

How Indian Media Looks Russia and Ukraine War? An Analysis on News Reports of Indian Newspapers

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The recent Russian-Ukrainian dispute attracted wide international attention. On Feb 24, 2022, Russia launched a full-fledged invasion of Ukraine. USA and NATO are striding up support for Ukraine, fearing Russia's probable incursion. World media is running continuous news about the Russia-Ukraine war. Each Country, Each Media is giving different kinds of news on this war. It is very important to study the news coverage of this war to know why and how the media is presenting this news. This paper is a detailed study of how Indian newspapers have covered conflict and war. The objectives of this study: To identify the presence of facts during the conflict; to study the content package, style, etc.; to understand the Indian media angle with that of the western media house. These objectives are studied by focusing on various variables like how much news space was given to the conflict, the gatekeeper angle, visuals, style of reporting, and major topics of discussion in the news. These variables are studied through a well-structured content analysis of the Russia and Ukraine war coverage, thus becoming an occasion for discussions about ethical journalism. One of the most prestigious assignments for journalists is conflict reporting. Rarely do we witness international events get continuous coverage in Indian media. Nevertheless, the current conflict has occupied news space in Indian media for almost more than three months. The study has some interesting findings: Russia-Ukraine conflict reportage mainly concentrated on the military power of Russia, and local reports concentrated on Indian students' evacuation. The editorial position is one of the most interesting aspects of Indian media's coverage of the conflict. Indian government's stand for neutrality is also highlighted. The fact that wiring stories were more than nationally produced stories, thus shows the western influence on Indian media.

Keywords: Ukraine, Russia, war, journalism, news media

Introduction

A perceived contradiction in goals or interests which are acted upon by the parties involved leads to a conflict situation (Bar-Tal, 2011). As for society's development, managing media conflict is very important (Salah & Ariemu, 2017). During conflict reporting the duty of the media is to provide independent and trustworthy information that can contribute to the reconstruction and reconciliation process (Bamidele, 2012). Conflict and violence make news but peace doesn't (Diamond & McDonald, 1996). Gilboa argued that what is exciting makes news. In simple words, people living happily together are of no public interest. As violence is reportable; nonviolence is boring (Gilboa, 2006). However, Lynch put

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forth that modern newsgathering is a “Feedback loop”, as what is reported is created to be reported (Lynch, 2001).

The framing and the way the war is reported in Indian media are significantly keeping India’s international relations in mind. The coverage of conflict reporting depends on the news value given to the conflict (Maslog et al., 2006). Therefore, the media must provide a platform for peace and conflict management, in conflict-ravaged communities, without which development is a hallucination to the community (Salah et al., 2017).

Background of the Study

To understand media/news reporting during conflicts, it is important to understand war and peace journalism. Several studies have been undertaken to understand media reporting in times of conflict. A common theme of results can be found in all the studies.

Previous studies done on conflict reporting have emphasized the perspectives involved in news output. In an analysis of the coverage of the Kashmir conflict in Indian and Pakistani newspapers. A vital point about the number and nature of perspectives was also discussed. To elaborate, the coverage was mostly done in a singular perspective and not in a multi-perspective manner thus leading to a lack of coverage of the other parties involved in the conflict (Rawan & Rahman, 2022). A similar theme can be found in the media reporting on Russia and Ukraine wars. The study concludes that there is a need for debates that comes from a place of learning about different perspectives. For example, Russia’s reporting on the war should involve scholars and activists from the Ukraine region. It is imperative to mention that not being engaged with the people who are informed about it, would essentially be reproducing exclusionary practices and generalist knowledge rather than context-sensitive knowledge (Vorbrugg & Bluwstein, 2022). The media coverage of the London bombings of 2005 was studied across British, American, and Russian newspapers. It focused on the need and role of experts in journalistic reports. There was a significant variation among different newspapers in the usage of government officials, non-government experts, and journalistic sources (Venger, 2019).

