

## Fighting Wars through Radio Broadcasts

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### Abstract

The research paper dwells mainly about importance of Radio as a medium of mass communication, particularly used by different countries to safeguard their strategic and cultural interests in times of peace and war. The paper refers to instances when radio waves were used in fighting war of words by different countries across the globe. It makes a special mention of propaganda and counterpropaganda unleashed by India and Pakistan by using radio against each other since 1947.

**Keywords:** Radio broadcasts; Mass communication; Psychology; Radio; Mass media

### Introduction

Various nations across the globe have always used media as a tool to safeguard their strategic interests by promoting their ideologies, cultural or democratic values; policies and priorities, political ambitions and at the same time used media in propaganda and counter propaganda operations both in times of peace and war. Such an exercise has mostly been accomplished through official media under control of the Governments or funded by parties or regime in power. Whether in democratic, communist or theocratic nations or in countries ruled by Army or dictators, the official media has mostly been used to safeguard the strategic interests and security concerns of the establishment. The government controlled media while carrying forward three basic principles of educating, entertaining and informing the audience, has also been extensively used as a psychological warfare and a propaganda tool in combating insurgency and conflict situations. The medium has proved as a strong tool while fighting the war of words and boosting the morale of the security forces across the nations.

Since mass media does not only give news or entertainment but also provides information on different aspects of life and its problems, it has further been used for disseminating facts, transmitting knowledge on many subjects and helped national leaders in approaching the masses in times of distress, crisis and catastrophes. During the period when nations were plunged into crisis, mostly created by the enemy agents in the neighborhood, the media has played a very vital and pivotal role in safeguarding the unity and integrity of such affected nations.

### Radio's role in World War-II

Radio as a means of mass communication and the most affordable medium, has earned the distinction of being the most effective medium worldwide in guarding cultural and strategic concerns of the nations across the globe. The highest importance of Radio as a national medium for every country, including America, Germany, Japan and Britain was reinforced during World War II. Since there was no other well organized medium of mass communication, Radio was the only tool to have a liaison with the armed forces and public and at the same time used as a strong effective and strategic weapon to fight the wars [1]. The United States has predominantly used Radio in pre and post cold war era as well, as a strategic tool to keep an eye on the happenings in those countries where it felt American command was not acceptable or democratic values were at risk. Even after the breaking of the Soviet Union, the United States, through her scores of external service broadcasting units, used Radio as a medium to watch interests in Iraq,

Iran and Afghanistan where America and Americans have been facing hostile conditions. Some Radio stations set up in the vicinity of these nations and reportedly funded by United States, have been trying to make people aware of democratic values and their rights.

In India, it has been All India Radio (AIR), the largest public broadcaster, with a privilege to guard the strategic and cultural interests of the Union. Since Independence, India has always found hostile nations in her neighborhood, who, through their official media, have been playing with the regional and religious sentiments of the people, particularly those living in border areas. To thwart their designs, AIR has been a useful and effective medium to carry forward the battle against elements that have been inimical to secular and democratic institutions flourishing in India [2].

### Indo-Pak Radio Propaganda

At the time of India's Independence, the Congress government under Jawaharlal Nehru had three major goals: to achieve political integration, economic development and social modernization. Broadcasting was expected to play an important role in harnessing the task of political nation building. National integration and the development of a "national consciousness" were among the early objectives of All India Radio. The task of broadcasting was also to help in overcoming immediate crisis of political instability that followed Independence and to foster the long-term process of political modernization and nation building that were the dominant ideology of the newly formed State. These tasks continued to be the hallmark of All India Radio even in post-independence era. Its role as a national broadcaster during the wars with Pakistan and China in 1947, 1962, 1965 and 1971 has aptly been perfect in boosting the morale of security forces and at the same time keeping people abreast of the situation along the borders [3].

Even when India was engaged in pushing back Pakistani tribal raiders in 1947 and trying to restore peace in Jammu and Kashmir, Pakistan had intensified its propaganda campaign to spread rumors

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against the Government of India and people of Jammu and Kashmir. Such rumors and malicious anti-India propaganda were carried out by Pakistan through its various over and underground radio stations, some set up in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK). The situation persists till date as Radio Pakistan and Pakistan Television have been sparing good chunk of time on anti-India programmes.

