

## Significance of the media landscape in raising various social issues in urban areas of Lahore, Pakistan

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### Abstract

The present study aims to analyse the significance of the media landscape in raising various social issues in urban areas of Lahore, Pakistan. The present study will discuss how the media landscape helps in disseminating social awareness messages to urbanized communities, and that leads to evolving information and relationships between a social setup. For said purpose, the quantitative research method was used by the researchers to get the results. A questionnaire was devised to undertake the survey. Through stratified random sampling technique, a sample size of 250 respondents was selected from public and private sector universities of Lahore. According to the results, media have a vital part in each community's social development. People who live in urban regions are thought to be more technologically advanced than those who live in rural ones. The media landscape in metropolitan areas is the primary source of their information and awareness. The survey results also indicate that media is playing an important role to highlight various social issues being faced by the urban population of Lahore city; these issues include health, education, terrorism, and poverty.

**Keywords:** media, media landscape, social issues, social awareness, urban areas, urbanized communities, metropolitan areas.

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## 1. Introduction

Media and social networking have made the globe a smaller place in which exchange of information, ideas, cultural traditions and social issues with the others is easily possible. No development can take place without the cooperation of others, whether it be at the local or macro level. When it comes to information transmission, it is important to have a powerful tool that can quickly link everyone to one other. A wide range of concerns, including health care, poverty alleviation and environmental protection are addressed through the use of media for development. Socioeconomic and cultural development are also addressed. The media coverage contributes to highlight and illuminate urban social issues. It has been observed that numerous genuine issues are excessively found in Lahore urban areas. But our recognition of the greatness of these issues, their basic causes, and most vitally the capacity of society to discover arrangements to cater to these issues is altogether formed by how the major news media cover these social issues. This can be not appropriate to say that the media ignore good news in almost Lahore urban areas. Some social issues such as poverty, education, terrorism, health issues, and unemployment may be unmanageable.

Utilizing freely obvious information on media sources, their supporters, and intelligence among them, the researchers conducted a point-by-point examination of the media landscape in urban zones: from the advancing homes in media distributing and utilization, to the shared readership and association between diverse sorts of media, and to the differing qualities of supposition social contacts bring (Altheide, 2007; An *et al.*, 2021). Besides, social issues researchers ought to give open with the mindfulness and capacities to address and make unused media and innovation fundamental aptitudes for dynamic citizenship in our majority rule government (Pytash *et al.*, 2018; Munir, 2021). Interceding the media show looks forward to preparing professionals with an all-encompassing and comprehensive system to develop media relations. This show recognizes two sets of impacts, inner and outside. Inner impacts incorporate journalist mindsets, journalist schedules, and newsroom schedules. Outside impacts incorporate extra-media powers and media philosophy. Changing media landscape Lahore urban ranges present a charming setting to test the demonstration. Indeed, with the development of social media, the standard media remains prevalent with tall readership and viewership figures (Pang, 2010).

This can be likely in portion due to the generally huge impact sizes included: individuals who live in urban regions frequently take part in social media at a division of the rate of their urban partners and contribute orders of size less substance (Johnson *et al.*, 2017). The accessibility of so numerous media alternatives, in any case, has raised concerns almost the majority rule suggestions of living in such a high-choice media environment. After all, no one individual can devour all the media choices accessible to him or her. As such, a collection approach gives a window into the decision-making methodologies of groups of onlookers who are confronted with expanded media choices. The rise of ideologically driven news and the obscuring of news and excitement are considered nearby more conventional sources of print, TV, radio, and web news (Edgerly, 2015). Advanced innovations have on a very basic level modified the nature and work of media in our society, rehashing age-old hones of open communication and at times circumventing conventional media and challenging its advantaged part as guardians of news and excitement. Purposeful publicity camouflaged as news is prospering, and even though interaction with the advanced space educates children profitable abilities, it can moreover uncover them to grave dangers (Ian-Ross, 2007; Kaul, 2012). Media Landscape may be a term

right now utilized to depict social and media centres working at exceptionally diverse topographical levels. They range from small-scale nearby urban clusters within the media industry to the social cities of the worldwide urban and territorial framework. Media cities constitute a topographically complex wonder, which is associated to a certain degree with the conventional centre on urban culture (Krätke, 2003).

