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Agenda Setting Role of Pakistani Elite Media during Natural Disasters

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the 'agenda setting' role of Pakistani elite media in the course of natural disasters. In this regard, two predictable catastrophes have been selected in order to examine the role of media in pre and post disaster periods. The attention, prominence, and valence of news reports published regarding the selected disasters are observed through research. Findings revealed that the pre-phase of both disasters was left unheeded by media despite the fact that discoursing of pre-phase in media was significant in order to mitigate risk as well as alleviate probable disaster damage. In the post-disaster period, it was observed that media plainly overlooked policy-related debates intended for sustainable disaster management. Instead, it remained focused on coverage of everyday statements, visits and meetings of politicians and other important personalities. Towards the end of the research, recommendations meant for improved natural disaster coverage are proposed for the mass media.

Key Words: natural disaster, mass media, pre and post-disaster, agenda setting, Pakistani elite media.

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