CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE AND THE PRINT MEDIA: A CASE STUDY OF LINGUISTIC CONSTRUCTION OF MORAL PANIC

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ABSTRACT

Research on crime has been of great importance to researches. Recent days have witnessed monumental increase in the news of child sex abuse in the world in general and in Pakistan in particular. This phenomenon has aroused concern on an epic scale in the society and generated moral panic. Moral panic was first coined by Cohen (1972) in England and he gave its first model. Cohen provided a processual model and what role mass media and social control actors play in constituting moral panic. Erich Goode and Nachman Ben Yehuda structured Attributional model in 1990 and it placed more emphasis on definition than cultural processes. The present paper is a case study and aims at looking at linguistic devices which constitute moral panic in crime news stories about child sexual abuse. The data consist of crime news about Zainab rape and murder case. Both model of Cohen and Goode & Bin Yehuda are employed to explore the linguistic devices. The case study meets the criteria laid down in both models and the findings show that moral panic was constructed in these news.

Keywords: Media, moral panic, child sexual abuse, linguistic

Introduction

Every year, half of the children in the whole world face different kind of violence (Hillis, et.al., 2016) whereas, the delinquent's violence and survivors, trauma, along with its ramifications are usually concealed from the public (Mercy et. al., 2017). Children have been subject to different kinds of abuse, however, Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) is one form of violence against children which is hidden from the public view but CSA is growing as a threat to an alarming extent in every civilized society (Johnston, 2014). Because of growing cruelty and inhumane torture, times are growing uncertain and critical and it becomes unconceivable that some fathers and near ones are discovered to abuse their children, the teachers harass their students, women batter boys and employers are found to hire the services of uneducated, unskilled minor children. Multiple forms of child abuse like family pressure, negligence of parents, poverty, political influence of offenders, and social pressure are not reported due to unknown and unspecified reasons (Taylor & Steward 2011; & Violato, 2001). South Asia comprises 23% population of world and is believed to be the most impoverished region of the world. Child sexual abuse, child trafficking, child labor and Child prostitution are common problems children face in South Asian countries like Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Pakistan (Venkateswarlu, 2003). India and Pakistan were colonized states and they got freedom from British yet they are still under social influence of British culture Ali, Gulzar and Anwar (2018). Children face different forms of violence. It includes physical emotional, sexual and psychological abuse. The example of physical abuse is when an adult directs physical anger towards a child (Hosin, 2007).

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Child sexual abuse is a form of violence in which an older adolescent or an adult stimulates a child sexually (Gorey & Lestie, 1997). CSA has different forms such as to force a child to involve in sexual activities, show pornographic material to a child, sexual intercourse, attempted sexual intercourse with a child, view of child's genitalia with or without touching it or use a child for pornography or prostitution (Hosim, 2007; Krug et. al., 2002).

Pakistan is also facing an upward surge in CSA. 50 Police officials were found involved in CSA in 2011 and 10 of them used their official residences to perpetrate their crimes. Likewise, 155 officials indulged in CSA in 2012 and 13 cases were perpetrated in police stations and five children were sexually abused in lockups in 2013 (Khoso & Yew, 2015). Physical and mental illness, depression, unemployment, trouble in socialization and poor socialization are contributory factors in the perpetration of sexual offences against children. Various taboos such as the proclaimed curative powers of virgins are usually reasons believed or stated by the perpetrators for the CSA (Kisanga et. al., 2010; Smith et.al., 2010; Meursine et.al., 1995).

Sahil, a private organization working in Pakistan for the rights of children regularly issues biannual report about CSA in Pakistan. Its reports show an increasing trend in CSA and this indicates that the state is doing nothing to defend children from being sexually abused. In January 2018, a minor female child's sexual abuse case was reported in Kasur, a Pakistani town. This case is known as Zainab Case. It shook the society, media and the state as well. It received huge amount of attention of print and electronic media, society stood up for the protection of children and the state also woke up from sound slumber. The state institutions moved heaven and earth to find the culprit and bring him to justice and tabled a bill in the assembly known as Zainab Alert. This incident badly jolted the social fabric and became a source of potential moral panic. The present papers endeavor to investigate the linguistic content of the news stories about Zainab Case published in English print media and explore the linguistic choices which helped us ascertain if this particular case created moral panic or not.

Moral Panic Perspective

We shall see that moral panic is considered a controversial term. However, it can be described as a disproportional reaction of society to a certain condition, person, and group and is thought to be a threat to social values (Murji, 2006: 250-1). It can be observed through the reaction of media, social institutes, politicians, and social commentators and ultimately through the reaction of masses.it is an odd blend of simplification and disproportion and disproportionate reaction is conceivably an elementary point of moral panic (Critcher, 2006:2). It can also occur in relation to health, medicine and crime.

