

Abstract

Soon after the independence media in Pakistan has been under strict government control. Pakistan has been ruled by the Military for a long time. The regimes hammered the press through various ordinances, advertisement and broadcasting policies for decades. In spite of repeated assurances by the ruling elite of Pakistan for advocating freedom of media, most of the time media been under severe restrictions in some form or the other.

According to various estimates many journalists in Pakistan have been killed. The threat against the fourth pillar was quoted by the Reporters Sans Frontiers. Their Annual Worldwide Press Indexing (2007), listed Pakistan on 152 rank out of 167. The International Federation of Journalist also declared Pakistan as the most dangerous place for media workers (2010). According to the Committee to Protect Journalist (CPJ) 1,179 journalists have been killed in Pakistan since 1992 till 2011. Another report of UNESCO (2012) had declared Pakistan as the second dangerous country in the World after Mexico.

The Pakistani media has faced challenges not only from the state and government but also from the pressure groups, which didn't even stop short of murder if they found that the coverage ran counter to their interest.

Although, Pakistani journalists have braved all odds to achieve the right to freedom of thought and expression but had paid a heavy cost not only in terms of their lives but also otherwise. The present government is now forced for bestowing the freedom to the Media. The findings indicate that media was suppressed by the rulers, in the name of regulations and suggests that the history of violence against journalists, demands the formation of human rights, followed with the removal of the black laws by the ruling elites. In spite of all the hurdles the Pakistani media has faced and is facing, it is doing a credible job which should be appreciated by all concerned and general public.

Keywords: Pakistan, Media, Ruling Elite, Journalist, Draconian Laws

1. Introduction

Media in Pakistan - Print Media

The print media in Pakistan dates back to pre-partition days of British India, when a number of newspapers were established to promote communal agenda. The first fortnightly journal 'Nawa-i-Waqt' was established in 1940 by Hameed Nizami, one of the founding fathers of Pakistani Journalism. This group also published the conservative English newspaper "The Nation" from Lahore. In 1977 an article defined, Nawa-i-Waqt as the 'self-appointed custodian of the ideology of Pakistan', and, in the first five years of existence of the country, it 'had hunted and pursued a remorseless campaign against all liberal trends and progressive forces in national life'.¹ Javed Siddique, editor of daily Nawa-i-Waqt in Islamabad, refers, in this regard, to the policy, or editorial, aims of his newspaper that, 'The newspaper does not support the 'so-called war against terrorism',

The newspaper 'Dawn', founded by Quaid-e-Azam and first published in 1941, was dedicated to promote an independent Pakistan.² The Dawn Group of newspapers is Pakistan's second largest media group and produces an array of publications which include The Star, Herald and the newspaper Dawn, which is its flagship. It is considered a liberal, secular paper with moderate views.

The Jang Group of Newspapers is Pakistan's largest media group and publishes the Urdu language Daily Jang, The News International, Mag Weekly, and Awam was established in 1942 in Delhi by Mir Khalil-ur-Rehman. After independence it was moved to Karachi. This media group is having a range of Urdu and English publications and four TV channels. The Group's flagship publication is the Urdu-language newspaper Daily Jang, which is printed from six locations across the country and it also publishes arguably the second largest English newspaper The News'. 3. Generally speaking, the group is reputed to have 'a moderate conservative perspective'. 4. Its English publications tend to be more critical of current political affairs and players, while the Urdu publications are milder in their approach. The Star is Pakistan's most popular evening newspaper, and the Herald, is a current affairs monthly.

Tele-Vision

In mid 1960 Television was established in Pakistan, and was brought under the strict control of the government. Pakistan Television Corporation (PTV) broadcasts began in 1964. By the late 1990s many channels were launched through satellite technology. 2. Today, PTV has six channels, one of which, PTV Global, broadcasts in Europe, Asia and the US. This National brand broadcasts programmes in the many different languages of Pakistan. PTV's state monopoly was ended in 2003 when the market for electronic media was liberalised. This led to the boom in new private TV channels that today transmit soaps, news, dramas, and talk shows for millions of viewers. 2.

