


**Annex I**  
**Monthly Media Monitoring Report**



# Monitoring of People Focus Vs Media Focus issues in mainstream/regional print and electronic media

**Monthly media monitoring**  
**for**  
**Open Society Foundation**

## Contents

Executive Summary .....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Methodology.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Why these ten issues .....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
News Media in Pakistan.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Findings.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Print media.....	7
English Newspapers .....	7
Urdu newspapers.....	8
Regional Newspapers.....	9
Electronic Media .....	10

## Executive Summary

This media monitoring is aimed at gauging the coverage trends in the mainstream and regional print and electronic media in Pakistan, especially on the issues which are critical to people's political, social and economic outcomes.

The critical issues selected for print and electronic media monitoring are:

- Water
- Climate change
- Food security
- Gender
- Education/students
- Labor and peasants
- Art, culture and literature
- Science and discovery
- Agriculture

These issues may come across as apolitical but they are very much political and critical to the overall social fabric with a direct bearing on the prospects of Pakistan as a stable, democratic country.

For this purpose of clarity, the issues selected for this monitoring have been called People Focus while the other issues such as politics, political statements, government, foreign policy, sports, entertainment, terrorism, etc. have been called Media Focus.

The focus of news media in February remained on politics, visit of the crown prince of Saudi Arabia and the border skirmishes between Pakistan and India. The ten selected issues for monitoring remained neglected, getting much less space than other issues. There has been no investigative story on the ten issues identified for monitoring.

Out of the total 7319 news items, editorials, articles and the letters to the editor on the front/back and editorial pages of the six mainstream Urdu and English and two regional newspapers, only 771 (10%) were on the selected ten issues.

In the electronic media also, the people-focused issues failed to get considerable time in the bulletins. Out of 3630.3 minutes of news on the six TV channels, only 207.3 minutes (6%) were given to the selected issues. In terms of number of news, on the four mainstream channels, out of total 968 news stories, only 62 (6%) were about the people-focused issues. Similarly on the selected Pushto and Sindhi channels, out of 881 news stories, only 98 (11%) discussed the selected issues.

The selected talk shows on the mainstream and regional TV channels did not give much time to the people focus issues in February.

The news media narrative around these issues is marked by a clear lack of understanding and investigative journalism. It can also be said that the mainstream media seems reluctant to spend time and money on issues which require background research, and which are not considered worth following. This is despite the fact that the ten issues selected for this monitoring are confronted by the people and the journalists daily.

There is need for engaging with news media organizations and working journalists on the coverage of issues which are critical to the present and future of Pakistan. There is also need for coaxing journalists to go beyond the immediate news agenda and look for stories that look into and discuss issues concerning people.

## Methodology

The objective of this monitoring is to gauge the coverage trends in the mainstream and regional print and electronic media, especially on the issues which are critical to people's political, social and economic outcomes.

The critical issues selected for monitoring are: water, climate change, food security, gender, education/students, labor and peasants, art, culture and literature, science and discovery, and agriculture. The news items, articles, editorials, letters to the editor, and electronic media stories on these issues have been noted in detail. The aim of closely looking at the coverage of these issues is to review the quality of the content and its presentation.

These issues are critical to every aspect of people's collective political, social and economic life. They may come across as apolitical but they are very much political and are critical to Pakistan's future as a stable and democratic country.

Therefore these issues for the sake this media monitoring have been called People focus.

In the other hand, in order to gauge on which the print and electronic media are focusing, we noted the number of stories, articles, etc. on other issues such as politics, political statement, foreign affairs, accountability, parliament, sports, entertainment, crime, military etc. This approach helped to provide a clear picture in terms of numbers on where the focus of the media is.

These issues have been called Media Focus.

While monitoring the media, we want to see if these selected issues get any coverage on the front and back and editorial pages in the print media and the main bulletins and talk shows of the electronic media.

Therefore for the print media five days a week, front/back and editorial pages have been monitored. Overall three mainstream Urdu and English newspapers – Jang, Express and Nawa-e-Waqt and The News, Dawn and The Tribune – were monitored. From the regional print media, Pushto and Sindhi language newspapers were monitored.

