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Since Year 2015

GALLUP & GILANI PAKISTAN

NEWSPAPER CONTENT

ANALYSIS REPORT

March 2020

“A monthly series from Gallup & Gilani Pakistan Media Research Wing Looking at Approximately 2400 Newspapers, Columns and Editorials”





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Content Analysis of Newspaper Articles Published During March 2020

In the 12 English and Urdu newspapers analyzed for March 2020 covering nearly 2400 opinion pieces, 'Health' issues dominated the space followed by 'Social' & 'International' (GALLUP & GILANI PAKISTAN)

Islamabad, April 06, 2020

Introduction

According to a Monthly Newspaper Content Analysis Research Study conducted by Gallup & Gilani Pakistan under the supervision of Executive Director, Bilal I Gilani, the main issues under discussion during March 2020 in the mainstream media belonged to the following three categories: 'Health', 'Social' and 'International'. Whereas topics related to 'Security', 'Education', 'Law' and 'Sports' received scant attention in the 12 newspapers.

An analysis of the content of 12 national newspapers consisting of a total of 2,382 opinion articles/columns written by various columnists was conducted for March 2020. This is part of Gallup & Gilani Pakistan Media Research Division's initiative to empirically understand opinion leaders' views on national issues.

This is the 27th edition of this study. The rest of the editions (dating back to 2015) can be accessed at the following link: <http://gallup.com.pk/polls/newspaper-analysis/>.

Which newspapers have been analyzed?

Out of the 12 newspapers, 5 were **Urdu** newspapers, namely Daily Pakistan, Daily Express, Daily Jang, Daily Khabrain and Nawa-i-waqt, and 7 were **English** newspapers, namely The Express Tribune, Daily Times, Dawn, Pakistan Today, The Pakistan Observer, The Nation, and The News.

Main Topics under discussion: Health, Social & International took priority while discussions related to Security, Sports, Law and Education received scant attention.

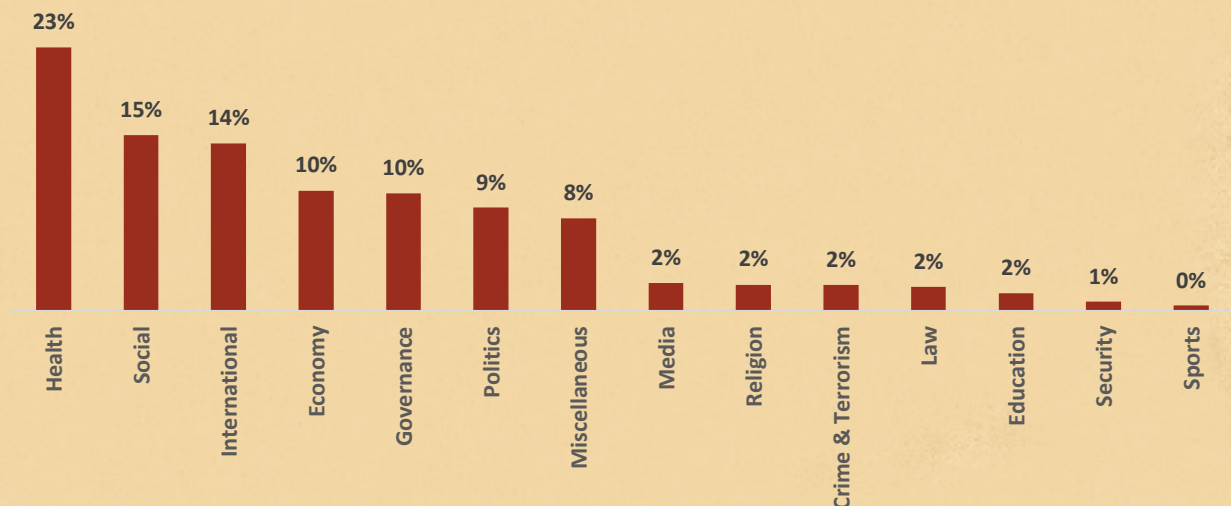
The topics discussed in these opinion articles/columns were categorized into 14 broad themes: 'Politics', 'Security', 'Media', 'Law', 'Economy', 'Governance', 'International', 'Social', 'Sports', 'Health', 'Education', 'Religion', 'Crime/Terrorism, and 'Miscellaneous'.

23% of the articles were devoted to health issues, followed by social at **15%** and international at **14%**. Economy & governance took **10%** share each, followed by politics at **9%** and miscellaneous at **8%**. After these categories, news related to media, security, education, law, religion, crime/ terrorism and sports occupied the remaining **11%** of the space.