Research objectives of the study are a) to know and analyse the role of media in urban areas; b) to know the role of media in highlighting various social issues in urban areas of Lahore; and c) to know the impact of the media landscape in urban development in Lahore city. Regarding significance of the study, the role of media in the present era is unneglectable. The present study will determine the importance of media, in raising various social issues being faced by the urbanized communities particularly the dwellers of Lahore. The result might indicate different types of media to focus on issues as expected by the audience. Many localized and contextual events are of utmost significance, but they go unattended because of lack of stream time on media, hence affecting the people associated. Hence, this study is undertaken to understand the role of different types of media in highlighting any social issues in Lahore city, as well as identifying the types of issues people are interested to get the limelight. The researchers will analyse and evaluate the role of media in highlighting certain social issues in urban areas of Lahore and based on the results of this study societal progression and media responsibilities are further determined.

## **2. Literature review**

According to Bertot *et al.* (2012) media alludes to a set of print and online apparatuses that are planned for and centred on social interaction. In here, social media serves as a catchall state for a combination of web-based innovations and administrations such as blogs, microblogs (i.e., Twitter), social sharing administrations (e.g., YouTube, Flickr), text informing, discussion gatherings, collaborative altering devices (e.g., wikis), and social organizing administrations (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp). This many-to-many interaction permits expansive bunches of geographically scattered clients to create profitable data assets, fathom challenging issues by tapping into one-of-a-kind and uncommon skill and pick up differing bits of knowledge and viewpoints through discourse. The noteworthiness of the media scene is that highlighted the Lahore urban ranges social issues.

Rappaz *et al.* (2019) explain that information is prepared and spread in such a way that it may be accessible to all over the world and broadcasted through an expansive number of channels and over different mediums. The media landscape has driven to productive inquire about lines crossing different areas. The examination of scope designs can highlight non-obvious connections between various sources. The information and data might at that point give a setting for the journalists examining the scope of a specific story or bolster watchdog-like forums that screen the wellbeing and advancement of the media landscape. The impact of real-world components on substance dissemination may be a challenging assignment.

Sterling *et al.* (2012) state that in 2008, approximately half of the world's populace (around three billion individuals) was living in urban regions. By 2030, the extent of the world populace that's urban is anticipated to rise to 61%. An expanding earlier dialog almost the utilize of underground space in urban regions to address the developing centre on the maintainability of current urban improvement patterns and how the urban foundation is given. Much has been

composed concerning significance of underground space utilizes in urban zones and deploring the need of arranging for the expanding uses that create over time in developing city Lahore.

Whitehand (2021) explains that the term 'urban morphology' is utilized in many ways. Likely its most strict and broadly acknowledged definition is 'the consideration of the urban form'. For numerous, it is the think about of the urban scene or townscape. It to a great extent needs national organizational bodies. Formal degree courses in urban morphology are uncommon and content books are few. Urban morphology involves more of a multidisciplinary position than most areas of information. It is at an assembly put of the expressions, humanities, social sciences, and, to a much lesser degree, the characteristic sciences. The differing character of urban morphology, particularly it is multidisciplinary, maybe a coherent beginning points for the thought of a range of things that the urban morphologists have to be considered more enthusiastically than until now.

According to McKendrick *et al.* (2008) recent times have seen an enormous infiltration of mass media within the creating world. Set against an understanding of the history of social approaches for individuals living in poverty. The acknowledgment that the media satisfy is a critical part in forming, increasing, and reacting to open states of mind towards destitution. Moreover, the media has experienced significant changes in current time, with a more extensive run of communication modes being utilized and more openings being managed for participatory news coverage. The noteworthiness of the media is assisting our understanding of poverty. It takes after that poverty is more likely to be recognized when it is depicted as such when displayed through the mass media. Daily papers, TV, movies, blogs, and radio all display poverty to their particular gatherings of people.