Ever since the signing of the Instrument of Accession by Maharaja Hari Singh with the Indian Union on October 26, 1947, Pakistan has been resorting to malicious propaganda in a bid to project the accession of Jammu and Kashmir to India as 'invalid' and playing with the religious sentiments of the majority Muslim community of Jammu and Kashmir by trying to brainwash them that "their future was not safe with India and her Hindu rulers" [4]. This bogey from Pakistani side is continuing till date and it had created an alarming situation in 1990 when Pakistani propaganda against India was at its peak. There appears to be no shift in Pakistani policies and India has to face the similar situation on this front while countering Pakistani media in future as well.

Pakistan has been doing it in a bid to camouflage its territorial ambitions, as it wants to annex Jammu and Kashmir, for which that country has fought four wars with India. With the creation of Pakistan, the Pakistan Broadcasting Service has all these years harped on anti-India bashing and rousing Muslim sentiments through its numerous radio and television programmes. Even despite the Calcutta (now Kolkata) Pact of 1948 between two nations not to interfere in internal matters of each others, Pakistani media has been continuing to beam anti-India propaganda through its aerial waves. Pakistan, which has witnessed political uncertainty and a number of military rulers, is basically opposed to democratic and secular values, which are the hallmarks of the Union of India. The State-run media of that country has accordingly been criticizing Indian democratic set-up only to justify their way of governance under their military regimes [5].

It was in the backdrop of this fact that the then State administration of Jammu and Kashmir, with the active support of the Union of India, had to establish its own radio station-Radio Kashmir, as a strategic tool to counter Pakistani propaganda unleashed from across the border. Radio Kashmir in December 1947 basically started functioning as a State Department and was later taken over by the All India Radio (AIR). The two wings of Radio Kashmir--- at Srinagar (set-up in July 1948) and at Jammu (set up on December 1, 1947) are presently important constituents of the Prasar Bharati Broadcasting Corporation of India and continue to hold an important position in guarding the strategic interests of India [6].

Despite the growth of private radio and TV channels in India, more so after 1990 when India was engaged in proxy war in Jammu and Kashmir, Radio Kashmir has remained as the most trusted strategic institution for its efforts in nation-building and simultaneously countering the enemy propaganda. It has also been instrumental in helping authorities in maintaining peace and tranquility in the troubled State.

Since 1947 to 1989, Radio Pakistan and infamous Radio Trarkhal were beaming vicious propaganda against India and creating unrest within the minds of Kashmiris. While impact of Pakistani media was not so strong, it was, however, at peak during post-militancy era when Pakistan under "Operation Topac", set up more radio stations, mostly along Indo-Pak border to bombard air waves with anti-India propaganda. Radio Pakistan has presently about 31 stations which are functioning from different cities and towns of Pakistan Occupied

Kashmir and North Western Frontier. These Stations have daily been devoting about 15 percent time slot to religious programmes and anti-India propaganda and the percentage increases when Indo-Pak ties run into rough weather. In aggregate, Radio Pakistan has been broadcasting programmes for more than 300 hours daily in the Home Service and on the external front and even beams programmes in Hindi, Bangla, and Gujratai. All these languages are spoken in India and the Pakistani media has been trying to target Indian audience by stuffing their programmes with anti-India messages.

In addition to Jammu and Kashmir, the coverage area of the Pakistani radio stations targeted on Indian cities include New Delhi, Jaipur, Kanpur, Bikaner, Ambala, Saharanpur, Meerut, Aligarh, Farrukhabad and parts of Nepal. The Pakistani radio has been mostly choosing Muslim majority areas of India and broadcasts programmes in Urdu and English with News, talks, discussions, documentaries and interviews as their programme formats.

Radio Pakistan has 100 daily news bulletins which are loaded with news from Kashmir and India. Radio Pakistan also broadcasts news bulletins in languages like Kashmiri, Balti, Shina, Pahari and Urdu (Golden Jubilee Souvenir of Radio Kashmir: 56). Incidentally, all these languages are spoken in Jammu and Kashmir. It has further developed Mirpuri and Muzzafarabad channels to exclusively target Poonch, Rajouri and Doda districts of Jammu province where Gujjars and Paharis live in majority. Both these channels broadcast programmes in Gojri, Kashmiri, Pahari and Urdu and spit venom against India.