In 1989 Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto tried to break PTV's monopoly of terrestrial TV by establishing the People's Television Network. This channel was later renamed Shalimar Recording & Broadcasting Company (STN), and in 1990 it sold some of its broadcasting time to private company the Network Television Marketing (NTM). NTM further developed as an entertainment channel and it acquired popularity mainly for its dramas and music shows. In the late 1990s, however, it was brought down allegedly by inner strife and charges of corruption. In 2005 this terrestrial television network was finally re-launched as ATV. 5.

Despite the wide-ranging process of electronic media liberalisation that was initiated in 2002, to date PTV has maintained its (near) monopolistic position in the provision of terrestrial services. 6. While cable and satellite channels were allowed entrance into the new media market, the Pakistani government was careful in keeping a tight control on the television programmes being offered through terrestrial beams.

The Regulatory Framework

Pakistan's media-related legislation dates back to the British colonial era. 8. As such, it was characterised by an inherent tendency to restrain, rather than promote, freedom of expression. Subsequent civilian and military governments did not feel sufficient incentives to reverse this approach in a radical way, and they preferred to maintain a certain degree of continuity in order to protect their own class privilege. Religious leaders have promulgated blasphemy laws that have curbed freedom of expression, the intelligence services have manipulated the media, and the civil bureaucracy have been

used to control the media through its administration of media laws, licensing and placement of public funds for ads.

In 1954 an attempt was made to deal with the 12 press laws that had been issued since 1860. A Press Commission was then established by the Central government. The conclusions of its work, however, were quite innocuous. When they were released four years later, they highlighted the patriotic character of the press and its sensitive relations to issues of the security and integrity of the country. The various military regimes in Pakistan have had a special interest in controlling the media, and initiated many media laws to censor the media.

Press and Publication Ordinance (PPO)

The first step in introducing media laws in the country was done by the then military ruler Field Marshal Ayub Khan who promulgated the Press and Publication Ordinance (PPO) in 1962, which eventually 'borrowed a great deal from the repealed laws of the British era'. 8. But even before the original PPO had been issued, a considerable corpus of laws had already been introduced in the Pakistan Penal Code, all of them prescribing punishments for communication activities that were deemed harmful to the stability of the country. 2. Ayub Khan nationalised large parts of the press and took over one of the two largest news agencies. After the lifting of martial law in June 1962, this ordinance was replaced in 1963 by a new regulation, which in practice guaranteed continuity of legislation and further strengthened the government's control over the media. A major amendment to the original ordinance contained provisions for the appointment of a commission for "inquiring into the affairs" of any printing press or newspaper'. 9.

More draconian additions were made to the PPO during the regime of General Zia-ul-Haq in the 1980's. According to these new amendments, the publisher would be liable and prosecuted if a story was not to the liking of the administration even if it was factual and of national interest. 2. It was only in 1988 that the 1963 PPO was finally repealed and replaced by a new, more media-friendly, legislation. This ordinance has been generally credited with the creation of a legal environment conducive to the expansion of print publication. 10.

The Official Secrets Act

In Pakistan there are laws which actually permit public officials not to reveal information to the media. 'The Official Secrets Act' says that government officials cannot pass information to the media without authorization. Under the rules, no official can give information to the journalists except the minister or secretary of any ministry. The Special Power entails that prejudicial reports shall be punishable and the government shall have the power to prohibit publication of newspapers or periodicals containing prejudicial reports. The law directly affects the fundamental right of freedom of expression and human rights. 'Press and Publications Ordinance' 1997 require the printing press and newspapers to register with the government for licensing.

Press and Publication Regulatory Authority (PAPRA)

The government introduced a new body 'Press and Publication Regulatory Authority' (PAPRA) to control the press, which

advocates a more self-regulatory mechanisms. Under the panel code procedure, blasphemy is severely punishable, for example, on July 8 2003; a court in Peshawar convicted a journalist in a blasphemy case and sentenced him to life imprisonment with heavy fine. He contributed a blasphemous letter in the newspaper on 29 January 2001, which caused violent protests. 11.

The Regulatory Authority for Media Broadcast Organisations (RAMBO) & Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA)

Probably one of the most relevant pieces of military legislation affecting the media has been the establishment and formalisation of a media regulatory authority. The Regulatory Authority for Media Broadcast Organisations (RAMBO), the predecessor of the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA), was established in 2000, and one of the four components of its mandate was to 'facilitate the devolution of responsibility and power to grassroots by improving the access to mass media at the local and community level'.¹² This was apparently in response to specific clauses in the country's constitution about decentralising broadcasting and it was probably also linked to the devolution process initiated by Musharraf in 2001. ¹³ The Authority PEMRA was enabled to stop any electronic broadcast relating in the name of "vulgarity" Journalists view the defamation act as replacement of the printing and publication act.

