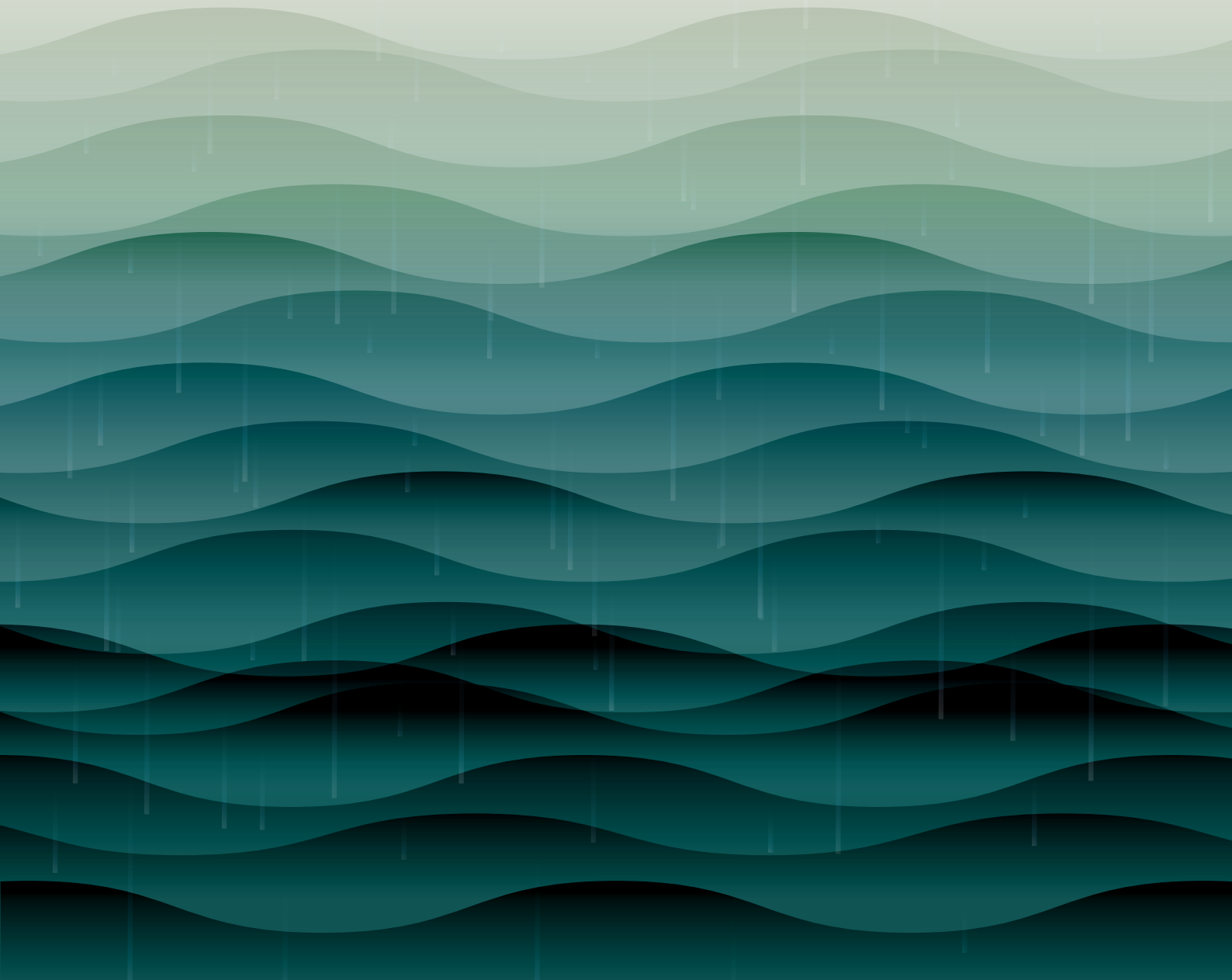


MEDIA COVERAGE AND NATURAL DISASTERS

Analyzing Electronic Media's Coverage of
Pakistan Floods 2022



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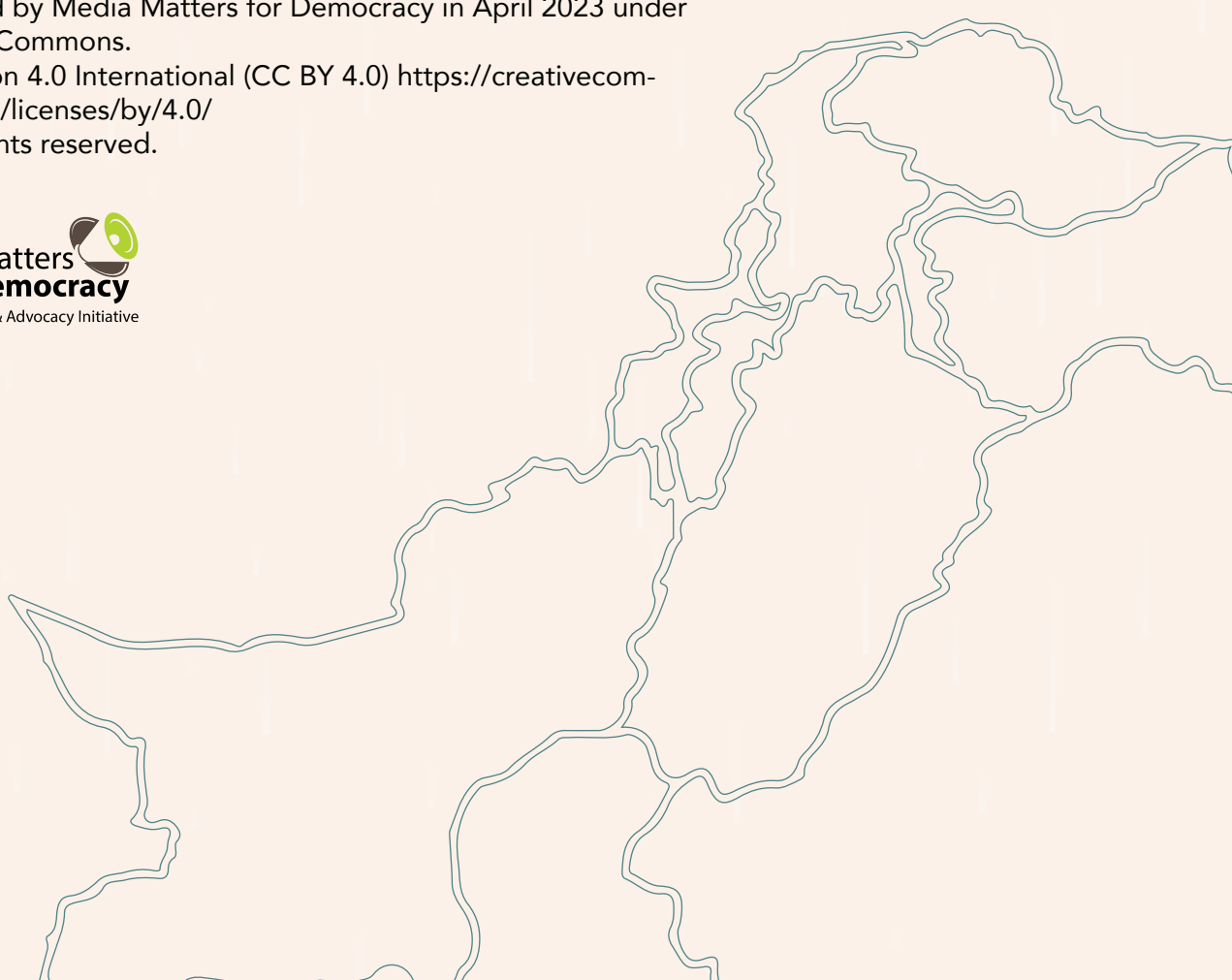


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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Reporting on natural disasters presents unique challenges and obstacles, and the 2022 floods in Pakistan were no exception. The country was ill-prepared for the disaster, and this was reflected in the media's response. However, the media plays a crucial role in informing the public and raising awareness about such events, including providing essential information about safety measures and relief efforts. The focus of this research was to study the reporting patterns of electronic media in Pakistan during the floods and assess if sufficient coverage was provided. Given that the Pakistani media tends to prioritize political reporting and issues in major cities like Karachi, Lahore, and Islamabad, the research aimed to investigate whether a similar pattern was observed during the floods.

To achieve this, the study analyzed 654 bulletins from three news channels between June 15 and August 31, 2022, to quantify the frequency of flood coverage. The research revealed the following key findings:

- **Flood-related news in headlines:** Such news did not make it to the top five headlines in 57.7% of the bulletins, while it was broadcast in 85.9% of the bulletins.
- **Live reporting was the most common type of reporting:** Reporters giving beepers from the flood site, areas, and showing the situation at ground were featured more frequently than statistics, side stories, or in-depth reporting. Such reporting featured 39.3% of the time.