The so-called Azad Kashmir Radio Trarkhal/Taraarkheil which operates via Islamabad on 3975 KHz and via Rawalpindi on 4790 KHz has remained a strategic radio station for Pakistan for the last six decades. It is through this radio station that Pakistani authorities resorted to all cheap tactics in guiding militants during the proxy war and also at times when the country was engaged with wars of 1965 and 1971 with India. Similarly, Radio Pakistan has eight stations operating in its Punjab province and most of these stations have been found involved in beaming anti-India and anti-Punjabi propaganda. These stations are located at Islamabad, Multan, Bhawalapur and Faislaabad and two each at Lahore and Rawalpindi (Golden Jubilee Souvenir of Radio Kashmir: 61).

A number of Government and private owned FM stations also operate in these cities with high frequency. Similarly, the Stations in NWF at Peshawar, Abbottabad and Chitral have also been assigned the task to raise the religious sentiments of the people living in India. In the Pakistan's Northern Area, Gilgit and Skardu Radio Stations have been beaming anti-India propaganda aimed at trying to influence the minds of Muslims living in Kargil belt of Jammu and Kashmir.

## Impact of Pakistani Propaganda

The major impact of Pakistani radio Stations has been found in Uri, Rajouri and Poonch areas of Jammu and Kashmir, as these sectors are very close to the Line of Control (LoC) dividing J&K into two parts and people living in these districts mostly depend on radio due to social, cultural and geographical factors. The signal of AIR stations and Radio Kashmir in some areas is not so strong while as Pakistani Government owned stations located at Muzzafarabad and two at Mirpur in PoK, are beamed through high power transmitters with a penetration deep into Indian states. While Muzzafarabad station runs on 150 KWs with a medium wave frequency of 792 KHz, the two Mirpur Stations have a frequency of 936 KHz and operate with a transmitter power of 10 and 100 KWs respectively.

Since 1947, Radio Pakistan had been broadcasting anti-India programmes both in times of peace and war. Radio Pakistan has still been broadcasting such programmes like 'Kashmir Update' in Urdu language from all its stations daily for five minutes after regular intervals of time. It also broadcasts a variety of news bulletins in Pushto, Baluchi, Kashmiri, Balti, Shina and Brahvi languages which carry highly anti-India propaganda [7].

Similarly, private radio stations of Pakistan have been mostly set up near the International border and Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir. Although such radio stations have so far not openly resorted to anti-India propaganda, their establishment along the border and supported by high power transmitters could be a matter of concern for the Indian authorities in near future. This is so because programmes broadcast over these stations are presently in languages spoken in Jammu and Kashmir and could influence the people of this Muslim majority State during the time of crisis, when Pakistan could use such private radio stations also for anti-India propaganda.

Radio Buraq (operating from Sialkot) [8] is one such Pakistani private radio station which is clearly heard in Jammu city, its outskirts, besides Samba district and villages in RS Pura sector, bordering Pakistan. This Radio station of Pakistan, which broadcasts programmes in Urdu and Punjabi, runs round the clock while as there is no such Government owned or private radio station in Jammu and Kashmir which operates 24 hours.

Rose FM 90 [9] is another private radio station across the border, functioning in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK) and clearly heard in Poonch and Rajouri districts of Jammu and Kashmir. A unit of Rose Group, it stepped into media industry by setting up two FM Radio Stations conquering the sound waves over a 70 KM radius area of so-called 'Azad Kashmir' and Punjab. The company is licensed by the Pakistan Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) for operating two FM radio stations in Mirpur and Bhimber districts of PoK. The channel started working in July 2007 and is clearly heard and monitored on this side of the border in entire Haveli, Mandi, Mendhar and Surankote belt of Poonch and in Rajouri, Manjakote, Darhal, Kalakote, Budhal, Sunderbani, Nowshera and Thana Mandi towns of Rajouri district.