In 2002 General Musharraf put an end to this more permissive legislation by introducing a new series of restrictive laws in the period leading to the October elections. Among these laws there was also an ordinance, formally approved by the federal cabinet in January 2002, which aimed to create an autonomous regulatory authority for an independent electronic media. New ordinance section 5A prohibits any news reports on terrorism, unless law enforcement agencies allow, and section 20 of the 2002 PEMRA Ordinance was amended to put the same ban on television stations also. The penalties for breaking the new ordinances are severe. Newspapers can be suspended for up to 30 days. Broadcast stations forfeit their facilities and equipment, and the licensee or representative can be sent to jail for three years, fined Rs 10 million or both. ¹⁴.

The controversial 2004 Defamation (Amendment) Act expanded the definition of defamation and increased the punishment for offenders to minimum fines of 1,00,000 rupees and/or prison sentences of up to five years; however, this legislation has not yet been used to convict members of the press. The Provisional Constitutional Order, which replaced the constitution, suspended Article 19 of the constitution relating to freedom of the press, and two additional ordinances imposed severe curbs on print and electronic media respectively, barring them from publishing or broadcasting "anything which defames or brings into ridicule the head of state, or members of the armed forces, or executive, legislative or judicial organ of the state," as well as any broadcasts deemed to be "false or baseless." Those journalists considered to be in breach of the ordinance could face jail terms of up to three years, fines of up to 10 Million Rupees and cancellation of their broadcaster's license. ¹⁵.

Probably in 2005 the exponential growth of cable TV channels and the evident problems in keeping all of them under a tight control, the Musharraf administration decided to introduce a

first amendment to the PEMRA Ordinance. Amid rising civil unrest, mainly spearheaded by the lawyers' movement, the situation repeated itself in 2007, when the government introduced a decree amending the PEMRA Ordinance. This second amendment in practice prohibited 'printing or broadcasting of anything which defamed or brought into ridicule the head of state, or members of the armed forces, or executive, legislative or judicial organs of the state'.¹⁶ A third amendment enacted on 3rd November 2007 'notified at least seven new violations that were not part of the version of the law that existed before the state of emergency' and it carried enhanced punishments and penalties. ¹⁷.

Growth of Media

Print Media

In 1997 the total number of daily, monthly, and minor publications was 4,455 but by 2003, six years later, only 945 remained. Circulation however has increased in the same period. In 2003 daily distribution was 6.2 million. This figure includes a wide range of publications. According to the Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies there are 142 proper newspapers.

According to Zaffar Abbas, editor of the English newspaper, Dawn, the overall circulation of newspapers today is around four million.

Print media publishes in 11 languages with Urdu and Sindhi as largest language groups. English-language publications are not as numerous. Urdu newspapers are the dominant media in the rural areas. 2. The Statistical Department of Pakistan admitted that there were 1,464 newspapers in all languages published in four provinces (Sindh, Punjab, NWFP and Balochistan- 2008) According to the trivia book the surveys of UNESCO, it defines Pakistan at 10th number in the world regarding circulation of the newspapers (78,17,958- December 2, 2010)

Visual Media

But the TV sector remains vibrant. In total Pakistan has 49 TV channels of which 15 are news channels, 32 primarily entertainment and two religious. The three media conglomerates also have their own TV channels, but newcomers such as ARY TV and Ajj TV have challenged their dominating status. The Haroon group however still owns the 24-hour English news channel Dawn News that is popular among the urban elite. Geo TV, owned by the Independent Media Corporation, is affiliated with the Jang Group of Newspapers. Geo News is Geo TV's flagship.².

The number of television channels grew from two or three state-run stations in 2000 to over 50 privately owned channels in 2008. About 20 channels exclusively broadcast news, with only two of them in English (Dawn and Express). There are about five religious channels, which produce programmes related to Islam, but which also deal with social issues.

