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JOURNALISTIC DISCOURSE AND NATIONAL IDEOLOGIES: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF HEADSCARF BAN COVERAGE IN THE TIMES OF INDIA AND DAWN NEWS

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ABSTRACT

This study carried out qualitative content analysis for studying as to how Indian and Pakistani newspapers expressed their ideological standpoints regarding the banning of headscarf in the Karnataka educational institutions. Close analysis of *Dawn News* and *The Times of India* regarding their mention of ban reflected their different worldviews on the issue. The study analysed the news coverage about the educational institution ban and tried to look into the linguistic and tonal communication patterns used, besides analysing the framing methods through Fairclough's three-dimensional model. It surfaced that the According to research Dawn News employed discriminating terminology and challenged the headscarf ban by terming it as a violation of human rights and religious discrimination against the Muslims of India. Contrarily, the Times of India held somewhat unprejudiced view and focused on how the ban went against the interests the Muslim minority. The Times of India implicitly expressed a prejudiced view by terming the hijab-wearing women as being oppressed or being unaware of their condition. Dawn News gave very objective outlook and subscribed to many other social reactions toward the hijab alongside its cultural values. Research outcomes demonstrated that fundamental beliefs and historical components together with societal customs determined how media showed things which subsequently shaped social beliefs and understanding of various concepts. This research added new information about how media affected public sentiments while focusing on cultural attitudes and religious aspects. Critical examination of media representation along with its effects on public dialogue receives significant importance according to these research findings that guide media studies along with cultural studies and communication research.

Keywords: Journalistic discourse, Dawn News, The Times of India, Ideology, Headscarves Ban.

Introduction

Journalistic discourse refers to the interaction that takes place through a broadcast platform. It can be spoken or written. It differentiates itself from other forms of discourse and conversation by being on record and intended for the reader and viewer. The primary concern of journalistic discourse lies in the audience's response, specifically how readers or viewers of online newspapers react to the communicated messages. Depending on their ideologies and mental frameworks, people perceive journalistic discourse differently. Journalistic language is a powerful social practice to express feelings, thoughts, and experiences. An individual can maintain their viewpoint and evaluate the discourse through the lens of their worldview. Due to its unique nature, journalistic discourse stands out in the realm of communication. This mode of discourse takes into account the social context in which it operates, interweaving numerous interrelated concepts to shape its distinctive characteristics. Thus, journalistic discourse effectively conveys information while accounting for the complexities of the surrounding environment. It employs its knowledge of societal dynamics to engage audiences and communicate informative and persuasive messages. This approach distinguishes journalistic discourse from other forms of communication, emphasizing its significance in journalism. Within this framework, media texts play a pivotal role by constructing versions of reality and serving as reflections of society. Journalistic discourse plays a fundamental and indispensable role as the primary societal realm that shapes public knowledge, distributes information, influences beliefs, instills values, and molds attitudes. Its pervasive influence is instrumental in establishing and sustaining economic, social, and political systems while upholding the overall order within society. According to Los (2008) "Journalism is a social science and human study" (p.34).

This research seeks to investigate how Dawn Pakistani online English-language newspaper presents the news about the Karnataka headscarf ban in educational facilities; how The Times of India online English-language newspaper shares information about Karnataka, India banning headscarves in educational establishments; and how throughout their coverage of the headscarf ban in educational premises in Karnataka, India, Dawn News and The Times of India online English-language newspapers display an ideological perspective.

This research contributes to the understanding of media discourse and its portrayal of hijab-related issues, which is of great importance to the fields of literature and linguistics. This study stressed over the analysis of newspaper coverage and discourse to provide very useful insights regarding the linguistic and rhetorical strategies that were used to represent the hijab in the media. By examining the ideological positions and the perspectives underlying the language used by The Times of India and The

Dawn News, this research throws light over the fact that how these newspapers mold perception of public on matters involving hijab. This study contributes to the concerned literature as it supplies a very comprehensive analysis of linguistic choices, discursive strategies, and ideological foundations which are present in the portrayal of hijab in the said newspapers. By carefully examining the complex issues related to hijab, this study helps us comprehend how the newspapers generate narratives regarding hijab.

Literature Review

This section is related to books and research articles, along with the scholarly works that deal with the journalistic discourses covering the ideology of headscarves in the societies of Pakistan and India. It has three parts in which the first part is related to the idea of journalistic discourse in our society. The second part throws light over the role that newspapers play in the depiction of ideology. In its third section, it throws light over the concept of headscarves in different societies.

