

14th
National

MEDIA WORKSHOP

Truth Beyond Perceptions

19-23 Aug 2024

Post Workshop Report

INSTITUTE FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES, RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS (ISSRA)
NATIONAL DEFENCE UNIVERSITY, ISLAMABAD



WORKSHOP SPONSOR

Brigadier Qasim Kayani

Director, Keystone Capstone and Pinnacle Programmes Branch

REPORT COMPILED BY

Keystone Capstone and Pinnacle Programmes Branch

EDITED BY

Colonel Amer Mehmood & Research Team

Keystone Capstone and Pinnacle Programmes Branch

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14th National Media Workshop (NMW)

Institute for Strategic Studies Research & Analysis (ISSRA), National Defence University (NDU) organized 14th National Media Workshop under the overarching theme “Truth Beyond Preceptions” from 19 to 23 Aug 2024. The Workshop was aimed to enhance awareness of participants about media’s role in contemporary era.

The workshop was attended by 54 participants including personnel from Electronic, Print, Digital /Web Media, Foreign Correspondents, Academia, Government officials and Civil Society. The purpose of the workshop was to exchange ideas and develop understanding of the dynamics of contemporary media and its ability to influence the public opinion.

Great Minds Discuss Ideas; Average Minds Discuss Events;
Small Minds Discuss People
Eleanor Roosevelt





NATIONAL DEFENCE UNIVERSITY

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Inaugural Session

19 Aug, 2024





DAY 1

Session - I

19 August, 2024

MAJOR CONTOURS OF EVOLVING GLOBAL AND REGIONAL ORDER



SPEAKERS



Distinguished Visiting Fellow
Ambassador Zamir Akram



SPEAKER - I
Ambassador Anne W Patterson



SPEAKER - II
Mr Victor Gao



SPEAKER - III
Dr Maria Sultan



MODERATOR
Mr Faisal Rehman

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- There has been a relative shift in global order with the decline in US power, having implications for US as well as international community; nevertheless, it still retains military might and has most dominant currency.
- Lack of requisite support on issue of Ukraine from Global South was alarming for US; upcoming US elections will dictate future course of engagement with Global South.
- US defense strategy defines China as the most consequential strategic competitor which spent over \$ 700 Bn on defense; the military competition is seeping into strategic thinking of US.
- US-China trade war is inadvertently pushing China towards achieving self-reliance spec in semi-conductor chips besides impacting the common citizens of US.
- There are several potential areas of conflict between US and China with Taiwan as the most prominent; possible military conflict over Taiwan can have disastrous consequences for the World.
- US-China War is unthinkable primarily due to the nuclear factor; eventually, the countries will have to pick the side of peace.
- US presence in Middle East is guided by challenges like securing energy sources, tackling Iran and continued support to Israel; the later has badly impacted the US' global repute.
- Rising middle powers like, Brazil, India, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Pakistan are seeking more inclusive global economy, multipolar global system and UN reforms.
- Global governance has failed, with UN and INGOs serving the political agendas; middle powers need to navigate this complex landscape to ensure their security and prosperity.
- Global currency is yet another challenge for middle powers; apparently, the Bretton Woods system is politicized, and it does not know how to bridge with belt and road economic system.
- There is a rise of ultra-nationalism and protectionism as seen in UK, Switzerland and India.
- India is USA's next investment hub, despite knowing that they are engaged in ethnic cleansing of the Muslims.
- Pakistan has to deal with the economy of the sanctioned world; 81% of the globe is sanctioned by US with Pakistan as one of the biggest sufferers.

