Religious Violence and Media Coverage in a Globalizing India

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Abstract

Profound changes in an increasingly global world compel us to re-examine our notions of culture and identity. Preserving one's heritage, and understanding one's culture attains new significance; religious identity becomes an easy anchor in a rapidly changing world. Recently in India, violence particularly against religious minorities has raised questions about asserting one's religious identity and citizenship. This paper will examine the intersection of religious identity, globalization, and media coverage as evidenced in the recent violence against Christians in some parts of India. In post-independence India, religious stirrings have been common, including violent conflagrations between members of Muslim and Hindu groups. However, in recent times, a new religious violence flared up—attacks on the Catholic minority in India. Because of the long history of peaceful relations between India's Hindu majority and Catholic minority in Karnataka, the attacks on Catholics and their property were highly unusual. Thus, the Indian media reported the information through newspaper, magazine, and television coverage. The internet was another place where the attacks were recorded and discussed. The stories depicted not only attacks on Catholic churches, but also the subsequent community protests and peaceful engagement. Furthermore, the series of church attacks were ambiguous because they deviated from the previous pattern of Hindu-Muslim clashes, particularly in Mangalore, Karnataka. When the media are confronted with ambiguous situations, reporting the news becomes more challenging. Often, the circumstances are highly fluid, resisting neat resolutions. This paper will contextualize the religious violence and its reporting in a globalized India.

Keywords : Media and Globalization, Religious Voilence, Impact of Media Coverage on Society.

1. Introduction

Michael Jackson died recently. A regular media user who had never heard of him became familiar with all the details of Michael Jackson's through a specific lens: the media. Generally, media gatekeepers sift through the available information and make choices as to what is newsworthy and what is not. In this process, some stories are discarded, some get minimal coverage and some others, like that of Michael Jackson, make the front page of newspapers, news websites or become the lead story in a radio or television news program; the stories may sometimes run for days and weeks. Media coverage of these stories raises audience awareness and accessibility to these issues (Price and Tewksbury, 1997). As early as 1920, Walter Lippman suggested that "the media would control public opinion by focusing attention on selected issues while ignoring others" (as cited in Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). In addition to selecting stories, the media also design news stories to make them comprehensible to their audiences.

In shaping news stories, journalists turn meaningless and non-recognizable happenings into discernible events (Tuchman, 1978). They provide a context for these events; they frame them. Researchers use the term media framing to describe the way events and issues are organized and made sense of, especially by

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media, media professionals, and their audiences (Reese, Gandy, Jr., & Grant, 2001). Entman (1993), "To frame is to select some aspect of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation" (p. 52). For example, depending upon the news source and the journalist covering the story, Michael Jackson's depiction has varied from child prodigy to drug addict to legend and sometimes, a variation on or a combination of all three.

In this paper we utilize the concept of framing to examine the recent events that occurred in India. Indian media in January 2009 were swamped with images and stories of violence against women socializing in the Amnesia pub, in Mangalore, Dakshina Kannada. The images on television and on U-Tube showed, among others, a group of young men attacking young women. The late afternoon attack by a band of young goons, with allegiance to a Hindu-fundamentalist organization, Shri Rama Sene (Rama's army), claimed they were opposed to women being seen in pubs. They felt that it was against Indian culture for women to frequent pubs and worse to be in the company of men.

Television channels and newspapers focused on the violence and the cultural implications of these actions. Although hindu fundamentalists' violence against minorities in Dakshina Kannada was not an uncommon occurrence, with about 45 incidents recorded in January and February of that year (PUCL, 2009), the media coverage of this particular incident made it worthy of national attention. The live footage received extensive coverage. While the news media covered the incidents in Mangalore, a protest movement called the "Pink Chaddi Movement" garnered online support for the victims and became a vehicle to render absurd the communal leanings of the violence. Indeed, the Pink Chaddi Movement succeeded in gaining a lot of mileage as well as support across the country, and even abroad. The impudence of the campaign--- of sending pink women's underwear (chaddi) to the leader of the Shri Rama Sene, Pramod Muthalik--- notwithstanding, it raised awareness, while of course a section of the media and some parts of the Indian population disdained the movement, as they felt it was in bad taste and against Indian culture.