- **Strong urban bias:** Karachi was the most commonly mentioned city in bulletins. It was mentioned 52.5% of the time. Interestingly, Karachi was flooded twice this monsoon season, once in July and second time in August.
- **Lack of coverage on talk shows:** Topics related to floods, climate change and urban flooding remained missing in talks shows aired on the three news channels. Talk shows featured a segment on flood only 14.5% of the time.

SECTION 1

Introduction



Natural Disasters in Pakistan and the Role of Media

Pakistan has experienced numerous natural disasters in recent decades, including flooding, earthquakes, landslides, and heat waves. These events have often resulted in humanitarian crises, with devastating consequences such as loss of life, destruction of homes and infrastructure, and disruption of livelihoods, including road networks and bridges. More than five million people were affected after the country faced drought-like conditions, which started late 2019 and continued through 2019.¹ The 2022 Floods exposed Pakistan's high vulnerability to climate change. It affected 33 million people, of which 8 million were displaced, and resulted in one-third of the country being under water.² United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres called the catastrophe "monsoon on steroids".³ It is noteworthy that despite the onset of heavy rains from June to August causing flooding in villages, Pakistan was ill-prepared for the situation. It took authorities two months to acknowledge the scale of the destruction and initiate rescue and rehabilitation efforts. While the media provided statistics on the floods, there was a lack of significant discussion on the country's inadequate preparedness for the disaster.