Influence of Media on Public Opinion

One of the concerns of media reporting during conflict is that it has the power to influence public opinion. One conflict reporting study on the coverage of fatalities during the Russia-Ukraine war found that there was two times more emphasis on civilian deaths by the Russian and US media than the Ukrainian media. Although the risk of manipulating public opinion remains high in media reporting, it is also necessary to consider that conflicts may sometimes “disappear” from public attention without media coverage. A newspaper coverage study done on the conflict reporting about the herdsmen-farmers in Nigeria showed that 71.3% of conflict stories were on the inside pages of the newspapers. The study

explored ideas on agenda setting role of newspapers by emphasizing that if an issue is not covered by a newspaper consistently, the issue might be abandoned from the public's purview. It was found that the conflict was covered only when it was ongoing hence there were no follow-ups done after the conflict. It was concluded that there was inadequate importance placed on the conflict by the newspapers under study (Gever & Essien, 2017). Another study explored critical events from their inception to after effects and the public reaction to them. It further explored how media representation can both inform and fabricate emotions. It was concluded that media coverage directly influenced the emotions of the people who consumed it (Thakur & Malhotra, 2020).

Influencing public opinion also takes the form of endorsing stereotypes and creates a biased representation of certain groups of people. This study compared the representation of ideological violence of Muslim and Non-Muslim perpetrators by the Canadian National News media. The study found that there was a significant presence of labeling as terrorists and the religious identity being revealed along with association with other violent acts. An interesting part of the study explored the idea of frames of reference manufactured by the media.

This research focussed on the media coverage of war crimes and war crime judiciary during Serbia's post-war period. The attention was solely on the media output about the conflict to understand the influence of media reporting throughout the life of a conflict. However, it is important to understand how media reporting shapes public opinion, ideas of representation, identities of the journalists, and media authority can play an impactful role in post-conflict media reporting (Golċevski et al., 2013).

News Reporting Influenced by Government / Political Parties

Media reporting bias can be fuelled by shifting public opinions, at the same time they can also be influenced or represented by the leaders, government, or the political affiliations of the dominant parties. In a critical discourse analysis report of the Gaza war of 2008-2009, it was found that reporting was influenced by political orientations and political stances of liberal and conservative stances. In a study conducted on Greek media coverage of the Ukrainian war, the general standpoint of the Greeks was that the war was unacceptable despite the multi-pronged attachment with Russia. Regarding media coverage, it was noted that all newspapers considered the Russian invasion of Ukraine unacceptable. From the results of the study, it can be concluded that the media coverage was heavily influenced by the leadership parties hence the language used in the media coverage was appealing to the political parties of the current leadership who unhonored state strong ties that they had with Russia. Hence, it was also concluded that the stance of the media was not exactly pro or anti-Russia but a matter of principle of the nation. A similar result was found in a comparative analysis of the media coverage of the Taliban conflict in Pakistan and Afghanistan from a war and peace journalism point of view. It was found that the news reporting relied heavily on the perspective of governmental agendas. It was also noted that when

there is a dominant public opinion about the conflict, other perspectives will not be covered or engaged in the conversation (Hussain & Siraj, 2018).

Peace Journalism

The Russia-Ukraine war had shaken the foundations of a lot of people as they were on the first steps of recovery from a global pandemic. With the major news source coming from media coverage, it is important that the world not become susceptible to more uncertainty and fear but rather be faced with the truth and not be blemished by biases and political agendas. This brings the need for peace journalism to the forefront of this.

There are two types of journalism when it comes to reporting situations of war namely, war journalism and peace journalism. Whilst war journalism reports negatively about the conflict that cultivates violence and selective victory, peace journalism reports on the root causes of the problem and solutions. Peace journalism also prioritizes bringing all the parties' perspectives to the table earning the alias empathetic journalism (Gouse et al., 2018).

The role of mainstream international mass media in contemporary conflict was studied. Stressing the importance of peace journalism as an alternative to the current media coverage. By honing into this fact, it explains the importance of the news system in shifting the perspective about conflict and security. There is a clear need for more peace journalism which can pave the way toward change even if it cannot bring out peace by itself.

Implications of the Previous Studies

The review of the literature regarding journalism during conflict has opened several similar doors to the path of peace. It can be inferred from the existing literature that war journalism feeds fear in the minds of people while propagating and representing the ideas of government-related institutions. On the other hand, peace journalism brings in different perspectives of the parties involved in the conflict. It is imperative to note the substance of having appropriate press media coverage during conflict times. A study (Thakur & Malhotra, 2020) explored how media reporting can inform and fabricate information. When media representation acts as a powerful tool, it also can skew the perceptions of certain religious and ethnic minorities (Kanji, 2018). This becomes disadvantageous and even fatal to certain groups of people. If a certain coverage has only one perspective or is the dominant view, it does not do justice to reporting the conflict. One solution to tackle such a system would be to address the structural limitations of media/news production (Joseph, 2014). Another solution would be to gradually shift toward peaceful journalistic reporting. Peace journalism ensures multiple perspectives in reporting involving affected parties, experts, and public opinion. Journalism during conflict times has been studied widely among diverse populations, but despite the need for peace journalism, evidence of the practice is not found.

