

## **A FRAMING ANALYSIS OF THE TIMES SPECIAL ON 100 DAYS OF BJP GOVERNMENT**

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### **Abstract**

*Media and politics are indeed inseparable. Media favours more sources concerning politicians who are involved in policy making and governance of the country which directly involve public interest and have news value. At the same time, a politician needs the media for publicity and to inform the people of their actions, policies. The political actor needs the media to relay its message to the public and so does the media who needs the political elite to serve as a spokesman, to fill news and provide drama, and to merge the issues. Both the print and electronic media are platforms to gain exposure and popularity and have a big influence in shaping the public perception on issues. Past research and evidence state that the media is a powerful tool in influencing public opinions and shaping their political perceptions.*

### **Introduction**

Firstly, by stating the issue covered, media prescribes the public's agenda (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987; Mackuen, 1981; McCombs & Shaw, 1972). Secondly, by putting an issue higher than others (throughput priming), the media influences the voters. Then they will make an evaluation on the political actors and change the criteria used by the public to judge them (Krosnick & Kinder, 1990). Nevertheless, agenda setting and priming are not the only power of the media. Political issues can be pictured and shown in various ways, and the media's choice to frame what can be used can affect the consideration of the people and political elites on the support level of certain issues. The chances to frame any upheaval or political problem emerge from the media's ability to pick and decide the choices from rhetoric which are offered by pressure groups and politicians. In extreme cases, media can drop all message inputs given by other parties and can create a debate fully moulded by them. Is it true that the media is more powerful than the political characters in moulding the people's perception? The answer is 'yes'. Any group who has interest or political actors can create various current issues that they think are important but their domination is insignificant towards the media. In reality, the media has full control over any matter and the way they report the news. The realities that we access through the media might be the realities that are created by the media and do not really represent the actual situation. News or editorial views are different according to different newspapers. Newspapers are able to downplay or play up a certain issue while portraying the image of a political personality. Based on environment driven rating states that news are packaged and delivered by a journalist who often exploits personality, uses sensation, drama and story conflict, does not downplay the social picture, economy and politics (Bennett, 2002; & Hart & Sparrow, 2001). Environment based on market where media operations put them with strategic actors in their effort to redefine and to

change political rhetoric (Cook, 1998; Hallin, 1992). Hence, the role played by the media is more complex compared to other actors. Media simultaneously may act as a unique frame builder to be expressed to public. Journalists and editors draw the map or the internal story pattern for readers, and the map which is also known as framing, functions cognitively in structuring political debates, influencing the information levelling on the readers, and attributing to the policy responsibility (Gamson, 1992; Iyengar, 1991; & Kinder & Kiewit, 1979). Whether it is from the journalism norm, the dependency of media on the source, the desire to comply with public's priority, the desire to acquire profit, the priority of the journalist's value, or the accessibility of the spokesman and other practical considerations (Tuchman, 1980), media frame forms over how certain issues are being portrayed, either directly or through chosen message to who they want. From strategic political perspectives, the media is a 'mine field' which needs to be negotiated cautiously to put in the exact frame. For example, according to Gans (1980) and Hess (1984), the relationship between the media and other elite is symbiotic, based on giving and receiving information. The Press has the freedom to deal with any issue which can influence the views of a society. News framing is important because it can highlight certain issue until it is able to satisfy the society or highlight it until it is able to arouse dissatisfaction among the society. There are many Malaysian political personalities who are known by the people through their portrayal in the media compared to interpersonal ways. This proves that the perceived good or bad image of the political personalities among the people mainly depends on what they can get from the media.

**Background** Elections 2014, marked a major change in the political history of India bringing the Bharatiya Janata Party to power with a massive majority. Narendra Modi was elected Prime Minister and took over as the 15th Prime Minister and stated that — better days are to come soon. The expectations of the Indians were raised especially on crucial issues like governance, economy, growth, development etc.