Similarly we selected the main news bulletins (9-10am) of six TV channels – four mainstream and two regional (One Pushto and one Sindhi). Additionally from the selected TV channels, one talk show was also selected for monitoring. In order to monitor more channels, the TV channels and their talk shows are to be replaced every month. In other words in a quarter 18 TV channels and talk shows will be monitored.

**Table 1: For February 2019, the following TV channels and talk shows were monitored.**

TV Channel	Talk-show
Geo News	Capital Talk
Dunya News	Dunay with Kamran Khan kay Saath
Dawn News	Zara Hatt kay
Aaj News	Faisal Aap ka
KTN News	Issues with Naz
Khyber News	Dateline Islamabad

## Team

A team of six monitors, headed by a supervisor, has been employed. For the print media, the monitors are provided hard copies of the newspapers. While for the electronic media, recorded bulletins and talk shows are provided to the monitors.

## Challenges

Availability of the regional newspapers remained a challenge. It is important to highlight that in his age of instant communication and internet, the websites of the regional newspapers remain for most of the time dysfunctional. The Pushto daily, Khabroona, remained available for only eight days during February.

## Why these ten issues?

As stated above the ten issues have been selected keeping in view their critical importance in the governance of the country. In a way these issues can be termed as the issues of the people, which it seems have been unable to find space in the ever expanding news media in Pakistan. A brief look at these issues highlights the fact that there is a need for making them priority urgently.

Today Pakistan has become a water-deficit country, with a per person annual availability of water at 1.017 cubic meters.<sup>1</sup> Pakistan is one of the ten countries which have been most affected by climate change from 1997 to 2016.<sup>2</sup>

According to [globalfoodsecurityportal.org](http://globalfoodsecurityportal.org), “despite the growth in production of staple crops, Pakistan has experienced a sharp decline in food security in recent years due to a combination of militant activity, natural disaster, and economic instability.”

On the World Economic Forum’s gender index 2018, Pakistan is the second worst country in terms of gender parity.<sup>3</sup> Education in Pakistan presents a confused picture, torn between a class-based system trying to find a balance between “traditional and modern education” and with a “clear separation of religious and secular educational content”.<sup>4</sup>

Over the years the labor and peasants have been conspicuous by their absence from the mainstream media. Their voice and their issues seem to be no longer a story for the news media. Art, culture and literature, science and discovery have also taken a back seat in terms of getting media coverage in Pakistan.

## News Media in Pakistan

News media in Pakistan has expanded exponentially since 2002. As the country opened its airwaves to private electronic media, journalism in Pakistan underwent a sea change. Private TV channels and social media became the new face of media of Pakistan.

---

<sup>1</sup> Ebrahim, Zofeen. Is Pakistan running out of fresh water? Dawn, March 30, 2018 [available at <https://www.dawn.com/news/1398499>]

<sup>2</sup> Global Climate Risk Index 2018. Who suffers most from extreme weather events? Weather-related loss events in 2016 and 1997 to 2016, German Watch, [available at <https://germanwatch.org/sites/germanwatch.org/files/publication/20432.pdf>]

<sup>3</sup> Ahmed, Amin. Pakistan among worst performers on gender equality: WEF, Dawn, December 19, 2018 [available at <https://www.dawn.com/news/1452284>]

<sup>4</sup> Hoodbhoy, Pervez. Why attempts to reform Pakistani education fail, Dawn, October 27, 2018 [available at <https://www.dawn.com/news/1441704>]

Today the country has 91 privately-owned television channels. Of them 35 are news channels. Pakistan has also witnessed a mushroom growth of private radio stations. The country has more than 130 private FM radio stations. Despite the growth of private electronic media in Pakistan, state media (Pakistan Television and Radio Pakistan) has an edge in outreach to every part of the country.

Today, Pakistan has 246 big and small Urdu dailies, 53 English dailies, 63 monthly magazines (English, Urdu, Sindhi, and Balochi), 17 weeklies, and three fortnightlies, according to All Pakistan Newspapers Society (APNS). Noticeably Urdu-language dailies are covering almost every part of the country, overshadowing the regional press.