Peace and Media

Although journalists through peace journalism try to ensure balance and a comprehensive portrayal of conflict, peace journalism may seem to be a kind of politicking (Joseph, 2014). In the process of news selection research demonstrates that only the stories that tend to fill newsworthy are worthy by the journalists, these problems arise from the fact that media are profit-oriented and peace stories do not bring profit to media houses (Youngblood, 2017).

The broad idea for which peace journalism stands cannot be ignored despite the criticism and obstacles faced because according to (Wolfsled, 2001) the media can play a prominent role in the promotion of peace by highlighting the benefits peace can bring. According to Galtung and Lynch peace journalism covers all the stages of conflict - ranging from actual incidents to the cultural and structural aspects of the conflict. The media may not be able to make peace by themselves, but they can certainly pave the way toward it (Vladimir Bratic, 2008).

Peace Journalism and its Importance

In the year 1970's Johan Galtung first proposed peace journalism (McGoldrick & Lynch, 2000). According to Galtung, peace, journalism is advocacy, an interpretative approach that signifies peace initiatives, tones down ethnic and religious differences, prevents further conflict, focuses on the structure of society, and promotes conflict resolution, reconstruction, and reconciliation (Galtung, 1986). McGoldrick and Lynch described peace journalism as the broader, fairer, and more accurate way of framing a situation as it helps give in-depth conflict analyses and transformation. Peace journalism opposes conventional journalism as it avoids the context of conflict being reported. Peace journalism looks into the causes and development of the conflict, alternatives to war, and solutions to end the war (Joseph, 2014). Therefore, peace journalism reports are efforts put in by the media to facilitate conflict resolution. As it examines the root cause of the conflict and places humanizing the situation higher than creating enemies (Joseph, 2014).

Conflict and News Reporting

Besides international organizations, national governments, or non-governmental organizations, mass media also plays an important role in reporting international conflict. How information is framed, shaping perception, and set agendas play a crucial role in molding public opinion (Joseph, 2014). In the case of an international crisis, the complete international structure is affected in terms of threat, most frequently intensity or change in the interactions between two or more states (Wilkenfled, 2003). In this respect, media plays a crucial role in forming the public's perception of events by providing storylines and frames (Gamson & Modigliani, 1987). For instance, the cold war between Russia and the west lasted for decades. As a result, they mediatize crises in such a way that their importance is the only source of information that strongly affects public opinions, which is

recognized even by politicians and other societal actors adapting media (Harvard, 2015). And media executive has admitted professional and ethical failures in covering conflict (Gilboa, 2006).

The Current Russia-Ukraine Conflict

On 24th February, Russia launched a full-scale land, sea, and air invasion of Ukraine, targeting Ukrainian military assets and cities across the country marking the start of the biggest war in Europe since the Second World War. U.S. President Joe Biden stated that the attack was “unjustified” and issued severe sanctions against top Kremlin officials, including President Putin. On 2nd March 2022, 141 of 193 UN members voted against Russia’s invasion in an emergency UN General Assembly session, demanding Russia immediately withdraw from Ukraine. What is been happening in Ukraine since Feb 24 has different light and is interpreted in different ways, using different terms depending on different regions. Ukraine and western media call the invasion a “war”, while the Russian media use the term “Special military operation”. To better understand and expose the truth about conflict major news organizations around the world have embedded journalists in Ukraine to cover bombing and violence in towns and cities that are hard-hit, across broadcast, print, and digital media. Journalists, politicians, civilians, and particularly Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky have also taken to various social networking sites to document the horrors of the war to a global audience.

Indian Media and Russia-Ukraine Conflict

Media plays a vital role in international relations as it has the power to decide what is right and what is wrong, and an aspect of how the world should view a story. The different portrayal of the same news makes the audience and state act in a certain way and take action accordingly, for example, the portrayal of the conflict presented by Russian media is opposite from the same news portrayed by Ukraine media or western media, the difference in perspective is also perceived in non-aligned nations like India.

