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## How Mainstream Media's Agenda Influence the Local Newspapers Priorities?

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### Abstract

*Media in Pakistan varies from local to national level. This study investigates Pakistan's two mainstream and two local newspapers contents—while taking China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) as a case study—for agenda setting patterns and influence on each other. A look at various newspapers in Pakistan suggests that every Newspaper is almost copy of its contemporaries. The main objective of the study is to highlight that mainstream media influence local media. The main significance of my study and research is to create the importance of local newspapers. The case study for this research is “China-Pakistan Economic Corridor” (CPEC), a controversial and political issue between federal and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Methodology for this study is qualitative content analysis guided by Agenda setting theory. The analysis found the following themes, which became part of the public as well as political discourse in the ongoing debate on CPEC. It was concluded that mainstream media partially influenced the Print media agenda*

**Key Words:** Mainstream Media, Newspapers, CPEC.

### Introduction

Media in Pakistan varies from local to national level. It is usually assumed that the agenda of public debate is set by the media. The same is true in the sense that in a country where mainstream and local print media operate, mainstream newspapers get influenced the local newspapers. This study investigates Pakistan's two mainstream and two local newspapers contents—while taking China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) as a case study—for agenda setting patterns and influence on each other. The time frame is from December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015, to January 30, 2016. The methodology is Qualitative content analysis guided by Agenda Setting theory. The data was collected from online web archives of the site newspapers. From the analysis, this study found the agenda-setting theory “partially applied”. When the interests of both media matched, then the agenda was set by mainstream and followed by local print media, but when interests didn't coincide, then each print media had its own priorities.

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## **Statement of the Problem**

There is a general perception that mainstream print media's agenda somehow dominate the agenda of the local press. A look at various newspapers in Pakistan suggests that every Newspaper is almost copy of its contemporaries. The pattern is more vivid in the lesser-known newspapers. Keeping in view the number of resources and expertise available to them, they have little to venture and offer. The format, the contents, the style, the issues go one and the same with them. They are just imitators of their big brothers; what the big brother does they just follow that. One clear instance is following the agenda set by mainstream newspapers. As observed, the media agenda is generally set by the mainstream media, so the local media find it hard to deviate from that. As a result, coverage of most of the local issues sacrificed by the local press. Ignoring local issues by mainstream media can be justified, as it has to cater to the needs of a much wider and diversified audience. But the same justification may not work for the local press as it is supposed to reflect more rather solely on issues in its limited target area. Thus, many may question the very existence of the local press. What purpose do they serve? Why should one pick a smaller newspaper for news about bigger national and international affairs if mainstream media that too with more sophisticated arrangements produces the same?

## **Objective of the Study**

The main objective of the study is to highlight that mainstream media influence local media. This study will dig out how local media contents are inspired by mainstream media in Pakistan.

## **Significance of the Study**

To pinpoint areas of improvement in the Provincial autonomy through print media in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), and besides to explore the causes and effects of weak/ less effectiveness of newspapers

This study may also help for local print media to defend their agenda against mainstream print media; also, the local issues will get importance and will be properly highlighted. The main significance of my study and research is to create the importance of local newspapers. Because once the Mainstream newspapers were also local newspapers, with the passage of time they got their importance and now they have become the mainstream, i.e., once *JANG* was a local newspaper started from Delhi, then shifted to Karachi after the independence of Pakistan. This will be also helpful for the local community to solve their issues in local print media. For this research, the issue of CPEC was chosen because it is an important issue for local people (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) so that a controversial debate arises amid local print media (KP) and mainstream print media.

## **Case Study**

The case study for this research is "China-Pakistan Economic Corridor" (CPEC), a controversial and political issue between federal and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

## **An Introduction to CPEC**

Pakistan has enjoyed a historic long-term and strong relationship with China. The long-standing ties between the two trustworthy friends have been based on mutual trust and benefits. A close identity of views on political and economic is a Chinese dream of 'One Belt, one road' for the connectivity of West of China with Central Asia, South Asia and Europe, i.e., Eurasia through Silk Road Economic Belt (SREB) and Maritime Silk Road (MSR). The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)

Due to the important Geo-strategic location of Pakistan, China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is one of the vital sections of the 'One Belt, One Road' initiative which will benefit both the countries equally by making Pakistan a bridge to carve out a large economic bloc of about 3 billion people living in this part of the world, nearly half of the population of the planet.