We use framing as the theoretical framework to analyze the attacks in Mangalore in February 2009. The attacks may have gone unnoticed or received minimal coverage except that they were captured on camera and televised. Incidentally it was a local cable TV cameramen who caught the incident live, ostensibly after being tipped off by the goons themselves, about their plans. The clippings found their way to all the major state and national stations as well as international TV channels in no time.

The attack in the pub, however, has to be seen in the context of a pattern of violence perpetrated against minorities. What makes this particular incident noteworthy is that media coverage drew public attention and protests. It is also noteworthy because it resulted in an internet-based social protest that drew enormous support. The "Amnesia" incident provides an excellent example of how different opposing frames wrestled and how an internet-based protest movement successfully managed to raise awareness about the vigilantism of some conservative right-wing organisations. It also exposed the state government's laxity as well as to some extent complicity in such vigilant.

The purpose of this study is to examine the frames used in discussing the violence, explain the violence in a globalized context, and to describe the Pink Chaddi Movement. This study also attempts to explain how various factors influenced the framing process and how the frames deployed by politicians and online supporters worked to shape the news story, the situation in Mangalore, and the internet protest movement. The paper begins with the theoretical perspectives of framing and their role in a conflict situation. In the next section, the context and history of the violence against minorities is delineated. Then the frames used to describe the stories of violence are analyzed. Finally the Pink Chaddi movement is described and analyzed.

2. Agenda Setting and Framing

Previous researchers have utilized the concept of agenda setting to study the influence of the extent of media coverage of an issue on audience perceptions of that issue (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). The central idea of agenda setting is that by the prioritization of some issues over others, the media shape the topics that the audiences think about and talk about (Abrajano & Singh, 2009). Previous researchers have also shown a causal link between the news media emphasis on particular issues and the audiences' rankings of the relative importance of these issues (McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Iyengar, Peters, and Kinder, 1982).

In addition to Priority issues, the media are also effective in shaping audience views of an issue, a concept termed as "framing." Essentially, news framing is the process by which the thematic or stylistic organization of news stories emphasizes a particular angle and not other story lines. Frames are valuable tools that allow journalists to make an issue less complex and more understandable to their audiences. Furthermore, it is much easier for the reporter to focus on a certain aspect of the issue. Current framing literature uses the concept in two ways: frame building and frame setting. Frame building mostly deals with "the question of how frames get established in discourse and how different frames compete for adoption by elites and journalists" (Bryant & Oliver, 2008, p. 22). Frame setting is usually concerned with the framing effects on audience members. For instance, news frames affect an audience's interpretation as well as their recollection of a story.

Thus framing and media language used to describe events play a key role in shaping public views. For example, when the media depicted affirmative action as a "special interest" issue rather than "an institutional effort for social justice," viewers came to regard the issue an individualistic moral problem rather than a societal concern (Gamson, 1983). While individuals may draw on other information and their own experiences, the media frame spurs certain ways of thinking about an issue and prevents other potential lines of thought (Price, Tewksbury, & Powers 1997). "While framing is an inevitable part of the communication process, media framing is not a random process but rather a powerful discursive strategy." (Tucker, 1998, p. 142). Indeed, there are a variety of reasons why news is framed the way it is. The framing of a story may be 'driven by ideology and prejudice' (Edelman, 1993), by an interaction of journalistic norms and the influence of societal groups (Gamson & Modigliani, 1987), or

perhaps by the influence and efforts of public relations practitioners (Esrock, Hart, D'Silva, and Werking, 2002).