This study aims at understanding Indian newspaper coverage of the Russia-Ukraine conflict. The study examined the framing of the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict by newspapers for two months from 24 February 2022 to 30 April 2022. The media has become an authentic mediator in the process of knowledge, happenings around the world, and daily societal happenings. Hence there is a need to examine media presentation and representation of reality (Salah et al., 2017). After analyzing both newspapers the most important story covered locally in the Russia-Ukraine war is India’s repatriation of almost 18,000 stranded Indian students’ struggles and hardships they were facing during the conflict in Ukrainian regions. Wire services stories report on the life-threatening situation for millions of Ukrainian civilians, the killing of families trying to flee via humanitarian corridors, the anti-war protests in Russia, the bravery of the President of Ukraine Mr. Volodymyr Zelensky, and the brutality of the Russian president Volodymyr Putin.

Objectives of this Study

- 1.To identify the Salient indicators of war or peace journalism
- 2.Understand the difference between locally produced es and foreign wire stories in war.
- 3.To identify the discursive representation of social actors in the conflict by both the newspapers

Methodology

Since the research objective is aimed at assessing Newspaper Framing and Dominant Discourse of the Russia-Ukraine conflicts. Qualitative and Quantitative Content Analysis was employed in conducting the study. The quantitative and qualitative methods are complementary as they allow a wide-ranging analysis of newspaper stories. The study reveals that, despite differing in reporting based on their different editorial lines, the two newspapers have nonetheless projected dialogue as the most suitable pathway to resolve the conflict.

Research Question: The news from the Russia-Ukraine conflict is foreign and international for the selected newspapers as we have already seen in the previous section. In this regard, this study aims to answer the following broad question:

1. Salient indicators of war or peace journalism?
2. How does the newspaper discursively represent the social actors in the conflict?
3. Do the locally produced stories differ from the foreign wire stories in war

Data Collection and Sampling Technique

The paper chooses to examine two Indian newspapers (The Hindu and Times of India). The selection is based on the large circulation in their countries and their popularity around the world, and this makes them international. The Hindu is the second most circulated English newspaper in India. The Times of India is the third-largest newspaper by circulation in India and one of the oldest English-language newspapers in India. The selected newspapers are also chosen for their political orientation and ideological stances, i.e., liberal, and conservative. The two selected newspapers are considered elite and prominent publications on the international level.

The researcher extracted all the materials related to the Russia-Ukraine conflict from 24 February 2022 to 30th April 2022 that is from the day the war had begun from then for the next two months. The paper follows a purposive sample that reflects and supports the purpose of examining and analyzing the data. Seale (2012, p. 237) explains that when using purposive sampling, items are 'selected based on having a significant relation to the research topic'. A purposive sample seeks to be 'reflective (if not strictly representative) of the population. The sample

arguably represents the texts of the two selected newspapers from which it is chosen systematically. The sample consists of hard news presented in news stories. From different sections like the front page, national news, editorial, global, or world news, business, and so on. News stories cover the Russia-Ukraine conflict and exclude the news which just mentions war without focusing on it.

Theory of the Study

It is captivating that peace studies probe into some quintessential questions concerning human behaviors, cooperation, conflict, and relations. From this point of view, this study aims to examine two Indian dailies The Hindu and Times of India from the general perspective of the pioneer theorist Johan Galtung's Peace and War journalism. Galtung's theory is a combination of theory and practice (Burak Ercoşkun, December 2020). Galtung peace journalism suggests taking preventive advocacy such as writing editorials, focusing on common ground rather than revenge, differences, and retaliation, and focusing more on the invisible effect of violence.

The coding categories were adapted from Galtung (1986, 1998). The coder assessed each story based on 22 variables. These indicators, which comprised two major themes, approach and language were used to elicit from the body of the text of each story which frame, war journalism or peace journalism, and the depth of the narrative. The approach-based criteria included orientations such as partisan/nonpartisan, elite-oriented/ people-oriented, etc. The language-based criteria included the use of demonizing language, victimizing language, emotive words, etc. For example, a story is judged if it is war-oriented, whether it reports mainly on the visible effects of war. Does it focus on casualties, death toll, and property damage? Or if it is partisan-oriented. In this way, the approaches and language used in war journalism and peace journalism were measured.