A significant development is the number of regional private TV channels operating in the provinces, especially in Sindhi language. In the interior Sindh, there is a vibrant and strong regional press in the form of 23 dailies in Sindhi language.

This vibrant print media has now witnessed the emergence of news and entertainment private TV channels in Sindhi language.

Moreover Karachi is the hub of print and electronic media. Head offices of the most of the print and electronic media are in Karachi. Almost all the Urdu, English and vernacular newspapers have offices in Pakistan's financial metropolitan. This makes Sindh a journalistic center of Pakistan in terms of the number of media outlets and the content generation – both regional and national.

In Balochistan, the regional press is weak. The national newspapers, Urdu and English, are the main source of information. There are local newspapers with limited outreach. Similarly the mainstream private TV channels are followed in Balochistan, with PTV Bolan catering to the news and entertainment in Balochi language.

## FINDINGS

### Print media

A total of eight newspapers – six mainstream and two regional – were monitored from Feb11-28, five days a week.

The focus of the print news media remained on politics, the visit of Saudi crown prince and the border skirmishes between and Pakistan. Both in the print and electronic media, there was not a single investigative story on the ten issues selected for monitoring.

Out of the total 7319 news items, editorials, articles and the letters to the editor on the front/back and editorial pages of the six mainstream Urdu and English and two regional newspapers, only 771 (10%) were on the selected ten issues, which have been dubbed as the people's issues compared to media focused issues. It is important to note that the mainstream English newspaper gave a slightly more coverage to the people's issues – 14% compared to 9% and 12% in the mainstream Urdu and two regional newspapers.

### English Newspapers

The readers of the English newspapers are interested in discussing the ten issues selected for monitoring. This is evident from 100 letters to the editor in the three English newspapers on the people's issues. In the mainstream Urdu and regional newspapers, there were only 44 and 29 letters to the editor on the people's issues.

The readers raising issues concerning water, climate change, food security, education, gender, art, culture and literature, etc. shows that the people are interested in discussing these serious and critical issues. However the papers' front and back pages are not giving much space and preference to the selected issues.

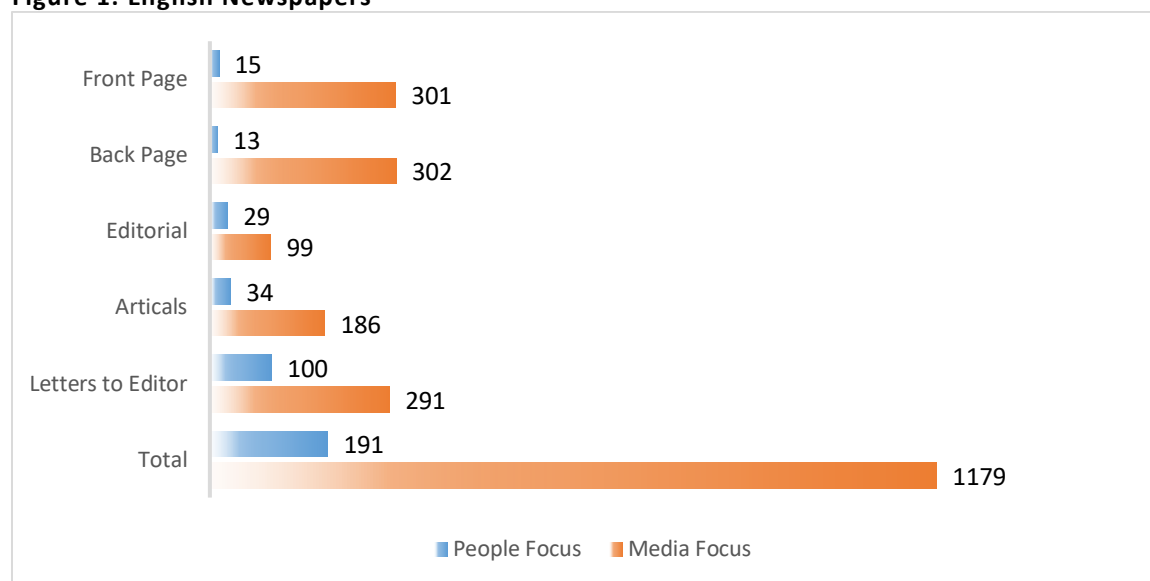


The three English papers (The News, Dawn, and The Express Tribune) carried editorials, articles and letters on women rights, sexism, harassment of women and gender equality. One editorial in Dawn was on a proposed legislation tabled in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa assembly for the protection of women rights backed the bill.

