Growing Population and the stance of Different Religion: An Analysis of the Media Coverage in the Context of Pakistan

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Abstract

The study focused on growing population, media coverage and opinion of the different religions about population control. The objective of the study was to analyze the different religions stance about birth and population control, and to examine the different Newspapers coverage about this issue through content analysis, based these suggestions also recommended for population control department for effective awareness campaigns to control the increasing population. The study was qualitative in nature, therefore, content analysis was used to analysis the public service announcements of newspaper regarding population control, as well as semi-structured interviews, were conducted with different religious scholars to know the stance of different religions about population control. After the content analysis of the newspapers and taking stance of religious scholar, it was concluded that the main focus of the newspapers PSAs was to change the mindset of common people about increasing population and in this regard prominent religious personalities were used as opinion leader in the PSAs to influence people, on the other side through interviews, it is revealed that every religion's teachings were in the favor of to control the birth and an increase in population.

Keywords: Growing Population, Public Service Announcements, Religions, Scholars.

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Introduction

Population means the number of people living in a particular area or place as according to Cambridge English Dictionary, "All the people who live in a particular country, area or place" (Dictionary, 2018). The population growth rate means an increase in the number of people in a specific period of time or the increase in the number of people living in a country in a specified period of time. Similarly, in scientific the population growth means the increase in the number of individuals in a country or state.

The graph of increase in Population is becoming higher and higher with every passing day and it created an alarming situation for the world's countries regarding survival in the coming years and this situation is more miserable in the developing countries where people living under the line of poverty, health and economic conditions are at worst in these countries. Experts are saying that this situation of increasing population will be more worst in the coming years as Cohen (2010) said the period from 1950 to 2050 will witnessed highest population growth rate ever and due to this developing will be affected more.

Population increase has a major impact on domestic disadvantages and due to this a country become worse regarding the economic position and population increase influence economic growth, health facilities, sanitation, employment and management of assets (Cincotta & Engelman, 1997). It is seen that the countries where the population is out of control rate of unemployment are increased, people have lost of basic facilities, health facilities are extinct for common people.

Increase in population is also problematic regarding food production as in developing countries number of individual increasing day by day but facilities for them like food production, educational facilities, proper land for residence is decreasing day by day as according to Kemjika (2012) if world population increases in result of its food production should also be increased to avoid hunger and starvation in future. This grim condition was put forward early in the history of economics by Robert Thomas Malthus(Limits to growth,1766-1834) that population growth will always continue to be a problem due to the natural human reproductive urge which increases geometrically (1, 2, 4, 16, 32, 64, 128, 256, etc.) in relation to food supply which only increases arithmetically (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, etc.) and thus could have a resultant starvation effect if left unchecked.

But the question which arises here is what are the reasons behind increase in population and the answer here that the main reason behind ever growth in population is religious mindset as majority of the world's religious teachings are in favor of population increase and some religions provide social reward and religious benefits for those who have many children and it is in the form of social status and blessings (Lehrer, 2004). Research took the point of view of different religious scholars Mr. Sabir Naz Serva Bhuma (Hinduism), Mr. Adrian Feldmann (Buddha), Dr. Herman Roborgh (Christianity), Mr. Abid Naeem (Islam) and Mr. Kalyan Sing (Sikhism) to know the stance of their regions. The world population is increasing at a high speed without any planning of the resources like proper education, proper health care facilities, proper food, and proper sanitation system.

Despite that the concerned governments of the countries are paying attention towards this alarming situation of growth in population by running awareness campaigns through different media sources and this gave a positive result to control the population as Bankole (1994) concluded in his study that media campaign about family planning created a desire among masses for fewer children in Nigereia. A more positive response can be obtained if advertisement to control the population is designed effectively by keeping in mind the nature

of the target audience. Researcher did the analysis of Public Services Announcements of Jang, Nawaiwaqt, Express, and Dunya to know about the coverage of this in important issue

Literature Review

Growing population is an alarming situation for this world where resources for better living is decreasing day by day but the graph of increasing population is becoming high day by day. This situation is more alarming in the developing countries where people already living under the poverty line and the growing population rate is creating many problems for them as not enough food available, there is a lack of pure drinking water, no standard education and unemployment etc, along with this the high growth rate in population also created urbanization and according to UN there is 54.5% world's population already living in cities and this percentage will be increased to above 60% by 2030.