Gerstl-Pepin (2007) discusses the role that media play in educational legislative issues and considers what part instructive analysts might play in how instructive issues are depicted by the media. This has vital suggestions for educational approach issues, which are regularly spoken to adversely within the press at the national level. Media representatives tend to strengthen open discernments concerning the causes of school disappointment as inferable basically to falling flat teachers and/or school structures instead of relevant variables such as generational destitution or socially one-sided tests. In case it can concur that media's part as a watchdog serves as a vital check and adjust our political framework and, in this way, is central to the operation of popular government, at that point claims of media predisposition are tricky.

Leask *et al.* (2010) portrays that the media plays a massively persuasive part in open reactions to health issues. The mass media i.e., print, TV, radio, and web has an unparalleled reach as a communication component. Open wellbeing experts have continuously been delicate to the influencing control of the mass media. In truth, open health has regularly had the challenging errand of both utilizing the media to impact wellbeing hones whereas countering this same impact where it energizes undesirable choices. For public health communicators to endeavour to attain their objectives, it is fundamental to get it how the mass media works. Besides, open health can have a more productive engagement with the mass media if there's a more prominent understanding of how wellbeing news is built inside media organizations.

Garz and Martin (2021) discuss the role of media in highlighting various social issues. The researcher argues that unemployment figures crossing a circular number "milestone" cause an irregular increment within the sum of media scope given to unemployment conditions, and we

utilize this brokenness to gauge the impact of consideration to unemployment news on voting, holding consistent the genuine financial conditions on the ground. The media takes an advantage of the unemployment “milestones”: circular limit numbers that are cognitively notable. Media compare unemployment discharges where a breakthrough has been crossed to those with exceptionally comparative detailed levels and changes, but which do not cross a turning point.

### 3. Research methodology

To know the significance of the media landscape in raising various social issues in urban areas of Lahore, a quantitative research methodology has been used in the present study. In this regard, a survey was conducted among the target population- university students of public and private sector universities of Lahore city. Stratified random sampling technique was used and 3 private sector universities and 2 public sector universities of Lahore city were selected. A sample of 50 students from each of the 5 universities was randomly drawn, hence making the sample size of 250 students. A 26-item questionnaire based on closed-ended statements measured on different scales was prepared to get the responses of the sample. The questionnaire was validated for content validity through expert opinion of 3 university professor. The final questionnaire was distributed among 250 participants; however, only 199 respondents have given their complete feedback. Subsequently, the responses of 199 respondents were analysed with the help of SPSS to get the results.

### 4. Data analysis and interpretation

The demographic variables of the sample are displayed in table-1. The responses of 199 respondents were analysed. There were 108 females and 91 males, 92 respondents belonged to the age group of 15-25 years range, 97 belonged to 26-35 years age range. The qualification of the respondents was diversified, 27 respondents were BS/BSc, 117 had MA/MSc, and 55 had MS/MPhil qualification. This shows that the data was spread across different demographics, thus resulting in diversified and comprehensive opinions.

Table-1: Demographic analysis (N= 199)

Variable	F	%
Gender	Male	45.7
	Female	54.3
Age	15-25	46.2
	26-35	48.7
	36-45	0.05
Education	BA/BSc	13.6
	MA/MSc	58.8
	MS/MPhil	27.6