Govt V/s Press

One of the first measures taken by General Ayub Khan, after the declaration of martial law in 1958, was the establishment of the Bureau of National Research and Reconstruction (BNR&R), which later became the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. Following an approach to the media that still

seems to exist, the BNR&R embarked on a campaign of hiring 'journalists who were well known and willing to lend their names to commentaries that were published in national newspapers in support of government policies'.¹⁸

In 1960, the military government also introduced a draconian Press and Publication Ordinance that was renewed periodically by both military and civilian regimes to exert control over the news media, holding not only editors and publishers, but also printers and distributors liable for punishment if they printed anything counter to the government's views'.¹⁴ The same misfortunes that are still evident today began to affect the media landscape in Pakistan in the brief democratic interlude that followed partition and that was concluded by the rise to power of General Ayub Khan. During that decade, it is possible to trace the abandonment of the original ideological basis on which the Pakistani media had been created in favor of a drift towards political opportunism and harsh competition for the capture of the establishment's attention and favours. That period also saw the emergence of a new kind of journalism that was driven by factors other than coherence to political and professional principles.¹⁹

In certain cases, when news media did not comply with the directives imparted by the military administration, they were simply taken over, as happened to publishing house Progressive Papers Limited (PPL) and to the newspapers that it owned: 'The Pakistan Times', 'Imroze' and the weekly 'Lailo Nahar'. Because of suspicions that their editors had socialist leanings, in 1959 the government of Ayub Khan, under the cover of the Pakistan Security Act, 11 moved to change the management of these newspapers in order to prevent them from publishing material that could allegedly 'endanger the defence, external affairs or security of Pakistan'.¹¹ In 1964 the takeover of PPL was eventually completed by transforming it into the National Press Trust (NPT). Journalists working for this new media group, which, along the way, acquired nine other newspapers, proved their value as staunch supporters of military action through successive military regimes. In fact, when General Yahya Khan took over from his predecessor in 1969, they welcomed the appearance of martial law and its related emergency actions.²⁰

The government not only sought to liberalise the electronic media on its own terms, but also wanted to control and use the media as a tool to strengthen national interests, is also evident from the way that the public advisement budget is allocated. PTV receives 70 percent of the budget.² The Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) had previously committed itself to its dissolution, when a civilian government came to power in 1972, it simply prolonged the tradition of taking over control of the NPT. Under the false premise that the newspapers belonging to it had to be retained and returned to the collective domain, through them, the new political masters launched a shameless 'campaign of slander and character assassination against those who dared to criticise any action of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto or his henchmen'.²¹ Ironically, the story repeated itself with the 1977 military coup of General Zia ul-Haq. The same newspapers simply continued their mission as mouthpieces of the ruler of the day and in a seemingly effortless shift, probably born out of habit and survival instinct, they turned against Bhutto and his party.²²

According to Mir Shakilur Rehman, Publisher and Editor-in-Chief of the Jang Group of Publications, he was directed by two senior officials close to Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to dismiss 16 journalists on his rolls. Mr. Rehman was told that "nothing adverse should be written concerning their (the Sharif's) loans, business, personal matters etc." Apart from the raids on 'The News' offices during Nawaz Sharif government in October 1998, plainclothes officials landed up at the office of the Karachi-based monthly 'Newsline' demanding the home phone numbers and addresses of its correspondents.²³

Censorship during the Zia years was direct, concrete and dictatorial. Newspapers were scrutinised; critical or undesired sections of an article censored. After sudden death of Zia Haq media was wedded with democracy.

From 2002, media faced a decisive development under the umbrella of General Musharraf. New liberal media laws broke the state's monopoly on electronic media. TV broadcasting and FM radio licenses were issued to private media outlets. Media became an important actor in the process that led to the fall of Musharraf and his regime.²

Status of Press Freedom in Pakistan

Adnan and Matiullah (2005) argue that freedom of press in Pakistan shrunken in both print and electronic media during Pervez Musharraf regime by intimidating and harassing journalists. The press was barred from covering opposition, public events, corruption and abuses of power by the public servants and tribal areas where military was engaged in operations against terrorists. There were censorship, press advice, issuance of government's advertisement to favorite media organizations, forcing off opposition leader's interview on a private television channel, dozens of reporters were beaten and arrested during the tussle between the President's election and the Supreme Court (Adnan and Matiullah, 2005).²⁴