But here's the questions what are reasons behind this urbanization and population growth, in this regard we first discuss the reason behind urbanization as Malik and Dewancker (2018) concluded in their study that easily available better health facilities, availability of educational institutions, status quo, lifestyles and mental stability of the children are the main reason behind urbanization.

World population is increasing with a speed of bullet train and United Nations already warned the world rich countries to contribute their part to cater this situation as increasing world population is also a big cause of migration from developing countries to rich countries and it is seen in the last few years a large number of individuals and in some cases whole families are migrating from developing countries to rich European countries, according to United Nations the growth rate in the world population during last five years were as follows.

The current population of the **world** is **7,632,819,325** as of Friday, July 6, 2018, based on the latest United Nations estimates.

Last five-year data of population of the world

Year	World Population	Yearly	Net	Density	Urban	Urban
		Change	Change	(P/Km^2)	Pop	Pop %
2018	7,632,819,325	1.09 %	82,557,224	51	4,186,975,665	55 %
2017	7,550,262,101	1.12 %	83,297,821	51	4,110,778,369	54 %
2016	7,466,964,280	1.14 %	83,955,460	50	4,034,193,153	54 %
2015	7,383,008,820	1.16 %	84,555,787	50	3,957,285,013	54 %
2014	7,298,453,033	1.18 %	85,026,581	49	3,880,128,255	53 %
2013	7,213,426,452	1.20 %	85,249,517	48	3,802,824,481	53 %

Another reason behind the high growth rate in world's population is the religious mindset about the population as some of the world's religions considered it as a noble cause and so their religious teachings emphasize that the population should be increased. In this regard two religions are prominent, Islam and Christianity and according to the Pew Research Center Report "The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections, 2010-2050" released on April 2, 2015, these both religions will be the high contributor in world population till 2050 and Muslims are expected to increase by 73 percent and Christians are expected to increase by 35 percent, the rest of the religions contribution according to the report is as Hindus 34%, Jews 16% and Buddhist 0.3%.

The effect of the religious mindset about increasing population is mostly seen in poor Islamic countries and Pakistan is one of them where population is increased due to the influence of religious preachers who emphasize their followers to give birth more children to maintain the high numbers of their sect people and therefore this developing country is affecting more from increasing population

The current population of **Pakistan** is **200,829,306** as of Friday, July 6, 2018, based on the latest United Nations estimates.

Last five-year data of Pakistan population

Year	Population	Yearly %	Yearly Change	Migrants	Median	Fertility Rate	Density (P/Km²)	Urban
		Change	Change	(net)	Age	Kate	(P/Km ²)	Pop %
2018	200,813,818	1.93 %	3,797,863	214,356	22.7	3.65	260	38.4 %
2017	197,015,955	1.97 %	3,812,479	214,356	22.7	3.65	256	39.1 %
2016	193,203,476	2.02 %	3,822,963	214,356	22.7	3.65	251	38.8 %
2015	189,380,513	2.12 %	3,764,066	236,384	22.5	3.72	246	38.5 %
2010	170,560,182	2.08 %	3,330,103	279,275	21.4	3.98	221	37.2 %

In Pakistan the population in cities is growing rapidly than villages and this high growth rate of population in cities is becoming very problematic for Districts Governments in Pakistan as due to this population growth the situation of health and cleanliness is becoming intense as in some areas for a large number of individuals there is only one hospital available to provide better health facilities as this research is conducted in Lahore city therefore if we only look at Lahore regarding increasing population the result is that the population of this prominent city of Pakistan is increased very rapidly in last some years because a large number of people for better life styles have moved towards Lahore.