The country is prone to disaster and in such a situation the role of the media becomes more important than ever before in sharing information about the overall change in climate but also raising awareness. The media is responsible for forging a link between the public and emergency organisations, and disseminate relevant information to the public, during and after disasters. It should acknowledge its role as a credible information provider responsible for educating people about disaster, reporting on hazard warnings, sharing information about the needs of affected areas, alerting government officials, and facilitating discussions about disaster preparedness.⁴ There have been times when the public administrators have criticised the mass media for recording their every action, questioning their every decision. But in time for a catastrophe, it is important to realise the benefits of a balanced media.⁵

The research carried out an analysis of broadcast news coverage of the floods to determine the quality of the information provided by the media during a natural disaster. This analysis focused on how many times news related to flooding featured in the headlines of three news channels, the type of reporting which was featured and how frequently discussions related to floods featured on different talk shows.

The research findings shed light on the current state of media coverage of natural disasters in Pakistan and can serve as a starting point for further discussions on how to improve it. It is essential to recognize the significance of media coverage during a natural disaster and how it can impact the response and recovery efforts. Therefore, the recommendations derived from this research can prove to be useful not only for journalists and media organizations but also for government departments responsible for disaster management. These recommendations can include the need for developing guidelines for disaster reporting, training programs for journalists to equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge for covering natural disasters, and creating partnerships between media and government agencies to ensure accurate and timely information dissemination. Moreover, the research

1. <https://www.pc.gov.pk/uploads/downloads/PDNA-2022.pdf>
2. <https://www.pc.gov.pk/uploads/downloads/PDNA-2022.pdf>
3. <https://twitter.com/antonioguterres/status/1564556094680227841>
4. <https://www.osou.ac.in/eresources/role-of-media-in-disaster-management.pdf>
5. Ibid.

can contribute to a larger discourse on the role of media in raising public awareness about climate change and its impact on natural disasters. By highlighting the importance of responsible and accurate reporting, the research can encourage media organizations to prioritize coverage of climate change-related issues and educate the public on the measures they can take to mitigate the impact of natural disasters.

SECTION 2

Research Focus and Methodology



Methodology

The aim of the study was to provide insights and recommendations that could improve the quality of disaster reporting in Pakistan, for the benefit of journalists, media organizations, and government agencies alike. The research was guided by three main questions, which informed the study design and methodology:

- To what extent did Pakistan's broadcast news media provide adequate coverage of the floods that occurred from June to August 2022?
- Did the news coverage display a bias towards specific provinces or urban areas affected by the floods?
- Were talk shows able to produce in-depth discussions on climate change and flooding in Pakistan?

To answer these questions, the research team analyzed a total of 654 bulletins from three of the most popular news channels in Pakistan: Geo News, ARY News, and SAMAA News. The study period was from June 15th to August 31st, 2022.

These dates have been selected because mid-June 2022 marked the beginning of Pakistan's monsoon season and heavy rains had started to flood different parts of the country. By late August, flooding worsened to catastrophic levels affecting millions of people.⁶

A total of 218 bulletins of ARY News, 219 of Geo News, and 217 of SAMAA News have been studied. There is a discrepancy in the figures because some bulletins were not available online.

Geo News	219 Bulletins
ARY News	218 Bulletins
SAMAA News	217 Bulletins
	654 Bulletins

Table 1: Total Number of Bulletins

The news channels were selected because of their popularity and availability of their headlines, bulletins and talk shows online.

The research was designed to record flood-related news or headlines in the following three bulletins:

- 12PM
- 6PM
- 9PM

6. <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF12211>

It is interesting to note that the bulletins at different times run a varied number of headlines. The 9PM bulletin generally is the longest for most news organisations as they run news from around the day in it. Sometimes the bulletin headlines can even go on for as long as 20 minutes or more. But on average, bulletins include seven to eight headlines. The data was collated through a questionnaire that is annexed with this report.

One section of the questionnaire focused on recording the names of the provinces and cities mentioned in bulletins. This was done to gauge if certain provinces or cities receive more reporting than others. Focus was also placed on gathering details if any talk show on the three channels, which aired between 7PM to 11PM, featured a segment on floods or not.

Limitations

The design of the research has the following limitations:

Limited sample size: The research only looks at a small selection of news channels and their coverage. Therefore, its findings may not be generalizable to the entire broadcast news industry or the overall news industry. It is possible that other news channels may have provided more or less coverage than the selected ones, which could have influenced the research findings.

Data availability: The researchers depended on the data available online for certain news channels, and there were some discrepancies in figures because some bulletins were not available online. This could be due to copyright issues or other reasons. As a result, the entire data was not available to the researchers, which could have affected the accuracy of the findings.

Time limitation: The research looks at content from selected news channels which aired from June to August 2022, the period during which the flooding occurred. The floods coverage remained in the news in September too, and it's possible that researchers might have missed notable examples of good or even ideal journalism produced during this time. The analysis and findings are, therefore, only indicative of the bulletins and news reports included in the sample.

Limited scope: The data collection focused on selected broadcast news media and in no way claims to offer commentary or insight on alternative digital news sources and their coverage of floods. This means that the research findings do not represent the overall news coverage of floods in the country, and other news sources could have provided different perspectives on the issue.