Role of Journalistic discourse

Journalistic discourse plays an important role in the shaping of public perception with the help of presenting and framing news in such peculiar manner, that the news influence As mass media is depended upon as a major source of information with respect to national and international politics, security, and extraordinary happenings, it becomes the responsibility of the media to provide correct and unprejudiced information. However, research shows the opposite and demonstrates that media helps fortify the ideologies fed to it, and molds the public opinion in favour of its narratives, while appearing to be neutral. Fairclough's (2007) methodology of critical discourse analysis (CDA) stresses that media discourse is complex and keeps varying, and its ideological constructs most of the times reflect predominant power dynamics and social practices. There is a need for an elaborate framework with the help of which we can study the interplay of power ideology and hegemony, in order to know and understand how narratives are constructed and then propagated in the public. With the help of CDA, we can uncover it that how the media channels employ language, narrative structures and frames to establish some ideologies at the behest of the powerful elite.

The influence of journalistic discourse is more visible in the media coverage of countries like India and Pakistan in which ideologically immersed news and reports and floated to win over the public opinion in their favor, despite being building and enhancing cultural and political prejudices. Researches in point, particularly that of Hassan (2018) , depicts how online media and television can change our perception when they give undue emphasis to peculiar frames and ideologies in covering an event. The application of CDA enables us to expose the implicit ideologies of news

headlines and to understand how power relations have a bearing upon media representation. Studies confirm that media either breeds polarization in society or causes social stability, which calls for self-regulation inside the media houses for reporting without violating ethical bounds and without letting itself be biased. Media, if used positively, can contribute handsomely in constructing objective reality. The journalists must be educated to have media literacy and responsibility by making them understand the strategies that exploit discourse.

Role of newspapers in the portrayal of ideology

Newspapers have historically performed the duty of informing the public about local, national and international happenings. . They have helped in informing the public from time to time about recent developments as well as in shaping its opinion. Popular national newspapers like *The New York Times*, *The Pravda*, and *The Times of India* have proved no less in influencing public opinion, views and attitudes with respect to global matters. Newspapers enjoy the status of being considered the defenders of the human rights and civil liberties in highly developed countries, which focuses on their primary function of safeguarding the democratic (Vella, 2020). Instead of just reporting, they contribute to the promotion of commerce, business and culture, as we can see them featuring classified notices, advertisements, and stories related arts, culture and entertainment. Apart from it, their editorial content serves as a medium of expression for the public and imparts to us understanding of the global scenario, although less academic focus is given to the analysis of these change-inducing texts (Van Dijk, 1995). The role of newspapers is not limited to just the provision of information, as it extends also to to the spreading of powerful ideologies that help the the powerful social groups to hold on to power and pursue their interests. Van Dijk (1995) highlights that editorials through their ideologies can not only reflect and uphold the ideologies of the powerful social groups, but can also represent the views and ideologies of the suppressed groups. The expression of ideology impacts the perception of readers and offers room for societal debate. Besides, in the modern world, technology has brought vital changes in the production and consumption of news through digital platforms that reshape the practices of journalism and the distribution of content (Jamil, 2020). The modern shift can be witnessed more noticeably in the ethnic news of Pakistan, in which the technological influence has steadily been on the rise. Digital platforms and tools have caused a revolution in the broadcasting of news, despite the existence of lack of resources and resistance to change. These shifts in media practices underscore the enduring significance of newspapers in ideological communication, even as their role evolves with technological advancements.

Concept of Headscarves

A headscarf can be worn for a variety of reasons, including covering one's hair or protecting the head from the elements, such as rain, wind, dirt, or cold, as well as for fashion, religious reasons, modesty, and social distinction. People also wear headscarves for cultural or practical reasons, or to conceal baldness. In many parts of Europe, Southwestern Asia, North Africa, and the Americas, headscarves were commonly worn until the second half of the twentieth century. While the popularity of headscarves has diminished in Western cultures, particularly in urban areas, they remain widely worn in many rural areas of Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and the Indian subcontinent. Different religious beliefs and cultural practices influence the significance and use of headscarves, and they carry diverse meanings across various societies. For instance, in Christianity, women are traditionally expected to wear head coverings while praying or attending church, as outlined in 1 Corinthians 11:4-13 (Contributors, 2023a). In Judaism, married Orthodox Jewish women often cover their hair as a symbol of modesty (Contributors, 2023b), while in Islam, the hijab is a headscarf worn by many Muslim women, signifying both modesty and religious devotion.

