

Image of Pakistan Armed Forces Portrayed by the News TV Channels: A Comparative Study of Public Perception of Two Metropolitan Cities

Javeria Nazeer*

Aneela Naqvi†

Abstract

This study is an effort to examine the image of Pakistan Armed Forces in the eyes of public with the lens of News Channels especially after the General Election 2018 in Pakistan. This study tries to measure opinion of the public about image building coverage given by the news channels to the events and operations of Pakistan Armed Forces. This study hypothesized that news channels give insufficient coverage to the armed forces as compared to the coverage given to the armed forces in other countries. The study employed quantitative research technique of survey to collect public opinion from the sample of 400 respondents including males and females from two major cities of Pakistan including Islamabad and Lahore because of heterogeneous population residing in both metropolitans. A questionnaire with close ended questions were distributed through young adults to measure their opinion while employing cultivation theory as theoretical framework. The study found out a high level of reliability among the research items and the findings show that Pakistani news channels give position coverage to the armed forces.

Key Words: Armed Forces, Image Building, Public Perception, Public Opinion, Media Effects, TV News Channels.

Introduction

The contemporary world in which we are living is constructed by media. Now, in this world, life seems dull without media. Media give information, entertainment, awareness and educate us. The TV news media has inspired the life of the people of this world. News media used to formulate public opinion, change attitudes, behaviors and perception (McCombs & Valenzuela, 2020).

Media plays a vital role of image building by projecting of the positive image of the army and avoiding publicity (Wang & Chan-Olmsted, 2020). The main object of publicity is to stress upon the people that Army is well equipped and well trained they are in a high state and their welfare is being looked after adequately. It is not a publicity but deliberately well-planned effort for the image building of the Army. But in our neighbor state of India, the State has a massive media plan to uplift the image of their Armed Forces. If we analyze the historical perspective, the Persian Gulf War was a television war where media also have greater access to military innovation. 'Operation Desert Storm' is also known as Gulf War.

Today media demand complete freedom. Private media TV channels has an easy accessibility and government controlled media TV channels seems less accessibility but situation is improving now in Pakistan regarding TV news coverage. The word media is derived from medium, in the relation to dissemination, and the expression of the medium used to acquire, interpret, circulate and circulate the information. The media may be categorized in judging its characteristics and impact of news. Bulletin boards on networks are in use in Western countries as a forum for exchange of information and views to the whole world. Media organizations use every means of communication mentioned above to report the news. Services like Reuters, AP, BBC, CNN and large newspapers maintain correspondents and bureau in all parts of the world. There are various types of reporters,

* Assistant professor, Department of Mass Communication, Lahore Garrison University, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan.
Email: javerianazeer@lgu.edu.pk

† M.Phil. Scholar, Department of Mass Communication, Lahore Garrison University, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan.

writers and editors to collect and prepare news and features. Armed forces will be mostly involved with agencies reporters, feature writers, foreign journalists and war correspondents (Pedelty, 2020)

TV channels News rapidly spread in Pakistan because it is not much expensive and especially in urban areas all social classes can easily access this technology. Media usage has turned into one of the most important part of our everyday life. Therefore, research tried to identify the news effects on the public minds or any impact on its user's behavior especially young generation. For this purpose, Lahore and Islamabad cities were selected for the research in hand.

Problem Statement

There is a long debate about portrayal of the image of the armed forces and the freedom of media. Keeping in view such above scenario, the researcher has made an effort to investigate the phenomenon to measure opinion of the public especially the young adult about image of the armed forces in wake of General Election 2018 in Pakistan. This seemed an emerging problem from the observations and gossips in the civic community on different platforms including social media about the image of the country's armed forces. Since the study is an effort to examine the opinion of the public about judging media's functionality for enhancing or tarnishing or under representing the image of the armed forces, the researcher has chosen 'armed forces' as 'dependent variable' and 'media' as an independent variable.

Significance of the Study

The critics believe the image of armed forces was weaker in eyes of public after the 2018's General Election as compared to earlier eras in country's history owing to various controversial statements and activities from different functionaries of the incumbent government about uniformed forces. Therefore, this study is important in a manner that it has highlighted the 'deficiency element' of media approach towards portrayal of the armed forces with the lens of media, because media coverage affect public approach.