SECTION 3

Research Findings



Key Findings

- Flood-related news did not make it to the top five headlines in 57.7% of the bulletins, while it was broadcast in 85.9% of the bulletins. It was reported as the first headline in 18% of the bulletins.
- The most common type of reporting was live reporting from the flood site, which was recorded 39.3% of the times.
- Karachi was the most commonly mentioned city in bulletins. It was mentioned 52.5% of the time, followed by Kohlu (22%), Quetta (20%), Hyderabad (17.7%), and Thatta (17%). Interestingly, Karachi was flooded twice this monsoon season, once in July and second time in August.
- Topics related to floods, climate change and urban flooding remained missing in talks shows aired on the three news channels. Out of a total of 234 times, talk shows featured a segment on floods a meager 14.5% of the time.
- Bulletins or headlines barely mentioned reporting on climate change or explainers on what is happening in Pakistan and why. The word “climate change” was mentioned only a few times in headlines and that too without any context.
- There were almost no in-depth investigative stories run by any of the news channels in their bulletins or headlines.

Floods Coverage in Headlines

Based on the research findings, it appears that weather, flood warnings, and flood affected areas were mentioned in a significant majority of the monitored bulletins. However, the study highlights that only a small proportion of these bulletins had such news as a top five headline, and a significant proportion did not mention any updates on weather or floods at all. Additionally, the study found that flood-related news was often not prioritized, with the majority of bulletins pushing such stories towards the end of the bulletin, rather than featuring them prominently in the top five headlines. This trend was consistent across all three news channels studied, suggesting a general lack of priority given to flood-related news. weather, flood warnings, and flood-affected areas were mentioned in 562 of the monitored bulletins, accounting for 85.9% of the total bulletins studied. However, out of these, only 28.13% of the bulletins had such news in their top five headlines, while 14% of the bulletins did not mention any updates on weather or floods at all. Further analysis of the bulletins showed that flood-related news was featured as the first headline in 119 bulletins, which was 18% of the total bulletins studied. However, in the majority of the bulletins (57.7%), flood stories were not included in the top five headlines and were instead pushed towards the end of the bulletin. This pattern was consistent across all three news channels, indicating a lack of priority given to flood-related news.

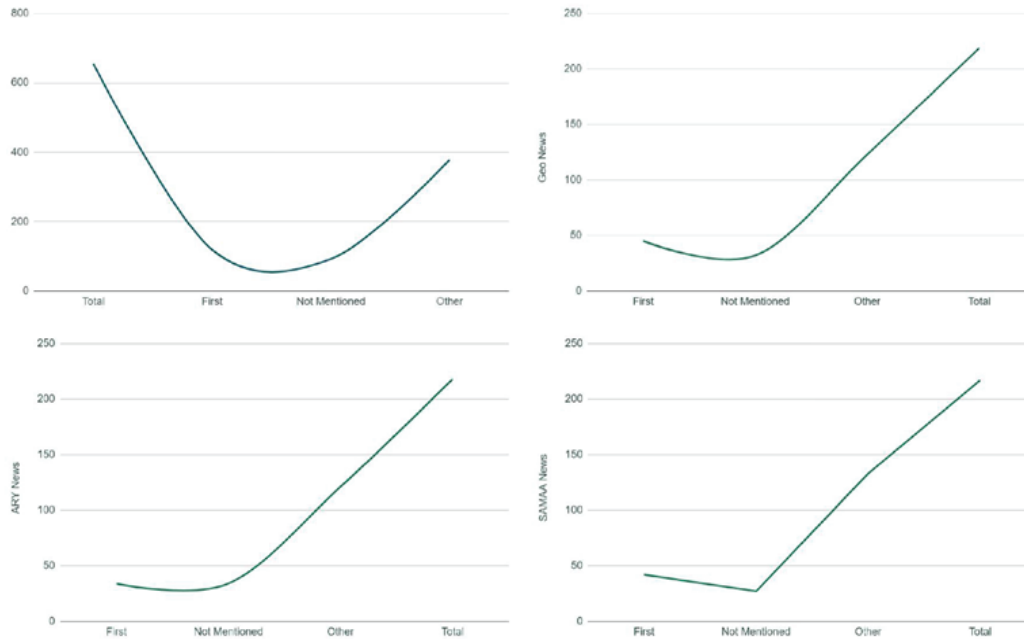


Table 1 Total Number of Bulletins

After analyzing the coverage of all three news channels, it was found that Geo News had the highest percentage of featuring flood-related news as the first headline. However, the news still didn't make it to the top five headlines in a significant number of bulletins. ARY and SAMAA News had a similar pattern of coverage, with SAMAA News featuring the flood news as the first headline the most number of times. Geo News ran flood-related news as its first headlines in 45 (20.5%) bulletins out of a total 219, it didn't mention the news in 32 (14.6%) bulletins, while it did not make it to the top five headlines in 123 (56%) bulletins. Similar pattern was observed in the reporting and coverage by ARY News and SAMAA News. ARY ran it as top headline 34 (15.6%) times, while SAMAA ran it 42 (19.35%) times, there was zero coverage in the headlines for both channels 34 (15.6%) and 27 (12.5%) times, respectively. The news ran on the bulletin after the broadcast of top five headlines 121 (55.5%) times for ARY, and 133 (61.3%) times for SAMAA.