The Voice of Kashmir (VOK 105 FM) of Power Plus Private Ltd. is another private radio station, functioning in Dhirkot and Rawlakote area of Pakistan Occupied Kashmir. This Station is also heard in parts of Poonch and Rajouri with a thumping clarity. *Geo Kashmir* (96 MHz) is yet another private radio station that operates in Kotli area of Pakistan Occupied Kashmir and very close to Poonch and Rajouri towns. This Station on the other side of the LoC, has been broadcasting programmes in Gojri and Pahari languages which are equally spoken in twin districts of Poonch and Poonch and Rajouri. Also, the transmission of the first state-run FM-93 radio in so called 'Azad Kashmir' city of Mirpur was inaugurated on September 30, 2009. The FM station has a 192-foot high FM Radio mast and installed on the premises of the Mirpur Radio Station. Programmes of local, national and international interest are being aired through this Station which covers a vast area of PoK besides the parts of Jammu and Kashmir. While there are a number of private and state-run radio stations set-up in PoK, there are only two radio stations operational in Poonch and Bhaderwah with a limited manpower. Further, Nowshera and Rajouri stations of AIR have only remained as relaying stations. There is, as such a strong need to have a contingency plan to augment radio broadcasting in this hilly belt.

On monitoring Radio Pakistan, one finds that the media of

that country is in the habit of saying that Pakistan would not allow Kashmiri brethren to remain with India for a long time and Pakistan would continue to provide moral support to Kashmir's. The punch line of Pakistani radio broadcasts have often been that people of Kashmir are mentally and physically with us and need our support as they are very simple minded people and cannot fight like Punjabis and Afghans against the foreign rule. They have to be prepared for the revolt against India. Radio Pakistan has also been harping over anti-India propaganda by trying to malign the image of Indian Army and security forces. Under Operation Topac nefarious designs, Pakistani newspapers, Radio and television were/have been presenting news about Kashmir in such a twisted way as if Indian Army was committing grave excesses on Kashmiri youths and denying them religious freedom. The pictures of the injured in any normal road accident were being projected as victims of the Indian Army.

It is not only during the wars and unrests that Pakistani Radio had resorted to anti-India propaganda with a nefarious design to pollute the minds of the Indian youth, in fact, even during the times of peace, Pakistani Radio had been resorting to the same gimmicks with a twin purpose of keeping the Pakistani listeners ignorant of the developments in that nation and simultaneously spreading anti-India hatred among the people of India in general and Kashmiri Muslims in particular. The incidents of mysterious disappearance of holy relic and burning of shrine at Charar-e-Sharief are to name a few when Radio Pakistan stooped too low in its rabid anti-India propaganda.

During the Lok Sabha elections of 2004, Radio Pakistan, Radio Trarkhal and Radio Muzzafarabad in PoK had intensified anti-India propaganda programmes to the extent that people of Jammu and Kashmir were instigated to boycott the Lok Sabha polls. In fact since 1947, radio programmes broadcast over Pakistani radio stations were invariably anti-Indian and broadcast for hours together, whenever there was any political or democratic exercise taking place in Jammu and Kashmir, like the State Assembly or Lok Sabha elections. This was primarily being done to paint India as an 'undemocratic' country, and an 'oppressor' having 'forcibly' occupied Jammu and Kashmir. Further, by airing such anti-India propaganda programmes, most of the Pakistani military regimes were trying to falsely convince people back home that democratic exercise in India, particularly in J&K was a 'big fraud', while as military regime was a better option for them.

Acting as a bridge in establishing the communication channel between the infiltrators and their masters, the Radio Pakistan at a number of times had transmitted several "motivational messages" in a bid to guide the anti-national elements, who were pushed in from that country, particularly during the proxy war era, beginning from 1989. These messages as colloquially called '*Taranas*', were most often in Gojri, Pahari, Urdu and Punjabi languages spoken on either side of LoC and even in the Punjab province of Pakistan. Along with arms, there have been instances when infiltrators were caught with studio based high quality audio cassettes of the motivational content which they had to distribute in the frontier areas of the State of Jammu and Kashmir having the same ethnic and caste distribution as the areas of Pakistan Occupied Kashmir.