Last five-year data of Lahore (Pakistan) population

Year	Population	Growth Rate (%)	Growth
2018	9,508,000	2.84%	767,000
2015	8,741,000	3.15%	1,254,000
2010	7,487,000	3.22%	1,098,000
2005	6,389,000	3.22%	937,000
2000	5,452,000	3.22%	799,000

Due to lack of knowledge and none availability of proper guidance from population control department people who live in less developed areas produce more children, without worrying that taking care of their health is also included in their commitment. couples produce

babies but don't care about their proper early vaccination and therefore according to the report of USAID (United States Aid) and WHO (World Health Organization) one child in every eleven dies before reaching till the age of 5 years and its main cause is non-availability of proper vaccination and every year a large number of babies die due to measles and other communicable diseases. It's very sad to mention here that Pakistan is still among the few countries where children effected from polio and still polio cases are found from far-flung and tribal areas where people refused their children for polio vaccination.

(Ashcroft et al., 2017) conducted a research on "Implementation of CycleTel Family Advice: an SMS-based service to provide family planning and fertility awareness information in India" objective of the study is to the impact of CFA (CycleTel Family Advice) on knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors. The researcher used a survey method to and phone surveys as a tool for data collection. The sample was selected using simple random sampling and the sample size was over 100,000 people in India from April to August 2015. Respondent results of the study show that Programmatic data and phone surveys resulted in some operative findings, particularly in the areas of user behavior, partnership management, and Health Research. While there were improvements in knowledge, there were no important changes in FP (Family planning) use and couple communication.

Another research, (Kumar and Svensson, 2012) conducted a research on "Strengthening Community Health Systems with Localized Multimedia" objective of the study is to explore the benefits and challenges introduced by using multimedia CommCare. The researcher used a survey method to and qualitative review of CHW (Community Health Workers)/client interactions and implementer interviews. The sample was selected using simple random sampling and the sample size were 8 implementers. Respondent results of the study show that multimedia increases client engagement as well as CHW (Community Health Workers) credibility and suggest identifying an engaging speaker and determining optimal audio message length as potential strategies for creating effective multimedia.

Rationale for selecting the Topic

Researcher chooses this topic for the research because it is an important issue in the world. Researcher focuses on the population growth of Pakistan and problem creating by increasing rate of population. The population growth rate in the last five years is 2013 -2018 that is why researcher choose this topic for the research.

Rationale for selecting the Newspaper

The main purpose of selecting the said newspapers (Jang, Nawa-i-waqt, Express, Dunya) that the Urdu newspaper is very commonly available for everyone in Pakistan and therefore the population control departments Govt of Punjab always prefer Urdu newspaper to publish PSAs (Public Service Announcements) regarding population control to send its message to a large number of people. The public is only Urdu newspapers and these awareness messages provided mostly informed uneducated people.

Rationale for selecting the time period

The selecting period of this research paper is March 2018 - April 2018 because, according to the welfare department, the birth rate increase these months compared to other months. The time period which selected for this study was from March 2018 to April 2018 and the reason for selecting this time period is that the birth rate high during these months.

Objective of the study

- To analyze the different religion's stance about population control.
- To examine the coverage of different newspapers regarding population control.

Research Questions

RQ1. What is the different religion's stance about population control?

RQ2. What is the coverage of different newspapers regarding population control?

Theoretical Frame Work

According to the needs and objectives of this research paper **Agenda Setting & Framing and Social Responsibility Theory**, are all most relevant and appropriate theory Govt set the agenda about the population control and according to the set agenda they print public service announcements in the newspapers and designed public service awareness campaigns about population control to change the mindset of common people about growth in population. As described by the McCombs & Donald L. Shaw, (McQuail, D. (2010). that television set the agenda for its audience like this way newspaper set the agenda for its readers.