China conceptualised the CPEC project in the era of Pervez Musharraf government under the vision of 'One Belt, One Road'. The issue of its route was finalised during the government of Pakistan People's Party under the leadership of President of Pakistan Asif Ali Zardari. Till that period the project remained uncontroversial

As a result of elections In May 2013, Pakistan Muslim League – Nawaz (PML-N) came into power. PML-N Government followed CPEC, closely with the Chinese government. The Pak-China Economic Corridor Secretariat was jointly inaugurated on Tuesday, 27 August 2013 by Federal Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal and Zhang Xiaoping, the vice-chairman of National Development and Reforms Commission China (NDRC), The China Government encouraged the Chinese companies to offer loan and invest 46 Billion US \$ in Bank Corporation), ICBC (Industrial and Commercial Bank of China Limited) etc. The economic corridor is mainly about cooperation in three areas, namely, transport, energy and industrial parks. It builds a new platform for the growth of China-Pakistan strategic cooperative partnership in the next five to ten years

The Project will bring an investment of about 15,000 billion Rupees, in a few years. That's about four times the current Federal budget of the country. The industries, Trade zones, Motorways, Railway Tracks, LNG Terminals & Pipeline Projects and transmission lines of world standards will be built. The fibre optic cable will make the Corridor one of the latest one in the world. The problem of unemployment, low are no Technical knowhow, and export-oriented Trade will be solved. CPEC should benefit the whole country.

## **Literature Review**

Pakistan is a federal state, which consists of four provinces. Alongside Pakistan's mainstream or national press, there exist provincial press in all provinces, which tries to give their local perspectives. In this study, it is investigated how national print media affect the contents of local newspapers?

The theory of Agenda Setting is referred to as media set Public Agenda, but the same can be used as to whether mainstream media can also have the ability to set the agenda for the local press?

Rogers and Dearing (1988) concluded:

- (a) "The media influence the public agenda."
- (b) "The agenda seems to have a direct, sometimes strong, influence upon the policy agenda, and the media indirectly influence policy as well because"
- (c) "The public agenda, once set by, or reflected by, the media agenda, influences the policy agenda."

In the same way, the mainstream print media may also influence the agenda of the local press since local media does not have enough resources to deploy reporters and analysts for producing news and mostly rely on national media. Also, because readers may be interested to know about national issues rather than local issues, so the local press has to compete with mainstream print media and give emphasis on the same issues, which are highlighted by the mainstream press.

According to Noam Chomsky (1997), "There is another sector of the media, the elite media, sometimes called the agenda-setting media because they are the ones with the big resources; they set the framework in which everyone else operates". For example; The New York Time and CBS that kind of things. Their audience is mostly privileged people. The people who read the New York Times—people who are wealthy or part of what is sometimes called the political class—they are actually involved in the political system in an ongoing fashion. They are basically managers of one sort or another. They can be political managers, business managers (like corporate executives or that sort of thing), doctoral managers (like university professors), or other journalists who are involved in organising the way people think and look at things."

The Mainstream media set a framework within which local media operate. If you are reading *DAWN* newspaper, who grind out a constant flow of news, there is something that comes along every day that says "Notice to Editors: Tomorrow's mostly Urdu newspapers and other local newspaper, i.e., *Statesmen* and *Aaj* going to have the following stories on the front page." The point of that is if you're an editor of a newspaper in Local Press, and you don't have the resources to figure out what the news is, or you don't want to think about it anyway, this tells you what the news is. These are the stories for the quarter page that you are going to devote to something other than local affairs or diverting your audience. These are the stories that you put there because that's what the *Local press* tells us is what you're supposed to care about tomorrow. Again, if you are working as an editor in Local press, you would sort of having to do that, because you don't have much else in the way of resources. If you get off the line, if you're producing stories that the big press doesn't like, you'll hear about it pretty soon. That framework works pretty well, and it is understandable that it is just a reflection of obvious power structures. The audience is the product. The product is privileged people, just like the people who are writing the newspapers, you know, top-level decision-making people in society. You have to sell a product to a market, and the market is, of course, an advertiser. Whether it is television or newspapers, or whatever, they are

selling audiences. Corporations sell audiences to other corporations. In the case of the elite media, it's big businesses.

“In addition, by gaining agenda importance and then altering the framing of an issue, sources can control which news beats or types of organisations (Mainstream or Local press) cover an issue and even influence the type of policy pitch where the debate over an issue takes place. This connection between agenda building, frame building, and its impact on the trajectory of an issue of research” (Nesbit & Huges, 2006)

The news agenda is defined as the list of events or issues that are portrayed in coverage at one point in time or across time (Nesbit & Huges, 2006). Events are discrete occurrences, such as the release of a government report on greenhouse gas emissions or the Prime minister speech on China. In order to further promote certainty, Media have a tendency to rely heavily on routine channel sources and information subsidies. Examples include official government actions and event. These routines result in systematic patterns in news attention and sourcing. Studies find that the majority of news stories are source-generated, with government and industry officials having the strongest impact on the news agenda.