News Channel	Top Headline	Not in Top 5 Headlines	No Coverage
Geo News	20.5%	56%	14.6%
ARY News	15.6%	55.5%	15.6%
SAMAA News	19.35%	61.3%	12.5%

Table 2: Number of times flood-related news was broadcast in top headlines

It is pertinent to mention that everytime news related to heavy rains, flooding alert or weather update was run in the headline, it was often accompanied by words such as "mausam khushgawaar (weather had turned pleasant)", "shehriyon ko baarish ka bey sabri say intejar (citizens are anxiously waiting for the rain)", "siyahon ki mojain (tourists are

having a blast)", and "Cholistan mei baarish ke baad khushaali (rain brings happiness to people in Cholistan)"⁷ among others.

In one bulletin on 4th July, 2022, it was mentioned that people in Karachi are anxiously waiting for rain followed by a warning for urban flooding in the city. After five days, the city received record-breaking rainfall, 141.4 mm, bringing life to a halt in the metropolis.⁸ Estimates show that the average rainfall record for Karachi in July is 53.2mm, in August it is 64.6mm and in September it is 23.6mm.⁹ The unprecedented heavy rainfall left many roads, streets, houses inundated for days and caused deaths of 14 people.¹⁰

Another bulletin, which ran on 22nd June, 2022, mentioned how tourists and people are looking forward to rains in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and waiting for some respite from the heat. It said that people in Dir are all prepared and have taken out their warm clothes while waiting for the rains to make the weather pleasant. This reporting was followed a month by news of seven people, including four children, being killed in rain-related incidents in Lower Dir.¹¹

Bulletins or headlines barely mentioned reporting on climate change or explainers on what is happening in Pakistan and why. The word "climate change" was mentioned only a few times in headlines and that too without any context.

Type of Reporting

When analyzing the data on the type of reporting, the research found that side stories on the topic were reported a total of 161 (24.6%) times, 72 (32.8%) times by Geo News, 54 (24.7%) by ARY News, and 35 (16.1%) by SAMAA News, while reporting on figures was recorded 136 (21%) times, out of which ARY News shared them 50 (23%) times, Geo News 61 (28%) times and SAMAA News 25 (11.5%) times.

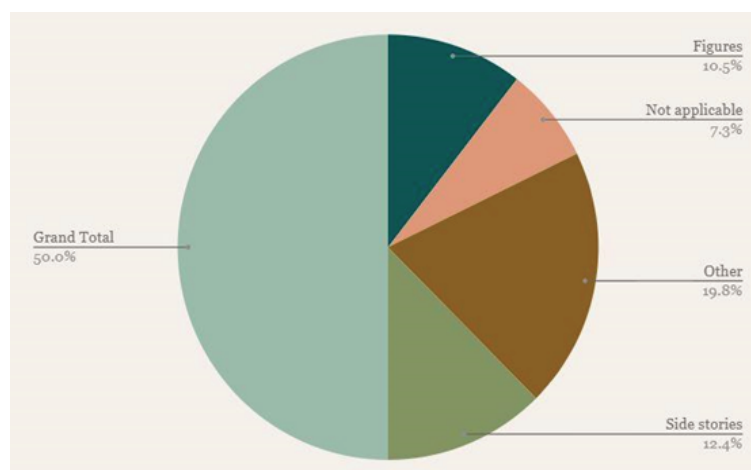


Figure 2: Type of Reporting on Flood-Related News between June 15, 2022 to August 31, 2022 by three Pakistani news channels.

7. This was said in reference to reporting on rain and water scarcity.
8. <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2365586/karachi-reels-from-rain-fury-amid-fresh-forecast>
9. Ibid.
10. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1699209>
11. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1702241>

The most common was the reporting category titled 'Other', which was recorded a total of 257 (39.3%) times. This type of reporting could be described as 'situational' at best, in which TV reporters were present in a certain area and giving their beeper while speaking to the flood affectees. The reporter and the testimonies of the affectees were just describing the situation of flood in a particular area, and contained no additional information on the cause, solution, or ways to help the affectees. The purpose remained to show the situation on ground, and how people are coping with it without providing any context or explainer. No information was shared on the ways to help people too, a majority of the time.¹²

There were almost no in-depth investigative stories run by any of the news channels in their bulletins or headlines.

Coverage of Provinces

The data reveals that the electronic media focused on coverage in Sindh, Balochistan, Punjab, and then Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Regions such as Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and Gilgit-Baltistan were also mentioned in the bulletin but their coverage remained restricted to running viral videos showing the damage done by floods.