Beyond framing by the news media, researchers have also examined how conflicts are exacerbated or diffused depending upon media coverage of such conflicts. As Omenugha and Adem state "the media can build as well as destroy. They can promote healthy conversations or inflame. Conflict may seem natural and normal but violence is a choice." (p. 53). Clearly, the concept of framing has come to be regarded as an integral factor that is intertwined with ethnic conflict and public opinion. Study of the opinion-formation process in a society is particularly vital in a democratic political system and, therefore, so too is the study of mass media, ethnic conflicts, and public issues. "We need to look more closely at the particular frames that are used and trace these through to their antecedents in the legislative process, social movements, or grassroots. In this way, we can make the study of issues more vital and central" (Kosick, 1993, p.120).

3. Social Movements and Virtual Community

Social movements may be described as networks of informal relationships among a diversity of individuals and institutions with a shared distinct collective identity. These networks mobilize resources on issues that concern them (Diani 1992).

In a computer mediated environment, examination of these networks would "include:

(a) The behaviour of specific movement actors, individuals or organizations;

(b) The relations linking individual activists and organizations to each other (Diani 1995; della Porta and Diani 1999);

(c) The feelings of mutual identification and solidarity which bond movement actors together and secure the persistence of movements even when specific campaigns are not taking place (Rupp and Taylor 1987; Melucci 1996). Treating movements as networks also makes the relationship between movements and their spatial location most explicit. Contemporary social movements have developed historically in parallel to the emergence of a public sphere located in specific physical and cultural spaces, namely, in societies defined by national boundaries, specific infrastructures and common cultural traits (Tilly 1978; Calhoun 1992; Emirbayer and Sheller 1999; Tarrow 1998)." (Diani, 2000, p. 388).

Individuals may participate in a computer-mediated movement because they believe in the issue even though they are not connected to the organizers by previous relationship or location. In such instances, communication technologies and informal networks can play important roles as disseminators of information. These movements provide 'new social spaces' where ... like-minded persons seek their own individuality in a complex and often contradictory world, (Johnston, 1994, p. 276). Additionally, new social movements draw their support in novel ways from across class and regional boundaries and place a high value upon grassroots, informal and 'hidden' forms of organization ... (Keane & Mier, 1989, p. 1).

Beyond political issues, Meeks (1997) suggests communication technology will allow for the increasing development of online communities that address a broad array of social issues and problems. Interactive media enable individuals to reach out to others with common interests, develop community, and organize to solve problems, from safety to land planning to volunteer campaign coordination (Conte, 1997).

4. Method

This study comprises two parts: frame analysis and internet movement analysis. Both parts utilize the qualitative research tradition. Because the study is in its initial phase, we report here only some parts of the data-gathering process. Ethnic violence in India is a complex issue and given the time constraints, we have been compelled to analyze these events in a cursory manner.

The researchers reviewed internet news accounts that had appeared in national and regional publications including the Hindu, Udayavani, the PUCL report, and the Pink Chaddi campaign, among others. (The next section of this paper includes citations for many of these articles.) Internet video sources (U-Tube) of NDTV and Daiji World, with images of the attacks, were analyzed. Web sources were used for locating and detailing all information about the Pink Chaddi Movement.

Furthermore, the authors have completed some in-depth interviews with individuals in Mangalore familiar with the case, and are in the process of conducting more interviews with various parties involved in the issue. The completed interviews were recorded and will be transcribed. Transcripts were marked to note key frames from the viewpoints of the participants. These transcripts, news coverage, and accounts on the Web site were integral in analyzing the Amnesia bar incident, how that framing was developed, and how the Chaddi movement evolved.

5. Historical Account of the Violence

Karnataka, in India has historically been a rather peaceful state compared to other Indian states in terms of communal violence. The effect of partition was least felt in the state; even after independence there have been no major communal conflagrations until the late eighties. Even in the late eighties, when southern Karnataka witnessed communal violence, following the publication of a short story in a major state-level English newspaper (Deccan Herald), with a misleading headline concerning Prophet Mohammed, Dakshina Kannada district was largely free of that type of disturbance. However, the district witnessed the growth of communal forces in the late eighties; by the time the Ram Mandir movement started gaining momentum across the country, the district in fact became one of the most Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-friendly districts. In 1991, in the general elections to the Lok Sabha (the people's assembly), BJP managed to get a member of its party elected from the Dakshina Kannada constituency. BJP had never won from this seat before.

