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## Role of Pakistani media in disseminating core national issues and viewers perception

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### Abstract

Today media have become most powerful element of every society and its major function is to play a role as watchdog. For this present study researchers selected a survey technique to collect data from male and female viewers of the society. To collect data from a sample of 300 by using Quota sampling technique. Unit of analysis of this study was different segments of society, i.e. Reporter, Anchors, Bureaucrates, Business Men, Teachers, Students, Analyst & Other Employees. The findings showed that that majority of respondents (59%) frequently watch private channels. It was also indicated that a large proportion of respondents are more satisfied with the role of print media a similar trend was observed across all selected population groups. Respondents are more satisfied from role of print media contents. The findings also showed that a major proportion of the respondents are somewhat satisfied with the coverage of educational issues. However, a great number of the respondents are much satisfied with the coverage given to Political leaders and political issues; similarly, the significant portion of the respondents is much satisfied with the coverage given to issues related to showbiz & sports.

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**Keywords:** Media, watchdog, showbiz & sports

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## Introduction

Mass media have considered as a vital tool that have the ability to influence the masses at large level. Today media is known as a fourth or fifth pillar of the state and they have become an important stakeholder of any society and entire world as well. Role of media has been defined as watchdog and they keep an eye over all the activities and policies of all the influential officials and authorities. In Pakistan, private electronic media emerged during the era of General Pervaiz Musharaf. Media played every effective role during the restoration movement of chief justice of Pakistan Iftikhar Chuhdary. During ten years of private media functions, they make lots of fans and they are admired by a large segment of society, but on the other side there is also a great amount of people who criticize the role of private media because they think the media just creating frustration and there is no role of media in problem solving of common people. Because of two different contradictory points of view regarding private electronic media, there is need that systematic and scientific study should be conducted to determine the role of private media especially television (Hassan, 2009).

Society refers to groups of people who share common geographic area; they have similar culture, tradition, lifestyles and lead their lives for common goals. Society also refers to social and economic infrastructure. Every society has different features and characteristics; every society varies from having number of features. These features would be structural feature, organizational feature, shared belief and common goals (Ehrenberg, 1999). Mass media play a very essential character in structuring any society and formulating, shaping existing and new trends. Media has the ability to influence public opinion and they set the agenda and they guide about what they should think about. Media are more influential to unite the entire nation and also build a national consensus. Media are the main defender of ideology and nationalism, but today because of commercialization media sometimes cross their limits and they are destroying national and social infrastructure and they are teaching alien culture to their herds (Zohra, 2008). Pakistan appeared as an independent state on August 14, 1947 on the map of the world, though its seeds sown by saints and reformers of this land. People of Pakistani society have a great affiliation with great Indus Valley Civilization. Invaders from Arabian Peninsula, Persia & Central Asia ruled over the subcontinent for centuries and after them British East India Company ruled over almost for two centuries. After the rule of 200 years the people of the subcontinent struggle for independence and after the World War-II, they became successful to get freedom and subcontinent separated into two different states Pakistan and India (Ahmed, 2008).

Media especially Muslim press played a very important role in getting independence. They educated the people and disseminate awareness among people of Pakistan, especially Muslims of the subcontinent. Print media played a very important role against British Rule. Muslim press, which played a vital role for independence, it was started with the publication of the 'Urdu Akhbar' in 1836 by Moulvi Muhammad Baqar. At the time of its inception, it was considered as literary paper, but later it served to disseminate political news and political awareness among the people of subcontinent especially among Muslims. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan also drew great effects on journalism of subcontinent and he performed his role to promote a reconciliation environment between Muslims and Britishers through his renowned papers "Scientific Society Magazine" started in 1866 and "Tehzibul Akhlaq" started in 1870. After the formulation of "All India Muslim League" in 1906, there was great need to promote it so Muslim press played a very immense role to promote All India Muslim League. Fight for independence were fought through the press and hundreds of newspapers participated in that struggle. Founder of Pakistan Muhammad Ali Jinnah was a great supporter of freedom of expression so he laid foundation of an English newspaper 'Dawn' in 1941 (Alam, 2007).

