



Research Article

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# Framing War, Silencing Peace: A Comparative Analysis of Indian Print and Digital Media Coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

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## ABSTRACT

The study examines how selected Indian news media outlets framed the Oct 7, 2023 attacks and subsequent conflict between Israel and Palestine using a war and peace journalism lens. Galtung's peace journalism model and Lee and Maslog's (2005) indicators, which have been used as the analytical framework for the study. Through content analysis of news stories and photographs, the study identified dominant textual and visual frames, highlighting how peace and war frames compared across both print and digital media. The findings demonstrate the dominance of war journalism across textual and visual formats through the presence of indicators like 'visual effects of war,' 'difference-oriented framing,' and 'two-party orientation.' The analysis of print and digital news outlets gave a limited view as reflected in 'peace-oriented' and 'cause and consequences' indicators. This paper argues that, despite the theoretical potential of digital platforms to provide alternative narratives due to their endless space, interactivity, and ability to accommodate diverse perspectives, they largely mirror the war-centric framework of legacy media. Further, the paper contributes through a systematic comparative analysis of Indian legacy and digital media coverage of the Israel-Palestine conflict, integrating the textual and visual framing indicators. By inspecting how war and peace frames operate in different media formats in global south contexts, the study situates itself in comparative conflict reporting research.

## INTRODUCTION

The Israel-Palestine conflict is a global issue that has persisted for over a century following the Balfour Declaration of 1917 and Britain's administration of the Palestine mandate. It reached its deadliest chapters on Oct 7, 2023, when Hamas attacked Israel and killed 1200 citizens. Israel reacted with a chain of relentless violence in Gaza, subverting human rights, and international law, committing outright war crimes (Abbas et al., 2024; Baldwin, 2023). Human Rights Watch (2024) reported that civilians were targeted, attacked, and killed at an unprecedented scale. These massive violations prompted the death of more than 1200 Israelis and 55000 Palestinians, mostly children, women, and elderly, in a span of 20 months (AJLabs, 2025; UNOCHA, 2024). By the first six months, approximately seventy percent of fatalities

were women and children and 85% of Gaza's two million inhabitants were displaced (Human Rights Watch, 2024).

These gross violations of the civilian population call for an immediate need to document and report the catastrophic scale of humanitarian crises to the world. The reportage underscores the essential role of journalists as indispensable actors in establishing peace, as they are neither mere peacemakers nor drivers for conflicts; often they can help with mediation, reconciliation, and peacekeeping (Ross, 2006; Matschke, 2019). But newsrooms pressure journalists for real-time updates and opinions on evolving crises, which often increase the newsroom's workload. (Campbell, 1997; Gaunt, 1990; Tuchman, 1978). Moreover, in India, the dependency on big news agencies like Reuters, AP, and AFP also determines the presentation as well as the understanding of the causes,

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effects, and significance of the conflict (Evans, 2010). In a non-partisan country like India, Singh (2018) noted that the agencies carry a Western bias and tend to hegemonize the regional frames carrying alternative perspectives.

However, the media framing of attacks on Palestine did not align with the ground realities. It is important to examine media framing of conflict as it has the power to determine how the audience perceives. Entman (1993) defines media framing as the way information is selected, highlighted, and presented to shape public understanding and attitudes towards events. He earlier argued that news media offer the dominant interpretation in texts and images, which is more easily perceived, accepted, and remembered when it resonates with the audience's existing cultural schemas and beliefs (Entman, 1991). Lee & Maslog (2005) added that Galtung, in his examination of the role of the media in security and peace, found that framing either exacerbates tensions or fosters the understanding and reconciliation.