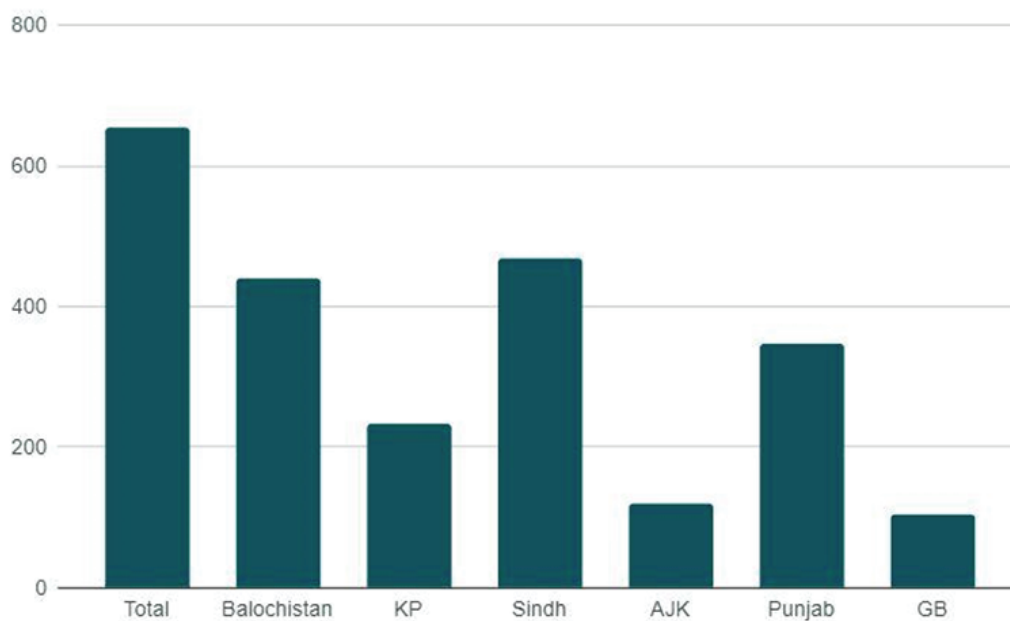


Figure 3: Coverage of Provinces

It is, however, interesting to note that Balochistan and Sindh were the most affected provinces with flooding being reported in both rural and urban areas. It has been reported that both the provinces received over 400% more rainfall than previous years with Balochistan receiving 411% and Sindh receiving 471% more rain.¹³

The trend for cities showed that the most commonly mentioned city was Karachi, a whopping 344 times, compared to other cities Hyderabad, mentioned 116 times, Thatta, mentioned

12. This reporting also remained quite common in certain talk shows such as Capital Talk, Aaj Shahzeb Khanzada Kay Saath, Zimmedar Kaun among others.

13. <https://graphics.reuters.com/PAKISTAN-WEATHER/FLOODS/akpezbxgvt/>

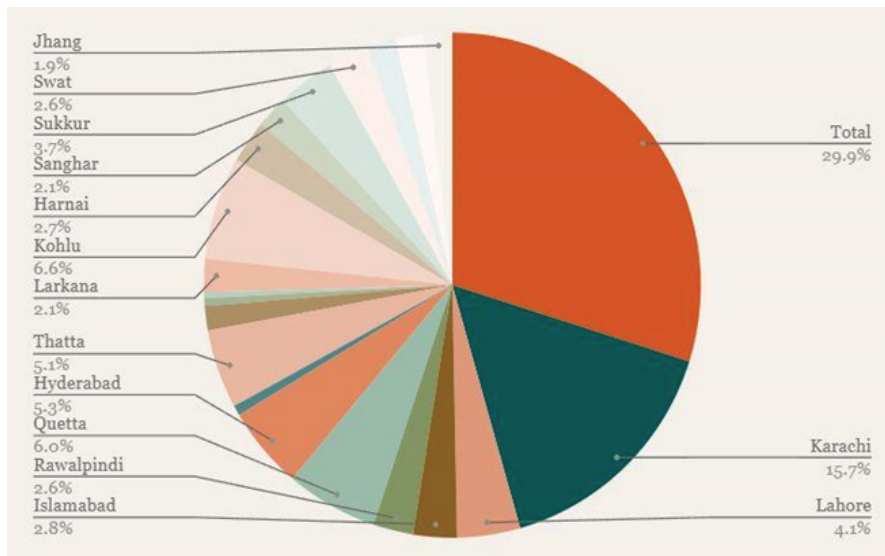


Figure 4: Coverage of Cities

Flooding in Balochistan, and Sindh had started at the end of June and continued till August. On July 30 2022, Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif even visited the flood-affected areas in Balochistan and announced Rs1 million for families who lost their loved ones in the rain, and Rs500,000 for people whose houses were destroyed.¹⁴ Despite the flooding, the reporting did not feature any quote from any environmentalist on the situation. At most, comments were sought from officials working at Pakistan Meteorological Department. Bulletins also featured headlines on the rescue work being conducted by the Pakistan Army in flood-affected areas.

Coverage on Talk Shows

Topics related to floods, climate change and urban flooding remained missing in talks shows aired on the three news channels. Out of a total of 234 times, talk shows featured a segment on floods 34 times only, making it a meager 14.5% of the times.

Of Geo's total 79 days, talk shows featured a segment on floods 10 times, and on Ary 15 times, while SAMAA out of its 76 days, only featured it 9 times.