Table-2 displays the descriptive analysis of items in which the respondents had to respond to different options. The majority 92.5% of the respondents used media and only 7.5% responded using media to some extent. In this age of digital technology, no one can deny the use of media out rightly. Social media took the lead in terms of usage as reported by 62.3% of respondents, followed by electronic media at 18.2%. However, it was noted that only 1% of the sample used

print media, which tells us the digital culture of the world and its influence on the choice of media as well. It was also noted from the responses that the majority of people use media from 1 hour to 3 hours (42.7%) and only a limited number of extreme media users exist in the sample (2.5%) that use media for more than 12 hours. As far as purpose of use of media is concerned, it was seen that the respondents used media for multiple purposes such as entertainment (22.6%), information (19.6%), education (12.1%), persuasion/motivation (22.6%), development (9%), and for information/education and entertainment purposes (14.1%). Interesting to note is that despite the users of print media were only 1% in the sample but when asked about the trustworthiness of media (30.6%) reported that they trust the news published by print media. Electronic and social media trustworthiness was 35.7% and 33.7% respectively. Upon asking about the social issues most highlighted by media, a majority (39.2%) of the respondents have opined terrorism is most highlighted, followed by poverty (29.1%), health (20.1%), and education (11.6%) respectively.

Table-2: Statements related to different options

Statement	Options	F	%
Do you use media?	Yes	184	92.5
	To some extent	15	7.5
Which form of media do you commonly use?	Print	2	1
	Electronic	36	18.2
	Social	124	62.3
	Print/electronic/social	16	8
	Electronic/social	21	10.5
How many hours do you spend in a normal day using the media i.e., Electronic, Print, and social media?	1-3 hours	85	42.7
	Up to 1 hour	60	30.1
	3 - 6 hours	22	11.1
	6 - 12 hours	27	13.6
	More than 12 hours	5	2.5
For what the main purpose, you use media?	Entertainment	45	22.6
	Information	39	19.6
	Education	24	12.1
	Development	18	9
	Persuasion/motivation	45	22.6
	Information/education/entertainment	28	14.1
In your opinion, which media source is most trustworthy in terms of the provision of information you receive?	Print	61	30.6
	Electronic	71	35.7
	Social	67	33.7
Which type of public interest social issues are mostly highlighted in the media?	Education	23	11.6
	Health	40	20.1
	Poverty	58	29.1
	Terrorism	78	39.2

Table-3 illustrates the responses of the respondents on a scale of five-point ranging from greater extent, great extent, some extent, rarely, and not at all. When asked about recommending a colleague/ friend to trust the information provided by the media, based upon your experience with the media, the majority of the responses were in agreement (42.2%), whereas only 15.6%

were not in favour. When asked about the fairness of media in covering and highlighting the social issues for the urban population, 67.8% rated it in agreement; only 11.5% were against this opinion. When asked about reporting various social issues with honesty, only 28.6% were in agreement whereas 25.1% were against this belief that media reports with honesty. This is an interesting finding to note. When asked about honestly reporting about the environment, 60.3% of the respondents believed that media reports with honesty, and 10.5% were against this notion. When honesty of media reporting on business-related issues was asked, 64.3% were in agreement and 15.1% were against it. This is important to note that majority of respondents do not consider the reporting of media on social issues, to be honest. While the same respondents believe the same media reports honestly on environment and business. However, the role of media in promoting harmony in different groups of society was considered highly by the respondents as 64.9% were in agreement only 13.5 opined against it.

Table-3: Statements measured on a five-point scale

Statement	Greater	Great	Some Extent	Rarely	Not At all
Up to what extent, you will recommend a friend/colleague to trust the information provided by media, based upon your experience with the media?	16 (8.0)	68 (34.2)	84 (42.2)	31 (15.6)	-
How fair do you think that media has been to the Urban population in terms of coverage and highlighting various issues?	59 (29.6)	76 (38.2)	41 (20.6)	17 (8.5)	6 (3.0)
How honest do you think the media has been for the News reporting for various social issues? News reporting for various social issues	17 (8.5)	40 (20.1)	92 (46.2)	40 (20.1)	10 (5.0)
News related to the environment	35 (17.6)	85 (42.7)	58 (29.1)	17 (8.5)	4 (2.0)
News related to the business overall	27 (13.6)	87 (43.7)	55 (27.6)	25 (12.6)	5 (2.5)
To what extent do you think that media plays an important role in promoting harmony among the different groups of society?	64 (32.2)	65 (32.7)	43 (21.6)	19 (9.5)	8 (4.0)