A couple of editorials touched upon issues of mother and child health which were again women-centric as access to contraceptives and women choices in decisions regarding abortion were discussed.

There was also a news report on the front pages which covered the Supreme Court proceedings of a suo moto notice on law about harassment of women at workplace. It said the SC ruled that the law should not be watered down in the name of amendments and asked the government to simplify the procedure for registration of women's complaints under the law.

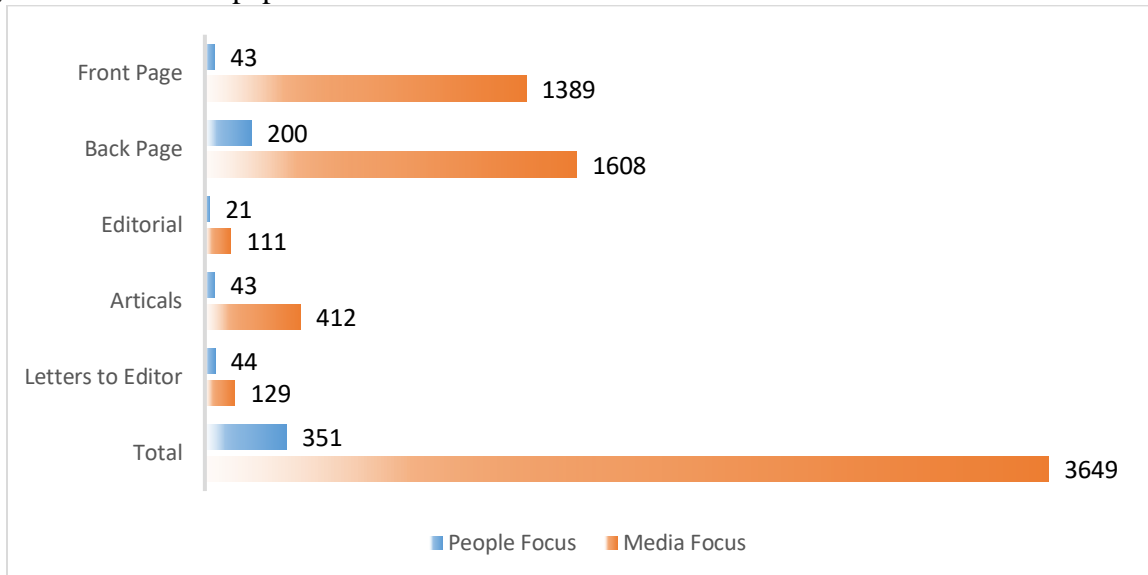
**Figure 1: English Newspapers**



### Urdu newspapers

In the three mainstream Urdu newspapers, most of the news stories, articles, editorials and letters to the editor on the ten selected issues were about education, followed by health, art, culture and literature, agriculture, water, climate change, gender, science and technology, and food security.