In fact the precursor to the growth of BJP, which is supported by organisations like the RSS, VHP and Bajrang Dal and its off-shoots like the Shri Rama Sene, was also to do with the changing economic and social situation in the district. As the PUCL (2009, p. 10) states, the "current communal tensions in the district can be traced to the late 1970s, when the land reforms created new spaces for the various communities and castes to operate in and compete with each other." The right-wing Hindu fundamentalist

groups utilized the general economic deprivation among certain castes like the moghaveeras and billavas (PUCL, 2009) and drew them to their fold. The largely prosperous minority communities, like the Muslims (in business) and Christians, added to the tensions fuelled by the fundamentalist groups. The Ram Mandir movement, started by the VHP, and later adopted by the BJP in the late eighties, also brought more converts into the Hindu right-wing organisations.

The communal violence and tensions meanwhile became a regular feature in the district in the late 1990s. The communal riots in Surathkal, near Mangalore, the headquarters of the Dakshina district, in 1998, set off a series of incidents, in which mainly the Muslims were the target. "According to human rights activists, between 1998 and 2000, the district witnessed communal flare-ups ever six months. But as the new century dawned, the frequency averaged almost one incident every month. And now it happens every week" (Bidwai, 2009 para 2).

The organizations involved in these acts of physical violence and moral vigilantism against the minorities gained further ground and became more brazen after the BJP became part of the government in Karnataka in 2006. During this period, especially in Dakshina Kannada district, incidents of such acts grew menacingly. The law and order forces, however, seemed to ignore the incidents in some cases, they have even been accused of being complicit in the acts of these organisations. The advent of the BJP Government on its own strength in May 2008, is called as an important benchmark in the politics of the Hindu right in Karnataka (PUCL, 2009, p. 11). Within months of the swearing in of the new government, orchestrated attacks began on Christian churches. But some of its ministers, including the home minister trying to find fault with the Christians for the attack.

A section of the media both at the district level in Dakshina Kannada and at the State level, largely the Kannada media, also joined the orchestration with fiery and provocative articles which added to the already communalized atmosphere. The tragedy is that some leading Kannada language newspapers have made it a habit to publish false stories, baseless theories and imagined facts as scoop stories. For example, Vijaya Karnataka, the largest selling Kannada daily, recently carried a four-column article about 'coastal Karnataka's links with the underworld' in its coastal edition of September 8, 2006 (Gauri Lankesh, 2006).

Apart from these articles, a well known Kannada novelist, S.L.Bhairappa's book, "Avarana" which was released around the same time, contained provocative materials about conversion of the Hindus by the Christians. In one of the chapters titled, Could this have happened in any other country? he paints a picture of Christians as schemers out to destroy Hinduism through conversions, and as plunderers of wealth (Lankesh, 2008). He writes: "though conversion to Christianity has been taking place over the last four centuries it has gone up alarmingly ever since Sonia Gandhi was installed on the throne of power. But the media has never bothered about it. However, now that some people have woken up to the big problem facing them and have expressed their reaction in some areas of Orissa and Karnataka, the secular publications and the left leaning media are behaving as if India itself is being destroyed. Sonia's followers, intellectuals, leftists, secularists and others have taken the side of the missionaries and are tarnishing Hindu organisations, religious heads and the BJP….". A section of the Kannada media highlighting such writings and discussing them in articles only added to the already tense situation in the state, and especially in Dakshina Kannada district.