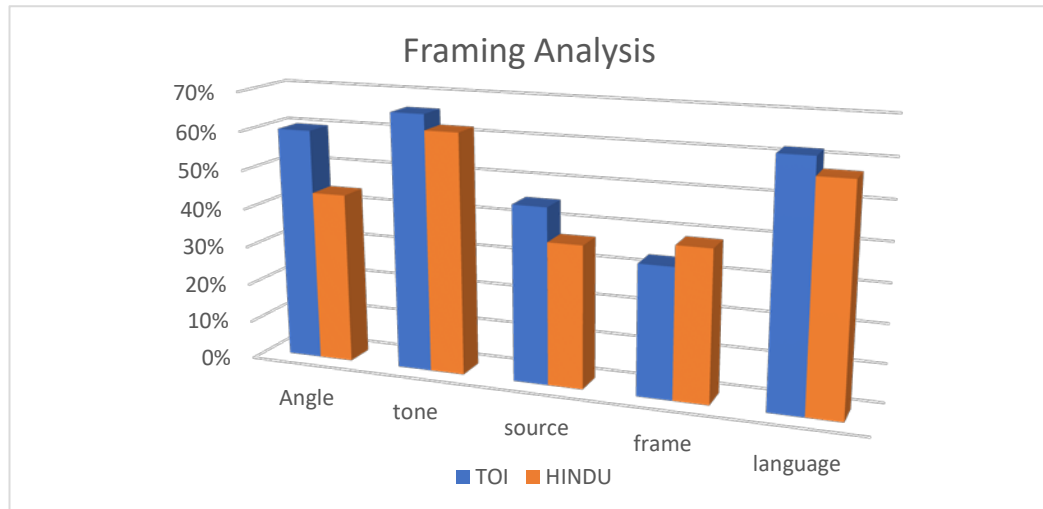
Content Analysis of Ukraine – Russia War News Stories

The unit of analysis was the individual story, which includes hard news, wire news, and editorials. A total of 589 stories about the Russia-Ukraine conflict were gathered from "The Hindu" and "Times of India (ToI)" over a period of two months – February 24-April 30, 2022.

This study aimed to understand the coverage of the Russia-Ukraine conflict done by two major newspapers by analyzing the framing and dominant discourse of individual stories published by them. The gathered data from about 284 and 305 news articles collected from The Hindu and TOI respectively shows that news on the Russia-Ukraine conflict was mostly reported in the international section of the newspapers (ToI-56% & H-40.14%). Both newspapers' content and newsmakers were more on Indian student evacuation (H-35% & ToI-30%). Newspapers have done well to reflect the condition of Indian students, stranded in Ukraine. News

stories have also reflected the students' ambivalence towards the Indian government's efforts to help them return home.

Framing Analysis



The commercial angle (ToI-60% and H-44.27%) was the dominant angle of the news stories. The tone of the news stories was critical of the war, (ToI-70% & H-62.32%). The majority of news stories from both papers were predominantly politically themed (H-38.73%; ToI-33.44%). Reports on glorifying the Indian government for the evacuation of students under operation “Ganga” was given peer importance. Wire service sources articles dominated the locally produced story (TOI-45.25% & H-36.62%). The language adopted avoided victimizing, emotive, or demonizing language and was more precise or neutral (ToI-62% & H-57.39%).

Themes Covered	TOI	HINDU
Economic	19.34%	23.54%
Political	33.41%	38.73%
Threat	16.07%	15.14%
Historical	1.31%	3.52%
People	21.31%	16.20%
Elite	3.28%	1.41%
Military	5.25%	1.41%

The themes selected for analysis include those subjects that can increase the intensity of the conflict. Political themes indicate dominance out of all the themes (TOI-33.41% & H-38.73%).