There is no doubt that CSA has received a phenomenal attention recently both in print and electronic media. But the question is if the given attention of the media is justified or unjustified and distorted. The concern produced by media is justified or it may be described as reflecting what has been called moral panic? In 1970, the British Media started announcing messages which indicated an alarming increase in crime rates. These crimes entail the establishment of special police units to deal with these problems and the concern helped coin the term moral panic (Young, 2009). The term became popular after the publication of Cohen's book Folk Devils and Moral Panic 1972). This book reflects that Cohen was influenced by labeling

theory (Backer, 1963). This theory states deviance is less about people's behavior and much more about what society thinks and labels normal and deviant. The youth culture which gained popularity in post war period sought much attention in his initial work.

To understand the thesis Cohen outlined, it seems essential to define in detail moral panic and folk devils.

Definitions

Cohen (1972, 2002) defines moral panic: 1) a condition episode, person or group of persons emerges to become defined as a threat to societal interests and values.

2) Mass Media present it in a stylized and stereotypical manner;

3) The moral barricades are manned by editors, bishops, politicians and other re-thinking people;

4) Diagnoses and solutions are pronounced by socially accredited experts;

5) Ways of coping are generated or resorted to;

6) The condition deteriorates, submerges and disappears.

At time, the phenomenon of moral panic becomes quite novel and at another time; it seems that it has been present for a long time but suddenly comes into spot light. The panic, sometimes, passes over and is forgotten except in collective memory. It leaves serious and ever lasting effects and might prompt changes in legal and social policy

Jenkins (1994:4) states that moral panic is an incident that causes widespread social fear which comes out putatively out of nowhere and rears in space for a short time or months and then disappears to nothing. Furendi (1994) writes moral panic is a phenomenon that surfaces in newspaper headlines which consistently warns of some new danger which appears a lurching threat to our health, happiness and social values. Besides it, Furendi (2005) depicts moral panic as a psychological process preparatory to the politics of fear, law and order agendas, bloodletting, with hunts and other types of oppression. Put simply, moral panic is a process where a real or presumed social problem comes into limelight or manufactured. This case may be viewed as a threat to morals, values and traditions. The media (print, electronic and social) stereotype it possibly amplifies it and in the process creates folk devils (Rohloff, 2011: 69).

Folk devils grow as the "other" and that the rest of society feels to be protected from (Rohloff, 2011:69). Folk devils were people diagnosed as Mods and Rockers and were beheld as a threat to the social order. Moral panic cannot be instituted unless there is a degree of concern and fear over an imagined or real threat. There appears a feeling that governmental institutions are either unable or unwilling to palliate the problem (Rohloff, 2011:71).

Moral panic

Several questions are required to be addressed while applying the concept of moral panic to an issue. How does a panic befall and result, what are the indices and who is involved? Cohen

observed the responses of five sections of society: the public, law enforcement agencies, the press, action group, law makers and politicians (Goode and Ben Yehuda, 2009:29). Traditional factors like the creation of folk devils and the development of destruction of mentality characterize moral panic. The folk devil is aberrant; someone who is part of the violence and whose actions intend to harm society, Measures should be adopted to counteract their actions in order to return them to normalcy. Drama of moral panic surfaces in the progression of disaster mentality. It augurs impending doom, over emphasized reaction, institutionalization of threat, gossips, false harms and mass illusions. The notion of moral panic is based on disproportionality in the amount of public concern and fear on the behavior itself, the problem it advances or the conditions it generates. Disproportionality employs empirical information, numbers or figures are many times overstated. In a nut shell, moral panics erupt suddenly and subside and disappear almost as quickly. It is volatile in nature. Folk devils are poor, young and hapless and are the scapegoats in the hands of life in an inconsistent world. They are considered enemies of society because of being dire social problem and therefore qualify for public hostility and punishment (Burns and Crawford, 1999).

The foremost basis for panic is real or unreal occurrences used to arouse moral outrage and propagate action (Meade, 2000) as cited by Goode & Ben-Yehuda, 2009). The conception that this happening has become common has been believed to generate calls for action for the masses (Goode & Ben-Yehuda, 1999). Many times various stories sharing same themes become connected and indicate a growing threat. These stories have energy and fascination, sharing border with amusement. Police chase the offender and the media thrive on the dispute produced by the event and the public eagerly follow the abuse and shock. The deviant event is often aroused and sometimes reconstructed.