Emboldened by such support, and with the advent of the BJP Government in May 2008, the right-wing fundamentalist organisations took upon themselves the task of what they repeatedly say as "putting in place" the religious minorities. The attacks on Christians reached its peak between September 2008 and February 2009, when over 50 attacks against Christian churches were reported from different districts of Karnataka, including Dakshina Kannada, Chikamagalur, Davanagere, Tumkur and Chikkaballapur. "Meanwhile, the justification for the attacks against the Christians being touted by the BJP-RSS-VHP-Bajrang Dal, etc., is that Christian sects have been indulging in forcible conversions of the Hindus. New Life, a Pentecostal sect, has been identified as the main culprit, though the pro-Sangh Hindu mobs have made no distinction while attacking Catholics as well as other sects' places of worship."(Girish Nikam, Hardnews, March, 2009).

The attacks against churches were simultaneously accompanied by the moral vigilantism by the right wing groups. This assumed the form of tracking down Hindu boys and girls being seen with either Muslim or Christian boys and girls and harassing them. According to PUCL (2009), 45 cases of such vigilantism have been recorded until March this year, compiled through various newspaper reports. The climax to these various incidents and attacks was the Amnesia pub incident on Jan.25, 2009, where young women were attacked by activists claiming to belong to Shri Rama Sene. Emboldened by the enormous publicity which this incident attracted—the goons and their leaders became instant stars--Pramod Muthalik, the chief of the Sene, announced that they would not allow Valentine's Day celebration in the state. This announcement launched the Pink Chaddi Movement.

6. Pub Attack

The attack on the Amnesia pub, located in the heart of Mangalore, happened around 4 p.m., not really the time the hard drinking kinds choose to visit the pubs but a convenient time for students. A band of 40 people wearing saffron headbands and scarves (the signature wear of the right-wing fundamentalist groups), according to an eye witness as reported in newspapers, first huddled in a group and prayed silently before barging into the pub and chanting "Jai Shri Ram, Bharat Mata ki jai, Bajrang dal ki jai, Shri Rama Sene ki jai."

The PUCL (2009) report states, They asked to be let in so that they could get everybody out of the joint, a victim said. Even as the bouncers negotiated with them at the entrance, the pub's staff quickly closed the doors, and locked the bouncers outside. Hearing the noise, a curious kitchen staffer opened the rear door to see what was happening. The mob seized this opportunity and barged in through the kitchen. Once inside, they went straight for the women guests. They rounded them up at the centre of the dance floor and then started beating them mercilessly, she said. After the initial beating, some of the assailants began to single out some of them and molested them. We have been molested and humiliated in the name of God and country by people who obviously have no regard for either of the two, one of them told

One of them stripped a girl and groped her. She was also badly beaten up. We are still trying to trace her," she said. According to her, several girls were similarly targeted. They were laughing when they were doing all this. It was just fun for them,' she said. The attackers then targeted the men who dared come to the rescue of the girls. The narrator herself was slapped a few times." (The Hindu, 27.01.09).

Another victim spoke to the Times Now Channel covering her face. Recounting the trauma that no amount of consolation can erase she claimed that the Sri Ram Sene activists hurled abuses at them and called them prostitutes. We were attacked, beaten horribly our hair pulled we were kicked put on the floor. A few of our pants were pulled down, skirts pulled down. We were molested more than attacked. Being molested in front of the camera and being called prostitutes is something no girl wants to go through." "We are scarred for life.....We were thrown about, hit. What you did not see was what we saw that day—the footage of us being molested," recalled a horrified victim. They said that, "What happened on Saturday was traumatizing, but we need to feel safe again."

One of the facts to note about the attack was it was well-orchestrated with the media receiving advance notice of the attack. In fact the attack began only after the TV cameras were well-stationed to cover the attack in all its details. It should also be noted that Amnesia Pub is located in a posh, crowded and up market locality. This attack, occurring in broad daylight, was observed by numerous passersby. Among the large number of people who watched there was only one person, Pawan Kumar Shetty, who went to the defence of the girls who were being assaulted.