14. <https://www.geo.tv/latest/430812-pm-shehbaz-sharif-visits-balochistan-after-rain-death-toll-crosses-120>

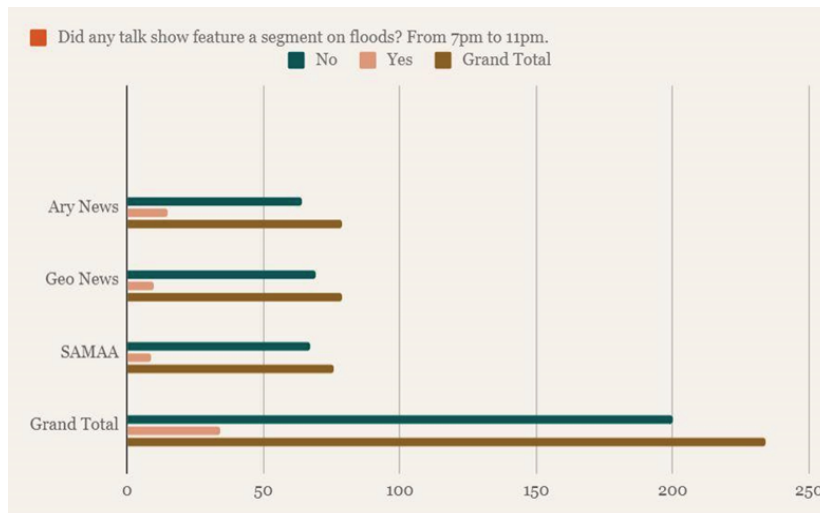


Figure 5: Coverage on Talk Shows

Out of the three channels, ARY News' talk show Power Play by Arshad Sharif was the first to hold a segment on floods on July 12th, 2022. The next day, July 13th, 2022, talk shows on all three channels featured segments on flood because Karachi was left flooded during unprecedented rainfall which lashed the metropolitan from July 10, 2022 to July 11, 2022 and left many areas in the city flooded for days.

The reporting on talk shows also remained restricted to situational reporting which included beepers from anchors or reporters present in flood-affected areas and telling the audience about the situation, while other times facts and figures about the flood damage were shared. Even the panellists on talk shows on flood segments only included politicians or journalists. No environment experts were called on the show to explain the situation or speak about the effects of climate change.

The coverage increased starting August 23, 2022 when most talk shows were dedicating at least one segment to floods. Even then, most talk shows focused on the judgement reserved on the plea to disqualify former PM Imran Khan. Hamid Mir's Capital Talk was the only talk show which focused only on floods.

During a segment on floods in one of the talk shows, journalists remarked that the media is not giving enough coverage or attention to flood-affected areas or reporting on it. Interestingly, the comments were made by the same panel which spoke about Imran Khan's disqualification in a segment before floods.

SECTION 4

Analysis and Recommendations



Analysis

Flooding is not a new phenomenon in Pakistan. The country faced massive flooding in September 1992 following four-day historic rainfall which led to flooding in northern parts of the country and was the worst flood after 1959.¹⁵ On 23rd July 2001, Islamabad and adjoining areas received heaviest downpour recorded in 100 years,¹⁶ and this led to its virtual drowning. Flooding has been reported in Sindh more frequently since the 2000s. In 2003, the province was left flooded by unprecedented monsoon rains and over 230 people died,¹⁷ even Karachi was hit by urban flooding.¹⁸ Massive flooding was once again reported in 2007 and 2010. During the 2007 floods over 300 lives were lost and 550,000 people were displaced,¹⁹ while in 2010 over 1,700 casualties were reported and 20 million people displaced.²⁰ Floods were again reported in 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2019, 2020, and 2021. Even then, Pakistani institutions were caught unprepared during the devastating floods in 2022, and electronic media was no exception. A detailed look at the data and findings reveal that electronic media remained unable to gauge the severity of the situation unfolding due to the flooding, or report on it in a manner which highlighted its severity leading to swift action by government authorities.

News Channels in Pakistan have a built-in assumption that whenever there is rain in any part of Pakistan this will translate into only one thing: weather is now pleasant there. In the last monsoon, Pakistan witnessed unprecedented rains and in some parts there was 400 percent more rain and despite the warning from the MET department, news channels continued with their usual, and often complacent, reporting. However, when reports from different parts of the country started to emerge that due to rains there is flooding, news channels focused on 'situational' reporting rather than explaining climate change, or global warming and its consequences on developing countries such as Pakistan. Channels remained unable to provide any context of the flooding, explaining why they occurred, or provide information about how people can receive help or stay safe.

Despite such a natural catastrophe, politics remained the first priority of the Pakistani news channels. The concept that only 'hard news' brings in viewerships has been strongly ingrained in the minds of newsroom managers because of which the focus remained on political news and programming. In headlines of most of the bulletins, political news remained top headlines in most of the bulletins. Unfortunately, when this disaster was unfolding, news channels gave more airtime to the political happenings then covering the floods which included the arrest of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leader Shahbaz Gill, disqualification case against former Prime Minister Imran Khan. There is no doubt that during this time Pakistan's politics was seeing unprecedented events. For the first time in the history of Pakistan, a vote of no confidence against a sitting prime minister succeeded and Pakistan Tehreek Insaf lost the majority in the national assembly. But during the same period, millions of people were suffering due to a natural calamity. They were forced to leave their homes, take refuge on the sides of the roads and news channels were busy discussing political events in bulletins and programming.