The concept of headscarves also holds cultural and religious significance in other traditions, such as Sikhism, where young Sikhs often wrap their hair before wearing a turban. In societies that value respect, modesty and identity, headscarf is considered as a vital religious and cultural symbol. Many scholars, including Arthur (1999), have studied the nexus between culture, religion and clothes and have observed the significant role played by dress code like headscarf, in expressing religious and cultural identity. Headscarf has assumed a very focal status in the social and political contentions concerning female's rights and religious freedom. In some cases, like in the debates over headscarf in Europe and in the domain of law, headscarf has started to be viewed as a sign of oppression and as an expression of personal freedom (Bracke & Fadil, 2012). Such contentions imply issues related to identity, religion and gender, thus raising headscarf to be considered as a potent symbol in the current global discourse.

In examining the media coverage of the headscarf ban, both *The Times* of India and *Dawn News* reflect national ideologies through their distinct journalistic discourse. Ali et al. (2018) note the role of language in shaping narratives, which can influence national perspectives, such as in the portrayal of gender and cultural conflicts. Additionally, the comparative analysis in their 2019 studies (Ali et al., 2019a, 2019b) highlights how discourse strategies, including the use of idiomatic expressions and conversational features, play a role in national identity construction. In the context of *The Times* of India and *Dawn News*, these strategies may underscore cultural nuances,

revealing the ideological divides between India and Pakistan on issues like religious freedom and women's rights. Furthermore, the linguistic features analyzed by Ishtiaq et al. (2021a) and Ali et al. (2020a) reflect how semantic density and punctuation can impact the interpretation of sensitive topics like the headscarf, thereby influencing public opinion. These findings underscore how the media, through its linguistic choices, can shape national discourse on controversial issues (Ishtiaq et al., 2021b; Ali et al., 2021).

In the investigation of humor in language teaching, studies have highlighted how humor can significantly impact teaching methodologies (Ali et al., 2015). Similarly, the dynamic nature of oral literature is an essential subject of study, focusing on the interaction between solipsism and discourse (Ali, 2016). The gap between teachers' beliefs and their actual practices in the classroom further suggests a disconnection that needs addressing to enhance teaching effectiveness (Rahman et al., 2015). Additionally, research on the role of non-verbal communication, such as Muhammad's (PBUH) effective use of non-verbal features, contributes to understanding communication dynamics (Ali et al., 2019). The work by Iqbal et al. (2016) on gender schema in Pakistani media also adds an interesting perspective on the social implications of advertisements.

Research Methodology

This section outlines those procedures and framework that were used in collecting the data and analysing it. Qualitative approach is adopted for exploring how headscarf is depicted ideologically in the newspapers. The data collected belongs to the articles about ban on hijab covered from 2003 to 2023 by two leading English-language newspapers of India and Pakistan i.e. *The Dawn News* of Pakistan and *The Times of India* of India. The reason for the selection of these two newspapers among other newspapers of these countries was their wide readership and their reputation for the neutrality in their news reporting. This study focuses over the analysis of the ideological representations in these newspapers and the identification of their differences and similarities regarding their coverage of headscarf issue. Billig (1995) throws light over the role of mass media in establishing and propagating ideologies, with a focus on the influence of mass media as a potent institution in society. Carrying out content analysis of the data, the researchers studied these newspapers for understanding the ways in which they portray political, social and cultural discourses regarding ban on hijab in academic contexts.

A qualitative research design is used with a focus on the ideological, political, social, and cultural dimensions of newspaper articles. The sociocultural perception of the society regarding the use of headscarf is explored in the somewhat culturally affiliated countries of India and Pakistan. Using an inductive approach, the researchers are free

to establish a comprehensive theory on the basis of data analysis. This approach enables the researchers to be free from forgone assumptions and to provide a more nuanced comprehension of the matter. The design adopted is descriptive and analytical in nature and enables the researchers to carry out a thorough examination of the discourse on the headscarf ban. The analysis comprises assessment of tone, language, and the structure of articles in order to identify the perspective and themes that get repeated. Qualitative content analysis and discourse analysis techniques are employed by the methodology, for interpreting the articles, and for throwing light over the socio-cultural context in which these discussions occur.