Moral panics occur in a society not in a vacuum. They may appear in a society which experiences tension because of moral and cultural regulation. If people find these changes disturbing, there is a greater leaning towards moral panic. When moral panic arises, a good amount of its voice is found in media (Cohen, 1972; Goode & Ben-Yehuda, 1999). The proposal of legislation or enactment of legislation is an indicator that a moral panic has surfaced (Goode & Ben-Yehuda, 1999. Academic examples of moral panic represent the media and authorities, inflated reactions to or collective mistaken in perceiving the behavior of a specific group or cultural identity. The public feeds on a stylized and magnified depiction of a new enemy while the media pundits, officials, politicians and administrative authorities champion traditional morality (Linnemann, 2010). In the meantime, expert jump into the fray, diagnose the evil, offer solutions calm fears and soothe public sentiment.

The poor are particularly susceptible and vulnerable by this problem. Young (2007:42) wrote: "it cannot be an accident that the stereotype of the underclass with its idleness, dependency, hedonism and institutionalized irresponsibility with its drug use, teenage pregnancy and fickleness represents all the traits which respectable citizens suppress in order to maintain their lifestyle."

Cohen 's Model of Folk Devils and Moral Panic

Stanley Cohn gave the theory of moral panic in 1972. Cohen characterized a fight of two youth groups in 1960s Britain. Cohen employed labeling theory of deviance. According to it the same deviant behavior will be differently treated and it will be influenced by time and place. So, the question arises who decides when to apply the deviant theory. The process of labeling produces consequences. A person learns to identify who they are on the basis of their interaction with others, and most importantly with significant others.

An individual whose behavior is termed deviant may start to match to this label in a style that substantiates this label. Similarly, this labeling process overstates the deviance. If this theory is deemed correct the Mods and Rockers, two opposing groups as reported in the media should be identified as opposing groups. Cohen discovered that there was a visible pattern in the way the society responded to the Mods and Rockers. He wrote, "societies appear to be subjected every now and then to periods of moral panic" (Cohen, 2002:1). He, in this way, provided a singular contribution: an account of the key agents in moral panic and formed a method of comprehensive trajectory. It can be dubbed a "processual model of moral panic" Critcher, 2003).

Cohen identified four sets of agents which are significant to the development of moral panic. According to Cohen (1972), one of these agents is to understand the role which media play in creating folk devils and moral panic because media produce images of deviance and deviant. Three processes contribute to produce deviance and deviant. First is the exaggeration of who did or said what besides adding distortion. Second, the results of failing to act are anticipated, and finally symbolization. The words Mods and Rockers signify threat. In this process, media install Mods and Rockers as folk devils. Media focus on events and people who disrupt social order. The journalists use inferential structures to interpret such events, who commits deviant behavior and why it happens so.

The second group comprises "moral entrepreneurs". They are people or groups of people interested to rid the society of threatening behavior. Cohen is interested in their motivation and tactics (Critcher, 2003). Those wielding institutional power constitute the third group i.e. "Social Control Culture." This group consists of police, courts and politicians. This group will diffuse concern from the local to international levels because they are easy to the proof of widespread deviance. "Public opinion" is the fourth agent. Cohen employed individual and group discussions to explore how public accepts and suspects images of deviants produced by media. The existing complexity among these four groups prompted Cohen to define the problem and offer remedies.

Moral panic results in usually a change in law or its promulgation. In the wake of scuffles extended by media between the Mods and Rockers, a drug law was toned up and another was legislated as a direct response. Panic normally occurs in a part to reaffirm moral values of a society. Moral panics, suggests Cohen, are endemic because society will carry on producing deviants which it condemns (Cohen, 2002).

Cohen showed how media constructed deviance, hooliganism of Mods and Rockers which produced moral panic in 1960 (Cohen, 1980). Mods and Rockers were depicted as ungrateful youth belonging to a well off social class. They exhibited violent and destructive behavior (Cohen, 1980). Resultantly, social control agents hurried to respond to these images. Police, for instance, identified problem youth by their clothing and hairstyle and proceeded to

arrest these deviant youth. Cohen exhibited how media constructed and perpetuated deviance and what measures the social control groups took to respond to these developments. This kind of people are believed to be a threat to the order and wellbeing of society because they have violated the agreed upon norms on which the general good of society rests. Cohen (1972) asked a very important question as who deemed this behavior deviant and whose interests it served. "Cohen emphasizes that moral panics are constructed and produced by particular interest groups. According to Cohen Media are particularly important carrier and producer of panics.