A limitation for many of these content studies is their scale, with studies focusing on news coverage of an issue at just a few news outlets, over just a few years, within a single national setting, or using the agenda at the national elite newspapers as a proxy for the broader news agenda. Several studies have tracked coverage of an issue over a decade or more, identifying the important reciprocal relationships between media agendas and policy arenas (Nesbit et al., 2003)

“Agenda building refers to the process by which news organisations and journalists feature, emphasise, and/or select certain events, issues, or sources to cover over others. Research in the area is closely linked to but distinct from the agenda-setting tradition, which examines the connection between the issues portrayed in the news media and the issue priorities of the public” (McCombs, 2004). Once an issue is made prominent by mainstream media, the local media usually take the same issue because the audience needs it or they just fill their pages.

In combination with measuring the amount of media attention to an event or issue, this “visible source impact” approach (Berkowitz, 1992) also involves tracking the standing given in coverage to certain actors or institutions over others. Researchers may also closely examine news stories for the use of routine channel sources that appear to have served as the news peg for coverage. The more prominent the actor in coverage or the more frequently appearing a specific type of news story, the greater the influence that particular source is inferred to have on the agenda-building process. This is why local media prefer or blindly follow the mainstream media. The heavy reliance by journalists on familiar narratives means that in order to generate continued coverage of an issue, journalists must be able to fit the issue into a broader storyline visible conflict, personality clashes, and dramatic claims in relation to risks and morality (Zhu & Blood, 1997). Second, with technological changes and increasing audience fragmentation, future research needs to explore more carefully the relationship between traditional news organisations and their many emerging competitors. This is especially more important in Pakistan, where the

media landscape is very dynamic and diversified both in terms of language and interests. There are four provinces alongside Gilgit Baltistan (GB), Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) *Azad Jammu and Kashmir* (AJK) in which local media is actively functioning in competition with mainstream print media. The local media cater for the local population but as they either don't have that many resources or is influenced by mainstream media, so it is necessary to find out whether it is true or not to discover the areas of possible improvement.

## **Theoretical Framework**

The analysis in this research is informed by 'Agenda-setting theory'. Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw first put The Agenda-Setting Function of the Mass Media forth in 1972 in the general "Public Opinion Quarterly". They originally suggested that the media set the public agenda, in the sense that they may not exactly tell you what to think, but they may tell you what to think about.

*The main abstract of this theory states, "In choosing and displaying news, editors, newsroom staff, and broadcasters play an important part in shaping political reality. Readers learn not only about a given issue but also how much importance to attach to that issue from the amount of information in a news story and its position. In reflecting what candidates are saying during a campaign, the mass media may well determine the important issues—that is, the media may set the "agenda" of the campaign".*

This theory is intended to apply the news media, although in certain cases it has been applied to other areas of the media and messages, which they transmit to audiences. What we know about the world is largely based on what the media decide to tell us. More specifically, the result of this mediated view of the world is that the priorities of the media strongly influence the priorities of the public. Elements prominent on the media agenda become prominent in the public mind.

## **Research Questions**

- 1) How far local press follows the agenda of mainstream newspapers in its coverage of day-to-day affairs?
- 2) Agenda in which particular area is more dominate?

## **Research Methodology**

Methodology for this study is qualitative content analysis guided by Agenda setting theory. Walizer and Wienir (1978) cited by Wimmer & Dominick (2013) define content analysis as any systematic procedure devised to examine the contents of recorded information; Krippendorff (2004) defines it as a research technique for making replicable and valid references from data to their context. Kerlinger's (2000) definition is fairly typical: Content analysis is a method of studying and analysing communication in a *systematic, objective, and quantitative* manner for the purpose of measuring variables. This method is inspired by linguistics and interrogates how language is used to construct social reality? How are certain aspects of reality emphasised while others ignored?

## Method

Four newspapers of Pakistan's were select for analysing their contents. News stories, editorials and columns regarding CPEC were selected and analysed. In these four dailies, two are mainstream newspapers one English language and one Urdu, and two dailies from local print media one English and Urdu to analyse the research question, "How main Mainstream Print media Agenda influence the local Newspapers". The time frame for this research is from December 01, 2015, to January 30, 2016, because during this period issue of CPEC is controversial. But after the attack on Bacha Khan University, this issue was totally ignored. The data was collected, and themes in the contents from both mainstream and local newspapers were investigated to get the idea of how the agenda is set by mainstream and local print media.

The following newspapers were selected.

### a) Mainstream Newspapers

1. Daily *DAWN* (English language)
2. Daily *Jang* (Urdu language)

### b) Local Newspapers

1. Daily *Statesman* (English langue)
2. Daily *Aaj* (Urdu language)

## Data Analysis

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This analysis found the following themes, which became part of the public as well as political discourse in the ongoing debate on CPEC.

## Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Stance

Print media support the stance of KP province mostly with economic concerns. For example, Daily *Aaj* reports, "We do not accept only a highway; we want a corridor like Punjab in which Gas, LNG, Industrial zones, Optical Fibers, Power plants including other facilities" Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Pervaiz Khattak, (Dec 28, 2015). Daily *Aaj* Published 27 stories mostly on the front page with economic concerns, while one column and two editorials to represent Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's (KP) Stance. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is a backward province in

Pakistan as compared to Punjab and Sindh. When China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) was signed between China and Pakistan; china proposed Western route for their easy Trade from *Gawder* to Xingian Province lies in West of China, which is also an underdeveloped province as compared to East China. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's government claims that the original route has been diverted towards Punjab, which is also covered by Print media.

Daily *Jang*, published "Prime minister had diverted maximum \$46billons proposed projects to Punjab. Another All-Parties Conference (APC) will be called if Prime minister broke his promises" Chief Minister (CM) Pervez Khattak. Jan 10, 2016. Daily *Jang*, published nine stories five on the front page, while four and five columns on this issue while completely ignoring in its editorials. It shows that the issue of CPEC is not the editorial priority of this mainstream Urdu newspaper. In the given statement, if the route has been diverted than the economics benefits well go also to Punjab. And Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) remains deprived of its due share in the CPEC project. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif stated in a press conference first of all the "Western route should be completed in the first phase on the basis of emergency" But in reality, when the project announced there was the only highway without its complete package.

Print media focused on the economic consequences of CPEC while making an agenda for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). The second problem with CPEC is that most of the documents are being kept secret. No documents are available on the Websites of Planning and development department as Uzair M. Younas argue in his column published by Daily *DAWN* "the problem with the CPEC agreement is that much of it is secret and undisclosed. The State Bank governor recently bemoaned this fact, arguing that it is important for the bank to know the structure of CPEC deals". Jan 03, 2016.

When the federal government did not satisfy Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government, then they passed a resolution against changing in route. This is how media dug out the reality, and it means that the main route was changed from *Khyber Pakhtunkhwa* and *Baluchistan* to *Punjab* by the current political government of Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N). Thus, a strong debate and tension rose between the federal and Provincial Governments. Which was covered by Mainstream and Local Media: Daily *Statesmen* reports, "Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Assembly passed a resolution against changing the route of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). The resolution demanded that the agreement of CPEC should be made public".Dec. 05, 2016. *Statesmen* carried only five stories and one editorial to present the economic stance of KP's. No columnist has been found regarding this aspect.

In All Parties Conference (APC) on May 28, 2016, all the provincial Political Leaders agreed upon a single point that western route should be completed in the first phase in which Gas pipeline, optical fibres, Railway tracks and especially industrial parks must be included. Because these accompanying components of CPEC are supposed to boost the economy. Provincial media focused on these two issues, the economic benefits and the documents of CPEC, which became a topic of discussion both in the political and public sphere. Mainstream and local media both



covered it with their own perspective. Local media give a perspective in the province service while mainstream in esteem federal government.

### **National Interest**

While some Political leaders, media scholars and experts argue that China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is not only an Economic project invested by China in Pakistan but a window of opportunity that would usher in socio-economic development all over Pakistan. Print media in Pakistan reports that CPEC is not only the right of a single province, but all the provinces will take equal benefits from it. Print media started this that it was the duty of each Pakistani to protect CPEC in the course of National interest. Daily *DAWN* in one of its stories briefs, “CPEC is a fusion of multiple development projects aiming at prosperity and well-being of the people of the country and the region at large,” the Prime Minister said. (January 12, 2016). Daily reports four stories and one column regarding this aspect, while totally ignored in editorials. The mainstream media set this agenda, which became a vigorous stance of government as well as the public. For instance, in Daily *Aaj*, a guest columnist argues “CPEC is a ‘game-changer’ project for the progress and prosperity of Pakistan which will play an important role in the socio-economic development. (January 01, 2016).

In the course of national interest, either local or mainstream print media always called CPEC is a ‘Game Changer’, which means it will divert the attention of the entire world towards Pakistan for Trade. As *Gawdar* port emerging third deepest Port in the world. Thus, Trade must be increased in Pakistan that will be beneficial for Pakistan not only with the economic perspective but also will play an important role in the relationship with other countries either politically or strategically. Easy Trade always increases Import and export, which help in the growth of the economy, wealth, GDP and per capita as well.

Mainstream media reported that some elements are making CPEC controversial; they did not keep national interest rather their own interest. For example, Daily *DAWN* reports "People are custodians of this mega project and will foil all conspiracies against it". January 13, 2016. In my complete framework, *DAWN* published two stories, two columns while one editorial was available on the controversial aspect. It shows the priority of *DAWN* regarding controversial feature and importance.

Baluchistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa always struggle for their units to give equal shares in the Megaproject, which may be the first and last chance for their socio-economic development. In this context, Mainstream print media always reported that provinces making it controversial while skipping their National Interest.

The above statements mostly reported by Mainstream print media, local print media always reports economic priorities for KP and Baluchistan.