Fairclough's (1992) three-dimensional model of discourse analysis comprising textual analysis, discursive practice, and sociocultural practice is used. In the textual analysis, the articles are studied with respect to the language used, with a focus on the depiction headscarf issue, the choice of vocabulary, and the presuppositions. Through the use of semiotic analysis the role of the images and the visuals is analysed with respect to their involvement in the propagation of ideologies and in adding up to narratives. Then, in the next sphere, the production, distribution, and consumption of texts inside a social context are explored, with a focus on the role that media plays in shaping public discourse. At last, in the dimension of the social practice, the ideological underpinnings of discourse are examined and the ways in which varying ideologies with respect to headscarf are portrayed by Pakistani and Indian newspapers are identified. The issue is looked into from the above mentioned perspectives and a thorough understanding is developed as to how media coverage of the headscarf issue is determined by political and cultural factors.

Data Analysis

The first point that this study tries to find out is how on the issue of hijab ban, presuppositions and vocabulary have a role in the depiction of headlines and sub-headlines of the *Dawn News* and *The Times of India*. For this, we apply textual dimension of Fairclough's model, which is based on the examination of the linguistics features of the text. The headlines of the concerned newspapers are examined closely and the rationale of the word choices and the accompanying underlying presuppositions which are potentially effective in shaping the perception of the readers regarding the ban are studied. The underneath messages and the ideological standpoints loaded in the language are brought to light, with a focus on how a narrative is woven around the topic of hijab ban with the help of words and phrases (Fairclough, 1992).

Textual Analysis

In the headlines of *Dawn News*, the vocabulary and presuppositions most of the times present the ban on hijab as a controversial issue with sinister implications for the

affected people. The terms used like 'outraged', 'forces', and 'reprehensible' connote the involvement of force or unethical aspect of ban, underscoring the dilemma faced by the Muslim students and their opposition to the ban (Dawn.com, 2022d). In addition to that, the use of phrases like 'grave loss' and references to 'discrimination' imply that the ban on hijab is not just a local issue limited to a country but rather it extends in gravity to the world community outside, peculiarly with respect to the rights of women (Dawn.com, 2022b). The linguistic choices in *Dawn News* tend to reflect an ideological bias, supporting the perspective that the hijab ban is unjust and detrimental to the rights and freedoms of Muslim individuals.

On the other hand, in the headlines of *The Times of India*, we find the reflection of certain presuppositions and depictions of the ban on hijab, and this is visible more in the context of legal rulings operative in Karnataka. For example, the headline "Wearing of the Hijab by Muslim women does not form part of an essential Islamic faith, a full bench of the Karnataka high court" (Kumar, 2022b) suggests that the hijab is not mandatory in Islam, according to the court's decision. Similarly, the headline "Hijab row: Karnataka HC restrains students from wearing religious attire" (Kumar, 2022d) implies that the ban specifically affects Muslim students and portrays it as a contentious legal matter

The headlines like "Hijab may lead to a sense of social separateness equivalent to sectarianism: Karnataka High Court" (Kumar, 2022a) reflect the court's view that wearing the hijab could cause social division. The Karnataka High Court's decision to set a uniform school attire code, citing the Quran, is presented in the headline. Other headlines, such as "SC reserves order on petitions challenging Karnataka HC upholding the ban on Hijab in educational institutes" (Ani, 2022b), report on ongoing legal proceedings, highlights accusations of religious discrimination. Finally, "Karnataka now bans hijabs in state-run minority institutes" (Tnn, 2022) underscores a new policy that could infringe on religious rights, framing the issue as a conflict between the government and minority communities.

Interpretation

Interpretation is the second dimension of the Fairclough model, which involves understanding how a text is created, shared, and used within a social context. The debate over the hijab in India is framed differently by *Dawn News* and *The Times of India* based on their societal contexts. *Dawn News* emphasizes the hijab as an essential religious symbol for Muslim women, representing modesty and religious devotion, while challenging the state's attempt to define it without scholarly knowledge of religious law (Dawn.com, 2022b). The newspaper argues that the hijab's significance in Islam cannot be overlooked and must be protected as part of religious freedom under India's Constitution.