Peace Journalism studies show that framing aligns with two distinct approaches: war and peace. Galtung (1986) defined peace journalism as a solution-oriented approach focusing on nonviolent approaches for peace and reconciliation. War journalism, on the other hand, focuses on violence, blaming, and winning outcomes. Lee and Maslog (2005) operationalized the two constructs by offering indicators for analyzing media coverage of conflicts. Research on peace journalism usually examines global and regional conflicts such as the Kashmir tensions, Lebanon's (2006) war, and the Russian-Ukrainian war (Hussain, 2015; Nelson, 2019; Shinar, 2009) and more. These studies focus on the legacy media, and there is a gap in research on digital media or a comparison of the two, even as digital news is increasingly seen to challenge the dominant narratives (Hackett, 2011). The shift of audience to digital news raises questions about how digital outlets frame the Israel-Palestine conflict when compared to the legacy media.

Digital media is seen as democratizing information, giving marginalized voices a platform, and providing access to different viewpoints (Abhishek, 2022). It allowed individuals from both Israel and Palestine to share their stories of conflicts with even a far-off audience, demonstrating its powerful role in international conflict discourse (Miladi & Miladi, 2023). Due to its capacity to balance otherwise sensational, exaggerated and elite voices driven by conflict information often laced with sensationalism, exaggeration, and elite vices, digital news plays a significant role in India. (South Asia Media Solidarity Network, 2024). Given India's history of identity-based conflicts and religious polarization (Kumar, 2011; Sumra, 2020), examining media coverage of the Israel-Palestine conflict becomes particularly significant. Thus, this study examines how Indian print (The Hindu and Times of India) and digital (Scroll and Newslick)

media framed Israel-Palestine conflict. Galtung's (1986) peace journalism model and Lee and Maslog's (2005) operational indicators add to the analytical framework in order to comparatively analyze framing patterns in texts and visuals. Through empirical inquiry, this study contributes to the literature on peace journalism. While peace journalism has mostly been discussed in the Western context with an emphasis on war, this systematic comparative analysis from India adds value to the limited body of work in the global south by ascertaining if digital news diverges from legacy news' emphasis on giving way to peace narratives.

### Literature Review

Johan Galtung (1965) introduced the concept of peace journalism, challenging his seminal work on news values, where the media is more inclined towards war and violence compared to peaceful narratives while covering conflicts. Later, Galtung (1986) identified two distinct approaches to conflict coverage: peace journalism and war journalism. He further added that these approaches are through two dimensions: the high road, which promotes peace and reconciliation and the low road, which talks in support of conflict and violence (Galtung 2003). Scholars from different parts of the world substantiated that war reporting tends to suffer from sensationalism, material damage, and human loss (Allen & Seaton, 1999; Toffler & Toffler, 1994). Knightley (2000) found that war journalism uses the language of military triumph and focuses on action, but the narrative lacks context.

### Theoretical Framework

Galtung's model (1986) distinguishes peace journalism from war journalism as the former is truth-oriented, people-oriented, solution-oriented, and thus peace-oriented. For instance, it sees conflict with multiple parties and their goals, where truth is prioritized, and the voices of the marginalized are heard. War journalism, on the other hand, emphasizes violence, propaganda, elite voices and victory orientation. Hence, these news stories focus on conflict areas and battles, amplifying the binary narratives and the elite perspectives over those of the ordinary people, reducing conflicts to zero-sum frames.

Building on Galtung's idea, Lee and Maslog (2005) operationalized peace and war journalism into measurable indicators through their analysis of Asian regional conflicts in India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, and the Philippines. According to them, the salient indicators of peace journalism also include the avoidance of demonizing language, a non-partisan approach, and a multiparty orientation. Conversely, war journalism is supported by frames related to visible effects of war, a focus on here and now, and elite orientation. These indicators are used in this paper as analytical tools to allow structured comparison of texts and visuals on print and digital media platforms.