Today media have become most powerful element of every society and its major function is to play a role as watchdog. They are performing their functions effectively to formulate, shape and reshape public opinion, cultures and societies. Media are very powerful and they have the ability to influence culture and society. Media are considered as channels that carry messages from one place and reach them at masses. Media are also considered as messages because their existence presents some messages as Marshal McLuhan stated that 'Medium is a message'. Nowadays media as known as the fourth pillar of the state that are influencing society very effectively and they are playing vital role in almost every segment of every society. Media are performing several functions in society, especially they are informing, guiding, educating and entertaining their audience and they pay more attention on national and international politics. Media include Television, Radio, Newspapers, Magazines and films etc. some of them are: *Oral Media*: Oral media include public gatherings, meetings, seminars, lectures and meetings, etc. *Print Media*: Print media refers to newspapers, magazines, journals, books, pamphlets and posters and all other printed material that is published to disseminate messages. *Electronic Media*: Electronic media comprises of radio, television, tele-communication and internet. *Cyber Media or New Age Media*. After the inception of new of technologies new channels of communication came on screen, i.e. mobile phones, computers and internet and these are faster than the previous traditional means of communications (Nawaz, 2006).

### **Pakistani media**

*Print Media:* Written language appeared almost six thousand years ago and printing was invented in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Its potentiality as a mass communicator was soon realized and it was used both as an informational as well as a propagator. All forms of printed material like newspapers, magazines, etc. form part of Print Media. They have a long accord of matchless services to the humanity. In fact they have played a pivotal role in the socialization and modernization of man. These services have rendered the print media so much in making it an essential part of our daily life. The printed material can be referred again and again, therefore, it has a great potential to continuously affect the readers. However, the drawback of the print media is that only the literate people can be affected by it. There were five main Muslim Urdu newspapers i.e. “Pakistan Times”, “Zamindar”, “Nawa-i-Waqt”, “Jang” and “Civil and Military Gazette” Lahore based and English newspaper Dawn located in Karachi played an important role for independence. There is a large amount of newspapers which published only daily, weekly, fortnightly and monthly basis. Almost 540 newspapers published on a daily basis, 444 newspapers published on a weekly basis and 55 and 268 published fortnightly and monthly respectively. Print media publish in Pakistan in several languages, i.e. Urdu, Sindhi, Pashto, Punjabi and English. Today, almost all print media groups have their internet edition that makes the access easier for people (Madni, 2008). *Electronic Media: Radio:* Roots of broadcasting dates back in the subcontinent to July 1927 when the Indian Broadcasting Service started its transmission from Bombay. Radio of Khyber Pakhtun khwa started its transmission in 1935 and the Lahore station started in 1937. On August 14, 1947, All India Radio converted into ‘Voice of Pakistan’ overnight. The Radio played role in informing and educating people about government policies. Radio in Pakistan almost covers the eighty percent area and their transmission reach almost over 95 million listeners. In nineteenth century issued almost 100 FM licenses to private organization. Radio is a very influential source to influence society and culture and they also play a role in increasing knowledge, awareness about political and social issues and they also help people to understand national and international political and social issues. Radio is also the biggest source of bringing purposive and positive change in society. *Television:* Television Corporation inaugurated in May 1964 in Lahore. At beginning Pakistan Television started to telecast news and educational & entertainment programs and the duration at that time was just three hours per day. A PTV Islamabad station established in 1965 also established at Rawalpindi & Dhaka in the same year. Karachi station was established in 1966 and two more stations were established in 1974 at Peshawar and Quetta. Pakistan Television started its transmission through satellite on December 1972. Digital transmission started in 1999. During the era of General Pervaiz Musharraf private television channels were allowed to be on aired on March 01, 2002. It was the start of media awakening in the country. Numerous TV channels sprung in the field of

news reporting, entertainment, music, cooking, sports, regional languages and religion. PEMRA revealed in its annual reports that at this time there are 84 Pakistani Satellite channels are operational (Nawaz, 2006).

Article nineteen of the Pakistani Constitution stated "Every citizen shall have the right to freedom of speech and expression, and there shall be freedom of the press, subject to any reasonable restrictions imposed by law in the interest of the glory of Islam or the integrity, security or defense of Pakistan or any part thereof, friendly relations with foreign states, public order, decency or morality, or in relation to contempt of court, commission of or incitement to an offense". Relation of media and society is very strong because media represent the actual situation of society (Nawaz, 2009).

