

Portrayal of IDPs from Swat in Leading Pakistani Newspapers: Exploring Nature and Treatment

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ABSTRACT

This research study examines how three elite English language newspapers of Pakistan portrayed the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) from Swat. The content analysis of news stories and editorials highlights interesting facts about media treatment of IDPs. The total number of stories was 270, out of which 219 (81.1%) were News Stories and 51 (18.9%) were editorials. Daily The News gave the largest coverage to IDPs by publishing 101 stories while Dawn gave the smallest coverage. Majority of stories were generated from 'Unofficial' sources and newspapers gave more 'unfavorable' slants than 'favorable' to government for handling the IDPs crisis. The Nation used the slant 'Unfavorable to Government' in the largest number of stories. Since, the maximum number of stories were having slant 'Unfavorable to Government', which depicts that due to maximum stories from 'Unofficial' sources, the majority of stories carried 'Unfavorable to Government' Slant as a result of watchdog function. Only 20% news items were supplemented with photographs. Different frames were also applied by newspapers in covering the issue.

Introduction

The Swat valley, with its rolling hills, gushing streams and scenic vistas has been considered as the 'Switzerland' of Pakistan all over the world. However, since the beginning of military operation in Swat valley as a part of the war on terror, the law and order situation in Swat gone from bad to worse, converting this paradise into a valley of unrest.

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