## Peace Journalism in the Digital Era

Peace journalism is a widely discussed scholarly genre in media studies, and for the last two decades, it has been considered a vital framework for assessing media coverage of conflicts, understanding its possible ramifications, and proposing strategies to promote peace (Lee & Maslog, 2005; Doll and Moy, 2022). Studies have applied peace journalism across media in print (Gouse et al., 2019), television (McGoldrick & Lynch, 2012), and more recently digital (Aslam, 2016). Aslam argued that digital media can provide a compelling and alternative form of engagement for the affected people. But this is not true for social media, which accentuates conflict, as it was studied in the case of the Pakistan-Taliban conflict. In India, Najar and Jape (2024) and Sreedharan (2009) studied coverage of Kashmir using a peace journalism framework to find a consistent absence of frames that support peace. Instead, a consistent pattern of war frames was visible. These studies, however, do not use Galtung's peace journalism model or Lee and Maslog's indicators to visual elements at all. There is a near absence of structured studies related to digital platforms using systematic theoretical approaches for the study of peace journalism in India. This study links the theoretical frameworks with empirical data through a comparative study of coverage of the Israel-Palestine conflict in print and digital media.

With the rise of digital platforms as major sources of news, conflict reporting has met with emerging complexities like misinformation, fake news, and political pressures (Mirziyoyeva & Rajabova, 2025). Their impact is witnessed in the overshadowing of the very principles of peace journalism. Journalism's role in the digital age has been questioned, if it pursues peace and reconciliation, unlike legacy news. Despite studies suggesting that digital media interactive and multi-platform features may transcend structural limitations of legacy news media by enabling multi-perspective and solution-oriented conflict reporting (Sehl et al., 2023).

News framing of conflict has usually been from a war journalism perspective (Bhowmik & Fisher, 2023), Ross and Tehranian (2008) demonstrated how language, tone, and structure shape conflict reporting. Peace journalism adopts neutral language, focuses on human impact, and prioritizes reconciliation. Beyond words as text, visuals (images, photographs, etc.) also have a role to play in how a conflict is visualized. Scholars have studied the impact of news visuals on audience perceptions. Visuals depicting human suffering or peaceful protest align with peace journalism, and those showing destruction and military actions align with war frames (Elega et al., 2022).

Even as studies on peace journalism are gradually increasing, not many engage with how different media platforms in the global south report conflicts (Wang, 2022). Some research has explored conflict coverage in non-Western media contexts, such as Hoon (2024),

demonstrating global scholarly interest beyond Western outlets. The application of peace journalism frameworks in the Indian context, especially those exploring digital news, remains unexplored. It is particularly relevant as contemporary mediatized discourse in the country is marked by a politically charged environment, shaped by nationalism, competitive markets, and misinformation (Udapa, 2019; Chakravartty & Roy, 2013). Conflict reporting in India thus evidently privileges elite voices, emphasizes episodic violence, and focuses on us vs them narratives (Sreedharan, 2009; Bhowmik & Fisher, 2023). At the same time, India's own internal conflicts (religious, ethnic, and regional) make the normative case for peace journalism relevant (Varshney, 2002; Brass, 2003). To address the identified gaps in the literature, the following research questions were proposed below.

## Research Questions

RQ1: How do Indian news outlets frame the Israel-Palestine conflict through the lenses of peace journalism and war journalism?

RQ2: How do Indian print and digital media differ in their textual and visual framing of the conflict through peace and war journalism indicators?

## METHOD

To examine how print and digital media framed the Israel-Palestine conflict, Lee and Maslog's (2005) set of indicators with Galtung's (1986) peace journalism model has been used as a theoretical framework guiding the analysis. Four prominent English media outlets with pan-India reach, two each from legacy (The Hindu & Times of India) and independent digital media (Newslick & Scroll), were purposely sampled. These outlets were selected based on the Reuters Digital report (2023), which indicates that selected legacy media outlets continue to attract high overall access and broad reach, while digital media outlets tend to draw smaller but more dedicated and highly engaged audiences, making them more accessible and influential sources of news in India.