**Media Framing** Media plays a role in focusing the people's attention towards a certain issue. The frequency, depth, and importance given by the media towards a certain issue are believed to determine the level of observation, reaction or the thoughts of the targeted audience or society towards it. According to Reese (2001), —framing is organizing principles that are socially shared and persistent over time, that work symbolically to meaningfully structure the social world. Media is believed to have authority in influencing the people's views towards a certain issue. The influence used by the media is the same either concerning the positive or negative image or character of a certain race, society, country or the individual himself. Someone who is involved in the media from whichever level in the organisational structure of the media can influence the framework of the news either through choosing the news angle, choosing the sources to be used, headline expression, summarizing the main point of the story and choosing appropriate photos. Metaphors, catchphrases, exemplars, depictions, moral appeals, visual images, and other symbolic devices are tools that cluster into competing packages (Gamson, 1989; & Ungar, 1998). Framing and priority in the mass media are decisive role agenda which

refers to mass media capacity in choosing and stresses some particular issue until it becomes important to the people and consequently affect public opinions. Framing refers to the way a certain media carry out restrictions towards a certain issue to be put before the society. Framing influences the way how the news will be presented to the people through agenda setting and not only can it explain what is being thought and also to explain how to think about the issue. Focus will be given towards how a hot issue will be carried out. The main title will be emphasised because it is believed that it can have a great influence and overall, it will help to make the news objective and perfect.

According to Fairhurst and Sarr (1996), framing is a quality in a communication that people are able to understand the meaning. It is a part of a skill in producing effects on understanding a certain issue that is soon to be published. Framing consists of three important elements that should have in every framing process. The elements are language, careful thinking, and planning for the future. Language helps in providing information and actions to make changes in a situation. To use certain language, one should go through and picture one's view through one's own framing so others will understand. A leader should learn of ways to produce framing spontaneously in an unexpected situation. In other words, a frame that is made without any preparation (Deetz, Tracy & Simpson, 2000). Framing theory is quite a new communication theory and also one of the mass media effect theories looking towards how certain information is used to make an issue for the people's knowledge and understanding. This concept is also a way in accepting a certain information and understanding the beginning of one story and how the structure explains a certain issue that has been raised (Entman, 1991; Sheufele, 1999; & Pan & Kosicki, 2001). The information about a certain issue is arranged and spread selectively but it needs to be stressed that the people's interpretation is based on ones interest and needs. So the framing of a certain issue is important because it will influence the people's opinion concerning an issue. Choosing a good frame that can influence the people's mind toward a certain issue that is being displayed is important but it does not guarantee to form the people's interpretation.

## **Methodology**

**Content Analysis** Neuman, Marion and Ann (1992) explained that content analysis is a technique to collect and analyze text content where the content mentioned consists of word, meaning, picture, symbol, idea, theme, or any message that could be used in communication. The ideology that Neuendr of (2002) tried to deliver is much simpler, where he defined the media content analysis as a way to shorten and analyze quantitative on message through scientific method. On the other hand, other scholars such as Shomeker and Reese (1996) disagreed with the brief explanation. They explained that media content analysis could be split into behaviour tradition and humanity. Behaviour tradition prioritizes the media's effect by using scientific method, whereas in humanity tradition, the content analysis is done by looking through the media's content and what they wish to deliver to the society and the culture where the media exist. But this study will focus on the idea of Shomeker and Reese (1996) which suggests that media contents should be analyzed from the aspect of medium, publication technique, message, source,

reference, and the context to find the meaning of a certain message. The main purpose of this study is to focus exclusively on the role of media in portraying the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi on completion of 100 days in office through an empirical method and communication concept.

**Universe and Sample:** The Content analysis study included Times of India, the country's largest circulated daily. The analysis included the Times special pages devoted to examine the issues covered, the tone of the article and framing of issues. News and the contents presented have been examined from the frames of **muscular nationalism, economic growth, efficient and corruption free governance**

### **Data and Discussion**

The **Times of India** published a **Times special**, four full pages in the main edition giving an assessment of the performance of the newly elected Prime Minister with pictures and graphics. The page numbers were from 9-12 with a stripped title **The First Ton**.