Geo News has been criticised by the government for exaggerations and misrepresentations of facts. Numerous times, the station has been subjected to bans and shut downs. When President and Army Chief Musharraf imposed a sweeping 'state of emergency' / quasi martial law on 3rd November 2007, Geo TV Network received an order from local authorities of Dubai on November 16 to cut off all their Live broadcasts. After emergency some drastic consequences came up for the Pak Media. Like major crackdown on civil society actors, journalists (more than 20 arrested and about 60 injured). Non-governmental radio 'de facto' was banned. Two current affairs FM stations were sealed, their staff were assaulted and their broadcast equipment taken away. Other FM stations were warned against broadcasting any news bulletins or broadcasting emergency-related information. Apart from that Non-governmental satellite TV channels prevented from up-linking to satellite and banned from carriage on domestic cable networks (the source through which most Pakistanis have access to independent TV news): 35 Pakistani channels taken off air including a dozen popular 24/7 current affairs channels such as ARY TV and DawnNews TV.²⁵ Geo TV was also banned for showing any programmes with Geo News' popular anchors Dr. Shahid Masood and Hamid Mir.

Describing it as the "gravest errors of judgment," other Pakistani dailies remarked Musharraf's emergency state and media restrictions were bound only to "fracture an already weakened nation." According to a Press Trust of India report, police and information department personnel raided the premises of Urdu newspaper 'Awam' after they suspected that the paper planned to publish a special supplement on the state of emergency. They reportedly found no evidence, however, of such a supplement. In another incident, according to a 'Dawn' report, Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) officials raided Aaj TV channel's office in Islamabad and seized broadcast equipment without proof of legal orders.²⁶

In 2009 Pakistani lawyers had called for a "Long March" to force the reinstatement of Chief Justice, Iftikhar Chaudhry. 2. At this point President Ali Asif Zardari and PPP-led Pakistani government followed Musharraf's steps and Geo News was taken off-air in the evening in many major cities of Pakistan.

PEMRA issued warning to channels for violating its rules and went to the [extend] of accusing them of inciting violence." Hamid Mir, a senior anchor and Executive Editor of GEO television, whose program 'Capital Talk' was forcibly shut down said "it was an attempt to sabotage the struggle and movement of the press against black laws. With regard to the issue of commercial interests and their influence in the Pakistani media landscape, advertisements certainly play an important role. Within that landscape, the state occupies an important position, with a 25 percent stake in the advertisement budgets of the regional press. Thus, regional newspapers have at times faced pressures from this "advertising monopoly", which has a budget of about US\$20 million per annum. The consequence of this phenomenon is that the government uses this mammoth advertising budget to impose conditions on the regional newspapers' publication policies.²⁷

Media Liberalisation Drive

Musharraf had apparently decided, through PEMRA, to launch a wide liberalisation drive of the electronic media sector that in a few years would completely revolutionise the Pakistani media landscape. The state's monopoly on electronic media was removed, allowing for a mushrooming of private operators. In 2000 there were three state run channels in Pakistan, while by 2008 there were over 50 privately owned channels.²⁸ Most analysts agree that the main trigger behind this daring initiative by President Musharraf was the perception that Pakistan, besides confronting its fierce enemy India in military terms, was also engaged in a media war with it, and that it was losing this war. By the late 1990s Pakistan was open territory for the many Hindi channels that had become available across the border through satellite technology.

Other analysts prefer to separate the electronic media liberalisation drive from a pure counter-propaganda discourse. They rather emphasise the pre-existent liberalisation of the telecommunication market as the back door that was inadvertently opened by the Pakistani state, and through which media operators subsequently managed to unhinge the state monopoly on the sector. The market forces unleashed by globalisation, technological innovations in the field of media, a boom in electronic communication technology and people's

increased awareness and access to information through mobile phones and internet had all worked as catalysts in the process of electronic media liberalisation.²⁹

To understand the impact of this process, it is relevant to note that, when a ban was put on electronic media following the imposition of the state of emergency on 3rd November 2007, people were still able to communicate freely through mobile phone, SMS and internet. Live telecasts of some television channels were still available on the web, providing viewers with an alternative to cable-TV distribution networks.³⁰

Some media activists argue that the print media had already started to become more liberal and vibrant after the removal of the PPO in the late 1980s. Newspapers became more critical of the rulers' corruption, and this assertive approach is considered key to the dismissal of successive democratic governments between 1988 and 1993. At the same time, credit also needs to go to the journalist community's long struggle for media freedom and liberalisation.³¹