Each of these outlets in print and digital outlets represents a different set of ownership structures and editorial orientations within the Indian media landscape. TOI is India's largest English daily, driven with a market-oriented emphasis on the mainstream and status quo (Barclay et al., 2014; Hanson, 1995; Saeed, 2015; Vanita, 2003), and The Hindu is one of the oldest newspapers (founded in 1878), and it demonstrates a weaker market orientation and greater accountability-driven journalism, focusing on public ethics over commercial imperatives. (Beam, 2003; Murthy et al., 2010; Shakuntala & Navjit, 2006). Digital platform Newslick identifies itself with the progressive movement and is known for a critical stance against government and businesses, providing alternative voices (Al Jazeera, 2023; Newslandry, 2021). Scroll.in

is an independent venture that prioritizes explanatory journalism and accountability, adopting a counter-hegemonic stance to traditional media (Dore, 2024; Scroll.in, 2021). These outlets indicate an evolved news landscape - a commercially focused legacy media, an accountability-driven old news organization, a progressive digital venture, and an independent digital news organisation focusing on long-form journalism.

Individual news stories and photographs/images of Israel-Palestine conflicts were extracted from the archives of these news websites, which are digital extensions of legacy media and are important for public communication for their appeal to a broader and more varied audience than print versions. In a linguistically diverse country like India, the choice of English-language news outlets may not fully capture the ideological breadth. The English language provides a neutral bridge to study the conflict frames within a common communicative space that transcends regional and ethnic biases often embedded in varied local languages. Moreover, English is the primary language in which the stories of Israel and Palestine are getting received from the foreign news agencies these news outlets subscribe to.

A keyword search was conducted on the websites by the researcher to identify stories and photographs relevant to the study. The keyword list comprised 'Israel,' 'Israeli,' 'IDF,' 'Palestine,' 'Palestinian,' 'Hammas,' 'Gaza,' 'Gaza Strip,' 'Middle East Conflict,' 'Israel-Palestine War,' and 'Israel-Hamas War.' Any story that included even one of these keywords was included in the sample, as any story of Israel and Palestine cannot be told without at least one of them. To enhance search, metadata filters, story formats (hard news, op-eds, editorials, and features), and site search were used. Stories that merely referenced or lacked concrete content about conflict were excluded. This approach ensured the final sample was useful for identifying relevant frames for the study.

The sampling period was three months (Oct 7, 2023 to Jan 7, 2024). A total of 728 text-based stories and 672 visuals were collected. The initial phase ensured dense and sustained media coverage due to the phenomenon of news fatigue (Oberge & Sollenberg, 2011), which reduces the importance of news with the passage of time. Also, a saturation point was reached with minimal variation in subsequent reportage on the Israel-Palestine conflict.

Using Lee and Maslog's (2005) key indicators of peace and war journalism, all news stories were coded and clubbed into three categories: peace journalism, war journalism, and mixed journalism. A story was classified as a peace-oriented story if it had a higher number of peace journalism indicators, while a story was labelled as a war journalism story if it had a higher number of war journalism indicators. We classified it as mixed if it has an equal number of peace and war journalism indicators.

All peace and war journalism indicators were coded as binary variables. "1" indicated the presence, and "0"

indicated the absence of indicators. Each news article was coded from 18 indicators. Coding was based on the presence of a value of 1 when the indicator was present in text or visual and 0 when it was absent. All the coding of all the indicators for each article was determined using the count of indicators. The photographs and images were categorized to ascertain their use by reporters. Photographs have a powerful effect because they can evoke 'sympathy for human suffering through visual documentation' (Ottosen, 2007). The subject of the photographs, like infrastructure damage, civilian impact, and human casualties, is used to categorize the photos. Microsoft Excel was used for data entry; each article was assigned a unique ID, and the columns depicted variables like media source, media type, publication date, medium, headline, and visual details.

Reliability = (number of agreements/Total number of observations) \* 100

Two trained independent coders completed the coding of stories and photographs. To manage reliability, a cross-verification process was used. One-fourth of the total news articles and photographs were independently recorded to ensure reliability. Each coding variable's reliability coefficient is above 90%, suggesting a high degree of agreement and consistency. To minimize coder bias, a structured coding manual with pre-defined operational indicators was employed, and discrepancies were managed through discussion of difficult items, concluding in final group decisions. These measures, along with efforts to reduce individual interpretation and enhance transparency, were implemented to ensure greater replicability and objectivity in the coding process.