Figure 2: Urdu Newspapers



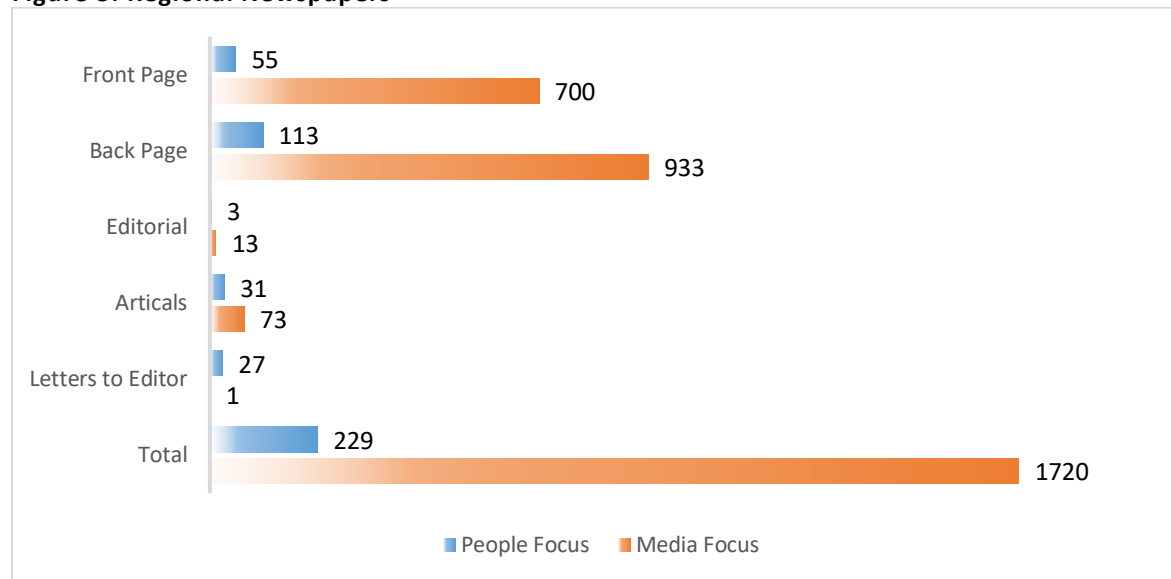
### Regional Newspapers

Two newspapers – one each in Pushto and Sindhi – have been selected for monitoring. Following the mainstream media, the regional newspapers seldom discuss the issues related to the people. In the two regional newspapers monitored, the focus remained on politics and foreign affairs. Pushto-language daily **Khabroona** focused more on international/foreign affairs news on its front and back pages apparently due to the Saudi Crown Prince's visit to Pakistan, situation in Indian-administered Kashmir and escalation of tension between India and Pakistan in the aftermath of Pulwama attack. The newspapers did not give any coverage to our main topics of interest or it very briefly touched a few of those issues.

The theme of the report on education was a seminar in Peshawar University of Engineering on mining industry; whereas topic of health was increase in prices of medicines by up to 15 percent, which the newspaper claimed, was beyond the recommended increase suggested by the government, and which caused problems for the people. One report each on water and gender carried statements of two federal ministers. **Khabroona** did not carry any editorial on our topics of interests. The newspaper though carried 15 articles on art and literature. However, almost all of the articles on literature were related to the work and poetry of Afghan Pushto writers, highlighting their personalities more instead of discussing on their literary work.

Sindhi newspaper Awami Awaz published 104 news on the people focus issues, with one-fifth of the news stories were on gender. Most of the gender-related news, however, were crimes against women including rape. The newspaper published three articles on shortage of irrigation water in Sindhi, with particular focus on district Badin.