DAY 1

Session - II

19 August, 2024

EMERGING GLOBAL TRENDS OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES



SPEAKERS



Distinguished Visiting Fellow
Ambassador Zamir Akram



SPEAKER - I
Mr Ahmer Bilal Soofi



SPEAKER - II
Ms Kashmala Kakakhel



SPEAKER - III
Dr Dayyab Gillani



SPEAKER - IV
Ms Myriam Francois



MODERATOR
Ms Mariam Fatima

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- International human rights treaties, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Human Rights, codify universal human rights; however, there is no global enforcement mechanism for human rights implementation.
- Due to absence of uniform application across the globe, human rights are sometimes used to further political motives, with certain countries being targeted (e.g., Iran, Pakistan) while others (e.g., Israel) are shielded.
- Pakistan must prepare for India's legal strategy to assert claims over contested regions like Gilgit-Baltistan, Ladakh, and Azad Kashmir.
- Climate change is transforming global dynamics along the pillars of energy, trade, and leadership. Pakistan took a leadership role in establishing the Loss and Damage Fund, highlighting the nation's proactive stance on global climate policy.
- Pakistan should also have the right to exploit its coal resources for energy needs, especially if Western nations like Germany continue to use coal despite global climate commitments.
- The global war on terror has seen temporal shifts, notably after 9/11 and the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan, but the ideology and doctrines underpinning it remain intact.
- The return of the Taliban in Afghanistan presents an opportunity for peace.
- U.S. policies on counter-terrorism are unlikely to change drastically, even with the potential shift in leadership, as the underlying doctrines remain unchanged.
- Islamophobia is deeply entrenched in western societies, exacerbated by disinformation campaigns and geopolitical tensions, particularly following Israeli attacks on Palestine.
- Despite UN resolutions on Islamophobia and the rights of occupied peoples, these commitments are often not enforced due to political considerations.
- Rise of anti-Muslim attacks in the UK reflect a broader crisis within the society, which remains unaddressed by the government.

DAY 2

Session - I

20 August, 2024

ECONOMIC FUNDAMENTALS OF PAKISTAN OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES



SPEAKERS



Distinguished Visiting Fellow
Mr Nadeem Ul Haq



SPEAKER - I
Mr Haroon Sharif



SPEAKER - II
Mr Abid Qaiyum Sulehri



SPEAKER - III
Mr Muhammad Ali



MODERATOR
Ms Aniq Nisar

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Pakistan is facing unprecedented economic challenges, but within those challenges lie untapped opportunities.
- Pakistan has historically leveraged its geopolitical position rather than investing in market-based economic strategies, a mindset that needs to change.
- Connectivity and economic corridors can be transformative, but Pakistan must do more to make these assets valuable for its people.
- Pakistan's economic framework should focus on wealth creation rather than consumption, with an emphasis on improving the savings rate; focus should shift from import substitution to export promotion
- Increasing female participation in the labor force, documenting the informal economy, and building an export-driven eco-system are critical to long-term growth.
- Economic policies cannot be separated from political realities; Pakistan faces significant debt challenges and must prioritize investment in human capital.
- Climate change poses an immediate threat to food security and the overall economy. Investments in human capital and consistent, evidence-based policies are essential for tackling these challenges.
- In the past, Pakistan has approached IMF 24 times; country needs to stop relying on short-term bailouts and emergency measures with focus on long-term structural reforms.
- To improve the economy, civil service reforms are necessary, as the public sector is overburdened and inefficient. Moreover, patronage-based politics are a hindrance to effective policymaking; only by empowering professionals and strengthening institutions can sustainable policies be implemented.
- Pakistan must invest across all levels of education, from primary to higher education, to build a skilled workforce.
- While CPEC has contributed to infrastructure development, it is not a silver bullet. Policies must focus on translating infrastructure into investments.
- Political system must evolve, possibly by reducing the size of administrative units in provinces, to ensure more localized governance and better economic management.