This is the first instance of 'Politics' not making it to the top 3 categories.



Figure 1: Main Topics Under Discussion in March 2020



Source: Newspaper Content Analysis by Gallup & Gilani Pakistan Media Research Consultancy
(www.gallup.com.pk, www.gilanifoundation.com)

Discussed within 'Health':

Health for the first time was the most discussed category in the Op-Eds taking up an overwhelming 23% of the newspaper space. In March 2020, the category heavily discussed the Coronavirus Pandemic threatening the stability of the country, the measures required to curb the spread of the contagion, the economic repercussions of a lockdown, the urgency of social distancing and awareness, and the need for protective gears for Doctors fighting at the front-line. The category also discussed the continued Polio threat in the country.

Discussed within 'Social':

Social was the second most discussed category and discussion mainly revolved around 'Aurat March' and the rights of women in the Pakistani society, and the need of social unity to fight against covid-19.

Discussed within 'International':

International discussed BJP's Hindutva raj in India, the continued curfew in Kashmir despite the covid-19 threat, the global economic and social impact of coronavirus and the need to relieve sanctions on Iran amidst the pandemic.

Discussed within 'Economy':

Economy discussed artificially escalated food prices and inflation, Pakistan's position in the grey list, the prospects of CPEC in the midst of covid-19 challenges, the need for relief packages for working class during lockdown and the looming economic crisis.

Discussed within 'Governance':

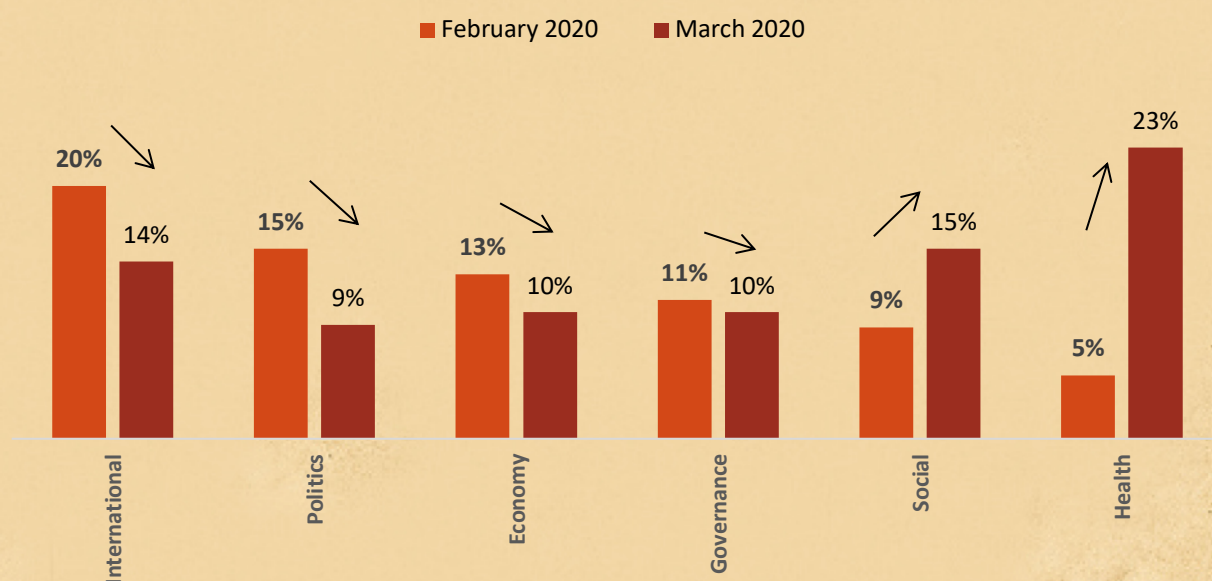
Governance category included PTI and Prime Minister's response to the pandemic, the relief package for those most inflicted by the lockdown, Prime Minister Imran Khan's demand for debt write-off for developing nations, the quarantine conditions in Taftan and the government steps to control the spread of virus by initiating lockdown and curbing social and religious gatherings.



In comparison with the previous month:

'International' dominated newspaper space in February 2020 however it was replaced by 'Health' in March 2020. These changes may be explained by the importance and urgency ascribed to certain events in public debate at certain points in time; for example, in February 2020 following issues were more important; President Trump's India visit, the BJP's mob attacks against Muslims in Delhi, the promising Pak-Turkey relationships and the U.S Secretary General's visit to Pakistan whereas in March, the COVID-19 pandemic replaced all other events, emerging as the most pressing domestic and global issue.