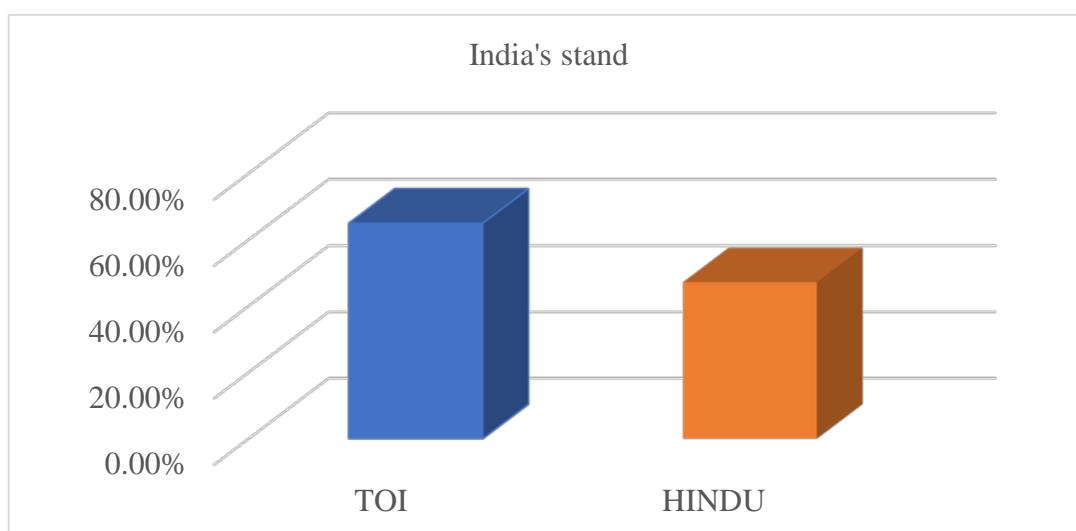
Journalists, civilians, and politicians. The humanitarian crisis unfolding in Ukraine and the scale of the Western response to Russia's invasion have far-reaching political and economic effects.

Discourse Analysis	TOI	HINDU
1. Ukraine region stories	46.56%	34.51%
2. Russian region stories	10%	10%
3. Favours Zelensky	33.44%	27.46%
4. Favours Putin	6%	8.10%
5. Neutral (No fav leaders)	10%	15%
6. International Relationship with Russia	6.23%	8.80%
7. International Relationship with Ukraine	49.24%	41.20%

Discourse analysis results state that Indian media extends support to President Zelensky over President Putin. It is a known fact that the west has extended support to Ukraine, Indian media's support towards president Zelensky is a result of more wiring stories from the west, as the locally produced stories concentrated on students' evacuation.

Effect of the Conflict in India

War effect in India	TOI	HINDU
Economy	12.79%	19.01%
Geo-Political Affair	15.34%	15.49%
Abstain	64.92%	60.28%



India's response to the conflict has been typical among major democracies. Despite India not being contented with the Russian invasion, It has abstained from votes in the UN Assembly India ultimately signifies "A subtle pro-Russia position". Due to the sanctions generated on Russia by America, India faced an economic fallout for its exports with Russia (ToI-12.79% and Hindu-19.01%).

Section * Source Crosstabulation

Count		Source of the news						Total	
TOI	Section	Journalist	Editor	News agency	Combination	Outside author	wiring	other sources	
	Frontpage	30	0	18	3	1	8	1	61
	National	19	0	9	0	0	2	0	30
	World	15	1	14	0	1	127	13	171
	Business	5	0	9	1	0	1	1	17
	Editorial	1	14	0	0	7	0	1	23
	Other	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	3
	Total	71	15	50	5	10	138	16	305

TOI	Value	DF	Asymp. sig. (2sided)
Chi-square	423.037	30	0.000
N of Valid Cases	305		

The chi-square test between the section and source demonstrates that the majority of the news reported was on the international or world section in TOI newspapers from 305 stories 171 stories were in the international section, hence resulting in the majority of wire service stories 138 stories out of 305 stories are from wiring sources like Reuters, AP, PA, AFP, etc.

Count		Source of the news						Total	
Hindu	Section	Journalist	Editor	News agency	Combination	Outside author	wiring	other sources	
	Frontpage	23	0	4	3	3	16	5	54
	National	5	0	1	0	0	0	2	8
	World	23	0	6	2	1	80	2	114
	Business	2	0	6	0	0	8	18	34
	Editorial	0	10	0	1	19	0	0	30
	Other	29	0	3	7	4	0	1	44
	Total	82	10	20	13	27	104	28	284

Hindu	Value	DF	Asymp. sig. (2sided)
Chi-square	406.611	30	0.000
N of Valid Cases	284		

Out of 284 stories analyzed in Hindu 114 stories were in the international section. Resulting in 104 wiring stories. The cold war between the west and Russia exists for centuries, therefore the west extends support to Ukraine. The effect of it has also been reflected in the coverage of news by both newspapers. As both, the newspapers gave more news space to wiring stories