Recalling the events, Pawan Kumar explains: "I could not bear to stand and watch. I just ran into the attacking mob to get their attention away from the girls." Video clippings show the entire mob turning its fury on Pawan Kumar, allowing the women to escape. According to him, there were over a hundred bystanders, "but not one of them did anything to prevent the attack." Had the people united against the attackers, they could have easily chased them away. Instead, "Everyone was falling over one another to get a glimpse of the action. It was like a cricket match." (PUCL, 2009).

As the detailed narrative above indicates the members of these organisations have spread terror and even awe among the people. The pub incident demonstrated that no one was prepared to come to the rescue of either the girls or the pub owner who had bravely stood up against the attackers. The fact that saffron headbands and red tilaks have become a mark of power as well as terror is well explained by a professor who has worked for over a decade in the Mangalore University but who wants to remain anonymous. "Today saffron is the colour of power. You just walk around with a big red tilak and see how people treat you. Right from the shopkeeper to the bus conductor to the policeman, everybody gives you respect. Respect out of fear, not the real respect. Without the tilak you are nothing, with the tilak you become a power structure."

7. Analysis

7.1 Frames

Although several frames emerged in the reporting of the story, here we introduce two that dominated the discourse: (a) pub culture vs. authentic culture and (b) talibanization. Each frame allowed a particular interpretation of the Mangalore situation. We address each of these below:

7.2 Pub Culture vs Authentic Culture

Pub culture as reported in the media is a uniquely Indian phenomenon. A web blog that posed the question, "what is pub culture?" answered the question as follows: "If we analyze the term [it] really stands for women drinking and socializing with men in public places. Bars, or pubs, were there for years and men have been there always. As long as men were going there wasn't an iota of protest about this being anti Indian culture (India summary, 2009).

Reports on the pub attacks included condemnation of the attacks but often raised concerns about the moral premises of such pub socialization. The Chief Minister of Karnataka, for example was quoted as saying, 'Pub culture' is wrong and such cultures should not be permitted." (Pub culture should not be permitted, 2009, para 1). He was not alone in his views. Comments such as "pubs are bad for Indian culture." They violate Indian tradition also appeared in the news stories. Interestingly the comments condemned the attacks but not the premise on which they were based: regulating the lives of Indian women. As Bidwai (2009, para 2) states, the violence against women pub goers is an "imposition of an extremist, male supremacist, puritanical code of conduct with which to regiment society in the name of authentic culture." Disguised in the critique of pub culture is a construction of Indian culture as one of male power and privilege and reflective of a larger patriarchal structure that functions to subordinate women (Marin and Russo, 1999, p. 20).

The subordination, however, is veiled in the theme of protecting the women; in this case protecting the women (not the men) from western culture. For example, the chief of Shri Rama Sena, Muthalik, stated that pub culture was not Indian culture and that [we] need to …keep mothers and daughters safe from the onslaught of western ideology (iwebie.com 1st feb.).

Western ideology, a byproduct of globalization, is cited often as the reason for the marginalization and mistreatment of Christian minorities. (This theme is elaborated on further in this section.)

Muthalik also stated … "Hindu cultural heritage deserves being kept away from the maddening tide of disco, pop and hip-hop culture (iwebie.com 1st feb). The attacks on minorities on the curious pretext of keeping them safe from western culture raises an important issue: the fury of the attackers. The fury is evidenced in the beating of Dakshina Kannada women and in the degradation reported elsewhere (e.g., making the women pee in their pants for being in the company of men of other religions). Such fury raises other questions and brings other examples to mind. That marginalized minorities are the focus of malevolent attention is not new. Hitler, for example, chose to exterminate Jews, gypsies – German minorities – after making all sorts of claims about them.