The second theory which is appropriate for the research is social responsibility theory the concept of the social responsibility theory is that media has some obligations towards the society as Siebert et al. (1956) explain the understanding of social responsibility theory. The media has free of expression but it should be controlled or self-checked and should keep up the social responsibility in view. This concept was summarized by Baran & Davis, (2006). It's the responsibility of the newspaper to cover the issue of the population growth and it's also the objective of the research that how much coverage is given to this important issue in newspapers

Research Methodology

The researcher used content analysis of newspaper and semi-structured interviews were also conducted for this research paper. Urdu newspapers of Lahore edition are taken as instruments and stance of scholars of different religions were taken by using the convenient sampling technique. In this study four newspapers Jang, Neweiwaqt, Express, and Dunya are analyzed regarding the content analysis of PSAs (Public Service Announcements) and five religious scholars were interviewed to know about their religious point of view regarding population control like Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Sikhism. A qualitative approach was used to analyze the content of selected newspapers. The unit of analysis was Public Service Announcements regarding the population control. Data was collected from the selected newspapers both in hard copies and e-papers. The content was deeply analyzed and examined. After that coding sheets were prepared to analyze the content and statistics were utilized.

Categories of Methodology

In the study, the methodology was divided into two parts in which at first analysis of newspaper advertisement were done and the categories were made. Categories include a number of words placement of announcements, analysis of content and opinion regarding and source of announcements.

In the second part of the methodology, Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the scholar of different religions, Mr. Sabir Naz Serva Bhuma (Hinduism), Mr. Adrian Feldmann (Buddha), Dr. Herman Roborgh (Christianity), Mr. Abid Naeem (Islam) and Mr. Kalyan Sing (Sikhism) in this regarding four questions were designed for interview to take the stance of the above-mentioned religious scholars.

Discussion and Analysis

The duration of this study was from March 2018 to May 2018 and during this period the content of four newspapers regarding population control PSAs (Public Service Announcements) named Express, Nawa-i-waqt, Jang, and Dunya were observed. After the

content analysis of the above-mentioned newspaper PSAs (public service announcements) during the said period the result as that:

Express

In express, the total public service announcements regarding population control were 6, on different dates in which 18 text boxes, 762 words were used the main focus was about mind changing of common people about population control in which the message was "sochbadlo- zindagibadlo" and in these PSAs (public service announcements) prominent religious leaders were used to belt the opinion of the leader.

Newspape		Messa	ages		Voice		
r							
Express	Informatio	Awarenes	Religion	Suggestiv	Celebrit	Ullm	Comme
	n	S	S	e	y	a	n
		Creating			·		
	0	1	4	1	2	4	0

Jang Newspaper

In Jang newspaper, the total public service announcements regarding population control were 33 in different dates in which 131 text boxes, 3480 words were used the main focus was about mind changing of common people about population control in which the message was "sochbadlo- zindagibadlo" and in these PSAs (Public Service Announcements) famous religious leaders were used to deliver message.

Newspape		Messa	Voice					
r								
Jang	Informatio	Awarenes	Religion	Suggestiv	Celebrit	Ullm	Comme	
	n	S	S	e	у	a	n	
		Creating						
	5	5	20	3	9	20	4	

Nawa-i-Waqt Newspaper

In Nawa-i-waqt, the total public service announcements regarding population control were 25 in different dates in which 100 text boxes, 2537 words were used the main focus was about mind changing of people of the society about population control in which the message was "sochbadlo-zindagibadlo" and in these PSAs (Public Service Announcements) reputed religious leaders were used to spreading the message in the society.

Newspape		Messa	Voice				
r							
Nawa-i-	Informatio	Awarenes	Religion	Suggestiv	Celebrit	Ullm	Comme
Waqt	n	s Creating	S	e	У	a	n
	1	5	15	4	9	15	1

Dunya Newspaper

In Dunya, the total public service announcements regarding population control were 11 in different dates in which 57 text boxes, 1624 words were used the main focus was to change the mind of the people about the sensitive and important issue of population growth among the people of the society the message was "sochbadlo- zindagibadlo" and in these

PSAs (Public Service Announcements)prominent religious leaders were used as message deliverer.