Moreover, Cohen recognizes seven groups of social identity to which the articles of moral panic are related.

1: working class, young, violent mates

2: Bullying and shootouts, school violence

3: wrong people use wrong drugs at wrong place

4: pedophile registers, satanic rituals, child abuse

5: Single mothers, welfare cheats

6: Refuges and asylum seekers.

Cohen also answers a pertinent question as why some news generates moral panic and some does not. There are, according to Cohen (2002), three components which construct moral panic. A suitable enemy and a suitable victim are the first two components which originate moral panic. Third component is the possibility that this incident may happen again. Cohen (2002) claims that only extreme kinds of occurrences can generate moral panics and they are irregular and disproportional and such happenings may arise time and again. Pludderman et. al. (2007) states that there are five stages of moral panics. They read as under:

1: Someone or something defined as a danger to interests and values.

2: The media easily recognize and depict this danger.

3: public concern is rapidly built up.

4: Social control groups (police, courts, politicians) respond to it quickly.

5: Being erratic in nature, it results in social/ legal change.

In the following section the second model employed to explore the linguistic devices used to create moral panic will be discussed.

Goode and Ben-Yehuda's Attributional Model

Erich Goode and Nachman Ben-Yehuda expanded Cohen's theory by publishing Moral panic: *The Social Construction of Deviance* in 1994, and provided indicators of moral panic. Theirs was rather a different model than Cohen's of the 1960s. Their model deals with the

concerned adjoining definition of a social problem. While reviewing theoretical and empirical studies in the constructionist definition, they identified five criteria which they believe should be present for moral panic to happen.

Goode and Ben-Yehuda are said to delineate the second theory of moral panic as the "elite-engineered model" (Hunt, 1997). This second theory is said to be developed more by Stuart Hall and Colleagues in policing the crisis: *Mugging, the State and Law and Order (1978)*. Their model was coined to fill the lacuna in the term Cohen used. Cohen insinuated that the media constructed the news and images which lent the cognitive basis for the panic (Hunt, 1997: 634).

By elite-engineered model, Goode and Ben-Yehuda means that the ruling elite classes methodically and knowingly create a moral panic about a problem which is not certainly harmful to social values as a whole. They endeavor to deflect public's attention from more serious issues. Then, they pointed out a third part of their model. They term it a grass root model. This theory reads that media and politicians cannot create concern and fear which is initially non-existent and moral panic must be based on some real public issue: this is a bottom up theoretical approach to moral panic.

Cohen's model is mainly founded on symbolic interaction and labeling theory related to deviant behavior. In a broader sense, the notion refers to the constitution of a situation in which overblown fear is created about topics that carry a moral component. The panic has to manufacture, focus on, and maintain powerfully impelling images of folk devils that can be a cause of moral fears. Such exceptionally exaggerated and imaginary fears focus on gang activities, illicit drugs, youth, prostitution and pornography. The original model appears to postulate a monolithic culture. So the question arises what happens to moral panics in multicultural societies where morality itself is incessantly negotiated, mediated and contested.

A good amount of research has focused on media as a potential source of creating and spreading fear and moral panics and media are a significant tool of sustaining cultures of fear. Though flight and fright responses characterize moral panic, it is a merely a part and it has nothing to do with physical panic reactions. Instead, it is speeches, debates, preaching, law enforcement preferences agenda setting and legislation which denotes moral panics. The focus is on moral issues. The moral panic theory is at the heart of cultural and economic change and the question is to what extent people's reaction is responsible to bring about this change. It can be claimed that moral panic is an effort for moral dominance over explanation of the legitimacy of predominant material interests and social arrangements.

Goode and Ben-Yehuda have provided a list of indicators to refine the moral panic theory. These indicators may help conclude if a moral panic has occurred. The first indicator is a fair and genuine level of concern caused by certain behavior. Hostility is the second constituent of moral panics. It is linked to the category of people responsible for the behavior. Cohen defines these individuals in his seminal work as evils and folk devils. Third, public develops a consensus as this particular behavior is a threat to the moral structure of society. Disproportionality is another constituent of moral panic and this anticipated threat should be removed. Volatility is the

fifth and last ingredient. It means that moral panic must break out suddenly and will diminish just as speedily.

With the passage of time Mods and Rocker went oblivious and new folk devils surfaced to succeed them. The term "folk devils" is more likely to be associated with vulnerable figures such as single mother, people with AIDS and the debatable incidents such as child abuse (Child sexual abuse) than to antisocial elements such as Mods and Rockers. The most important is the remark that the most processes by which moral panics and folk devils are generated do not date (Hunt, 1997:633).