Objectives of Study

1. To check the Pakistan armed forces image in the mind of public or study public perception about armed forces
2. To search out the effects of foreign and local media on public perception regarding military forces
3. To check the message efficiency and different ways of media coverage regarding military portrayal
4. To investigate how channels are portraying armed forces or highlight the techniques of TV channels in image building of armed forces to analyze role of media in formulating public opinion about armed forces

Literature Review

Media and Conflict Situation

Media is plural foam of the medium which describe any channel of communication can be included from printed paper to digital data and encompasses art, news, education and other form of information. Digital media makes up a modern communication which comprised that are transmitted over various forms of physical or virtual media such as fiber optic cables and computer networks. Media plays an important role in time of conflict. How media influence the public and discuss the armed forces' coverage in media. Topic examined the historical and current situation of media in military coverage (Vilanilam, 2005).

Hallin (1989) describes in their article Vietnam was Americans most unsuccessful war it is first televised and modern era fought without military censorship media role in Vietnam war has intensely controversial war and what American read and watched about Vietnam war. Daniel draw complete body New York Times coverage from 1961 to 1965 or television reports 1965-73 television coverage interviews with many journalists who reported it to give powerful critique of conventional wisdom and media shows as an official perspective of war as before television neither showed horror of war and presented idealized picture of war in the early year. Public unhappiness or elite division over the war well advanced.

Tumber and Webster (2006) in a research article addresses that previous war Vietnam and Gulf War perhaps were the biggest armed battle ever but not a single image was reported in history by the press in Iraq

and Kuwait Wars, as there were over 500 journalists, photographers and crews another 2,000 plus journalists were in the war time at the time of Gulf War and Afghanistan War media access have more but not even single image reported in the press while other operation Desert Storm media shunned but at that time media coverage about the real time coverage of war and also gulf war crises were covering in the book hotel warriors.

Nowadays Media Situation

Gray (2004) found out in their study that media and military had never easy relationship. In the same study, the scholar further described that in Pakistan it's more complicated relationship of media and military. Military have favorable coverage of the several military operations this article shows that local journalist relies on the ISPR officials analyze the local news coverage of ISPR news coverage about the event.

Shah (2016) tells the different person of PMNL-N and PTI, they blamed military but the journalist of this article which says that military help in the election according to Khan productive relationship with military traditional news media also stood up to the military and the Dawn, Geo News distribution was disrupted in the footage circulated country about military social media also help in this situation.

Taj (2019) found out that PMNL-N claims state security agencies are holding the party re-election campaign protest in Rawalpindi. Local media avoided Rawalpindi footage but these footages circulated rapidly via WhatsApp and they shouted death to the Khali-Makhlooq. Protests were marked the uniforms are behind the terrorists. This campaign blamed that public of Rawalpindi said army was involved in the election of 2018.

After detailed literature review about the above-said phenomenon, the researcher found that each country has a visible media policy to project image of its armed forces. However, the literature review shows such policies vary from country-to-country as there are several countries across the world which have authoritarian form of governments where either military or civilian dictators are ruling the governments or kings and monarchs have absolute powers to function. Accordingly, no other individual(s) other than dictator or monarch can rule, order, direct and instruct the state's institutions to run in line with the policy of the governments. Such practices are common in Saudi Arabia, North Korea, China, Russia, Jordan, etc., where all the State's institutions including Armed Forces are under direct control of the dictators or monarchs. However, the media policy is different in democratic countries where media have some liberty or broadly speaking they [media houses] have visible freedom of expression. Although, the literature review found out that there is an interlinking department – the ISPR which coordinates with all armed forces and issues media statements, and develops liaison with media houses to project image of the armed forces, however, there is a huge knowledge gap in area of projecting soft image of the county's armed forces in 'comprehensive willful order'. There is a dire need to train media persons, including anchors, news reporters, sub editors, copy editors, bureau chiefs and even the editors and owners of the news organization need for proper guidance, knowledge and training for news reporting of the armed forces.