**Figure 3: Regional Newspapers**

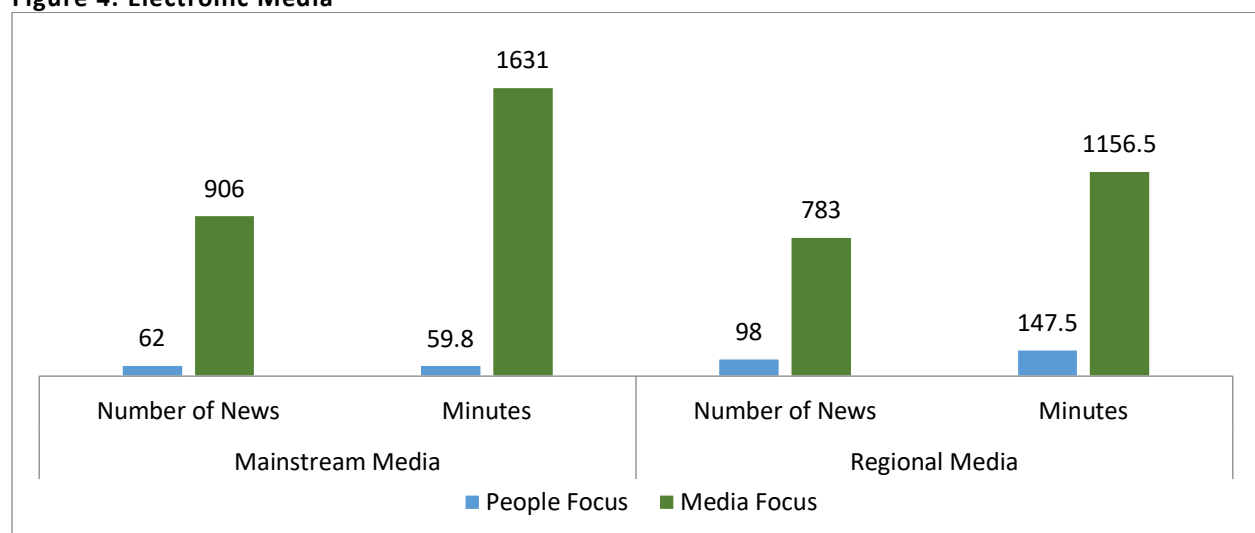


### Electronic Media

In the electronic media also, the people-focused issues failed to get considerable time in the bulletins. Out of 3630.3 minutes of news on the six TV channels, only 207.3 minutes (6%) were given to the selected issues. In terms of number of news, on the four mainstream channels, out of total 968 news stories, only 62 (6%) were about the people-focused issues. Similarly on the selected Pushto and Sindhi channels, out of 881 news stories, only 98 (11%) discussed the ten issues.

Most of the airtime went to politics, political parties, and political statements on both the mainstream and regional TV channels. Cumulatively 43% of the airtime of the bulletins on the six TV channels was given to politics, political parties and political statements.

**Figure 4: Electronic Media**



The Capital Talk on Geo TV and Faisala Aap ka on Aaj TV did not discuss any of the ten issues selected for this monitoring. However their news bulletins did give some airtime to the ten issues but much less than other issues such as politics, foreign affairs, border skirmishes between Pakistan and India, etc.

News Bulletins on Dawnnews Tv gave airtime to stories on health, gender, climate change and water. On health, the news stories were about antibiotic resistant typhoid virus in Hyderabad and the strike by young doctors. On gender, one of the stories was about the introduction of bill against domestic violence in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly and other a murder of pregnant woman by husband for refusing abortion of daughter. The story on water was in the context of border tensions between India and Pakistan. The tone of the story regarding Indian threat to block Pakistan's water was alarmist, rather than informative or evidence based. The widespread rains and snow in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was given airtime, but without discussing the reasons such as climate change.

The two talk shows Zara Hatt kay on Dawnnews TV and Dunya Kamran Khan ke Saath on Dunya TV discuss the issues concerning education, health and climate change. The three-anchor team of Zara Hatt kay discussed the increasing suicide rate among students as they backed the government decision carrying drug tests of college students. They also discussed the widespread rains in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa but did not link with climate change. Dunay Kamran Khan ke Saath discussed the situation of education in Sindh, inviting the provincial minister of education and a psychiatrist.

Primetime news bulletin on Pashto-language Khyber News TV channel gave less time to our topics. It, however, gave considerable airtime to news about the observance of World Mother Language Day. The channel aired six reports stressing on the promotion of mother language besides reporting on various literary functions held in Peshawar, Balochistan and Islamabad. The channel also aired five reports highlighting labor issues in context of the Saudi Government's announcement to release Pakistani prisoners in Saudi Arabia.

The talk show, hosted by Hassan Khan, mostly focused on political, security issues facing Pakistan, Saudi Crown Prince's visit to Pakistan, governance issues in Balochistan, and Pakistan-India tension. One of the three topics of the 15 February show was launching of health cards for tribal districts. The host stated in introduction of the program that they would discuss whether the scheme would actually facilitate the poor and deserving people of tribal areas or not. This particular topic was, however, not discussed in the program.

It is important to highlight that the issues which are not considered hot may be mentioned at the start of the talk show but may not be discussed at all.

In a talk show aired on 21 February, host and all of the participants gave opening remarks in their mother tongue -- Pushto, Balochi, Brahvi and Persian -- in context of World Mother Language Day. The participants talked about importance of mother languages, saying it is hoped that the government will "constitutionally promote" all regional languages in Pakistan.

Only one talk show on KTN news during the whole month was on lack of irrigation water in Sindh.