A way to understand the social construction of the child sexual abuse scare and moral panic conceptual framework is applied in this article to construct moral panic.

CSA and the Media

Media are a chief source of public knowledge about social issues and deviance including CSA. Media performs three functions: (i) Set agenda, (ii) transmit the image, (iii) and break silence. Based on public unanimity and opinion, it is media which decide what is deviant. A claim is put forth in the light of transmitted images. It is this claim making which gives rise to moral panic. Moral panics about CSA have been witnessed over the decades. These moral panics consist of offender and ideal victims (Christie, 1986).

Research Design

Over the years, content analysis has been a fast growing message centered methodology (Neuendorf, 2002). Entman, (1989) originally introduced this method to study propaganda. It is described as a technique to maintain objectivity, generality and precision and what is being said on a given time and place (Lasswell, Lerner & pool, 1952:34). Ali et al., (2019) and Mcnamara (2005) states that content analysis involves an examination of numerous variables and the basic units of content analysis are the messages expressed in the form of words, phrases and sentences. According to Nelson et.al., (1997) there are three steps for content analysis: i) selection of media forms, 2) selection of dates/issues 3) sampling of associated content within those media. To ensure objectivity and reliability, sampling should be done in an objective way (Ali et al., 2020). According to Mcnamra (2005) other key elements such as adjectives, both negative and positive are commonly studied. These key words provide a strong perception of a writer/speaker's attitude; usually a message conveyed by an expert outweighs that of non-expert.

A good deal of research shows that media play a paramount role in creating awareness, perception and consumer awareness (Mcnamra, 2005). There is a plenty of information in the media that Kasur (town in Punjab, Pakistan) is becoming a hub of CSA. This leads to select media base geographic location: Kasur District. Having chosen locality, news, being published in English main stream print media were selected for content analysis. The Dawn, the News, The Pakistan today, The Express Tribune, The Nation are main stream English newspapers and they enjoy a vast readership. News related to a particular Zainab case published in these papers were selected and retrieved online.

Research Objectives and aims

Research objectives are actually helpful to make the directions of the research Ali et al., (2020). The purpose of this study is to examine CSA from a moral panic perspective and measure all indicators described by both Cohen and Goode and Ben-Yehuda. The primary focus of this study is to determine when this issue peaked and how it was linguistically framed. Moreover, two research questions will address issue related to moral panic caused by CSA. The research questions are important as they aim to address the problems of agents and concepts explained by Cohen and Goode and Bin-Yehuda in their frameworks to construct moral panic.

Hostility increases the impact of folk devil and it presents a clear divide between the "US" and "them." This binary division is stereotyping: "the way the enemy is presented will contribute to the subsequent demonization of the enemy" (Goode and Bin-Yehuda, 2009:38). By stereotyping we mean the presentation of folk devil by age, presumed socio-economic status, physical appearance etc. i.e. profile. This can also be measured what media say of CSA (Both offender and victim) and what linguistic items are employed to describe these people labeling is a process of hostility, the names media attach to perpetrators and victims and ignite anger in the heart of population. Hostile behavior is encouraged (Goode & Bin-Yehuda, 2009:38).

Moral panic rests on the degree of disproportionality. Goode & Bin-Yehuda describes, "our knowledge of the material world is never definite never absolutely certain and we are only permitted degrees of confidence, but for some issues that may be enough (2009:41). This is why the following research questions are included:

1.What types of words are used in the English newspapers to describe offender and victim?

2.What are the words and steps used in papers which represent the indicators of moral panic?

The aim of the study is to utilize content analysis as a research method to investigate how the CSA issue was framed in the newspapers and to point out whether the problem per se was an actual threat or reflect moral panic.

Content analysis is an unobtrusive technique, in that the researcher cannot influence or interfere with the phenomenon under study. Berelson (1952) states that content analysis is a research technique that analyzes data objectively, systematically and quantitavily.

The death of Zainab

Zainab, a 6-year-old minor girl went missing on 4th January 2018. She went to learn her lesson of the Holy Quran in the neighborhood and did not return. Her dead body was discovered on 9th January from a heap of rubbish. The incident was reported in the newspapers as the most brutal occurrence in the town. The news of her abduction and later of death spread not only in the town Kasur and its neighborhoods but also in the whole country and beyond the geographic boundaries like fire. The incident was massively reported in the mass media. News of her abduction, rape and death was covered by print and electronic main stream media. It ignited a fire of rage and anger in the length and breadth of the country. People took to the streets and protests erupted in the country, demanding the arrest of the offender and bringing him to justice. She was buried on 10th January 2018. The offender was arrested, trialed and sentence to death.