15. <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/485607-climate-change-catching-pakistan-unprepared>

16. <https://www.essl.org/ECSS/2007/abs/02-Case-study/sheikh-1-sec02.oral.pdf>

17. https://www.adrc.asia/view_disaster_en.php?NationCode=&Lang=en&Key=620

18. <https://www.dawn.com/news/132442/karachi-heavy-rain-leaves-civic-system-in-tatters>

19. <https://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/images/18623/floods-in-pakistan>

20. https://www.finance.gov.pk/survey/chapter_11/Special%20Section_2.pdf

The findings have highlighted the need for broadcast organisations to bring a change in the way they report on calamities. The situation on ground, while an important source of information, is not enough till links are drawn between the calamity and overall climate crisis facing the country. The reporting needs to take into account the sense of injustice as the country contributes less than 1% emission of global greenhouse gasses that continue to warm the planet but its geography makes it extremely vulnerable to climate change.²¹ Pakistan has consistently been ranked among the top 10 most vulnerable countries on the Climate Risk Index²² and it has reported 10,000 fatalities due to climate-related disasters and financial losses amounting to about \$4 billion from 173 extreme weather events.²³ Even then, the broadcast media has largely failed in bringing awareness about climate change in the country. The term climate change is mentioned but no effort is made to explain the term or talk about the type of impact it can have on the lives of people and why it's necessary to immediately address it.

Even the Supreme Court has taken notice of the climate change vulnerabilities of the country. The top court in an order dated July 6, 2022 remarked that "the urban development authorities need to seriously consider the climate change angle" whenever a proposal is put forward for the amendment or modification in the Mater Scheme, adding "adaptation, climate resilience and sustainability" have assumed the role of constitutional necessity and an overarching constitutional obligation.²⁴ The verdict said:

In urban living, climate change can impair the quality of life of a person, offend his dignity and deprive him of his property or the right to fully enjoy his property. Incorporating adaptation, climate resilience and sustainability, in the policy decisions by the urban development authorities, are essential to actualise the fundamental rights of the people and therefore form an integral part of the fundamental human rights of the people of Pakistan.²⁵

In such a scenario, the media must rethink its reporting strategies for covering natural disasters and show a strong sense of responsibility in raising awareness regarding climate change and highlight the importance of reporting on the environment, especially in a vulnerable country such as Pakistan.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the research, the following recommendations have been drafted:

- **Capacity building for reporters**

Most reporters were caught unprepared for the reporting of floods. They must be taught about principles and phases of disaster reporting. Understand the safety and risks associated with it and make efforts to disseminate disaster warnings and educate people about rescue support in the first phase of the reporting. In the second phase, they must realize that humanitarian support is a part of the coverage and they must cover in-depth the effectiveness of the support available to survivors, share information on chances of disaster recurrence, and support the return of normalcy in affected areas. More civil society

21. <https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-62758811>

22. https://reliefweb.int/report/world/global-climate-risk-index-2021?gclid=Cj0KCQjw8qmhBhCLARIsANAtboeMA7xtbp7RTXhKA_Pupxd6tXBuGYO92Dr8lFW-KtjD-rXj0ilk8y8aAiDTEALw_wcB

23. <https://www.usip.org/publications/2022/07/pakistans-climate-challenges-pose-national-security-emergency>

24. <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2364905/consider-climate-change-angle-in-uplift-plans-rules-sc>

25. Ibid

organisations and media organisations need to conduct capacity building sessions for reporters and editors to understand the problems of reporting on natural disasters and learn ways to counter them effectively.

- **Collaboration between disaster management institutions and newsrooms**

There is a need for strong collaboration and cooperation between disaster management institutions and newsrooms to ensure that the statistics and figures being presented by the media are all up-to-date but also to ensure accessibility of experts who can comment on the situation on the ground and speak about climate change and its vulnerabilities, especially in a country such as Pakistan. This would contribute to the reporting and ensure that viewers are being informed about the climate disaster, and how it will affect their lives. Opinion of climate change experts on the topic would ensure a more holistic debate than those of just the politicians.

- **Innovation in reporting**

Reporters and news organisations must actively ensure in changing their reporting style and producing stories to give a holistic picture of the natural disaster. Live reporting is important, but if it's done without any context then it just amounts to showing helplessness of the people and leads to their victimization. Reporters must actively identify ways in which they can tell stories of people in ways to raise their problems and help them in meaningful ways. Investigative pieces on floods remained missing from the bulletins and talk shows. Effort must be placed towards generating human interest stories without desensitisation of the affectees. Report on the needs of the survivors and coordinating support.

- **Allocate resources for fact-checking**

In a situation of an emergency or disaster, there's a desire to seek as much information as possible for people. It is helpful in making people's decisions about themselves and their family, for instance what precautions to take, whether they should evacuate or not, and where they can seek help from. Such information helps in alleviating the fear of the unknown. It is, however, important to understand that in such a situation misinformation can spread widely and quickly during natural disasters through word of mouth, or social media, especially. It may even impact the efforts of emergency workers and aid organisations. Therefore, media organisations need to allocate resources to ensure the information they are running is credible, verifiable, and true. This would ensure that energy and funds are not wasted and could instead be used to fulfill an identified need.

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