

An Analysis of the Existing Challenges in the Indian News Media - Military Relationship from Indian News Media Perspective: A Grounded Theory Study

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ABSTRACT

Media plays an important role in our everyday lives. It plays multiple roles like a source of information, watchdog, gatekeeper, agent of change, mobiliser, educator etc. Media prominence and role become more critical and crucial, during a conflict situation, which can be either due to internal threats or external threats like war. Reporting during conflicts is another challenging task for journalists. Every conflict is fought on at least two grounds: on the battlefield and in the minds of the people via propaganda. This research study made an attempt to understand and analyse the challenges of Indian news media while reporting from the conflict zone, with special reference to Jammu and Kashmir conflict. The research paper was a part of a qualitative research study, based on grounded theory as advocated by Juliet Corbin and Anselm Strauss. The objective of the research paper was to understand the existing challenges in the Indian News Media- Military Relationship from Indian News Media Perspective. The media-military relationship, in the Indian context, appeared to be marred by a certain degree of mistrust and a lack of mutual understanding and knowledge. One of the key reasons is differences in institutional objectives. There was scope to analyse this issue in the Indian context in more depth, from the perspective of the media and the military. In the context of military/defence reporting, the Indian media has been often under criticism for the quality of the reportage, lack of the set journalistic standards and military understanding. This provided scope to investigate this issue further and identify elements of good or bad journalism, which this paper endeavoured to answer. This research study was based on the techniques and procedures suggested by Juliet Corbin and Anselm Strauss's Grounded Theory (GT). The approach adopted by the research study included a collection of data and its analysis and documenting observations based on analysis of the data. This was followed by coding, identifying categories, recognising properties and dimensions in categories, identifying relationships between generated categories and identifying the core category, which paved the way to a substantive theory. The primary data collection was done through in-depth, semi-structured interviews. The selection of participants was done by non-random sampling technique, under which purposive sampling was done. The respondents in this group were from the Indian armed forces veterans and defence reporters with conflict reporting exposure. The defence journalists who were interviewed have worked for both print and television news media. In total twelve respondents were interviewed till theoretical saturation was achieved. The research paper made an attempt to analyse the existing Indian media-military relationship in Jammu and Kashmir conflict post-Kargil war with reference to the Kargil Review Committee Report. It strived to bring new knowledge, revisit the old concepts and observe emerging patterns. It made an attempt to bring out the hidden opportunities for interaction between two institutions and open up vistas for future researchers. The research tried to bring out the challenges, faced by the two institutions during their interaction. This will provide scope for further research, which might result in a paradigm shift in the present state of affairs of the Indian media-military relationship or explore a new dimension to the existing relationship.

Keywords: Media, Military, Conflict, Grounded Theory