Analysis

This section will conduct content analysis of data to determine whether the concept of moral panic as framed by both models is met or not. Cohen (1972) states that such a problem has been in society for a long time. However, it surfaces suddenly due to unusual media coverage.

Example 1

*KASUR is once again the scene of a depraved crime against a child.*The Dawn: 12-01-2018

Linguistic item adverb of frequency *once again* amplifies the gravity of crime in the area. It suggests this is not the first such case in Kasur. Such cases have already been reported. They could not attract such media coverage as this case has done. While discussing moral panic, Rohloff (2008: 9) points out media amplifies the occurrence and generates moral panic.

 Example 2: *Rape and murder dominate land of Bulleh Shah. In the year between the gang rape of a Christian woman and the murder of seven-year-old Zainab, there have been at least 12 cases of sexual assault in the city T*he Express Tribune (14-01-   2018)

In the above example the paper reports Kasur the land of a sufi saint Bulleh Shah who is considered a symbol of righteousness and piety. His land is being defiled by such obnoxious and brutal activities like rape and murder. Media target the religious sentiments to arouse feeling of disgust in the masses and amplify the gravity of the situation. Besides it, there is a deliberate reference of a rape of *Christian woman*, again to stir religious emotions of minorities, and reference to *12 sexual assault cases.* Adjectival phrase *12 sexual assault* are used as a pre-modifier to modify noun *cases*, which means such cases have been perpetrated in past and the police did not take effective measures to curb this crime. This supports Rohloff's (2008: 71) opinion that there is a feeling that government agencies are either unwilling or unable to take action to mitigate the problem.

Cohen (1973) while defining moral panic (MP) observes that such occurrences create fear and concern in the people and extract prompt responses from public, law enforcement agencies, social control actors and action groups (legislators and politicians).

Example 3: *Parents are now scared for the safety and wellbeing of their sons and daughters.* Express Tribune: 14-01-2018

Example4: *Law Minister Rana Sanaullah, home secretary, IGP, Additional IGs of Special Branch and Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) met in the Civil Secretariat to look into the matter.* The Dawn: 11-01- 2018

Noun phrases which denote law makers, law enforcers have been used to respond and address the aggravated situation in Kasur.

Cohen (1980) also gives some other measures which suggest that moral panic exists. For example, particular news arouses moral shock and generates prompt action. Society is subject to such crime now and then. Disproportionality, bursting of such heinous crime suddenly and their disappearing as quickly, adopting measures to restore normalcy are other features of moral panic.

See example 2, 3 and 4. We see example 2 reads such 12 cases have taken place in past but they could not earn the disproportionality as Zainab case has acquired. In example 3, verb phrase *scared* express parents' fear and concern for the wellbeing and safety of their children. Such incidents claim disproportional responses too. See example 4 and 5, how the law enforcement hierarchy huddled together to find the culprit so that the fiery situation may be quieted and normalcy be restored. The numeral adjectives 5000 and 67 are meant to appease the people that appropriate measure are being taken in the concerned quarters to palliate the situation.

Example 5: *Police have so far interrogated 5,000 suspects and got conducted medical test of 67 of them.* The Dawn: 11-01- 2018

Cohen (1973) points out that the concerned institutions seek the assistance of experts to soothe and calm the people.

Example 6: *It was declared that sociologists and psychologists would be engaged to dig out reasons for such heinous crime.* The Dawn: 11-01- 2018

The noun phrases *sociologists and psychologists* refer to experts, and the law minister engaged Dr Zakria Zakir, Punjab University's former Dean of Social Sciences (now provisional VC), to discuss the reasons of sexual assaults on minor girls and boys.

Cohen's (1972) framework includes role of media in creation of folk devils and producing images of deviance and deviant. They also exaggerate the happening of crime and accuse the law enforcement agencies of not fulfilling their duties properly. Media also point out that such criminals are a lurching threat to the fabric of society and societal norms, see example 2. Besides Zainab case, a number of other cases have been reported in   Kasur   district   in general and the town in particular. This reflects the nature of the problem as endemic. According to Cohen (2002) such crimes are endemic. They occur in a particular town, gain notoriety suddenly and disappear as quickly.

Example 7: *Kasur incident shocks government, but not for first time.* The Dawn: 11 Jan 2018

This case was not the first one in the locality. Countless such cases have already been reported in media. However, it sparked a stupendously large amount of anger among the people.