## RESULTS

The study analyzed a total of 728 news articles and 672 photos from the four news outlets: The Hindu and The Times of India, Scroll, and Newslick. The content was coded, categorized, and assigned themes based on which war or peace frames for respective stories and photographs were determined. A comparison of the framing of texts and visuals gives a nuanced understanding of the Israel-Palestine conflict narrative.

### How do Indian news outlets frame the Israel-Palestine conflict through the lenses of peace journalism and war journalism?

The Israel-Palestine conflict was overwhelmingly framed through a war-journalism lens, with war journalism indicators appearing frequently in the selected print and digital outlets (Table 2). The dominant patterns that emerged had 'visible effect of war' as the most frequently occurring indicator. This was followed by 'difference-oriented' and 'two-party orientation' subsequently.

**Table 1:** Indicators of War and Peace Journalism

<i>War Journalism</i>	<i>Peace Journalism</i>
Visible effects of war	Invisible effects of war
Elite-Oriented	People-Oriented
Difference-oriented	Agreement-Oriented
Dichotomizes between the good and bad	Avoids labelling of good and bad
Two-party orientation	Multi-party orientation
zero-sum orientation	win-win orientation
Partisan orientation	Non-partisan orientation
Uses demonizing language	Avoids demonizing language
Focus on here and now.	Causes and Consequences

Notes: Adapted from peace and war journalism models developed by Galtung (1986) and Lee and Maslog (2005).

**Table 2:** Frequency of War Journalism Indicators

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>TOI</i>	<i>Hindu</i>	<i>Scroll</i>	<i>Newslick</i>
Visible Effects of War	12.46%	13.65%	13.24%	11.90%
Elite-Oriented	14.13%	13.17%	11.39%	10.85%
Difference-Oriented	13.29%	13.31%	13.10%	12.25%
Dichotomizes Good/Bad	10.65%	9.76%	10.68%	11.20%
Two-party Orientation	12.63%	11.67%	12.67%	11.73%
Zero-sum Orientation	9.99%	10.85%	10.96%	11.20%
Partisan Orientation	8.05%	9.14%	8.40%	11.20%
Demonizing Language	3.78%	4.98%	6.12%	8.05%
Focus on Here and Now	14.97%	13.44%	13.39%	11.55%

The most salient indicators, those with the highest scores, were considered. The coverage of the Israel-Palestine war focused heavily on employing war indicators, as seen in Table 4. More specifically, the three most prominent indicators in The Hindu were ‘Visible effects of war,’ ‘Focus on here and now,’ and ‘Difference oriented.’ These indicators accounted for 13.65%, 13.44%, and 13.31% of the coverage, respectively. In the case of TOI, the most frequently used indicators included ‘Elite-oriented’ and not ‘Visible effects of war.’ In Newslick, ‘Difference Orientation’ emerged as one of the three most common indicators with a score of 12.25%. The top three indicators on Newslick accounted for 35.88%. In The Scroll, ‘Focus here and now’ emerges as the most frequent indicator, with 13.39%. Notably, the use of demonizing language was the least employed indicator among the war indicators for all four outlets.

For example, on 8 Oct 23, TOI published a story, sourced from news agencies, that talks about the unprecedented assault by Hamas fighters through various means of transportation and the capturing of the civilians, which highlights a major indicator of ‘Focus here and now,’ which is immediate reporting without any historical, political, or social context. (The Times of India, 2023). On 7 Oct 23,

Scroll staff published a story, writing on the causalities, injuries, and destruction, which shows the indicator of visible effects of war, where reporting focused on tangible and physical impacts. (Scroll.in, 2023).

On the other hand, the three most prominent peace journalism indicators employed in The Hindu’s coverage were ‘People-oriented’ (18.66%), ‘Causes and consequences’ (15.33%), and ‘Invisible effects of war’ (13.49%). These indicators represent outlets’ minimal approach towards voices of ordinary citizens in conflict while disseminating the actual causes and consequences of conflict.