DAY 2

Session - II

20 August, 2024

TAX REFORMS AND MONETARY POLICY OF PAKISTAN - OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES



SPEAKERS



SPEAKER - I
Mr Khalid Jameel



SPEAKER - II
Mr Jameel Ahmad



MODERATOR
Ms Musarat Jabeen

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Year 2022 was challenging as Pakistan witnessed a historically high current account deficit due to multiple factors such as the unfolding geopolitical crisis (Russia-Ukraine), political instability, and domestic floods translating to high inflation. The current account deficit was way beyond the capacity of the government to finance.
- Covid-19 disrupted supply chains, reducing revenue generation options, and exerting pressure on foreign reserves. This led to an inability to fulfill international financial obligations, ultimately pushing the country towards an IMF bailout.
- The government imposed import restrictions across several sectors and took administrative measures to control inflation.
- A strong tax regime is imperative for the documentation of the economy.
- The documentation and digitalization of the supply chain is the way to increase revenues in the medium and long term.
- Container scanning technology and artificial intelligence tools are being implemented to mitigate smuggling activities; however, a whole of government approach is needed to control smuggling.
- There is a need to sign data-sharing agreements between major trade partners to control mis-invoicing.

DAY 2

Session - III

20 August, 2024

SIFC AND CPEC - THE FUTURE PROSPECTS



SPEAKERS



SPEAKER - I

Dr Muhammad Jehanzeb Khan



SPEAKER - II

Dr M Muzammil Zia



MODERATOR

Ms Aiza Azam

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The investment landscape targeted three key areas which include macroeconomic instability, balance of payment deficit, and debt encircle.
- The positive aspects of SIFC include increased trade and, a growing market under the system of government by rule. The main component of FDI brings new managerial capacities, and productivity enhancement and boosts the research and development sector of Pakistan.
- Increased FDI will become part of the global supply chain and hence market competitiveness will be enhanced and increased.
- Two types of investments are present in the economy with totally different dimensions and outcomes; market-seeking investment which leads to black market creation & efficiency market investment leading to production efficiency.
- SIFC resolves the problems raised by the Board of Investment through policy interventions. Long-term policy consistency is needed for economic growth and development.
- In last 10 years, under CPEC, 39 projects related to energy (16 projects; \$ 16 Bn), transport infrastructure (7 projects; \$ 6.5 Bn), socio-economic development (7 projects; \$ 0.13 Bn) and Gwadar (5 projects; \$ 0.56 Bn) have been completed with total financial outlay of approx \$ 23 Bn.
- The seven pillars of vision under CPEC Phase – II include: achieving sustained, indigenous and inclusive growth, private sector and entrepreneurship led growth, developing human and social capital, democratic governance, institutional reform and modernization of public sector, developing a competitive knowledge economy through value addition, energy, water and food security and modernizing transportation.
- Five E's Framework include: Exports, Equality and Empowerment, E-Pakistan, Environment and Climate Change and Energy Infrastructure.

DAY 2

Session - IV

20 August, 2024

ECONOMY OF PAKISTAN OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES



SPEAKER



SPEAKER

Mr Muhammad Aurangzeb

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Pakistan has concluded the last fiscal year on a strong note in terms of strong macroeconomic stability, twin deficit (trade and fiscal), currency stability, and Foreign Exchange Reserve stability.
- State Bank of Pakistan showed stability, which restored trust and credibility which is important for Pakistan.
- Pakistan has to be made a hub of export and we do not want to bring such FDI, which creates currency mismatches.
- Government is committed to take the tax to GDP ratio to 13 percent plus because we need sustainability in terms of our fiscal equation.
- The corruption and leakages need to be stopped for growth and sustainability. Conducive tax regime should be followed for the textile industry too.
- The success lies in to have check and balance on governance, opt for privatization of public entities, boost export-led growth, and bring export-led or production-efficient FDI. The bankable investable projects are recommended and need to move into international capital markets.

