative coverage to Muslim related news as compared to positive coverage. It was also found that press during BJP Regime was more statistically significant than press during Congress Regime. The researcher suggests here a theory Savior theory of Fourth Estate. There is no denying the fact that a number of theories proved that media has the power to do miracles. Now the researcher propounds this theory to request media to take charge of saving the minorities of India especially Muslim minority, which is the victim of intolerance. So that people get rid of the hatred against the Muslim minority.

KEYWORDS: Media, Muslims, India, Framing, and Content-Analysis

INTRODUCTION

Muslims are the second largest constituent of humanity. Islam, the religion of Muslims is the second largest religion in India with 14.2 % of the country's total population. (Census, 2011).