Figure 2: Comparison between February & March 2020



Source: Newspaper Content Analysis by Gallup & Gilani Pakistan Media Research Consultancy
(www.gallup.com.pk, www.gilanifoundation.com)

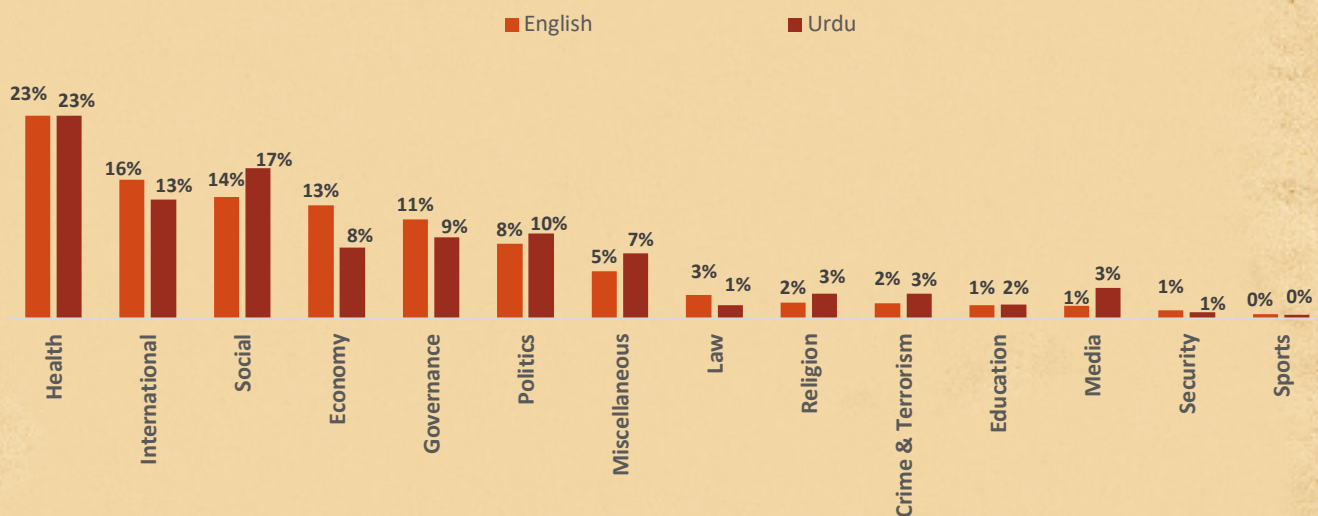
Urdu vs. English: Health, International and Social were the three most discussed categories in both Urdu and English newspapers.

Out of a total of **1,163** articles/columns written in Urdu newspapers in March 2020, majority were on topics falling under the banner of 'Health' at **23%**, 'Social' at **17%**, followed by 'International' at **13%**. This was followed by 'Politics' at **10%**, 'Governance' at **9%** and 'Economy' at **8%**, while 'Miscellaneous', 'Law', 'Religion', 'Sports', 'Security', 'Crime/Terrorism' and 'Education' occupied a total share of **20%**.

Out of a total of **1,219** articles/columns written in English during this month, the greatest share of **23%** was taken by 'Health' news, followed by 'International' at **16%**, and 'Social' at **14%**. 'Economy' took **13%** share, 'Governance' took **11%** followed by 'Politics' at **8%**. Articles related to 'Crime/Terrorism', 'Law', 'Education', 'Security', 'Sports', 'Religion', 'Miscellaneous' and 'Media' occupied the remaining **15%** of the total newspaper space.