In another set of questions related to the effects of media in Pakistan and in your specific area, interesting opinions were noted. For Pakistan, 24.1% believed that it has a negative effect, while in a specific area, 38.7% believed that it has negative effects. The reason for this inconsistency could be the urban demographic of this sample. In urban areas, the technology, facilities, and resources are much more as compared to the overall Pakistan which includes rural suburbs as well.

Table-4: Statements related to negative, neutral and positive

Statement	options	F	%
How would you evaluate the effects of media in Pakistan?	Negative	48	24.1
	Neutral	83	41.7
	Positive	68	34.2
How would you evaluate the effects of media in your area?	Negative	77	38.7
	Neutral	56	28.1
	Positive	66	33.2

Table-5 sums up the set of questions on a particular issue. The respondents were about an important issue to the respondents irrespective of it was being addressed on media or not. 31.6% of respondents said the issue was social, 25.6% said the issue was religious, 24.6% expressed the issue was related to the development and 18.2% thought of the apolitical issue. The majority of the respondents (51.7%) shared that particular issue with their friends. 52.8% of respondents reported that they got to know about that issue from social media. This is very interesting to note that the issue was got to know by the masses through social media. This signifies the importance of social media. Again 50.8% reported that to get further information or pursue that issue, they used social media. This means that the social media has a new power. When asked about what further action have you taken on that issue, 36.2% researched the issue, 34.2% discussed it with their friends and colleagues, and 14.1% reported that they got in touch with the media.

Table-5: Statements related to a particular issue

Statement	Options	F	%
Which public issue has been particularly important to you this need not be an issue covered in the media but can be any issue you think of general importance?	Development	49	24.6
	Political	36	18.2
	Religious	51	25.6
	Social	63	31.6
Do the people you tend to talk to about these issues tend to be.....?	Family	41	20.6
	Friends	103	51.7
	People at work	55	27.6
For that issue, where have you got your information about it from?	Family/Friends/Colleagues	27	13.6
	Newspaper	28	14.1
	Radio	3	1.5
	Social Media	105	52.8
	TV	32	16.1
Which of these sources were most useful in providing you with relevant further information on that particular issue?	Family/Friends/Colleagues	16	8.0
	Newspaper	32	16.1
	Radio	5	2.5
	Social Media	101	50.8
	TV	37	18.6
Still thinking about the issue, you have just mentioned, have you done any of these things concerning it?	Discussed with family/ friends/Colleagues	68	34.2
	Got in touch with media i.e., Electronic/Print/Social	28	14.1
	Joined a campaign group/discussion forum	9	4.5
	Joined a political party	16	8.0
	Researched the issue	72	36.2

Table-6 depicts the responses measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale. Media coverage on the specific issue was satisfactory, 50.7% agreed, while 15.6% disagreed. Being the students of urban universities, people believe you know about what is happening in the country, 80.4% agreed with this statement. When asked about following the news to know what is happening in the country, 79.4% of respondents agreed. The respondents know about issues faced in the country due to media, 63.3% agreed, while asked about the issues that media highlights are

little related to your lives, 70.8% people agreed. Different news sources give different perceptions and images of what is going on. It is also a hot debate going on these days. 45.3% agreed to this statement. Fair news reporting was asked from the respondents 49.8% agreed, and a question related to trusting media in reporting things that matter 69.3% of respondents agreed to this statement.