Source * International Relationship Crosstabulation

TOI Source	International Relationship					Total
	Russia	Ukraine	Neutral	Against both	Others	
Journalist	5	20	42	0	4	71
Editor	1	5	8	0	1	15
News agency	3	17	25	0	5	50
Combination	0	0	3	1	1	5
Outside author	0	4	6	0	0	10
Wiring	10	95	30	0	3	138
Other sources	0	11	4	0	1	16
Total	19	152	118	1	15	305

TOI	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Chi-Square	116.827 ^a	24	0.000
N of Valid Cases	305		

Source and International Relationships in TOI newspaper shows that since there is a majority of wiring stories out of the other sources covering the Russia-Ukraine war in the newspapers, certainly the support for Ukraine is also predominant 152 stories portray support for Ukraine, even though the locally produced were either neutral or on the stranded students of India in Ukraine region.

Hindu Source	International Relationship					Total
	Russia	Ukraine	Neutral	Against both	Others	
Journalist	8	31	40	1	2	82
Editor	0	2	8	0	0	10
News agency	3	3	10	3	1	20
Combination	0	3	9	1	0	13
Outside author	3	12	11	0	1	27
Wiring	9	65	23	2	5	104
Other sources	2	4	16	0	6	28
Total	25	120	117	7	15	284

Hindu	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Chi-Square	70.910a	24	0.000
N of Valid Cases	284		

Similarly, The Hindu has also articulated support for Ukraine by producing 120 stories indicating support for Ukraine, as the west is against Russia. The above chi-square test results state that Indian media's support for Ukraine is due to the majority of stories in the international section being sourced from western media

Theme*Dominant Discourse

TOI Theme	Dominant Discourse					Total
	Russia	Ukraine	Neutral	Against	Others	
Economic	2	13	38	0	6	59
Political	16	48	36	0	2	102
Threat	2	37	8	1	1	49
Historical	0	4	0	0	0	4
People	1	27	32	1	4	65
Elite	1	9	0	0	0	10
Military	0	6	10	0	0	16
Total	22	144	124	2	13	305

TOI	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Chi-Square	76.436 ^a	24	0.000
N of Valid Cases	305		

Russian President Putin may seem powerful and dominant in the conflict. But the above test between theme and dominant discourse states that Ukraine's President was the most favorable one internationally. This could be proved by a chain reaction that as a greater number of stories about conflict are published in the international section, hence there is a majority in wiring and west being an ally of Ukraine the support for President Zelensky is also obvious. The economic theme was also highlighted to communicate the economic crisis due to the war.

Hindu Theme	Dominant Discourse					Total
	Russia	Ukraine	Neutral	Against	Others	
Economic	2	12	40	3	10	67
Political	17	54	48	1	0	120
Threat	3	29	0	1	2	35
Historical	0	4	05	1	0	10
People	3	18	22	2	1	46
Elite	1	3	0	0	0	4
Military	0	2	0	0	0	2
Total	26	122	115	8	13	284

TOI	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Chi-Square	67.098 ^a	24	0.000
N of Valid Cases	284		

The Hindu also portrays a majority of politically themed stories, 120 articles out of 284 articles were of a political theme. The result of the content analysis of the frames indicates a constant dominance of strong support towards Ukraine's president Zelensky. Reconciliation and a diplomatic approach prove to be positive for conflict coverage whereas hegemony fans flame in dispute. There are some other themes also that newspapers have given importance like economic and people themes, which indicates the consequences faced due to the conflict and the

efforts put in by the newspapers to end the war. The pattern of coverage is no longer different in both papers.

Discussion

Conflict Reporting is considered one of the most traditional and prestigious assignments for journalists; and journalists covering war zones are also awarded rightfully and estimably to honor the work of these professionals (Mochish, 2022). Having said that Indian media's international news coverage or media engagement with conflict has become a matter of question and criticism. The coverage of the Russia-Ukraine conflict became the center point to discuss how Indian media has covered the conflict and the role of independent media in conflict reporting.

Rarely is it seen that an international event gets continuous coverage in Indian Media? However, the Russia-Ukraine conflict managed to occupy maximum attention and good space in newspapers for over a month. An average of 10 stories under different sections like the front page, national news, world, economy, etc. were published for a month and it eventually got down to an average of 5 stories in the second month from when the war had begun. This study of newspapers on how Indian leading newspapers viewed and framed the Russia-Ukraine conflict according to their perspective is done by operationalizing Galtung's classification. It was inferred that the newspapers show uniformity in their coverage of the conflict and more stories were framed as peace journalism or neutral. Mentions of support for the war were low because the majority of the stories were neutral.