Disproportional reaction of individuals, people, state institutions and media to a certain condition leads to moral panic (Murji, 2006: 1). It can be observed through the public reaction. It is a strange mixture of disproportion and simplification and disproportionately reaction is one of elementary points of moral panic (Critcher, 2006: 2). See the following example 8:

While traders observed a complete shutter-down strike. Lawyers boycotted court proceedings and took out a rally, protesting against the alleged police inaction over the child's rape and murder. The Pakistan Today: 11-01-2018

This is a classic example of disproportion reaction to the incident. Noun phrases *traders, lawyers, rally, rape and murder* and verb phrases *observed, took out, boycotted* are dominant linguistic choices to construct reaction to the occurrence. Pre-modifier *alleged* is another linguistic device which makes the writer's claim impersonal. Almost, all social sectors went on

strike and demonstrated their anger. It seemed this occurrence had badly shaken the very canvas of the society. Demonstrations were held in Karachi, Lahore and other towns for justice for Zainab.The point of debate is this is not the only case of its nature. Example 2 shows that almost a dozen children have been subjected to sexual abuse, apart from the cases which have been reported along with Zainab Case in Kasur and other towns. The point is, it is media that created hype about it and media covered these protests and rallies extensively and even trail of Zainab Case. Such media attention no case ever attracted in the past.

Moral panics have been taking place since decades. They involve an ideal offender and an ideal victim (Christie, 1986).

Example 9: *6-year-old Zainab's autopsy suggests child endured rape, captivity before murder.*

The Dawn Jan 11, 2018

Adjective, the linguistic device, *6-year-old* meet the standard of creating moral panic as Christie (1986) states that there should be an ideal victim. An ideal victim is helpless and cannot defend itself .The post mortem report suggested that she was tortured, her body was badly bruised and the hyoid bone was fractured. The Medical Legal Officer confirmed that the child had been sodomized. Similarly Example 10 reads *24-year-old Imran abducted Zainab, raped her and killed her*. The Express Tribune: 14-01-2018

Here again Christie's (1986) concept of ideal offender is realized by the *term 24-year-old*. Ideal offender is powerful and strong one who can easily dominate the ideal victim and this concept may easily disturb the people emotionally. The offender who is a paediphile is a constant danger to social norms and values and generates a constant concern among the people (Nelson et al.,, 1997). See example 3 which shows it is a social norm and traditions that parents provide safety to their children. But this example expresses their concern as they failed in discharging their social duty.

This incident was politically exploited. Religious and opposition parties jumped into the fray and took the provincial government to task for the grave negligence.

The leader of the opposition in the NA Khursheed Shah demanded provincial law minister Rana Sanaullah and CM Shahbaz Sharif tender their resignation for failing to provide protection to citizens. The opposition parties were incessantly blaming the provincial government for not full filling their responsibility.

Example 11: *This is not the first time such an incident has occurred in Kasur, but the government has failed to put a stop to these crimes.*   The Dawn 11 Jan 2018

PPP, PTI. MQM and PML (F) also tabled a resolution in the Sindh Assembly Condemning Zainab's death. Religious cum political party Pakistan Awami Tehreek chief led the funeral prayer of the Child and condemned the government for its failure to protect the nation's children.

The government in power was also guilty because when the mobs were pretesting and calling for the arrest of the culprit, a police constable fired into the crowd of protestors outside

the DC's office. The opposition parties tried to give this firing political hue that the government wanted to repeat the model town tragedy.

Another point emerged after this incident. The investigation into the rape-cum-murder case indicated that it was not the first case of its kind and that eight such cases had been reported to police since 2015 and it appeared that a serial killer was behind all these eight cases.

Example 12: *All these cases were reported in the jurisdiction of three police stations - A division, B Division and Sadar. The Dawn 12, 2018.*

Hostility is another theme that emerged in the wake of Zainab's case. Though the offender is not known and later when he was arrested, he was a 24-year-old young man of the same locality, the hostility was running high between the public and the government. Protests erupted not only in Kasur but in the whole country. People were chanting slogans against the police and government. The protestors were determined not to relent until the perpetrator was arrested and brought to justice. Justice for Zainab became the top trend on social media. A couple of people died in the clash between the protestors and the police. The protests were led by the leaders of Pakistan Awami Tahreek and Tahreek Labbaik Ya Rasool Allah. Members of civil society also joined hand, held protests and vigils for the victim. Students of the University of the Punjab and other institutions also staged protests and called for appropriate action against the culprit. Different newspapers reported the existing hostility.