Table-6: Statements related to strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree

Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD
	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)
Up to what extent would you agree or disagree that you were satisfied with the media coverage of that particular issue?	17 (8.5)	84 (42.2)	63 (31.7)	23 (11.6)	8 (4.0)
People would expect you to know what is going on in the country.	54 (27.1)	106 (53.3)	34 (17.1)	2 (1.0)	3 (1.5)
You follow the news to understand what is going on in the country.	58 (29.1)	100 (50.3)	39 (19.6)	2 (1.0)	-
You have a pretty good understanding of the main issues faced by our country due to media.	34 (17.1)	92 (46.2)	48 (24.1)	25 (12.6)	-
The things the media cover have little to do with your life.	46 (23.1)	95 (47.7)	44 (22.1)	14 (7.0)	-
Different news sources tend to give different perceptions and images of what is going on.	20 (10.1)	70 (35.2)	72 (36.2)	29 (14.6)	8 (4.0)
You trust the media to report the news fairly.	27 (13.6)	72 (36.2)	70 (35.2)	26 (13.1)	4 (2.0)
You trust the media to cover the things that matter to you.	47 (23.6)	91 (45.7)	48 (24.1)	12 (6.0)	1 (0.5)
You generally compare the news on different channels, newspapers, or websites.	37 (18.6)	81 (40.7)	48 (24.1)	22 (11.1)	11 (5.5)

## 5. Discussion

The results depict that a significant majority 92.5% use media and according to the results the usage of social media is on the higher side as compared with other media tools. The usage of social media indicates that the public at large has adopted the ongoing digital culture which conforms to the findings of (Hussain, 2012). This association of media is primarily due to the following reasons i.e., for acquiring information, education, persuasion, development, and entertainment. The results also indicate that the usage of print media is decreasing despite the fact people still trust print media about 30.6%. According to the results of the study, a large number of populations believe that social media is playing a key role in raising various social issues. Significantly, terrorism is the most highlighted social issue on the media whereas other social issues such as poverty 29.1%, health issues 20.1%, and issues regarding education 11.6% are also discussed on the media. These findings are contextual and based on the events that take place in the sample urban city, other urban cities in Pakistan might show different results because of the change in demographics and culture across provinces. The information received by the people by the use of media was also shared with other peer groups such as family, friends, colleagues, etc. The overall results also show that media is covering and raising different social issues being faced by the urban communities fairly. People also believe in the honesty of media reporting. According to the results, respondents believe that media plays a very important in promoting harmony in different groups of society.

The study also reveals that social media is being used as a tool of mass awareness and dissemination of information. According to the results of Table-5, 51.7% of participants opined that they share information on some particular issues with their peer groups, friends, etc. It indicates the strength of this communication platform as well as the strong bonding between the peers and friends which highlights the cultural strength. It will be interesting to note the findings if a study includes people from different provinces, language, religion, and ethnicity. A significant number of participants have endorsed the statement regarding the satisfactory performance of social media. It indicates that people rely on the information received through social media and they consider it more independent. Various international and national issues are highlighted through social media and people came to know about the current developments, happenings at the national or international level through the media.

## 6. Conclusion

Media plays a significant role in raising the voices of the voiceless either living in rural or urban areas. People living in urban areas are considered as the most updated communities as compared to rural areas. The major source behind their knowledge and awareness is the media landscape available for them in urban areas. The development process is somehow linked with the awareness level of certain communities. As much as, a community or an individual is concerned about some social issues in their vicinity, they collectively or individually put efforts for the betterment and physical development of such areas. The role of media is very vibrant for the social development of any area. In Pakistan the scenario is different as media organizations are being controlled by the Govt. and unseen pressure is inserted on them to work under the state-owned monopoly. However, it is the necessity of the era that media organizations may be given free hand so that the media landscape be focused on raising voices for the development and progression of society. Pakistan's media landscape has witnessed rapid growth, resulting in less qualified and less skilled media practitioners that grabbed the industry. The most pressing challenge for Pakistani media is to improve the overall quality of journalism. To compete with the market, the professional standards should be raised to the required levels and already defined standards.

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