DAY 3

Session - I

21 August, 2024

THE ART & SCIENCE OF NARRATIVE SHAPING IN THE POST TRUTH ERA



SPEAKERS



Distinguished Visiting Fellow
Mr Abdullah Hussain Haroon



SPEAKER - I
Syed Talat Hussain



SPEAKER - II
Syeda Nasim Zehra



MODERATOR
Ms Sadaf Khan

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Pakistan is part of the South Asian landscape with 51.5% concentration of internet adoption. In the coming years, the Internet will expand in Pakistani markets, creating more opportunities and challenges for the social media industry at the same time.
- Infotainment has more potential than news to create viewer's interest.
- The art of narrative formulation is presentation and the science of narrative shaping is the substance that is good enough to be accepted by the viewer's mindset as a reality or a perceived reality.
- The hierarchy of information is very important in narrative building; intangible information has become far more consequential than tangible information.
- Within Pakistan, there are power contenders like state, non- state competitors, interest groups, etc. Governance-related narratives are also a tool to achieve political agendas along with security and policy-related goals.
- The conflict of interest between different narrative-building agents is a challenge for public which puts negative impact on the processes and outcomes. This causes a violation of rules and laws by social media entities too.
- In terms of foreign policy, narrative building is essential to shape the general public's mind according to national interest; dissemination, selection, and propagation of information plays a main part in this process by the state.
- Fact-checking is the main challenge in Pakistan's mainstream media.
- Teenagers need to be included in the narrative shaping as this age bracket is the most receptive and fragile and attract the available content.

DAY 3

Session - II

21 August, 2024

MEDIA LANDSCAPE OF PAKISTAN OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES



SPEAKERS



SPEAKER - I
Mir Ibrahim Rahman



SPEAKER - II
Dr Kaiser Rafiq



SPEAKER - III
Mr Duraid Qureshi



MODERATOR
Ms Sidra Iqbal

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Media landscape in Pakistan is no longer just traditional, but has evolved into an integrated ecosystem combining print, television, and digital media. The way news and information are consumed has dramatically changed, especially with the rise of social media and digital platforms.
- There has been a significant shift from traditional media to digital platforms. Younger generations, such as millennials and Gen Z, prefer digital content; leading media organizations to adjust their strategies to meet the evolving demands.
- Pakistan's international image is often shaped by negative perceptions; media can reshape that narrative through positive storytelling, especially in areas like tourism. However, positive content must compete with the traditionally more popular negative or sensational news.
- While Pakistan enjoys a notable degree of freedom of expression compared to neighboring countries, there are limitations in how media can express certain views, particularly around sensitive political or security topics. This creates a delicate balance for media outlets between maintaining journalistic integrity and navigating regulatory challenges.
- Economic pressures on the media industry are significant; advertising revenues are shrinking, and media houses face financial challenges as they balance high production costs with diminishing budgets.
- The growing number of real estate-backed media ventures adds complexity to the financial sustainability of independent media outlets.
- Digital media is rapidly growing, offering new opportunities for revenue and audience engagement. However, traditional media content still holds significant value, and a large portion of digital content originates from television and newspapers. Monetization strategies for digital content are evolving but require robust ecosystems to be effective.
- Sensationalism and click bait are common challenges in both traditional and digital media; media outlets must find a balance between attracting audiences and maintaining responsible journalism.
- The future of Pakistan's media landscape lies in innovation and the ability to adapt to digital trends; there is a strong potential for the media to focus on promoting tourism.

DAY 3

Session - III

21 August, 2024

MEDIA REGULATIONS, CODE OF CONDUCT & ETHICS



SPEAKERS



SPEAKER - I
Mr Wakeel Khan



SPEAKER - II
Maj Gen Hafeez ur Rehman (Retd)



SPEAKER - III
Mr Abbas Ahsan



MODERATOR
Ms Sumera Khan

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Manipulated and undesired information, spreading in an unregulated environment, brings in a call for regulatory oversight and law enforcement.
- In Pakistan false information have created confirmation biases that have affected the national resolve, e.g misinformation over polio vaccine, religious harmony, food shortage during pandemics etc.
- Pakistan faces difficulties in securing mutual legal assistance from other countries, particularly concerning cybercrime, and the dark web remains a significant blind spot due to limited resources and economic constraints.
- There is a lack of focus on developing digital and cyberspace capabilities, which hinders Pakistan's ability to effectively address cyber threats and engage with global digital communities.
- The advent of social media has changed the information landscape from 'seeing is believing' to 'believing is seeing', in light of confirmation biases.
- The spectrum for telecommunications is being broadened, and PTA plans to introduce 5G in Pakistan by April 2025, with over 500 spectrum bands expected to be available.
- PTA is working on Satellite technology & related projects, underscoring the importance of government and public relations in advancing this area. The government has approved a satellite policy, marking a significant step forward for the country's telecom infrastructure.
- PEMRA license renewal requires 10% educational content to be aired, and section 20 of the PEMRA law requires 10% of the content to include public service messaging, thereby establishing a balanced approach towards aired content.
- PEMRA requires satellite channels to air 90% indigenous content and only 10% foreign content, for being able to get license renewal.
- Pakistan needs to change its focus from traditional medium to cyber space, where increasing the capacity of cybercrime wing is crucial.
- Law requires licensee to be a registered company with SECP and have its established capital in Pakistan that is where we can debunk the narrative of business owners to be channel owners.