Theoretical framework

Lasswell depiction working propaganda presents in Germany - Nazis under Adolph Hitler's control German Government in 1933. Propaganda wins support with the notion that the great propaganda theory, the great power to elites. Walter Lippmann in his first book, "Public Opinion" in 1922 says propaganda through mass media must be censored to protect public powerful influence. So, the 1930 was the unique era, which flourished the idea of powerful effects paradigms and limited effect paradigms. Mass communication propaganda played important role in World War 1 and 20th century in American society. News type society showed connectivity with a wired world. Idea developed by the term of stereotypes in 1922 compared masses to a great beast and bewildered herd guided by a governing class. Till 1925, an individual had no power to indulge in public affairs. Masses of people can produce directing force in public affairs. Theory stressed on the average of the people to make their sense about the world and make their action did not believe in libertarian assumption on the audience ([Baran & Davis, 2011](#)). This theory helps to describe that the how TV news channels change the public opinion and perception which TV news channels more affected the public minds or how they affected human minds. This will assist in judging the role either it truly affected the human minds or not.

Cultivation Theory

This theory examines long term effects of television of theory proposed by George Gerber. It is the

theory of media effects who watch television frequently more influenced by message from the television. Person watches television more they more influenced and a person who watch less television have less influenced by the television. Media presents today image of the world it does not reflect the reality of today's life. This theory applies on this topic to check the effects of TV news channels coverage regarding the armed forces are really portrayed the image of armed forces and how much effects are observed on the people. People who watch more television are really affected through the TV news coverage about armed forces and people who watch less television have really less effects through television (Davie, 2010).

Accordingly, the critics believed that Cultivation Theory was to the great extent similar to such circumstances which indicate that media play an integral role in 'cultivating' thoughts in the minds of the public. It can be argued with fair level of confidence that 'cultivation' of thoughts, ideas or even opinion is owing to the opinion leaders in the society. In today's era, the columnists, news anchors, celebrities, clerics, landowners, and political figures are the opinion leaders for general public. According to them, all of the famous personalities of modern time use media as tool of dissemination of messages and eventually mass media is the best tool for spread of information to massive public of the current era.

Research Questions

- R1:** How TV channels are portraying armed forces?
- R2:** What techniques are used by TV channels to build image of armed forces?
- R3:** What is public perception about armed forces?
- R4:** What is the role TV channels in building public opinion about armed forces?

Hypothesis

- H1: It is estimated that TV channels portray more positive image of Pakistan armed forces in the minds of public.
- H2: It is estimated that electronic media play a leading role in image building of Pakistan armed forces than other news sources.
- H3: It is estimated that public is dissatisfied with media coverage of Pakistan armed forces given by mainstream TV channels.
- H4: It is estimated that foreign TV channels are damaging more Pakistan armed forces image than the national news TV channels.
- H5: It is estimated that metropolitan cities public perception is changed by media coverage of news channels regarding armed forces.

Methodology

Quantitative survey is widely considered as an appropriate and accurate method in studying the news media coverage's effects. It provides an efficient way to investigate the problem. In this thesis, survey will be used to investigate the effects of media coverage portrayed by the new TV channels about Pakistani armed forces. In this research, the researcher applied the survey technique to gather quantitative data from a large representative population of the country. This survey method helps researcher in collecting information directly from the university students or different areas from the people who are watching news and thus their behavior is affected in any way. The effects on the attitude and behavior of people have hence sorted out through the information given on a quantitative scale. As discussed above, it was not possible to conduct a survey to take responses from all the population. Sampling allows researcher to gather information from a large population. Extensive time, money, support and material are essential even in a simple and modest sized survey. Thus the researcher applied sampling technique for data collection. In this research, the researcher has selected general public of Lahore and Islamabad were chosen from the urban and rural areas of Lahore and Islamabad on equal basis including rural area of Islamabad: Chak Sehzaad and Urban area of Islamabad: Zone 2, sector B-17 including 8 blocks, a, b, c, c-1, d, e, f and g. same as rural area of Lahore: Raiwind and Urban area of Lahore: Lahore Cantonment. sample of 200 respondents was selected from Islamabad including 100 from male and 100 from female population including 50 literate and 50 illiterate women from each portion of selected area, same as 50 literate and 50 illiterate men from the selected area will be included. While 200 for Lahore, 100 from male and 100 from female population

including 50 literate and 50 illiterate women from each portion of selected area, same as 50 literate and 50 illiterate men from the selected area will be included. In data analyzing process, the researcher used the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS Version 22.00). The Chi-square test was used for Hypothesis testing and descriptive analysis approach was adopted for research questions.