Almost every channel of communication has great impact on every segment of society and life, especially T.V programs create unlimited effects on politics, education, health & lifestyles. Almost every person in this planet considered television as a biggest source of information and entertainment as well (Narula, 2006). Today, technologies are growing day by day and like other countries of world Pakistan is also on the track of adopting innovations. By adopting new technologies Pakistani media have been stronger and they present information effectively, educating and entertaining people. Pakistani media is now very much independent to play a role as watchdog and playing an effective role in almost every portion of the society (Shahid, 2006). After the 9 years of military regime Pakistani media are now playing a great role freely under democratic setup. Pakistani media are divided into two major portion i.e. English Media and Urdu Media. Urdu media playing more effective role in a society than English Media because more than 90% people expose to Urdu Media. In this modern era Pakistani media also facing threats from different state and non-state actors ([www.i-m-sodk](http://www.i-m-sodk), retrieval date: July 11, 2011). Pakistani media got freedom after a long period of restriction, but today's media are also facing restrictions from government and its different departments (Nawaz, 2006). It is a basic right of everyone to access information and all people should have equal opportunity to express their point of views (Ahmad, 2002).

Pakistani media faced many ups and downs during its entire journey. Pakistani media faced different civil and military threats and obstacles. Pakistani media playing an effective role, but sometimes they present news and view without context, some critics criticize the media that journalists do not bother context of issues. There are different ways to present information, but Pakistani journalists present information in their particular culture so that people can understand the information easily. In a study on the topic "The Opinion of Scholars of Lahore on the

Cultural Talk shows on T.V.” by ‘Mr. Raza-ul-Haq’ about television’s role and relationship between T.V & culture, and the T.V was the most source of awareness in Pakistan. He also showed that the media in Pakistan is not clearly promoting the culture of Pakistan (Tariq, 2005). In a study which was conducted by (PEMRA) in 2004; about the programs which were aired and liked by public. It was concluded that 54% people watch T.V for entertainment, 34% watch for current affairs programs, 46% watch foreign T.V; 18.28% are not satisfied as due to vulgarity and obscenity (Nawaz, 2009). “Impact of T.V; on Youth”; a study conducted by Zaid bin Ismail; the researcher found out that the students of Punjab University, Lahore had moderate views about co-education, women’s liberation, and corruption; which is not the result of T.V programs only (Bin, 2004). The findings of the subject of public support described that role of media’s role of media was ignored. The study covered different political and social issues (Das, 2009).

### **Statement of the problem**

The main focus of the study is to analyze and determine how the media can play a positive role in strengthening the Pakistan’s Society?

What are its weaknesses and how can these is removed?

What are the state’s policies which need to be modified to put the media in its right path?

### **Research methodology**

For this present study researchers selected a survey technique to collect data from male and female viewers of the society. It was hard for researchers to gather data from the entire population, so for saving time and money took a sample of 300 by using Quota sampling technique. Unit of analysis of this study was different segments of society, i.e. Reporter, Anchors, Bureaucrats, Business Men, Teachers, Students, Analyst & Other Employees. Researchers asked different questions main questions of the study were as: How often they prefer to watch the selected channels’ news? How much they are satisfied with media contents? How much they are satisfied with different media? How much they are satisfied with the coverage of different issues? How much media help people to understand the issues?

### **Findings**

Table 1 shows the frequency of watching the news and Current Affairs’ channels. An overall analysis shows that the majority of respondents (59%) frequently watch private channels. The cross comparison shows Anchors (83%), bureaucrats (78%), analyst (73%), businessmen and students (58%) respectively watch private channels more frequently than reporters (50%), teachers (47%) and other employees (41%) respectively.

**Table 1: Frequency of watching television**

	A**	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Frequently	59*	50	83	78	58	47	58	73	41
Somewhat	41	50	17	22	42	53	42	27	59

\*: Figures show percentages

\*\* : A= Overall, B= Reporter, C= Anchors, D=Bureaucrates, E= Business Men, F= Teachers, G= Students, H= Analyst & I= Other Employees

Table 2 shows the satisfaction of respondents with media. An overall analysis shows that the large proportion of respondents are more satisfied with the role of print media than social media and electronic media. A similar trend was observed across all selected population groups. Respondents are more satisfied from role of print media contents.