### **Strategic Importance**

The strategic importance of Pakistan cannot be denied. Pakistan is located at the junction of great

powers. In its neighbor, one world power Russia and the other emerging power China lies. Any alliance among world powers enhances its significance. In Daily Statesmen Salman Safi states "It cannot be denied that Baluchistan, particularly, its *Gwadar* port, is crucial for the success of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Pakistan, on the other hand, seems willing enough to do whatever it takes to accommodate China's interests and address all its concerns in its bid to fully harness CPEC to pave the way for its own "economic strides." January 22, 2016. Central Asia is the center stage of new Great games. Quest for resources- oil and energy resources-holds the central point in their policies towards Central Asia. After the United Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) decline, the new quest started, which is manifested in their politics towards acquiring oil and gas. Pakistan is located very close to the oil-rich Middle Eastern countries. Thus, Pakistan can play an influential role in the shipment of oil with China through CPEC. Mainstream media framed CPEC mostly in this context while provincial media was least concerned about this.

Daily *DAWN* reports "The CPEC project is being viewed as very beneficial not only for the states involved but also for the region as well. Regional connectivity and economic development are two major aspects of the project". January 28, 2016. In daily *DAWN* two stories regarding strategic importance and one column as well

At the end of the cold war, with the emergence of the multi-polar system at the international arena, the process of globalisation got impetus. Resultantly, interdependence among states increased, and now states have begun to develop their diplomatic relations with each other on the basis of their geo-strategic and geo-political interests. Likewise, Pakistan and China, who are considered as two "all weathered" strategic and diplomatic partners in South Asia, decided to enlarge their relationship in a broader spectrum. Therefore, China issued a statement, reported by Daily Statesmen "We are ready to work with Pakistani, to actively promote the construction of CPEC projects, and bring tangible benefits to the people of the two countries," the spokesman added. January 01, 2016. Media report both mainstream and local. Pakistan is willing to bask in China's economic glory while China is all set to make huge strides towards consolidating its geopolitical position in the Asian continent. The strategic frame was present in the news stories, which shows that media is conscious of this aspect of CPEC and emphasised upon it. Mainstream media and strategic analysts mostly contributed to this agenda.

### **CEPC as Controversial**

It cannot be denied that Baluchistan, particularly, its *Gwadar* port, is crucial for the success of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Therefore, the resolution of the conflict in that region is much more important than merely building roads there. It is uncertain whether China is playing or will play any role in mitigating the conflict in Baluchistan. However, recent controversies about the route of CPEC have clearly demonstrated that nationalist forces in Baluchistan and other regions are highly suspicious about Chinese interventions in their respective regions.

The resolution of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Assembly further demands that the “monographic study on highways of CPEC should be made a public document. Similarly, the agreements between Pakistan and China should also be made public”. It is high time to bring transparency to CPEC, or perhaps call another multiparty conference to hammer out a new consensus behind it all over again.

The reasons given were that the Centre had not allocated the promised funds for those projects that lie in the province, and that changes were being made in the allocations and routes without consulting his government.

At one point, according to a participant, one of the federal ministers taunted Khattak that as Daily *DAWN* reports “instead of focusing on your own province, you and your government are spending all your energy on making the CPEC controversial and, in the process, creating problems for the federal government”. An irritated Khattak replied: “Don’t worry about my province; I know how to do my job.” January 16, 2016. This mainstream English Newspaper cover CPEC as controversial that is because they publish two stories on the front page while two-column and two editorials were a priority. Mainstream print media reports a handful of elements were trying to make CPEC controversial like *Kalabagh* dam for their political gains, adding making the important project controversial is tantamount to hamper the development process. Media also added to this function of making a controversial agenda.

## Federal’s Stance

Print media run through Advertisements, and Punjab is a hub of both news and advertisement. The federal government is also influenced by Punjab. Punjab is an industrial province. Thus, newspapers get more advertisements. Therefore, Mainstream media defend CEPC always in favor of the federal government. It has been observed in mainstream media when KP government or media raising vice for KP rights, mainstream media and government claims that Nationalist, religious and other political parties should stop playing their politics on this ‘gigantic project’. As Daily *Jang* reports, “There has been no change in route in China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), Some Nationalist parties, religious and other parties want playing politics on CPEC”. Said Ahsan Iqbal Federal minister for planning and development. January 02, 2016. This mainstream Urdu newspaper analyses with two stories and one column. On one side mainstream media reports that no change occurred in CPEC, all provinces will take equal benefits form it, the project is purely in National interest, but in reality, there are no such documents showed by mainstream media which give clear proof that route is western. But rather than straight statements as Daily *DAWN* reports “Federal minister assured Baluchistan on Friday that there would be no change in the design of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and work on major projects along CPEC’s western route would be taken up soon”. January 07, 2016. As well as daily *DAWN* published three stories and one column, including one editorial, which shows mainstream print media imports regarding this phase.