Data Analysis

Research Questions

Table 1. RQ1: How TV channels are Portraying Armed Forces?

Variables	Yes	No
Army related to news	82.9%	10.8%
The likeness of Army related news	75.9%	17.8%
Proper coverage to news	61.4%	32.3%
Visited national event	65.3%	28.3%
Watching TV	54.3%	39.3%

According to the results of the study, 82.9 percent respondents believed that Pakistani news channels give proper coverage to the events related to Pakistan armed forces, with addition to 75.9 percent respondents who agreed that they like armed forces of the country. In other words, they idealize to the armed personnel and feel satisfaction while seeing them safeguarding their fundamental rights of protecting their lives and properties. As per findings, a massive majority [61.4 percent] of respondents opined that 'proper' coverage is given to army by the news channels in Pakistan. These results based on the respondents who actually watch television, whereas there was also a 1/3 percent population which indicated that they do not watch news channels. The results of the study indicated that the first research question was proved by the hypothesis that most of the population watch news channels and they like army related events as well.

Table 2. RQ2: What techniques TV channels are opting in image building of armed forces?

Frequency	Percent Valid	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid			
ARY	136	31.9%	34.0%
GEO	109	25.5%	61.3%
SAMMA	33	7.7%	69.5%
EXPRESS	33	7.7%	77.8%
DUNIYA	21	4.9%	83.0%
PTV	19	4.4%	87.8%
OTHERS	49	11.5%	100.0%
Total	400	93.7%	100.0%
Missing System	27	6.3%	
Total	427	100.0%	

According to the results, out of total 427 news channels, 400 channels are considered as valid whereas 27 news channels are missing from the broadcast list. The results showed that almost all the mainstream news channels including Pakistan Television, ARY, Geo, Sama News, Express, Dunya News, and others use 'image building oriented' technique to highlight the image of the armed forces and make public perception more strong about the army. There was a similar ratio of 'likeness' of all the news channels, whereas only 6.3 percent population

shared that the ‘component’ of image building was missing in the news coverage of the news channels for armed forces of the country. Thus, the second research question also fetched positive results.

Table 3. RQ3: What is a General Public Perception of Armed Forces?

Variables	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Powerful Army	53.9%	31.4%	5.4%	2.6%	0.5%
ISPR Press Release	30.7%	40.0%	11.0%	9.8%	2.1%
Admin Operations	41.5%	39.6%	6.1%	5.6%	0.9%
Economic Development	41.0%	37.0%	7.3%	7.5%	0.9%

According to the results of the four main categories of public perception about armed forces, most of the population believed Pakistan Army is the most powerful military institute of the country which is adequately well equipped with the latest technology, weaponry, and arm arsenal to safeguard the sovereignty of the state. According to the findings, ISPR also portrays soft image of the armed forces through its handouts, news releases of the events including rescue and relief activities during peacetime. Overall, more than half of the respondents believed Pakistan army is the powerful institution, quite capable to defend the country at borders and safeguard the civilians from natural calamities as well. Accordingly, the third research question was also proved true.

Table 4. RQ4: What is the Role of Media in Formulating a Public Opinion about Armed Forces?

Variables	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Disaster Management	60.7%	25.8%	3.7%	1.9%	1.6%
Controlling Terrorism	61.4%	24.1%	3.0%	2.1%	3.0%
Image Building	52.5%	21.3%	6.1%	4.4%	9.1%
Peace Keeping	59.5%	25.3%	4.0%	2.3%	2.6%
National Events	55.0%	25.3%	3.3%	2.8%	7.0%

This graph illustrates the role of media in formulating the public opinion about the armed forces. This question deals with the role of media by taking into account the disaster management, control on terrorism, image building, peacekeeping and by arranging the national event. Thus the response of the subjects is setting down as strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree. The outcomes show that more than half of the respondents (60.7%) are strongly agreed that Pakistan's army help in the management of disasters, 3.7% are neutral and 1.6% are strongly disagreed. About 61.4% are strongly favored that army helps in controlling terrorism whereas 3.0% are strongly rejected this perception. Half of the total as 52.5% favored the role of media in image building of army with 6.1% neutral responses and 9.1% rejected this perception. About peacekeeping and arranging the national events, out of total 59.5% & 55.0% of subjects show their strong positive response respectively with 2.6% & 7.0 % are negative response holders. Overall the strongly agreed respondents are greater than strongly disagreed.