**Table 2: Satisfactions with media contents of private television**

	A**	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Much	22*	25	25	22	17	20	27	20	18
Somewhat	56	63	58	56	33	53	55	60	65
Not at all	22	12	17	22	50	27	18	20	18

\*: Figures show percentages

\*\* : A= Overall, B= Reporter, C= Anchors, D=Bureaucrates, E= Business Men, F= Teachers, G= Students, H= Analyst & I= Other Employees

**Table 2.1: Satisfaction with newspapers**

	A**	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Much	41*	50	42	33	58	47	42	40	24
Somewhat	52	50	58	67	25	47	52	53	65
Not at all	7	0	0	0	17	6	6	7	12

\*: Figures show percentages

\*\* : A= Overall, B= Reporter, C= Anchors, D=Bureaucrates, E= Business Men, F= Teachers, G= Students, H= Analyst & I= Other Employees

**Table 2.2: Satisfaction with social media**

	A**	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Much	33*	25	25	33	42	20	39	47	24
Somewhat	58	50	58	67	50	73	55	47	65
Not at all	9	25	17	0	8	7	6	6	12

\*: Figures show percentages

\*\* : A= Overall, B = Reporter, C = Anchors, D = Bureaucrats, E = Business men, F = Teachers, G= Students, H = Analyst & I = Other employees

Table 3 explains the respondents' satisfaction with coverage given by media to different selected issues. Findings showed that the majority of the viewers is somewhat satisfied with the coverage given to educational issues. However, a significant majority of the respondents is much satisfied with the coverage given to Political issues and political leaders, similarly, the majority of the viewers are much satisfied with the coverage given to issues related to showbiz and sports. However, the majority of the respondents are only somewhat satisfied with the coverage given to issues related to energy crisis, price hike, poverty unemployment and defense related issues. This situation shows that respondents have shown their concern related to coverage given to these issues. In terms of different groups it was observed from the empirical findings selected groups are only somewhat satisfied from the coverage given by media to educational issues. However, all selected groups are significantly much satisfied from the media's coverage to political issues and political leaders. The major reason behind is the overwhelming coverage given by media to political issues and political leaders. However, the majority of the respondents in selected groups are only somewhat satisfied with the coverage given to issues related to energy crisis, price hike, poverty unemployment and defense related issues. This shows that the media provide less coverage to social issues and it has more focus on political issues and political leaders.

**Table 3: Satisfaction with coverage to selected issues**

		A <sup>***</sup>	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Education	Much	22*	38	17	0	25	27	33	7	12
	Somewhat	69	62	83	100	58	66	48	87	76
	Not at all	9	0	0	0	17	7	19	7	12
Political issues	Much	76	100	92	89	66	67	73	73	65
	Somewhat	18	0	8	11	17	27	15	27	29
	Not at all	6	0	0	0	17	6	12	0	6
Political leader	Much	68	88	83	100	67	47	67	60	65
	Somewhat	25	12	17	0	16	47	24	33	29
	Not at all	7	0	0	0	17	6	9	7	6
Showbiz	Much	70	88	67	56	75	67	82	73	41
	Somewhat	29	12	33	44	17	33	18	27	47
	Not at all	1	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	12
Economics	Much	21	25	33	0	33	20	15	20	24
	Somewhat	71	75	67	100	50	73	79	80	71
	Not at all	8	0	0	0	17	7	6	0	6
Sports	Much	57	75	67	56	58	67	55	60	35
	Somewhat	42	25	33	44	42	33	42	40	65
	Not at all	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0
Energy crisis	Much	34	38	50	22	50	13	33	40	35
	Somewhat	60	62	50	78	42	67	61	60	65
	Not at all	6	0	0	0	8	20	6	0	0
Price hike	Much	44	62	42	56	83	33	42	27	35
	Somewhat	48	25	58	44	8	53	48	67	65
	Not at all	8	13	0	0	8	14	10	7	0



Poverty	Much	27	25	33	11	58	27	24	13	29
	Somewhat	61	63	50	89	33	60	58	80	65
	Not at all	12	13	17	0	8	13	18	7	6
Unemployment	Much	20	15	25	11	42	13	12	13	29
	Somewhat	65	75	58	78	42	73	61	67	71
	Not at all	15	10	17	11	17	13	27	20	0
Defense	Much	14	13	25	0	17	20	12	27	6
	Somewhat	70	75	67	100	75	47	73	53	76
	Not at all	16	12	8	0	8	33	15	20	18