Local media and Provinces continue to cry foul over the mega project due to lack of transparency, and it is the responsibility of the central government. Local media and KP government with political parties always struggle for their rights. Their reservations were simple: all the documents regarding CEPC should be Public, to what is the reality. On the other hand, State Bank of Pakistan doesn't know about funding. But in Punjab, there are several development work projects reported by media part of CPEC. When the KP government forced the federal government, An All-Parties Conference was arranged on May 28, 2015. To remove the reservation of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in which Prime minister Nawaz Sharif stated, covered by Daily statesmen's, "Western route should be completed in the first phase on the basis of emergency". December 29, 2016. The number of total stories was covered by daily statesman's only one with no editorial coverage in counter-argument local media reports "We do not accept only a highway; we want a corridor like Punjab in which Gas, LNG, Industrial zones, Optical Fibers, Power plants including other facilities" Chief Minister Khyber

In the context of national interest local media also reports to overlook It is a great opportunity to forge unity for making CPEC a fate changer for the entire country, for example, Daily Statesmen reports when inspired from mainstream media "President Mamnoon Hussain says implementation of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor will enhance the significance of Pakistan in the region. He asked all political forces in the country to join hands with the federal government for successful executing of CPEC project."

In this context, Local media is inspired by mainstream media; therefore, which means that here, the mainstream' agenda became provincial media's agenda.

### **CPEC and Security**

Pakistan is suffering due to militancy and backwardness for the past two decades, especially Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) had paid huge sacrifices in the fight against terrorism, where business and industrial activities were shattered and as a result, unemployment increased in the province. Print media reports two aspects regarding CEPC and security; first one is to protect this Mega project from terrorist and anti-Pakistani's. The second is that for this project, Pakistan and China want peace in the surrounding region, especially in Afghanistan, India and Iran. In Daily *Aaj*, Farooq Chohan writes in his column "China and Pakistan play a major role to set peace and harmony, for the purposes to complete this mega project" January 01, 2016. Peace is a very major component to maintain development to enhance economy; therefore, both countries are interested in maintaining peace in the region. Pakistan's print media claim that the United States and India don't want the successful completion of CPEC. Both countries have their own interest. As china emerging with huge economic power to become Superpower of the world is a threat to America. China burns 80 to 85% Oil on sea ship trade, CPEC will help to save these; definitely, her economy must then boost. While *Gwadar* Port is also a threat for India, as it will devalue her ports mainstream newspaper reports. Pakistan wants to maintain peace in the region and good relation with America too.

The second factor to safeguard CPEC internally from terrorist, Pakistan Army plays a vital role for this purpose, a two-star brigade has been developed to protect CPEC. It is a huge challenge for Pakistan to protect it both externally and internally. Daily *DAWN* reports “Gen Sharif reiterated the army’s commitment to providing security for CPEC and the workforce involved in the project, terming it a game-changer for the country which had the potential to transform the lives of its people We are totally aware of all campaigns against the corridor and the security forces are ready to pay any price to turn this long-cherished dream into reality”. January 20, 2016. Daily *DAWN* appears with five stories on its front along with one column. Chief of Army Staff General Raheel Sharif stressed the need for ensuring a peaceful environment for executing the planned development projects. Not only Pak-Army is ready to protect CPEC, but also Pak-Navy is prepared reports by Daily Statesmen “A special Marine Battalion has been raised for security of *Gwadar*, Chinese engineers and delegates visiting the port,” a Pakistan Navy said. January 06, 2016. This local Newspaper gives minimum coverage with only four stories. While totally ignored in its column and editorial.

Mainstream and local media both focused on security-related aspects of CPEC. This agenda mostly dominated the elite discourse. Blasts in Baluchistan and Karachi are being referred to as “Attacks on CPECT” which is manifest in the emphasis of media on this part.

### **Economic and Developmental Aspect**

China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a deal of \$45 billion being signed is purely economic in nature and will bring jobs opportunities, foreign capital, and economic growth to the country. CPEC is a window of opportunity that would usher in socio-economic development. The project reflects a new vision, new paradigm and a new endeavor. CPEC project is as known as ‘Game Changer’ in media. Besides strengthening the Sino-Pakistan geo-strategic partnership, the CPEC will interlink the region with modern infrastructure to change the fate of underdeveloped and vulnerable population residing in the region. For example, Daily *Aaj* reports “Billions of dollar project invested by China in Pakistan to encourage the economy of both countries. It will open doors in socio-economic growth relationship with Central Asia”. January 12, 2016. Daily *Aaj* reports with two stories on its front page while with one column. A flagship project of the Belt and Road initiative as well, the CPEC intends to revive the ancient Silk Road with a focus on infrastructure and constitutes the strategic framework of bilateral cooperation. The project links China’s strategy to develop its western region with Pakistan’s focus on improving its economy, including the infrastructure construction of *Gwadar* Port, together with some energy cooperation and investment programmers, for example, Daily *Statements* reports “CPEC included Port Qasim Electric Company Coal Fired Plant (1320 MW); Sahiwal Coal-fired Power Plant (1320 MW); Engro Thar Coal-fired Power Plant (1320 MW); Surface Mine in Block II of Thar Coalfield 6.5 mtpa; Gwadar Coal Power Project (300 MW); HUBCO Coal Power Plant (660 MW); Rahimyar Khan Coal Power Project (1320 MW); SSRL Thar Coal Block 6.5mtpa and CPIH Mine Mouth Power Plant, Thar, Sindh; Coal-Fired Power Project Thar block-I (1320 MW);