The minorities in India, as are minorities elsewhere, are products of the country's history. The Christians in India are a product of Portuguese and British colonization – not a particularly happy history – and yet they are attacked and demonized for that unhappy history. Appadurai (2006, p. 43) posits a reason, "minorities are the major site for displacing the anxieties of many states about their own minority or marginality (real or imagined) in the world of a few megastates, of unruly economic flows and compromised sovereignties." In part, minorities become the flash point for the uncertainties sparked by globalization. Beyond the uncertainties, Appadurai contends some individuals develop predatory identities. Predatory identities (Appadurai, 2006, p. 51) are those, whose social constructions and mobilizations require the extinction of other, proximate social categories, defined as threats to the very existence of some group, defined as we. Thus the attacks on Christians, created a clear demarcation between the attacked other and the majority. Indeed these attacks while bestowing an otherness on Christians created group cohesion amongst the we – Hindu Indians.

The subordination of women, implicit in the condemnation of the pub culture, was captured in a different frame: talibanization.

8. Talibanization

Talibanization is a newly coined phrase used to describe the process where other religious movements copy the Taliban's activities such as the harsh treatment of women, forbidding schooling of women, forbidding certain clothing and hairstyles because they are westernized.

In the Indian context, the word was initially used by the Women & Child Development Minister, Renuka Chowdhary, when she said, "The state government is not in control of the law and order situation. Talibanization is happening. There is a clear communal divide where a Hindu girl is prevented from talking to a Muslim boy. It is a very dangerous trend." (PUCL p. 11). Specifically, the frame compares Taliban's strict rules for women, and their violent enforcement of their strict rules, to Hindu fundamentalists' (Sri Rama Sene) attacks on progressive young women in Mangalore.

Here, Chowdhary herself impacted the frame early on in the process establishing distinctive language to discuss the issue. Thus, she partly shaped how the issue was discussed by the media. Soon, talibanization became the metaphor of choice for activists and media. For example, human rights activist, Burka Singh stated, "Our society is a victim of contradictions whereby our Government castigates Pakistan over talibanization without ever explaining as to what is being done to control the fast spreading similar trend within India (Town Nine Times, para 4, July 18, 2009 www.town9.com/indian-talibanization).

A web blog went even further calling the Mangalore attacks, "more than talibanization" (livemint.com/2009/01/27205225 para 1 Jan 27 2009).

Although the frame 'talibanization' effectively captures the rigidity of thought behind the attacks, and makes salient the harsh treatment of women, the frame also invokes fear in its audiences. As such the problem-focused frame offers no hope. It does not allow sufficient room for a solution.

Despite the prevailing meaning of talibanization, the frame was co-opted by Hindutva supporters for their own ends and given a new meaning as is evidenced in the following web blog, "this episode … exposes the talibanized closed mindset of the 24x7 national media which no longer cares about approaching news with an open mind." (Mangalore's real shame – Talibanization of National Media, Feb 8, 2009. Site: offstumped.wordpress.com/2009/02/08.

The blogger criticized the mainstream media for its coverage of the Amnesia pub incident, particularly for highlighting the negative role of the Sri Rama Sene and by connection, the Hindutva people. The blogger's response, however, did not capture the sentiments of many others in the country. Indeed, activists, secular individuals and others protested the actions of a few Hindu fanatics.

9. A Movement is Born

In response to the Mangalore attacks, a group of women spearheaded a grassroots internet campaign that came to be known as the Pink Chaddi (Pink Panty) movement. The movement was so successful that it had garnered 21,000 members at the time of writing. Chaddi is a gender-neutral word (in several Indian languages) for undergarments. As explained on their website:

Pink Chaddi (Pink Panty) is A Consortium of Pub-going, Loose and Forward Women with a mission to send the Ram Sene and its Chief Pramod Muthalik a Pink Chaddi. Why send the Ram Sena a pink chaddi? Remember, the Ram Sena and its goons beat up young women in Mangalore for apparently going to pubs and with a dire warning not to celebrate Valentine's Day. And, hilariously, the Ram Sene says "no one from good families would resort to such cheap steps" - meaning they come from "good families" beating up women for going to pubs or dressing "indecently"! The Pink Chaddi campaign is a message that beating up Indian Women in public is against "ummm... AGAINST INDIAN CULTURE" too.