Hypotheses

H1: The Public is not Satisfied with the Coverage of Armed Forces given by Major Tv news Channels?

Table 5. Chi-Square Tests

Value	DF	Asymptotic	Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	23.438a	16	.103
Likelihood Ratio	23.896	16	.092
Linear-by-Linear Association	12.583	1	.000
No of Valid Cases	400		

a. 7 cells (28.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .55.

This table represents the statistical results for H_1 which is the null hypothesis. Chi-square test includes three tests of which p-value is compared with a 5% level of significance to reject or accept the null hypothesis. Among of three tests of Chi-square, in case of Pearson chi-square and Likelihood ratio, the p-value is greater than 5% level of significance ($0.092 > 0.05$) which shows that we are unable to reject null hypothesis meaning that the public is not satisfied with the coverage of armed forces given by major TV news channels.

H2: It is estimated that foreign TV news channels are more damaging Pakistan armed forces image than the national news TV channels?

Table 6. Chi-Square Tests

Value	DF	Asymptotic	Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	30.445a	20	.063
Likelihood Ratio	27.641	20	.118
Linear-by-Linear Association	9.033	1	.003
No of Valid Cases	400		

a. 17 cells (56.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .02.

In this table of statistical results for H_2 which is known as the null hypothesis. Among of three tests of Chi-square, in case of Pearson chi-square and Likelihood ratio, the p-value is greater than 5% level of significance ($0.063 > 0.05$, $0.118 > 0.05$) which shows that we cannot reject the null hypothesis (H_2) meaning that the foreign TV news channels are more damaging Pakistan armed forces image than the national news TV channels.

H3: It is estimated that Pakistani news TV channels portrayed a more positive image of Pakistan armed forces minds of public than the negative image?

Table 7. Chi-Square Tests

Value	DF	Asymptotic	Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	15.692a	16	.475
Likelihood Ratio	17.446	16	.357
Linear-by-Linear Association	.852	1	.356
No of Valid Cases	399		

a. 12 cells (48.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .36.

The graph of statistical estimation presenting the results against or in favour of null hypothesis (H_3) which is estimating that Pakistani news TV channels portrayed a more positive image of Pakistan armed forces in minds of public than the negative image. The results of all three tests of chi-square shows that p-value is greater than the 5% level of significance ($0.47 > 0.05$, $0.357 > 0.05$ & $0.356 > 0.05$) which illustrates that we cannot reject the null

hypothesis and consider that Pakistani news channels picture a more positive image of the armed forces in the minds of the public.

H4: It is estimated that electronic media playing a major role in the image building of Pakistan armed forces than the other sources?

Table 8. Chi-Square Tests

Value	DF	Asymptotic	Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	39.258a	16	.001
Likelihood Ratio	29.293	16	.022
Linear-by-Linear Association	8.334	1	.004
No of Valid Cases	400		

a. 10 cells (40.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .22.

The statistical results are estimated to make a generalization about the null hypothesis (H₄) i.e. the electronic media plays a major role in the image building of Pakistan’s armed forces than the other sources. The results delineate that all of the three tests have a p-value which is less than 5% level of significance like Chi-Square test have 0.001 p-values which shows less than 5% statistically. The second & third test of Chi-Square e.g., Likelihood ratio and Linear-by-Linear association includes the p-value of 0.022 & 0.004 respectively which is also less than 0.05 level of significance. Overall the results show that due to the smaller p-value we are able to reject the null hypothesis (H₄) and will accept the alternative hypothesis which renders that the electronic media is not a major source of the image building of Pakistan's armed forces. This shows that there are also some other major sources which contribute to the image building of the armed forces.

H5: It is estimated that metropolitan cities population perception is changed by the coverage of news TV channels regarding armed forces?