**PAGE 9** had a TOI- IPOS Survey results. The results were presented in the form of tables including figures in percentages. Further, pie charts, pictograms were also a part of the presentation. The page had a very bold political cartoon of the Prime Minister dominating the page. The Headline of the interpretative piece running from the top to the bottom of the page read **Modi gets a —like! in 8 city poll**. The three column blurb said, **—the government's doing a fairly good job despite inherited problems and has delivered to some extent on its — ache din! promise, say urban residents. Babus to are functioning better than under the UPA, they feel.** The strip on the top right hand had a quote of the Prime Minister himself in Tokyo. It read **— see the work done in 100 days of my government, earlier, GDP would be around 5 per cent and led to an environment of disappointment.. In the first quarter of our government, there's been a 5.7 per cent growth**

### **The questions in the survey included:**

- How do you rate the government's approach to Indo Pak relations 38 (Good)
- In these 100 days, has India's image improved globally 52 (Improved) After 100 days in office,
- how do you see the election campaign tagline of bringing good days if BJP comes to power 45(Delivering as promised)
- Is the bureaucracy functioning better in the Modi regime 62( yes)
- Should seniors like LK Advani and Murli Manohar Joshi have been accommodated in the cabinet 44(Yes) How do you rate the Modi Government on its choice of ministers and portfolios 45(good)
- Has the Government done the right thing by changing the system of judges' appointment 58 (Yes)

- How would you rate the government on responsiveness 58( better than UPA)
- How do you rate the way in which the Government has dealt with the Congress / Opposition 63 (Fairly) Do you think the government is hobbled by problems inherited from the UPA 50( to some extent)
- Based on these 100 days, how would you assess the future prospects of the government on things like boosting growth, building infrastructure, tackling corruption,, creating jobs 61(Promising) .
- Based on its conduct so far do you think the Government will make a radical break from the past or just focus on improving the efficiency processes 45( will make a radical make)
- Is the RSS influencing the government's decision? 45 ( yes)
- The overall results veer towards giving a positive image to several aspects mentioned above.

**PAGE 10:** The page had a banner headline in all caps: THE MAN & HIS MEAN MACHINE with diagrams/ cartoons and visuals There was one two column story, one three column story and one four column story. There was one vertical unsize single column story The headlines for the stories were as follows: **Under the banner headline, the two column news alongside the three column cartoon, had a headline, "How Modi drives his men and office with a blurb: practising his — na sowunga na sone doonga ( I will not sleep nor will I let other do )**||, Modi has set an exacting schedule and pace. The main cartoon had the Prime Minister jumping through three loops of fire. The figure one has Pakistan while the first zero burning flames had inflation, policy paralysis, sanitation and the second zero again with flames had sentiment and economy. Adjacent to the five column story mentioned above, was a vertical two column story —Neighbours feel Namo charm, world woos him following Modi's invitation to the SAARC leaders and how the world was looking forward to his visit **100 day-**

**Hits and Misses** The bulleted entries under hits included: neighbourhood outreach lapped up by most countries, focus on economic diplomacy with involvement of states, rescue of nurses from Iraq and evacuation of Indians from Ukraine Iraq and Libya, Japan and China reaching out to India, MEA deciding : Act East: Sushma Swaraj visiting 3 Asean countries

**Misses** Pak remains a hold out nation among India's neighbours despite promising start. NO forward movement on land boundary deal with Dhaka and Over 49 Indians kidnapped in Iraq who were yet to be rescued **Below the fold stories** The box item had —Spot of bother|| I mentioning that it wasn't smooth sailing some storms threatened to unsettle Modi's cruise control. They included the issue of conflicting claims of HRD Minister about her educational background, reports of suspicious gadgets found near the Rural Development Minister Nitin Gadkari's house, protests on the imposition of Hindi in southern states, misconduct of Rajnath Singh's son and Modi's diktat against Ministers appointing secretaries from among officers who had been personal staff of UPA Ministers which caused heartburn an awkward moments to Rajnath, Irani and Ravi Shankar Prasad

There were two stories on Varanasi, his home constituency. The first story with the headline: **“Hope Lives in Kashi, but power comes and goes”** on the proclamations promising to alter the face of Kashi, but changes on the ground are little, the story points out the black out for 12 hours on an average improved for 22 hours but vanished soon. The second four column story: **PM goes with flow, shows what water and Ganga mean to him** also mentions that though the Water Ministry has attracted a lot of attention Ganga, but nothing much happened on the ground.