Recently the Minister for Information and Broadcasting Dr Firdous Ashiq Awan assured that the government firmly believed in bestowing full freedom to the media, and announced that steps had recently been taken in this regard. He quoted that "It has always supported freedom of expression, and Shaheed Benazir Bhutto remained a strong supporter of a free media and freedom of speech she held". The information minister claimed that the PPP-led government desired to see a strong and empowered media, and said that her party has been accredited with the lifting of various restrictions on the media imposed by previous dictatorial regimes.³²

Following the same President Asif Ali Zardari declared in Islamabad that the government and the Pakistan Peoples Party were committed to upholding freedom of the media and a cursory glance at the state of the media today would endorse the claim of the government. He said this in a statement issued on May 2, 2012 to mark the Press Freedom Day. He claimed that the PPP has always supported media freedom and liberalization of media in Pakistan owed a great deal to the struggle of the journalists and support given to it by the PPP, whether in government or in opposition.³³

Threat to Journalist in Pakistan

Green Press Report (2006) highlights working in Pakistan as an independent journalist is difficult and dangerous. The deplorable press freedom condition can be noticed from the facts that Daniel Pearl, Wall Street Journalist was murdered, force was used against journalists who were beaten and injured in the protest for restoration of Judiciary, popular private TV channels were banned during the Emergency in November 2007 and PAMRA used every means to cease criticism against government's policies on political issues and fight against terrorism.³⁴

Pakistan was ranked number one in the world in the statistics of journalists killed in 2009. Up to April 2009 six journalists were killed, and in May 2009 a seventh journalist disappeared after he had received threats. This follows a period of increased violence during the last days of the military regime. In the year from May

2007 to May 2008 fifteen journalists were killed, 357 were arrested, 123 sustained injuries in physical assaults, 154 were harassed while there were 18 cases of attacks and ransacking of media properties and 88 cases of various gag orders issued by the government.³⁵ In 2008 twelve journalists were killed, and at least 74 journalists sustained serious or minor injuries in 41 cases of assault or injury.³⁶

According to Inter-News, a training and monitoring group, there were 163 attacks during 2007, with at least 7 journalists killed and 100 abducted (most were released after a short period of time). Those killed during the year included Zubair Ahmed Mujahid, a Sindh correspondent for the Jang daily, in November 2007; Ahmed Solangi, who was ambushed and shot as he was distributing newspapers in June; and Noor Hakim, who was killed in the tribal areas, also in June. In a chilling trend, family members of journalists also continue to be targeted. The widow of slain journalist Hayatullah Khan was murdered in November 2007, while militants killed four members of the family of Din Muhammad, a journalist based in the northwestern Waziristan region, in March. In addition, the 14 year-old son of Shakil Ahmad Turabi, editor-in-chief of the South Asian News Agency (SANA), was beaten, probably by plainclothes police, as a warning to his father.

For example in 2007 the Islamabad offices of Geo TV were raided by police in March and Aaj TV's Karachi office was subject to a four-hour siege by pro-government political activists in May. Also in May, bullets were found planted on three cars belonging to journalists at the Karachi Press Club. Unions such as Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ) and its affiliates who held demonstrations in order to protest against the treatment of the media were assaulted and arrested, and its leaders faced threats.

Media remains much more tightly restricted in Pakistani occupied Kashmir, where publications need special permission from the regional government to operate, and pro-independence publications are unlikely to be given permission to publish.

Restrictions on the ownership of broadcast media were eased in late 2002, and media cross-ownership was allowed in July 2003. Private radio stations operate in some major cities but are prohibited from broadcasting news programming. Both state-level and national authorities use advertising boycotts to put economic pressure on media outlets that do not heed unofficial directives on coverage. Throughout 2007, the Dawn Group, which had refused to accede to an official request for a news blackout on coverage of Baluchistan and the tribal areas, was targeted as the federal government cut nearly two thirds of its advertisements and withheld awarding a television broadcast license to the group. Similar though less drastic cuts targeted a number of other media organizations. In addition, the broadcast ban imposed in November exacted a severe financial toll on private television stations, with many losing significant advertising revenues.¹⁵