Table 9. Chi-Square Tests

Value	DF	Asymptotic	Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	77.222a	16	.000
Likelihood Ratio	61.364	16	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	18.847	1	.000
No of Valid Cases	400		

a. 10 cells (40.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .36.

This table shows the statistical results of Chi-square test for the rejection or acceptance of the null hypothesis (H₅) which illustrates the estimation that the coverage of TV news channels regarding the armed forces can change the perception of the metropolitan cities population. This Chi-square test further involves three tests: Chi-square test, Likelihood ratio and Linear-by-Linear association. The resultant p-value is compared with a 5% level of significance. The outcomes of all three tests have a p-value which is less than 5% (0.05) level of significance comparatively. The p-value of the chi-square test is 0.00 as it is less than 0.05 (0.00<0.05) thus we can reject the null hypothesis. The p-value of other two tests also pictures that we can reject the null hypothesis (H₅) and will accept the alternative hypothesis which delineates that the perception of metropolitan cities population cannot be changed through the coverage of news TV channels regarding Pakistan’s armed forces. Overall, on the basis of these results, we can say that the perception of people cannot be changed by image building about the armed forces through the coverage of a number of national events.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Though TV news channels have recent years impacts on its public attitude and behavior and perception, but this study is based on exploratory level in this field from news media current point of view were changed in developing countries like Pakistan. A major study in this research conducted in developing or western countries. Current study was objectified to examine news media and public behavior according to Pakistani armed forces perspective. The main purpose of this study was to examine public attitude/perceptions about Armed forces specially TV news channel and their effects on attitudes as well as behaviors. Current study also found the effects of news media that most of the youngster and above age. Their attitude might get influenced by the TV news channels. The finding of the empirical research was to provide public perception of armed forces that may serve as a guideline for further studies in this important area of research. This study may be helpful for the Pakistani society about the current image of armed forces or in future studies. Analyze the repute of army and analyze the role of government media or local media of the Pakistan. According to the last category, more half of the total respondents watch TV and 39.3% do not watch TV. Thus, overall these results depict that TV channels are sketching armed forces by posting news about the army. Among these 427 channels, the valid channels are ARY, Geo, Samma, Express, Duniya, PTV, and 49 others. 31.9% of respondents are in favour of ARY, 25.5% favored Geo. 7.7% gave a positive response favored of both Samma & Express. 4.9 % and 4.4 % of subjects favored Duniya & PTV respectively. Only 6.3% of subjects favored missing systems for image building of armed forces. This shows that there are also some other major sources which contribute to the image building of the armed forces. Hypothesis which delineates that the perception of metropolitan cities population cannot be changed through the coverage of news TV channels regarding Pakistan's armed forces. Overall, on the basis of these results, we can say that the perception of people cannot be changed by image building about the armed forces through the coverage of a number of national events. The study concluded that although Pakistani news media display a positive picture in the eyes of the public but the public [based on the responses of respondents], a majority of the population was not agreed that the news coverage being given to the events of armed forces was 'sufficient'. According to the conclusion, Pakistan Army is a powerful institution and overall armed forces are the backbone of the country, therefore, the prestige of such an institute should not be compromised at any cost. The study concluded that armed forces should be respected in true letter and spirit and the morale of the armed personnel should not be downed by the negative coverage of the army.

Recommendations

Based on the results of the study, the researcher intends to make following recommendations: -

- 1: Pakistan Armed forces should invite all the stakeholders of the society including the owners, news editors, anchors and famous journalists working in various news organizations and develop consensus among them.
- 2: After taking all the stakeholders on board, a comprehensive but an amicable media policy should be formulated for an effective news coverage of armed forces.
- 3: The owners of the news channels and news anchors should be sensitized about international and national engagements of the armed forces and they should be urged upon to portray positive image of the armed forces as maximum as they can.
- 4: After detailed consultation of the stakeholders, the owners and anchors should be invited to discuss rather make positive 'in-house' criticism about the role of armed forces in political crisis and suggest for effective role the military can play for peaceful environment for the citizens of the state.
- 5: The armed forces of the country should develop an effective liaison with the owners, news anchors and the journalists for proper news coverage and programming aiming to enhance and strengthen image of the armed forces in the eyes of general public.

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