Example 13: *Two die in Kasur riots over girl's rape, murder.* The Nation Jan 2018

The more incendiary this incident was growing, the more such cases were being reported in the media. A case was reported from Pattoki, Ganda Singh Wala, Mardan, Karachi and Sialkot. These cases were proving fuel to fire.

Goode and Bin-Yehuda (2009) also gave a revised framework of moral panic which has its own agents to construct moral panic. They will be used to asses if the Zainab Case constructs moral panic.

Indices of Moral panic

Concern

We witness that media gave the incident phenomenally high attention. They covered the protests and later on the whole judicial proceedings regarding this case. The English newspapers (The Dawn, The News, The Nation, The Express Tribune etc.) published news stories, columns statements of social actors and wrote editorials not only to take administrative and political measure to stop such incidents but also educate the minors and also take social and psychological measures. See example 3, 4, 6 and

Example 14: *Govt must move to end violence against children.* The Express Tribune: April 11, 2018

Example 15: *End violence against children must be top priority of government: Seminar*

The Daily Times: Jan 6, 2018

Proposed Legislation

The other index to measure moral panic is legislation to cope with such cases and meet the challenges. Different resolutions were tabled in The National Assembly, Senate and the provincial assemblies to cope with such cases and eventually The Zainab Alert, Response and Recovery Bill 2020 was approved.

Example 16: *The Senate committee on Monday approved The Zainab Alert Bill enhancing its jurisdiction in the entire country.* The Dawn Feb 25, 2020

This bill proposes punishment if the police fail to register an FIR of missing or abducted child. Failure to register a case will result in punishment up-to two years and fine and The Courts will complete such cases within three months. The National Assembly Committee on human rights included death penalty for the offender. This bill is applicable in the whole country.

The Punjab government has also decided to adopt Zainab Alert Bill to enhance and ensure the safety and betterment of the children in the province. The Chief Minister Usman Buzdar said:

Example 17: *This is another leap in our mission of providing our children with safest possible environment*. The Dawn Jan 26, 2020

Hostility

The data conclusively shows that all classes (media, civil society, public and social actor) were unanimous and united against issues and challenges of child sexual abuse.

Example 18: *The government and opposition joined hands to unanimously pass Zainab Alert bill which paves the way for penalizing culprits in crimes against children from 10-14 years to life imprisonment.* The Dawn: Jan 26, 2020

Consensus

The content of text of news stories and statements of various political leaders and legislators show that there was consensus among all political parties and social control actors (police, courts etc.) to put a curb on hydra-headed issue of child sexual abuse.

Disproportionality

After the Zainab case, there were several other cases of child sexual abuse particularly in the Punjab and in the whole country in general. Besides it, the police also told that numerous cases of child sexual abuse were reported in the past.

Example 19: *A serial killer was behind all the eight cases reported in the district since 2015.*

The Dawn: Jan 11, 2018

Example 20: *The police official said that later more incidents of abduction of children, including five, which occurred in Kasur District.* The Dawn: Jan 11 2018

Example 20: *The suspect is a serial killer based in Kasur who is accused of raping and murdering 6-7 girls over the course of two years.*The Dawn: Jan 24, 2018

Volatility

Volatility is an important ingredient of moral panic (Goode & Bin-Yehuda, 2009). It means a problem comes into existence suddenly, attracts phenomenally huge attention of media, people, authoritative persons and social and state institutions. But as measures are taken to address the problem, it ends as quickly. This is what precisely happens in Zainab Case. The people kept on rioting the streets until the offender was arrested. But after the offender's arrest the situation became quiet and peaceful and the riots ended as quickly as they suddenly had erupted.

Conclusion

When the criteria of moral panic are analyzed, it becomes clear that this incident meets all the indicators of moral panic. The news stories about rape-cum-murder case of Zainab fulfill the concepts explained by Cohen (1972) and Goode & Bin-Yehuda (2009). There was a genuine concern about the issue, hostility and consensus and legislation to end such issues. Newspapers wrote editorials and leading columnists also wrote on the CSA in general and on Zainab Case in particular, published news articles and stories related to the tragedy. Electronic media aired live coverage and talk shows and it all jolted all the segments of society badly. Public, civil society, law makers, administrators and media all were unanimous and pointed out the gravity and solemnity of the issue and called for appropriate measures to prevent such occurrences in the future. Government took proactive steps to alleviate the alarming number of cases. In short, the criteria for moral panic had sufficient strength to warrant the label.

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