Newspape r		Messa	Voice				
Dunya	Informatio	Awarenes	Religion	Suggestiv	Celebrit	Ullm	Comme
	n	s Creating	S	e	У	a	n
	2	3	4	3	5	4	2

After the detailed content analysis of the PSAs (Public Service Announcements) of the said four newspapers during the three months period from March, 2018 - May 2018 it is concluded that prominence religious personalities were taken as opinion leaders to change the mind of common Pakistan's people about population control as Pakistan's general population is more attached and inspired from religious personalities in their sensitive matters, but on the other hand celebrities like famous actors were also taken as opinion leaders but their percentage was very less as compared to religious personalities. According to the content analysis of these PSAs (Public Service Announcements) mainly sacred verses of the Holy Quran were used to create awareness among people about population control.

N. P		Jang		Nav	va-i-Wa	ıqt	Express]	Dunya		
	March	April	May	March	April	May	March	April	May	March	April	May
	5	12	16	4	8	13	0	2	4	0	3	8

Figure 2: Month Wise Coverage of PSAs (public service announcements) and Population control.

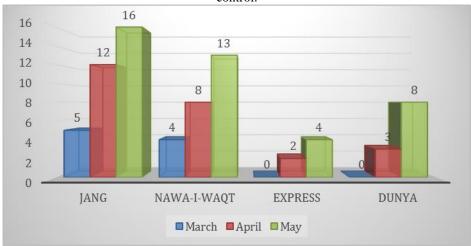
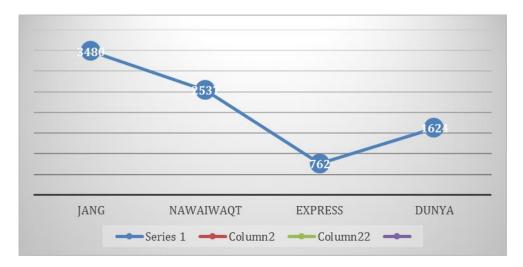


Figure 3: The Published word in PSAs (public service announcements).

Newspapers	Jang	Nawa-i-Waqt	Express	Dunya
Total PSAs	3480	2537	762	1624
Wordage				



After conducting semi-structured interviews with different religious scholars to know their religion's stance about population control the views were as follows

According to Mr. Sabir Naz Sarva Bhuma one of the Ph.D. scholars who represented Hindu Religion said by giving his religion stance:

"A male and female have the right to marry to make a bodily relation with each other to produce their family. According to the teachings of Sanatan Dharm (Hinduism), sexually meet up mean intercourse is allowed to produce a family. It's the responsibility of the parents to fulfill rights of their children. therefore they are bound to enhance their family as per their resources. If someone is unable to fulfill their rights he/she will not encourage to increase birth of children." (S. Naz, email, August 18, 2018).

According to Mr. Adrian Feldmann one of the Ph.D. Doctor who represented Buddhism Religion said by giving his religion stance:

"I don't think a population explosion was a problem at the time of Buddha, 2,500 years ago, in view of his general teachings, however, resolution of all problems should be approached with compassion and wisdom. The essence of Buddhist practice is for each individual to gain control of their own mind while simultaneously doing what they can do for the welfare of society. Thus, Buddhism is a doctrine for the individual, not for society. Although society would undoubtedly benefit greatly by its citizens always acting out of wisdom and compassion. Measures such as forcing people to have only one child seem contradictory to the Buddhist approach. Abortion is undoubtedly contrary to Buddhist doctrine." (A. Feldmann, email, August 1, 2018).

Dr. Herman Roborgh articulated the Catholic Church's position on birth control as follows:

"The Church teaches that each and every marriage act must remain open to the transmission of life. Hence the dual purpose of marriage, that is the love of the spouses and the procreation of children, must not be separated.