On the other hand, *The Times of India* portrays the hijab primarily as a matter of attire and modesty rather than a fundamental religious requirement, suggesting that its prohibition in schools does not violate the right to religious freedom (Kumar, 2022c). It views the hijab as a personal choice rather than an obligatory religious practice, aligning with India's secular principles (Mahapatra, 2022). The Times article stresses that the hijab does not have a direct link to Islamic law, unlike religious practices such as the Sikh turban, and suggests that the state's enforcement of uniformity in schools is in line with the Constitution's guarantee of equality (TimesofIndia.com, 2022). These contrasting portrayals shape the public debate and reflect the papers' different interpretations.

Education for students is a crucial concern in this situation, as it will determine whether the hijab ban has a positive or negative impact on their academic performance. It is important to pay attention to how these two newspapers portray the viewpoint of students' academic progress regarding the hijab ban. The *Dawn News* states that this action is not for the student's academic success or well-being in the article of *Dawn News*, where they reported that "This is not about academic discipline, but a move to stamp out religious and cultural symbols" (Dawn.com, 2022c, para. 4). The government is targeting Muslim women with this action. Instead of enhancing Muslim women's academic performance, this action will harm them. By claiming that the government is dictating what is best for women, *Dawn News* plays on the reader's emotions.

The *Dawn* newspaper, which is well-known and widely read, has a feministic bent, and it uses this to expose the unfavorable side of India by showing how they dictate and deny women and girls fundamental rights. The *Dawn* Newspaper targeted the Indian government because the main audience of the *Dawn News* is Muslims. According to *Dawn News*, Ayesha Imtiaz, a Muslim student at Mahatma Gandhi College, showed against the college administration's decision to ban the hijab on the premises. She values wearing the hijab more than education and sees it as an expression of her dignity. She stated that she would choose the hijab over education, and now the government is forcing them to decide between the hijab and education. She believes that the expulsion of girls who wear hijabs is an insult to them. Dawn.com (2022d) "It is more like telling us you choose between your religion or education, that's a wrong thing," she said after studying for five years at the Mahatma Gandhi Memorial College in Udupi" (para. 3). This demonstrates how *Dawn News* is trying to portray Muslim students as being unhappy with this act, which will have an impact on their academic performance because they will prioritize wearing the hijab over their studies.

By referring to Muslim students who are opposed to the hijab ban in news articles, *Dawn News* is attempting to draw attention to this act of banning a headscarf as condemnable. According to the Afp (2022), "Ayesha said a teacher had turned her away

from her chemistry exam for wearing the garment" (para. 7). A teenage girl who is not permitted to take the exam reports the news on *Dawn News*. This demonstrates how denying entrance to a girl wearing a hijab destroys education. The article by *Dawn News* continues to explain why it is currently not permitted for girls to enter while wearing a hijab when exams are so close. This demonstrates how negatively it is impacting the student's academic performance.

The opposition leader Rahul Gandhi is one of the prominent Indian politicians whose tweets about the hijab ban are presented in the *Dawn News*. When some of Modi's right-wing Bhartiya Janata Party rule the state of Karnataka and several notable members have backed the ban, Rahul Gandhi disagrees with the government's stance on the hijab. According to *Dawn News* Rahul Gandhi tweeted, "By letting students' hijab come in the way of their education, we are robbing the future of the daughters of India" (Dawn.com, 2022f, para. 7). By using the tweet from Rahul Gandhi, *Dawn News* seeks to show how this ban is destroying the careers of girls because, without the hijab, the girls and their families will not allow continuing their education. If the ban is kept in place, more and more girls will be denied the opportunity for education. The ban won't benefit the student; instead, it will have an impact on their future.

In a press conference covered by *Dawn News* for the article, Sumayya Roushan, the president of the Girls Islamic Organization of Karnataka, advocated for the rights of those wearing the hijab in protest. *Dawn.com* (2022a) "Roushan said the ban violated a personal choice that the students are entitled to, which doesn't harm any other person" (para. 4). The girls who are protesting appear dissatisfied with the government's decision to outlaw the hijab because they believe it will hurt their future and educational system. They believe that their fundamental rights are guaranteed by the Constitution. Muslim families in Karnataka assert that because the hijab is illegal to wear, it marginalizes them and prevents girls and women from education. As reported by *Dawn News*, Muslim families in India have never been prohibited from wearing hijab. Dawn.com (2022g); "We've always been attending classes wearing the hijab" (para. 8).