\*: Figures show percentages

\*\* : A= Overall, B = Reporter, C = Anchors, D = Bureaucrates, E = Business Men, F = Teachers, G = Students, H = Analyst & I = Other Employees

Table 4 shows help provided by media in understanding current social and political issues. Findings shows that majority of respondents believe that media provide significantly much help in understating issues related to corruption, energy crisis and terrorism leaders. However respondents believe media provide somewhat help in understanding selected social issues i.e. poverty, unemployment, price hike, economy crisis, moral values, health and justice law& order.

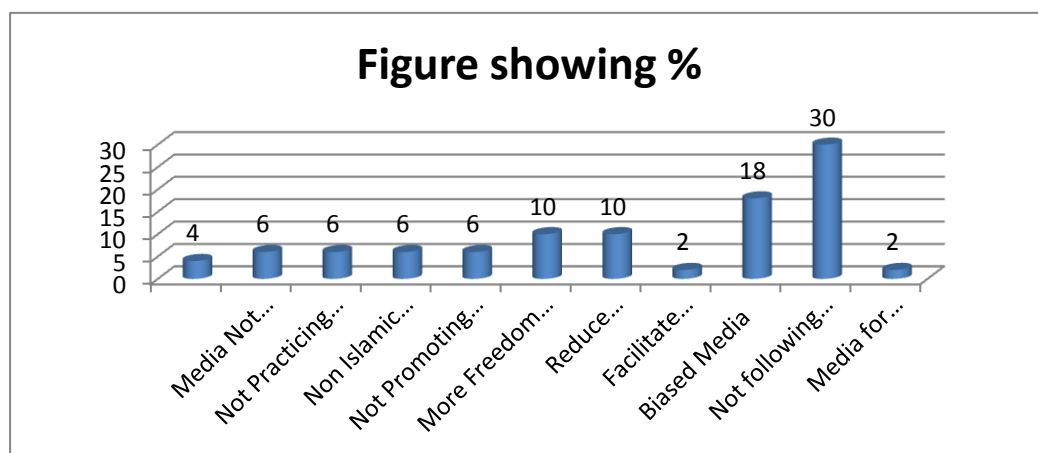
**Table 4: Help provided by media in understanding issues**

		A**	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Corruption	Much	60*	50	58	56	67	73	52	73	53
	Somewhat	34	50	42	44	25	20	39	27	29
	Not at all	6	0	0	0	8	7	9	0	18
Terrorism	Much	65	62	67	67	83	67	55	80	59
	Somewhat	31	38	33	33	17	20	36	20	41
	Not at all	4	0	0	0	0	13	9	0	0
Energy crisis	Much	50	25	50	44	67	47	52	60	47
	Somewhat	45	75	50	56	25	40	42	40	47
	Not at all	5	0	0	0	8	13	6	0	6
Poverty	Much	42	25	33	22	67	40	45	40	47
	Somewhat	50	62	67	78	25	47	39	60	53
	Not at all	8	13	0	0	8	13	15	0	0
Unemployment	Much	33	24	25	22	50	27	36	27	35
	Somewhat	58	63	58	78	42	60	48	73	59
	Not at all	9	13	17	0	8	13	15	0	6
Price hike	Much	38	50	33	22	33	47	39	33	41
	Somewhat	54	38	50	78	58	40	52	60	59
	Not at all	8	12	17	0	8	13	9	7	0
Economic crisis	Much	36	25	25	22	75	33	33	40	35
	Somewhat	56	75	58	67	17	53	58	60	65
	Not at all	8	0	17	11	8	14	9	0	0
Moral values	Much	25	12	17	0	58	13	30	27	24
	Somewhat	61	75	42	89	33	67	55	73	71
	Not at all	14	13	41	11	8	20	15	0	6
	Much	23	38	17	11	50	20	18	20	24

Health issues	Somewhat	63	62	58	78	33	67	70	60	65
	Not at all	14	0	25	11	17	13	12	20	12
Justice law and order	Much	34	38	33	33	33	27	39	40	24
	Somewhat	56	50	50	67	50	60	52	60	71
	Not at all	10	12	17	0	17	13	9	0	6
Political compromises	Much	41	25	58	56	42	33	36	53	35
	Somewhat	46	75	33	44	33	47	52	33	47
	Not at all	5	13	0	9	0	25	20	13	18