The attack on a journalist in Pakistan has taken place against 'Dawn' journalist Azaz Syed (2011). Protesting this incident the journalist walked out from the coverage of the National Assembly. President Zardari said that "government believes in freedom of the media and is committed to strengthening democracy in the country. Let's hope that he follows through on

this pledge by making a full inquiry into this incident and seeing that any attackers are brought to justice. In order for media to be truly free, it must be free from threats and harassment".³⁷

But the promising statements didn't work longer and the South-East Asia bureau chief of Asia Times Online and Italian news agency Adnkronos International, AKI's correspondent Saleem Shahzad was abducted by unidentified people a day after he wrote a piece claiming that the militant attack on a naval base in Karachi was orchestrated with the help of radical elements within the Pakistan Navy. The next day, his body was found on the roadside of a remote village. He had been tortured to death.³⁸ He was the fifth journalist killed in Pakistan the year 2011. Preceding his death the profession has also lost Ilyas Nizzar (Darwanth), Zaman Ibrahim (Daily Extra News), Wali Khan Babr (Geo) and Nasrullah Khan Afridi (PTV). According to the findings 16 journalists were killed in 2011. Listing these incidents, Pakistan was declared most dangerous country in the world for journalists.³⁹ Conditions for reporters covering the ongoing conflict in the Federally Administrated Tribal Areas (FATA) and parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (formally the North West frontier) remain difficult.

The 10th annual International Federation of Journalist (IFJ) Press Freedom Report for South Asia stated that the year 2011-12 in Pakistan continued to be one of serious hazard. "Within this frontline state in a global conflict, the combatant parties are many and norms of accountability and international humanitarian law are dishonored by all. Journalists in Pakistan have to steer a perilous course between these hostile elements," the report said. One journalist has been killed in the line of duty in Pakistan during the first four months of 2012, while four journalists received life threats, said 'Pakistan Press Freedom Report 2012' issued by Pakistan Press Foundation (PPF) (02/05/2012). The report said during these four months a TV channel's office was attacked, newspaper copies of same media group torched and transmission of Urdu language news channels was blocked.⁴⁰

Referring the threat an editorial of News International published the report of UNESCO in which Pakistan was ranked as the second most dangerous country in the world for journalists after Mexico.⁴¹

Notes

In a country like Pakistan where the public perceives little accountability towards the country's rulers, the fledgling broadcast media has assumed a position as a surrogate accountability system, regularly reporting on corruption scandals or other crimes committed by the powers-that-be. It is commonly perceived that the security threats to journalists stem from working in conflict zones. Whereas the Community to Protect Journalist, CPJ statistics have revealed that 53 percent of them were covering political beats, mostly in metropolitan areas.³⁸

While journalists and their bodies have been struggling hard to win media liberties and rights, they have not sufficiently focused on improving their professionalism and the quality of journalism. The number of journalists in Pakistan shot up from an estimated 2,000 in 2002 to over 10,000 in 2010. Concurrently, their average age dropped from 43 to 27 years.⁴² External

threats to media representatives come from both state and non-state actors trying to limit others' points of view. These threats are not virtual but real. The report says, Punjab was the most dangerous place to practice journalism, with 81 of the 247 cases of violations against the media. Media activist Mazhar Abbas is of the view that it is more difficult to deal with non-state actors. State agencies, he argues, in principle have to operate within a legal framework and the government can be held accountable if laws or human rights are allegedly violated. 43.

According to Amir Zia, Editor The News Karachi, the press in Pakistan today enjoys much more freedom compared to the repressive decades of the '60s, '70s and '80s. The credit for this freedom goes not only to the struggle of senior journalists who braved lashes and prisons, but also to the technological revolution that has made it difficult for the state to muzzle the press. 44.

Data's of Journalist killed in Pakistan (1992-2011)

Year	Motive Confirmed	Motive Unconfirmed
1992	44	11
1993	56	16
1994	66	18
1995	51	10
1996	26	08
1997	26	09
1998	24	13
1999	36	17
2000	24	21
2001	37	17
2002	21	14
2003	42	11
2004	60	15
2005	48	11
2006	57	29
2007	69	21
2008	42	24
2009	72	24
2010	44	31
2011	11	03 (Till May 2011)
Total =	856	323 Grand Total =
1,179		

45. Source: Committee to Protect Journalist (<http://cpj.org/killed/>)

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5. See ATV's website at <http://www.atv.com.pk/>
6. A reported case of ATV
7. Think, among others, of the 1923 'Official Secrets Act'.
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