Explanation

The ideological perspectives of the *Dawn News* and *The Times of India* are shaped by their respective national histories, political landscapes, and cultural contexts. *Dawn News*, a Pakistani publication, reflects the country's Islamic values and its roots in the partition of India, which led to the creation of Pakistan as a separate Muslim state. This background has influenced the support of *Dawn* for hijab, considering it as Muslim women's significant symbol of cultural modesty and religious identity. *Dawn* considers it as a curtailment or as an attack over the Muslim women's rights to express their cultural identity and religious beliefs and emphasises that this ban goes against the

freedom of religious expression and leads to polarization in society. Contrarily, in *The Times of India*, we find the depiction of the democratic, secular, and socialist framework of India, which encourages national unity and equality in its heterogeneous religious groups. It legitimates the ban on hijab as a means of maintaining secularism and averting social disintegration that the religious symbols might cultivate, and thereby pleads for an integrated national identity and encourages modernization in keeping with Western ideals.

Political factors play a crucial role in shaping the stances of these newspapers. The prevalence of Hindu nationalism in India, especially during the regime of the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP), frames the ban on hijab as a constituent of the agenda of asserting Hindu dominance and mitigating the appearance of Muslim culture as a minority. This move is taken exception to by *Dawn News* as a politically induced attempt to deliberately use the ban on Hijab as a tool for the marginalisation of the Muslims and stifle their cultural practices. Meanwhile, *The Times of India* covers the complexity of the India political environment and keeps a comparatively impartial standpoint that is in line with the state objective of public order and secularism. However, the political situation in the shape of, the policies of the BJP and the extended history of India with respect to communal tensions goes into shaping the editorial approach of *The Times of India*. The ensuing approach lays emphasis over the maintenance of national unity and the promotion of secular values. Both the newspapers show the ideological differences as something deeply embedded in the histories of their countries and in the existing political strife and thus illustrates that the ban on hijab is the hub of bigger social debates about power, identity and rights

Cultural factors also have a lot to do with the reporting of *Dawn News* and *The Times of India*. The countries where these newspapers operate are home to various cultures and religions, and where respective traditions and cultural values have a bearing over the nature of reporting and news coverage (Norris & Inglehart, 2009). With respect to *Dawn News*, the role of cultural factors is visible in shaping the coverage of topics like religious minorities, gender roles, and sectarianism, specifically in the society of Pakistan which is characterised by patriarchy and conservatism. Hijab, in this environment, is held as an esteemed symbol of religious identity, posing the ban as a sensitive issue that is framed as an attack and violation of women's rights and their cultural identity. In the same way, *The Times of India* is seen under the influence of its country's cultural diversity and the intersection of its religious pluralism and social issues. It seems to accommodate diverse perspectives, inclusive of the perspectives of the Muslim community, because the ban on hijab pertains to the area of cultural and religious identity inside the complex societal scenario of India. These different cultural dynamics go into the making of the editorial stances of these newspapers with respect

to the ban on hijab and thus manifest the broader religious and cultural contexts of Pakistan and India.

Discussion and Conclusion

The basic purpose of the study is analysing the difference in coverage of the headscarf ban by *Dawn News* and *The Times of India*. It examines the portrayal of headscarf ban in the headlines of the said newspapers and carries out a semiotic examination of their articles. Fairclough's three-dimensional model and semiotic analysis are the means employed for looking into the ideological implications of the stances taken by both the newspapers. Through the findings, it emerges that although both of them subscribe to the controversial nature of the hijab ban, yet the language used by *Dawn News* is more emotive in nature and depicts the ban as unfair and based on discrimination. It projects the actions of the Indian government in negative light and portrays it as detrimental to the Muslim population. Contrarily, the language of *The Times of India* seems comparatively neutral, which focuses on the secular status of India and the implications of the ban on the education and freedom of Muslim students, in addition to emphasising the need for bringing uniformity in schools.

The ideologies of the countries have largely to do with the ideological portrayal of hijab ban in their respective newspapers. *Dawn* operating from the Muslim Pakistan the ideological foundation of which favours the safeguarding of Islamic values, holds the ban as divesting the Muslim women from their right of religious expression. This is diametrically opposed to the stance of *The Times of India* which is secular and democratic, and which values the ban as a means to establishing secularism and national unity. The editorial policies of these newspapers are found to be largely determined by the cultural and political milieu of their countries. Whereas the focus of *Dawn* is on the rights of Muslim women and the protection of their freedoms, the concern of *The Times of India* is the maintenance of the secular educational environment; both of them reveal how the political dynamics and the social and cultural values colour the portrayal of hijab issue.

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