DAY 4

Session - I

22 August, 2024

ROLE OF ART & CULTURE IN NATION BUILDING



SPEAKERS



Distinguished Visiting Fellow
Ms Feryal Ali Gohar



SPEAKER - I
Mr Kamran Lashari



SPEAKER - II
Ms Nighat Chaudhary



SPEAKER - III
Mr Rohail Hyatt



MODERATOR
RA Faiza Khan

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Art and culture are not just forms of expression but essential components in the process of nation-building; they encapsulate our values, beliefs, and unique stories.
- Though, Pakistan is 75 years old, however, our history spans over 5000 years having invaluable footprints of Mohenjodaro, Harrapa, Gandhara and Taxila etc.
- Culture is associated by region and we have so many cultures in Pakistan and that is beauty of Pakistan; regional cultures define Pakistan.
- Sports is another avenue which brings country together as Arshad Nadeem rejuvenated the national solidarity; through sports and arts we can bring sanity, tolerance, and peace.
- Through dance, music, visual arts, and literature, we communicate what it means to be part of a particular community or nation. By preserving and celebrating these forms, we maintain a living connection to our past while shaping our future.
- Cultural festivals, communal performances, and shared artistic experiences foster a sense of belonging and unity.
- The impact of art and culture extends beyond emotional and social dimensions; it also plays a significant role in economic development.
- Native language is the best way of expression and artists feel comfortable in their native language to express their art; we must respect for regional cultures at individual level.
- We have a global culture and to survive in this culture we must not compromise self-identity and cultural values.
- There must be rationality in our approach; we cannot distinct ourselves based on man-made boundaries as we are bound by shared history.

DAY 5

Session - I

23 August, 2024

LOOKING INTO THE FUTURE TECHNOLOGY & MEDIA



SPEAKERS



SPEAKER - I
Ms Anna Knishenko



SPEAKER - II
Mr Ather Imran Nawaz



SPEAKER - III
Ms Amber Rahim Shamsi



SPEAKER - IV
Mr Habib Ullah Khan



MODERATOR
Ms Puruesh Maajid Chaudhary

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The shift from traditional media to digital platforms has created echo chambers where individuals are exposed to content that reinforces their existing beliefs, leading to polarization and the breakdown of national dialogue.
- In digital warfare, specific segments of the population based on their motivations rather than demographics are targeted. By creating a disciplined narrative and using info graphics effectively, small and well-organized groups can compete against larger and more powerful entities online.
- The "zero moment of truth," the point at which individuals first search for information online, is also a crucial battleground as controlling the results can significantly influence public opinion.
- While AI has contributed to the spread of misinformation, its destructive impact has been somewhat mitigated by increased awareness, reporting, and education.
- The ethical challenges faced by journalists have intensified in the digital age, where the pressure to report quickly often clashes with the need for accuracy.
- Journalists need to stay up-to-date and be aware of global trends, as the digital age requires continuous learning and adaptation.
- The rapid evolution of digital media necessitates that any digital content created must be carefully tailored to the target demographic, ensuring it is relevant and effective in reaching the audience.
- People are not learning about the world through journalists only, therefore, journalists and media organizations need to adapt, be more agile and understand what the audience is looking for.
- In this era of misinformation and disinformation, one thing which remains unchanged is the ability of good content to grab the attention of viewers.



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PICTURE GALLERY













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