Parents who wish to space the birth of their children must make sure that their desire is not motivated by selfishness but is in conformity with the generosity appropriate to responsible parenthood. Periodic continence, that is the methods of birth regulation based on self-observation and the use of infertile periods is in accordance with the objective criteria of morality. Legitimate intentions on the part of the spouses do not justify recourse to morally unacceptable methods of birth control such as direct sterilization or contraception. (Cf. Catechism, paragraphs 2366-2370 and paragraph 2399)" (H. Roborgh email, August 18, 2018).

Dr. Abid Naeem presented the view of Islam as follows:

"According to my faith, Allah is solely responsible for every matter. So is with population increase. Actually, population growth is much big issue as shown to us but rather it is about mismanagement on human's part. Islam does allow us to have a balanced approach and to have gap among children birth wherever it is required e.g. for the good health and care of the child or mother. Islam allows controlling birth control as it is necessary. If family members are large in numbers so it is difficult for the head of the family to keep balance among them, but our faith in God should be strong."

As described in Surah Al-Baqara, Ayat no 233 And mothers should suckle their children for complete two years, for him who intends to complete the period of suckling, and to whom the child belongs, on him, there is feeding and clothing of the women according to convention. No soul shall be burdened but within his capacity, the mother should not be made to suffer because of her child and nor father because of his child or (the mother should not make the child suffer, and nor father to his child, and the same is incumbent on the father's heir. Then if the mother and father both try to wean by mutual consent and consultation, there is no sin on them; and if you wish that your children should be suckled by nurses, then too there is no blame on you, provided what was agreed to pay is paid by you with kindness, and remain fearing Allah and know that Allah is seeing your works. (A. Naeem, email, August 19, 2018)

Mr. Kalyan Singh presented the view of the Sikh Religion on birth control as follows:

"Sikh religion teachings about married couples are to produce babies but not as much that they cannot full fill their needs of life and rights. Religiously mother is bounded to feed her child for two consecutive years, so it means a married couple is asked to have a gap of two consecutive years. In this way religion is creating a way of population control naturally." (k. Singh, personal interview, August 19, 2018).

Discussion and Analysis

After Semi-structured Interviews with different religious scholars, it is concluded that all the religions are agreed to control birth and an increase in population growth. Every religion emphasizes that increase the birth rate but by observing the ground realities, if a couple consider they are not able to fulfill the rights if they should practice birth control not

only for the interest of their self but also in the interest of the society or country where they are living.

All religious scholars agreed on running the awareness campaigns to control the increasing population and they also agreed to become the parts of such campaigns because they knew that the drastic increase in the world population will be a big problem in near future and if we do not think about its control now, then our coming generations will not forgive us.

Conclusion

After doing an analysis of data collected through content analysis of the public service announcements regarding birth control in four different newspapers, namely: Express, Nawa-i-waqt, Jang, and Dunya during the time period from March, 2018 – May, 2018 and also through semi-structured interviews conducted with the scholars of different religions like (Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Sikhism), the authors of this research paper conclude that during the said time period three months (March-May, 2018) public service announcements regarding birth control were published in all the four newspapers. However, only 306 text boxes and 8403 words were used. This is insufficient coverage to convey the important message about the legitimacy of birth control. After doing the analysis of the coverage in newspapers, the authors of this research suggest that the media should give more coverage to this issue. The main focus of these PSAs (Public Service Announcements) was to create awareness among common people about the legitimacy of birth control in which the prominent message was "sochbadlo- zindagibadlo" and the message was delivered by prominent religious leaders were used in these announcements.

As well as after the interviews conducted with religious scholars of the said religions it is concluded that all the religions agree that the birth rate could be increased but not so much that parents could not provide the basic rights to their new born babies. According to the religious scholars, the religious sacred books have proper guidance for their followers about married life and sexual relations and provide the basic needs of life for newborn babies. But these religious leaders also agreed that birth control was necessary in the world which is experiencing such a growth of population. It is the social responsibility of the media to convey this message about the need for birth control and the fact that religious leaders allow birth control. The government should organize campaigns to promote birth control among society.

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