Above the banner item, just below the dateline strip, a 4 centimetre coloured strip with infographics and headline: **What this Government did different. The issues mentioned included** : An invite to the SAARC leaders, cancelling of the Foreign secretary level talks with Pakistan, urging the countrymen to be responsible for one's waste, identifying the male as the menace of violence against women, refusing to yield ground with the WTO and asserting that there is a need for more freedom on food subsidies, doing away with the practice of an entourage of reporters travelling with the PM, advisory telling his ministers not to appoint relative as staff, directive to ministers to report early and late back home and neighborhood first initiative-involving his visit to Bhutan and Nepal

**PAGE 11 Modi puts India Ins on Zip drive** was the banner headline running across eight columns with two strips of infographics on the top and the bottom. The main four column story with a single column headline with a picture said **Experts see revival signs but still wary**. The picture headlined **Green Signal** with the caption in reverse which read: plans to revamp labour laws, clearances online, addressing transparency and speedier go ahead, apart, decisions by the environment ministry that will ease doing business; no need for consent from gram sabhas for prospecting forests, cultivable land less than 10000 hectares can be cleared by state governments. Also, included were bulleted points which read smaller coalmine expansion plans exempt from public hearings, ministers do not need to inspect mining projects on less than 100 hectares of land An unsize single column story headlined **Food inflation in check, but veggies a worry** and Modi's recipe in bullet points. Another two column boxed story on the appointment of Jaitley as Minister under the headline: **The PM's trusted lieutenant and govt's go to man were above the fold** Below the fold, stories included were **Modi's reliance on social media to spread the word, Armed forces happy their minister was also the Finance Minister** and a three column item on BJP's pattern for more sensitivity to the states, especially the concept that in the federal scheme, they are equal stakeholders under the headline- **Lending an ear and a hand to states. Strips- Top and Bottom** The top strip with a tinted blurb said: the overall impact of the Modi Government's policies on the economy has been positive with key indicators showing an improved business sentiment. The growth in the GDP to 5.7 during April- June from 4.7 from January to March was presented in an infographic. Also, there was a line graph indicating the Sensex from 26 May 2014 to 26/ 6 2014 rising from 24727 to 26638 and the rupee vs. dollar vale increasing from 56.72 to 60.82 during the same period The bottom strip listed the

100 day milestones of the Government through its initiatives and the impact published below. What is of significance to the study is how the impact has been presented.

### **Impact**

**Governance:** Improved and speedier decision making. There won't be any need to make a round of different ministries to get their views, improved programme delivery **Centre state relations:** Medium term results expected, states won't be subjected to one size fits all programmes **Manufacturing:** Intention to make India a manufacturing hub, thorny issues to be tackled

**Farmers:** More structural reforms needed including revitalising agricultural universities and involving states **e-governance:** Institutional reform underway. Should help ease business **Price rise and corruption:** Inflation has moderated but food inflation still stubborn. More efforts needed to improve supplies and make the system efficient

**PAGE 12** This page followed a similar pattern of layout and design with two strips- one at the top and the bottom. The top strip under the headline Master of semantics- listed some lyrical coinages and his love for word play and alliteration during the 100 days The eight column banner headline read **BJP sends Oppn on friend hunt** in capital letters. The five column story below the banner was on — Political sands shift after NaMo storm, bitter enemies eye alliances || Another boxed story traced the journey of the Prime Minister from the CM of Gujarat to PM highlighting the aspects of the Gujarat Model that are going national Three below the fold stories were on: A new tango at work: Government and party join hands to deliver quickly, — PM tightening screws, giving babudom a new rush hour and Centre making a big splash with tax hike on tobacco The bottom strip had 100 steps 100 tasks- highlighting the key measures by some nodal ministries and how they are likely to put the country on the fast track of progress.

### **News Frames**

**Muscular Nationalism** In the four pages, as listed above there are several stories which fall under this frame. For instance they include: cancellation of the Secretary level talks with Pakistan is unlike the stance of the previous governments indicating some kind of assertion. The invitation to SAARC leaders, neighbours being charmed, visits to Bhutan and Nepal though are foreign policy issues are and effort towards a stronger subcontinent and strengthening India's position. The speech at the Independence day urging making people for a cleaner India, proper grooming of males to curb violence against is to involve the entire country in simple actions instead of relying totally on the government to deliver. Coinages like sabka sath sabka vikas, three S's for India- skill, scale and speed, three Ps for J& K- Prakash paryavaran and Paryatan, Bt o B model- India to Bhutan and Bhutan to Bharat and Bhutan for Bharat ; HIT in Nepal- Himalayas, Information ways and Transways etc evoke a sense of identification with the issues. Further, the idea of carrying along the states in governance is to have a stronger India. A strong nation needs a strong and a decisive leader. Modi, emerged as a tall leader in the BJP and the coverage reflects beyond doubt that we have a 'real' prime minister with his hand firmly on the