Under Operation Topac, Pakistan had also set up some underground radio stations. One such station was '*Sadai-Hurriyat*' (Voice of Freedom), operating from Muzzafarabad in PoK. The Station was addressing itself as the so-called "Voice of Independent Kashmir" or "Voice of Kashmir Freedom" and in early stages of militancy, its programmes were heard in Balakote, Mendhar, Rajdhani, Khari Karmara, Sabjian, Ajote, Loran and Mandi areas of twin border



districts. Through the broadcasts of this radio station, the Pakistan propaganda was constantly bombarding Kashmir's by telling them the same stuff that the "Muslims had no place in India which was inhabited by the wily kafirs".

Pakistan had infact fed Kashmir's and her own citizens with horrific stories about India and the alleged 'atrocities' committed in Kashmir. Not only have the Pakistani media, especially the Urdu press, evened school textbooks too have contributed handsomely in injecting anti-India poison into successive generations of Pakistanis. The Pakistani propaganda machine have concentrated on showing India as the 'oppressor' of the Kashmiri Muslims while it predictably ignores the subjugation of people in living in PoK. It also underlines the differences between the Hindus and the Muslims to justify the Pakistani belief that co-existence between the two communities was impossible.

During proxy war phase, there have been instances when Radio Pakistan also attempted to spread communal strife not only in Jammu and Kashmir, but also in the border areas of Punjab through one of its highly anti-India programme 'Punjabi Darbar'. In this programme, Radio Pakistan was trying to rouse the feelings of the Sikh community. The programme, broadcast from Lahore and Sialkot stations of Radio Pakistan, mostly covered Punjab and Haryana villages.

## India's Counter Offensive

No sovereign country in the world would like to remain mum to the malicious propaganda aimed against her from across the border. India had to counter the Pakistani propaganda and the job has mostly been performed by Radio Kashmir [10]. This has been one of the major reasons for continuing with the nomenclature of 'Radio Kashmir', even after the institutions merger with AIR in 1954. If Pakistan was broadcasting a highly motivational 'Zarb-e-Kaleem' against India and people of Jammu and Kashmir, Radio Kashmir was countering the same programme through 'Jawabi Hamla', which was produced in Srinagar studios of Radio Kashmir in late forties and early fifties [7]. The production job was mainly assigned to the highly acclaimed Kashmiri broadcasters and was effectively countering the venomous propaganda from Radio Pakistan by highlighting the rich cultural values of Kashmir's who believed in the philosophies of Sufis and Rishis. Radio Kashmir has over the years in fact adopted the same line of projecting idea of co-existence and tolerance through a variety of programmes.

The News Unit of Radio Kashmir has played a pivotal role in countering the Pakistani propaganda through a number of news bulletins broadcast from both Jammu and Srinagar stations. The news bulletins and commentaries in various local dialects and languages and even in some foreign languages like Push to used to be broadcast from Radio Kashmir Srinagar, primarily to counter Pakistani propaganda and to give a real picture to the world community of the happenings taking place in Kashmir. Through programmes like 'Zalim Khan', 'Nakkara', 'Wotul Bujhe' and 'A Nation Prepared', Radio Kashmir has played the strategic interests of the nation by negating the enemy propaganda, particularly during the times of 1965 and 1971 conflicts. In 1971 war, the News Services Division of AIR had to broadcast a number of programmes to counter malicious Pakistani propaganda. One such programme was 'Spotlight' which was based on the observations and interviews of Indian military experts.

Playing of patriotic songs over radio has always helped in raising the morale of the security forces while serving on borders, away from their homes. During the Indo-Pakistan wars of 1965 and 1971 and

Kargil conflict of 1999, a number of patriotic songs were broadcast over Radio Kashmir with this very purpose and also to counter Radio Pakistan which was equally playing such revolutionary songs. 'Ae Mere Wattan Ke Logo', sung by legendary Lata Mangeshkar was one such great Indian patriotic song, which was frequently played over Radio Kashmir. On a local front, the artists and singers of Radio Kashmir have equally played their role in counter-propaganda programmes. 'Pakistan Ke Foji Bhago, Yahya Khan Ke Foji Bhago... Tikka Khan Ke Foji Bhago' was one such all time hit song broadcast over Radio Kashmir, which had demoralized Pakistani soldiers.