One of the eye-catching aspects of Indian media's coverage of the Russia-Ukraine conflict is the editorial position of the leading newspapers. In an uncommon departure from history, the newspapers took an anti-Russia position, which is the exact opposite of that of the ruling government of the nation. President Putin was criticized for his desire and greed to control the world. Nevertheless, India's stand highlighted its long-standing position of neutrality in international affairs even though Russia has been an Indian ally for decades. One of the main reasons for the shift in attitude by the Indian media could be its connection with popular western media. Most of the leading media houses in India buy news from western news agencies such as AP, AFP, Reuters, etc. And these agencies are quite popular for their western bias, especially during international conflict

We could identify differences between the foreign wire stories and locally produced stories. Foreign wire stories showed a stronger war journalism framing while locally produced stories were focused on students' evacuation from the conflict zone in Ukraine and, the remaining stories were neutral. Foreign wire stories also used emotive words to show their support towards Ukraine while locally produced stories did not use emotive words even though they had a concern for the people of Ukraine.

In-house journalists provided extensive coverage of India's evacuation of students from conflict areas in Ukraine. Nevertheless, media houses applauded the measures that were taken by the government to evacuate the students. A lot of

personal stories also appeared, and the diligent steps taken by the Indian government were also given significance. These reports appeared when the government was under severe criticism from parents, opposition, and social media for the delayed evacuation process. Times of India on February 28 carried a front-page story that spoke about the government's timely intervention. The piece was headlined ‘Most Active Evacuation Program’. As the war goes on, we can see massive propaganda by western media have put out stories targeting Russia and victimizing Ukraine. The western media has been successful in influencing Indian media to support Ukraine and anti-Russia opinion which will influence the people of India and pressurise the government to support Ukraine. However, the western media failed to influence the Indian government despite that, we can see a sharp division of opinion in Indian public discourse when it comes to the Russia-Ukraine war. Sood aptly sums it up (*The Ultimate Goal*, p. 280), “The Indian narrative has been run far too long from elsewhere. It needs to change and cannot be determined in Europe, America, or elsewhere. India and Indians must tell their own story. We need to manage our narrative to control our destiny.” This study also has its limitations. One of the prominent ones is the impact of the conflict framed by the newspapers on its readers. This study is also limited by its sample to only 2 newspapers. In this booming social and tech-savvy world future studies can examine the role played by social media and TV news agencies in reporting international conflict. Many other significant frames could not be determined as the coding category used for assessing the narrative content was conceived by Galtung’s theory.

Conclusion

According to Sandra Ball-Rokeach and Melvin DeFlur, “Media Dependency Theory” states that the “More dependent an individual is on the media for having his or her needs fulfilled, the more important the media will be to that person (Rokeach & DeFleur, 1976). This theory predicts a relationship between dependence and the influence of the media on individuals’ usage. As people are more dependent on the media for day-to-day activities happening around them or at a distance, likewise they are dependent on media frames and interpretations too. This study interprets the framing and dominant discourse analysis of international conflict by two leading newspapers in India. Within the prism of this study, the Russia-Ukraine conflict is reported largely in a peaceful frame rather than a conflict-insensitive frame by selected newspapers. The fact that the newspapers favored Ukraine over Russia was that the majority of stories produced were by wire service sources, and it is widely known that western media is critical of the war and indicated ending the war, whereas the locally produced stories were neutral and prioritized the stranded Indian students in Ukraine and the government operation “Ganga” was given more news space. History proves that the media has always been criticized for its coverage given to international conflict, the current Russia-Ukraine conflict was an opportunity for the media to change history, and the majority of coverage was given to the conflict until the peak period of the war.

It was noticed that the newspapers had covered the conflict in detail unlike the recent US-led conflicts in Asia that never attracted comprehensive coverage or empathy from media houses. Discussions on the suffering of people, issues related to refugees, human rights violations, etc. hardly found this distinct and enormous coverage by newspapers. However, the media has faced lashes and dilemmas, especially due to the nature of the Russia-Ukraine war. This can sabotage independent journalism and lead to fake.

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