Figure 3: Comparison between English & Urdu Newspapers March 2020

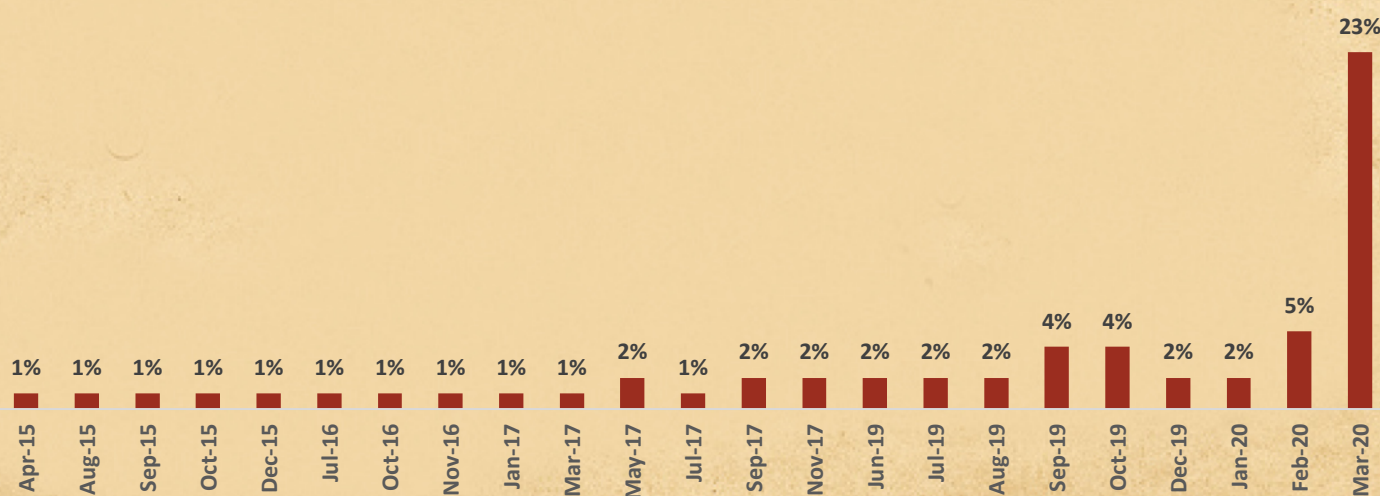


Source: Newspaper Content Analysis by Gallup & Gilani Pakistan Media Research Consultancy
(www.gallup.com.pk, www.gilanifoundation.com)

The Rise and Fall of Discussions on Health Issues in Op-Eds:

Health has been one of the least discussed categories among the Op-Eds, the highest percentage of share was recorded first in February 2020 at 5% when discussions related to re-emergence of Polio cases in Pakistan and the covid-19 had been discussed. Since then the percentage of share has risen to 23% in March 2020, the highest share ever recorded for Health category; a reminder of how severe Coronavirus pandemic has proven to be for domestic and global socio-economic situation and the utmost attention it requires not only from government agencies but also on part of citizens to ensure that the spread of the virus is contained to prevent high number of fatalities in the country.

Figure 4: The Rise and Fall of Health Issues in Op-Eds



Source: Newspaper Content Analysis by Gallup & Gilani Pakistan Media Research Consultancy
(www.gallup.com.pk, www.gilanifoundation.com)



Want to Access our Newspaper Op-Ed Headings and Columnist Names List?

We are now providing access to our database comprising of titles of all the newspaper articles analyzed, as well as names of columnists who wrote them, for all columns published from the time Gallup Pakistan initiated this activity. If you wish to gain access to this database, kindly write to Ms. Nimra Ejaz at nimra@gallup.com.pk.

The rationale behind this Content Analysis

Bilal Ijaz Gilani, Executive Director and Chief Editor of this series, explains, 'The aim of this new series of content analysis of mainstream media (newspapers as well as talk shows) is to understand how public disclosure and agenda-setting happens. Among other issues, once significant monthly data collection happens, we hope to establish a monthly 'trend' analysis and see how sensitive Urdu and English newspaper opinion articles/ columns are to changing current issues. It is also hoped that this analysis sheds some light on understanding who sets the agenda and who follows, i.e. whether TV talk shows set the themes for newspaper opinion articles/ columns or vice versa.

Another theme that we hope to explore is to understand who are the opinion leaders/ shapers when it comes to the media. Is there a significant difference in the background of English and Urdu opinion article/ column writers? How does the profile of TV talk show guests vary from newspaper opinion article/ column writers? The overall theme of the research is to empirically understand the Pakistani Media which has undeniably witnessed exponential growth in its numbers, its audience and also improved its legitimacy (and therefore its soft power) in the public sphere.'

We hope that these two studies (newspaper as well as talk shows) and their analysis would help shape a healthy and constructive debate among media practitioners on how the media industry can improve its quality and outreach in the future.

The study was released by Gilani Foundation and carried out by Gallup & Gilani Pakistan, the Pakistani affiliate of Gallup International. The duration of the analysis is **March 2020**. This data was obtained after reviewing **2,382** Op-Eds, spread over 12 newspapers (as mentioned in the third paragraph of this press release).

About Gilani Research Foundation

Gilani Research Foundation is a not for profit public service project to provide social science research to students, academia, policymakers, and concerned citizens in Pakistan and across the globe.

Gilani Research Foundation is headed by Dr. Ijaz Shafi Gilani who pioneered the field of opinion polling in Pakistan and established Gallup Pakistan in 1980. Currently Dr. Gilani, who holds a Ph.D. from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and has taught at leading universities in Pakistan and abroad, is Chairman of Gallup & Gilani Pakistan.

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For more survey data on social and other issues see website www.gallup.com.pk

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