steering wheel. The contents indicate that the Prime Minister is leading from the front and laying down the behavioural norms for Ministers, bureaucrats and setting targets and programs. For instance, read the headlines — The man and his mean machine, how Modi drives his men and office, directives to Ministers not to appoint kin as staff. Also, the blurb, which states, *na sowunga, na sone doonga* (I will not sleep not will I let others do so, Modi has sent an exacting schedule and pace

**Efficient and corruption free governance** The coverage highlights that the Prime Minister has put on notice all those layers of vested interests which thrive on rents and commissions in Delhi by stating that he will neither steal himself nor let anyone else do so and that the government will conduct business without 'suvidha shukl' or speed money. The abolition of the Planning Commission seen as an anachronistic institution in an Indian economy that is increasingly globally integrated and private sector driven. The scrapping of the empowered group of ministers. That the Government did certain things differently were highlighted in the strips at the top of the page above the banner headline. For instance on page 11 the bottom strip had the measures on e-governance and the likely impact and the impact as assessed by the paper said institutional reform underway and should help ease business. An interpretative story in the same page had the initiative of the Modi Government and the likely impact mentioned in specially highlighted boxes are positive about the governance. For instance, the newspaper claims that the measures on governance has improved and speedier decision making. And that there won't be any need to make a round of different ministries to get their views, improved programme delivery. On the e-governance front the paper mentions that institutional reform is underway and should help ease business. The impact of the measures is that inflation has moderated but food inflation is still stubborn. More efforts needed to improve supplies and make the system efficient, says the boxed item. Modi, an avid social media user has taken that as a route to improve governance, he has ensured that his government and ministers, too, have become active on them. Twitter has become the primary source of information about government plans and schemes. Revamping the website and the emphasis on social media for governance is a marked shift in the communication strategy. Overall, the impression one gets after reading the reports is that the first hundred days have seen a positive change in the pace and quality of governance.

**Economic growth** Almost a full page has been devoted by Times special on the economic growth supplemented by good visuals. As mentioned the banner headline reads Modi puts India on Zip drive with a strip on top with the headline tonic effect. The info graphics on the sensex, the increase in the rupee value, the GDP growth rate in 2014 testify that the paper is more than positive about the growth achieved during the first 100 days of the government — The stock market is scaling fresh highs with regularity and the rupee has shown signs of stability. The investor mood seems to be lifting and business fat cats are smiling. While a change in the business sentiment and investor mood was only expected, the initial measures of the Government seem to have indeed created the perception that doing business in India is now easier and the country has caught the attention of the investors. Notwithstanding this, the report states that the



budget hasn't been spectacular in ushering game changing reforms but unveiled some measures to calm investor anxiety over tax policies and signalled the government's intention to bridge the trust deficit. The defence ministry's decisions not to blacklist armament companies and the nod to private sector to tie up with foreign collaborators to build transport aircraft and to replace the Avro fleet at a cost of around Rs. 13,000 crore, a departure from the previous government has been highlighted in yet another report in the special

**Headlines** Generally, the news headlines indicate there are affiliations between a title with another news title. It might be due to the stakeholders and political interests and ideologies held by each newspaper. Generally positive and negative elements can be identified. From the news headlines the headlines of news stories, blurbs, picture captions, infographics, catchphrases, exemplars, depictions, moral appeals, and other symbolic devices portray the Government and its actions in a positive light.

### Conclusions

News is the window of the world. Through the frame's portrayal, people know who they are and who others are, their institutions, leaders, lifestyles, and the same things that happen outside their country. As other framings portray the world, framing of the news can be doubtful. As according to Tuchman (1980), the view through the window depends on whether the window is big or small, having more window or little, opaque or clear, and facing the road or the backyard of the house. That fact that the Times of India came up with a four page special in the all India main edition indicates the huge coverage on the 100 day performance of the Narendra Modi government. The coverage was laudatory and had issue-based criticism of the ruling dispensation and was silent on the lack of radical reforms and continued delays in infrastructure projects.

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