The web site received vicious invectives, supportive notes, and some persuasive arguments. Despite the stinging comments from some writers, the website became an important site for sustaining and encouraging women outraged or affected by the Mangalore (and later the Bangalore) incidents.

New social movements are often started by goal-oriented individuals. The Pink Chaddi was initiated by Nisha Susan who realized that something had to be done. Examining campaign rhetoric, Duffy (1997) notes "explanations of events can never be neutral; they are always organized to present events from a certain perspective and they invite others to share that perspective" (p. 129). The Pink Chaddi was not just a hook to hang the story of cultural policing but rather a powerful image and narrative that linked women who were attacked and women (and men) who were deeply troubled by the course of events. They established an us vs them mentality (see Hart, Esrock, D'Silva & Werking, 2001). They provided narrative closure. "Narrative closure is important not only because it "rounds out" the thematic and characterological developments within a story, but also because it imbues the story as a whole with its moral meaning. A story that concludes in a truncated or ambiguous

fashion can leave auditors confused, frustrated, or even apathetic because, having set before them a conflict or dilemma, it fails to disclose the terms on which that conflict or dilemma may be resolved in a morally satisfying manner. And this is all the more true in the case of narratives whose characters are depicted as explicitly "good" or "evil." (Griffin, 2000, p. 69). In the largest sense, a social movement reveals itself to the world in story form, complete with a moral compass and a purposive destination (Griffin, 2000). Despite detractors, the Pink Chaddi movement sustained itself, created enthusiasm amongst the people and succeeded in drawing attention to their cause. They successfully created a virtual community (Virnoche and Marx, 1997) where women (and men) sharing broad concerns about the issue but lacking opportunities for face-to-face interaction could meet and work for a common goal.

Indeed, the growth of the virtual community was simultaneous with establishment of clear antagonists, and a clear injustice, two ingredients of successful story structuring (Gamson, 1990; McCarthy, 1994). According to Hunt, Benford, and Snow (1994), social movements face three essential framing tasks: diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational. Diagnosis involves pinpointing a problem to ameliorate and the responsible parties. It specifies culpable agents with role identities of villain, culprit, or antagonist" (p. 191). Nisha's web site diagnosed the problem, identifying Pramod Muthalik as the culprit, and the opinions of movement supporters and orientation of subsequent news stories reinforced this diagnosis, serving to fuel wide acceptance of these views among her audience. Prognosis includes a plan for solving the problem. Here the action was clear: send a pink panty. Motivation centers in getting people involved -- the rationale for why people should join the cause. The news and human interest angles in the media coverage garnered support by resonating widely and "crosscutting identities (McCarthy, 1994, p. 134). Finally, the movement organizers found an effective medium to disseminate the information: the internet.

10. Discussion and Conclusion

The competing media frames generated by the attacks and the Pink Chaddi Movement are by no means over. Though the specific issue for which the Pink Chaddi campaign was launched has been relegated to the background, the broader reason why such a campaign became a necessity remains. The outcome of the campaign: valentine's day in Karnataka went off rather peacefully but it has not in any way detracted the perpetrators of the pub attacks as well as the church attacks. The Dakshina Kannada district, in particular, continues to witness instances of moral vigilantism as well as minority harassment. The latest is the case reported in the third week of August: a Muslim girl in a Bantwal college was ordered not to wear the head scarf to college. Beyond dictating head wear, the Hindu right-wing students found support from the college authorities. The way this incident found way to the national newspapers and TV channels is an indicator that even small everyday incidents, and minor problems will be magnified and become part of a larger narrative prompting either more attacks on minorities from individuals effectively manipulated by the fundamentalist Hindu groups or protests from disgusted citizens.

The Pink Chaddi Movement shows that it is possible for new virtual social movements with members connected to each other only through the web to birth, organize, and sustain an organized campaign. The internet helped to bring together rather disparate individuals, unconnected in space, into a customizable community (Jones, 1995) as a focused issue group (Abramson, Arterton, & Orren, 1988).

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