\*: Figures show percentages

\*\* : A= Overall, B= Reporter, C= Anchors, D=Bureaucrats, E= Business Men, F= Teachers, G= Students, H= Analyst & I= Other Employees



**Figure 1: Vital issues regarding role of media in Pakistan**

Figure 1 shows the respondents' response about vital issues regarding the role of media in Pakistan. Findings show that non objectiveness and biasness are the vital issues regarding the role of media. As media become a party in issues and guide issues in a particular direction.

Figure 2 shows the respondents' response about how role of the media can be improved in Pakistan. Findings show that respondents believe that the media should focus on objectiveness and bias free coverage media should not become party in issues and guide issues in a particular direction.

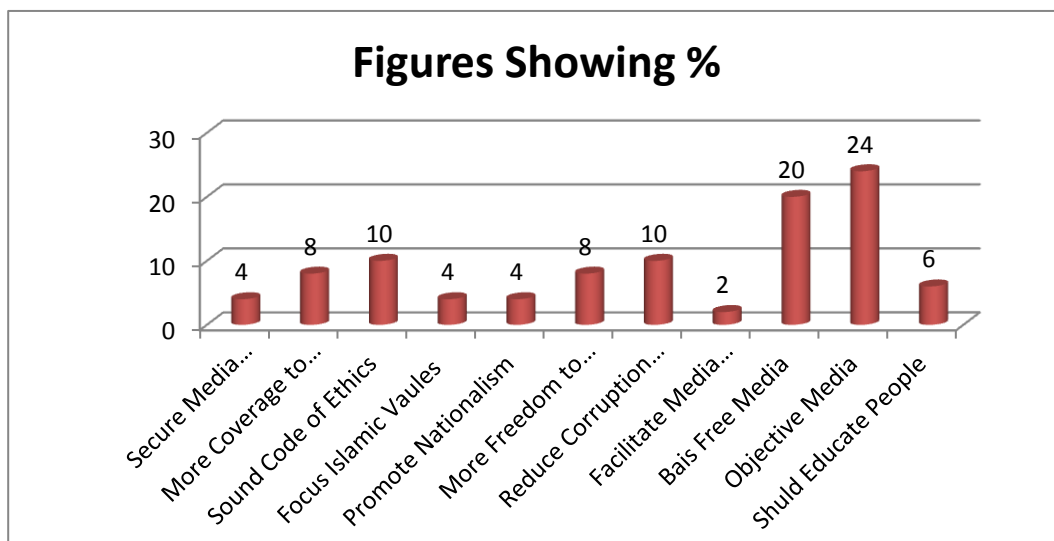


Figure 2: Suggestions to improve the role of media in Pakistan

**Statistical test**

**Frequency of watching news channels**

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between groups	15.267	7	2.181	2.602	0.016
Within groups	94.733	113	0.838		
Total	110	120			

Results of ANOVA shows that highly significant variations exist in watching frequencies across selected groups.

**Chi-square**

	Satisfaction with TV Channels	Satisfaction with Newspapers	Satisfaction with Social Media
Chi-Square	37.967 <sup>a</sup>	70.446 <sup>a</sup>	40.198 <sup>a</sup>
Df	4	4	4
Asymp. Sig.	0	0	0

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 24.2.

The results are significant and show that satisfaction level differs for selected mediums.

**Correlation test****Correlation Test between Frequency of Watching and Help in Understanding**

Independent Variable	Test	Dependent Variable										
		Corruption	Terrorism	Energy Crisis	Poverty	Unemployment	Price Hike	Economic Crisis	Moral Values	Health	Justice Law	Political Compromise
Frequency of Watching Geo News	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	0.397**	0.202*	0.356**	0.363**	0.257**	0.244**	0.225*	0.061	0.083	0.110	0.186*
		0.000	0.026	0.000	0.000	0.004	0.007	0.013	0.504	0.367	0.228	0.042

The correlation test shows that highly significant positive correlation exists between frequently of watching current affairs channels and respondents' perception about the level of help provided by media in understating social and political issues.

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