Quaid-e-Azam Solar Park, Bahawalpur (1000 MW); Dawood Wind Farm, Bhambore, Sindh (50MW); UEP 100MW Wind Farm, Jhampir, Sindh; Sachal 50MW Wind Farm, Jhampir, Sindh; Sunnec 50MW Wind Farm, Nooriabad, Thatta, Sindh". January 12, 2016. This local English Newspaper gives extraordinary coverage to CPEC on its Economic and Development aspect. With no column and no editorial.

CPEC projects to benefit all provinces the infrastructure projects to be undertaken under China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) will benefit all provinces of the country generating billions in revenue and providing shorter land routes for international Trade. The CPEC is a 3,000km-long network of roads, railway tracks and pipelines to transport oil and gas from *Gwadar* Port to Kashgar city in China's Xinjiang region. Under the plan, a railway line will be developed from *Gwadar* to Quetta and Jacobabad via Besima tehsil in Baluchistan and a 560km track will be laid from Bostan to Kotla Jam on the main line-II via Zhob and Dera Ismail Khan and another 682km track will be laid from Havelian to Khunjerab.

The western route is originating from *Gwadar* will pass through *Turbat, Panjgur, Nag, Basima, Sorab, Qalat, Quetta, QillaSaifullah, Zhob* and reach Dera Ismail Khan before leading to Islamabad.

The up-gradation of 1,872km track from Karachi to Peshawar via Kotri, Multan, Lahore and Rawalpindi (including Taxila-Havelian) — along with dualisation of the track from Shahdara to Peshawar — will also be carried out. Further the up-gradation of 1,254 kilometres of railway track from Kotri to Attock City via Dadu, Larkana, Jacobabad, Dera Ghazi Khan, Bhakkar and Kundian will be upgraded. Both media reported the economic and development benefits of this project; however, local media is mostly concerned about the reservations of the province as it claimed that the KP's route is not with all its components. So, the mainstream media ignored KP's concerns but also could not influence the local media's agenda as it continuously reported the province's worries.

### Quantitative Analysis Table

Table 1. The Quantitative Analysis of the Data is as Follows.

| S. No | Themes                     | DAWN |    |    | Jang |    |    | Aaj |    |    | Statements |   |   | Total |
|-------|----------------------------|------|----|----|------|----|----|-----|----|----|------------|---|---|-------|
|       |                            | S    | C  | E  | S    | C  | E  | S   | C  | E  | S          | C | E |       |
| 1     | Khyber Pakhtukhwa's Stance | 10   | 02 | 01 | 09   | 05 | 0  | 27  | 01 | 02 | 05         | 0 | 1 | 63    |
| 2     | CPEC & Security            | 05   | 01 | 0  | 0    | 0  | 01 | 03  | 0  | 01 | 04         | 0 | 0 | 15    |
| 3     | National Interest          | 01   | 01 | 0  | 01   | 03 | 02 | 02  | 04 | 01 | 0          | 0 | 0 | 15    |
| 4     | Federal's stance           | 04   | 0  | 0  | 02   | 01 | 0  | 04  | 0  | 0  | 01         | 0 | 0 | 12    |
| 5     | Controvercializng CPEC     | 02   | 02 | 01 | 03   | 01 | 02 | 01  | 01 | 01 | 03         | 0 | 0 | 17    |

|   |                                |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |     |
|---|--------------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|
| 6 | Strategic Importance           | 02 | 01 | 0  | 02 | 01 | 0  | 0  | 01 | 0  | 0  | 01 | 0  | 8   |
| 7 | Economic & Development Aspects | 08 | 02 | 0  | 03 | 0  | 01 | 02 | 01 | 0  | 13 | 0  | 0  | 30  |
|   | Total                          | 32 | 08 | 02 | 20 | 11 | 06 | 39 | 08 | 05 | 26 | 01 | 01 | 160 |

In the total 160 collections (stories, columns and editorials), the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's reservations (63) and Economic and Development (30) themes are on top of the media agenda. Security and national interest have equal representation of 15 each. This study focused on Editorials and columns, which can be said as the brain of a newspaper and influence public opinion as well as government policies. In this regard daily *Aaj* although carried 27 stories only wrote two editorials and one column. The stories were statements of politicians or remarks of some individual, which based on obvious facts. The editorial priority is distributed as *Jang's* six, *Aaj* five, *DAWN* two, and *Statesmen* carry only one. The editorial always shows the interest and insight of Newspaper regarding any issue.