After 1971 war, India's counter-propaganda through Radio Kashmir, even during peace times was, carried out through a famous programme 'Vaadi Ki Awaz' and was meant for the people living in Pakistan and PoK. This programme was devised in such a way that it never appeared to be a counter-propaganda programme. The programme carried an element of wit and humour, news content, critical analysis on the happenings in Pakistan and PoK and was meticulously supported by Hindi film songs and Urdu Ghazals. For years together until the outbreak of militancy in Kashmir, this programme continued to be rated as one of the most important and popular strategic programme of Radio Kashmir Srinagar [6].

A new counter-propaganda programme 'Sada-e-Jaras', (the sound of trinket) was devised and aired in 1993 t by Radio Kashmir, when militancy was at peak in Kashmir. Through this programme, Radio Kashmir narrated atrocities committed by militants on common people. The programme was simultaneously broadcast in the morning time at 7.05 am from both Radio Kashmir Srinagar and Jammu besides other AIR stations in Jammu and Kashmir.

Radio Kashmir has been mounting a number of counter-propaganda programmes based on the spirit of 'Kashmiryat' and side by side making public aware of their rights in a democratic set of government. The concept of 'Kashmiryat' needs to be continued if government wants to seriously counter Pakistani media propaganda which will even continue in future with a punch line to exploit religious sentiments of the people of Kashmir.

After 2002, there appeared to be a drastic shift in the Pakistani media policy. As militancy was shifted to the higher reaches of Jammu, more so after Kargil conflict of 1999, Radio Pakistan accordingly, began to launch a number of propaganda programmes to brainwash Gujjars, Bakerwals and Pahari speaking people living in Doda, Poonch and Rajouri districts. In bulletins over Pakistan Television and Radio Pakistan, references to Doda, Poonch, Rajouri and other parts of Jammu region had become conspicuous. Radio Kashmir Jammu countered the malicious propaganda through programmes like 'Haqeeqat Yeh Hai', 'Sanjhi Dharti' and 'Waqt Ki Baat'. Through these programmes in Urdu and Gojri, real facts and figures were placed before the listeners so that they did not give ear to rumours spread by Radio Pakistan.

The counter-propaganda programmes broadcast over Radio Kashmir are equally being monitored by Pakistani authorities on the other side of the border besides Indian security and intelligence agencies who are guarding the strategic interest of the nation. The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) has also been keenly watching and regulating media strategy in Jammu and Kashmir in the light of intensified Pakistani propaganda. In order to counter the Pakistani media propaganda, a number of high power and low power transmitters were either commissioned or strengthened in the State during the past seven years. During the post-militancy era, India's Union Ministry of Home Affairs had also directed many a time to the authorities of

AIR New Delhi to formulate a strategy so that anti-India propaganda propagated by 'Radio Punjabi Darbar', a joint venture of Pak ISI and Punjab militants, was effectively countered.

Propaganda programmes apart, Radio Kashmir has also broadcast a number of well-organized programmes wherein it has been appealing militants to shun the path of militancy and join the mainstream. Radio Kashmir has also earned the importance of having equally served in times of peace in different roles assigned to it. As a promoter of strengthening cultural and democratic institutions in the State and the country as a whole, it has been providing an exclusive Parliament and election coverage since its inception. Even as Radio Kashmir has vigorously pursued its objective of countering Pakistani media, the station has at the same time earned a unique distinction in trying to promote the ties between the two neighboring nations who have otherwise fought four wars on Kashmir.

## Conclusion

While malicious and subversive propaganda across the world is a continuous process, the State owned media institutions like Radio Kashmir, which holds an important cultural and strategic position for its vast reach and acceptability since 1947, have to regularly broadcast a series of counter-propaganda programmes in different languages spoken in respective regions and areas. This is more important during the times of conflicts when nations try to weaken opponents using media as a psychological weapon. Even on the domestic front, the importance of Radio broadcasts is in fact felt more in an era when canards are spread against the government and its interests are

jeopardized by a section of media. In the absence of a proper national media policy, certain private electronic channels also surface to cause embarrassment for the Government. They too promote and glorify subversive and militant acts; a notion that violence or terrorism is sellable and newsworthy and invites high readership, without caring for ramifications. On the other hand, it has only been State owned media institutions across the globe who have courageously denounced militants' acts and strengthened the principles of peace and tranquility, communal amity and universal brotherhood.

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