## Discussion and Conclusion

Usually, the mainstream media set agenda for local media because of the larger resources at their disposal. This study also analysed Pakistan's Print media to check how much the above statement is true. Taking the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) as a case study, this researcher investigated the influence of mainstream media over the local media in terms of different themes they have focused upon.

In this study it was found that mainstream media partially influenced the Print media agenda, for example, taking the economic theme both media reported this issue but the KP stance which the local media presented with the context of changing the route which consequently will divert the economic benefits of this project to Punjab.

Imran Khan Chairmen Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf (PTI) "Pervez Khattak is a Docile Chief Minister; if I was on his place, I would protest and gather a sit-in."

This story was only reported by one newspaper *Jang* while the rest ignored it. The reason is that the mainstream media is Punjab based and support the federal government while the local media also could not report it as it was against the provincial authority. Thus, the media lost its objectivity.

The environmental aspect of CPEC is totally ignored by the media in the selected time period for this study. It is obvious that with such a huge project, which includes industrial zones can affect the environmental and ecological compositions of the area. The ignorance of media suggests that either they are unaware of this issue or it will not increase their ranking. Here it shows the media only focus on Political aspects the environmental aspect once ignored by the media is totally absent in public discourse. A common man is unaware of what positive or negative changes CPEC can bring to its surroundings.

One another aspect of CPEC is Demographic implications, which it will bring with itself. Where the industrial zone will be constructed, it will attract the people for employment

opportunities, which can change the political configuration of the country. Also, *Gawadar* Port and the sounding cities, which will be inhibited with CPEC, will totally change the demography of Baluchistan in the sense that people from other provinces and even countries will be imported to this province. Any change in population in Baluchistan is considered as an existential issue both for the state and Baluch nationalists. The media completely ignored this perspective, and this is why the general public is totally unaware of. It shows how the priority of media becomes the priorities of the public.

The residence and livelihood of Baloch people with developing *Gawadr* Port will be disturbed. As they are mostly fisher, now they will be deprived, and the media did not highlight alternative jobs and residence.

One another issue with CPEC is its too secretive nature. Neither its engineering nor financial documents are shared with provinces or the general public. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's strongly requested the route alignment document and the local media reported this issue, but mainstream media never bothered it. This is because they support the federal agenda. The other aspect was the funds (\$46b), which would be transacted between the chine's banks and Pakistan's state banks. But according to the statement of the governor of the SBP, he is unaware of this crucial decision. Mainstream media hence keeping the masses ignorant also downplayed this issue.

A major focus of mainstream media was on strategic and development aspects of CPEC. Thus, it nationalised CPEC and discussed it in the purview of national interest. Mainstream media heavily retained the theme of security and development and linked it the larger interest of the country but neglected provincial reservations.

The federal ministers supported by mainstream media repeatedly blamed the provincial political parties terming them as "nationalist and religious" who wants just to fail the project. Demands of provincial governments for transparency and their due share is their right, but the federal media used victim-blame frame and tried to link the CPEC with the controversial issue long been linked with national parties. For example, the federal media associated the strikes and calls of the provincial government with *KalaBagh* Dam and tried to trigger the anti-nationalist feelings of the people. Although local media supported the due right and demands of the provincial government, the mainstream media ignored this debate

The CPEC issue was on peak in the print media from December 15, 2015, to January 20, 2016, when the Bacha Khan University was attacked. After this attack, media shifted its attention to the new issue and completely put CPEC on the back burner. Only Daily *Aaj* carried three stories till December 30 that too on the back page. This trend shows the priorities of the media. It can be argued that the media need a burning issue for their survival and give very less attention to development reporting. Still, if they do so, they only report "controversial development." After the attack, the agenda of media changed, and the federal government was successful in diverting the route because it was easy for them to accomplish their task, as the public opinion was not informed by the media.



The daily statesman only wrote one column and editorial each on CPEC during the selected time period. This shows that the CPEC is not on its agenda. Being a provincial English language daily, it was far behind the daily *Aaj*, which carried more stories, editorials and columns on CPEC than all other newspapers.

In conclusion, this researcher states that in Pakistan, mainstream media set the agenda for local media. It has two forms; in the first, the mainstream media ignore or neglect the voice of the local media. In the second direct attempt, the mainstream media influence the local print media by imposing its narrative upon it. It was also found out that when mainstream media has its interests in local perspective, it supports local media, for example, in economic, security and development related debates, both media reported it. But when there was a difference in the interest of media, they both differed, for instance, the KP's reservations were not presented by mainstream media.

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