For the TOI, they were ‘Avoiding demonizing language’ (18.20%), ‘Cause and consequences’ (15.53%), and ‘Invisible effects of war’ (13.28%). In the digital media sample, Cause and Consequences topped for The Scroll with 17.87%, followed by ‘Invisible effects of war’ with 16.53%, and ‘People-oriented’ with 15.39%. Newslick showed a similar pattern led by ‘Invisible effects of war’ (23.35%) and followed by ‘Causes and consequences’ (21.71%) and ‘People-oriented’ (18.75%). Across all four outlets, ‘win-win orientation’ remained the least used peace journalism indicator.

Newslick published a story (19 Oct 2023) titled “British Roots of conflict in Palestine” by Saurav Sarkar, which explained how the British played a crucial role in this conflict (Balfour Declaration), further explaining the cause and consequences of the conflict, which is a major indicator of peace journalism, as it highlights the underlying causes and long-term effects of the conflict (Newslick, 2023). Another story published by TOI on 9 Oct 23, sourced by the Associated Press, discussing how Israeli and Palestinian supporters rallying for their cause involved ordinary people with different perspectives, stated they used the ‘people-oriented’ indicator (The Times of India, 2023).

These findings highlight that while alternative digital media (Newslick, Scroll) have shown slightly higher commitment to peace-oriented frames, they did not significantly deviate from the dominant war journalism paradigm. The presence of indicators like “visible effects

**Table 3:** Frequency of Peace Journalism Indicators

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>TOI</i>	<i>Hindu</i>	<i>Scroll</i>	<i>Newslick</i>
Invisible effects of war	13.28%	13.49%	16.53%	23.35%
People-oriented	12.71%	18.66%	15.39%	18.75%
Agreement-oriented	6.04%	7.53%	6.27%	6.57%
Avoids labelling good/bad	9.62%	7.71%	7.79%	3.28%
Multi-party orientation	10.11%	12.44%	13.87%	12.17%
Win-win orientation	3.58%	4.38%	3.99%	1.97%
Non-partisan orientation	10.89%	8.67%	7.60%	3.20%
Avoids demonizing language	18.20%	11.74%	10.64%	8.88%
Causes and consequences	15.53%	15.33%	17.87%	21.71%

of war,” “elite-oriented,” and “difference-oriented” in the narrative explain why most selected outlets framed their stories primarily from the scope of war journalism, despite the Scroll and Newslick’s less restrictive editorial policies.

With the extremely few opinion pieces and lengthy forms of analysis (editorials, op-eds, and explainers), the analysis highlights the prevalent inclination for hard news and immediate event coverage. This pattern reveals structural editorial bias that favors short-term, elite-centric narratives over a long-term, civilian-centric approach, which is essential for peace journalism. Additionally, throughout the analysis, hard news was the most used format among selected outlets to report conflict, with opinion pieces and features appearing less frequently.

The primary cause for the predominance of war-oriented framing is Indian media’s overreliance on international news agencies for their conflict reporting. In the sample, wire agencies provided 73% of the stories for TOI, whilst The Hindu relied on agencies for 63.04%. Newslick used 46.47% of their content, while Scroll used 27.08% of their reports. This dependence often limits the newsroom’s ability to contextualize and diversify narratives. As wire news agencies write for global circulation, they are event-driven and prioritize breaking developments, which leaves behind the very essentials of peace journalism. Therefore, the outlets showcase the war farming and just replicate the very systems that these wire agencies rely upon, rather than using independent reporting driven by contextual depth and alternative perspective. As wire news agencies write for global circulation, they are event-driven and prioritize breaking developments, which leaves behind the very essentials of peace journalism. Therefore, the outlets showcase the war farming and just replicate the very systems that these wire agencies rely upon, rather than using independent reporting driven by contextual depth and alternative perspective.

**How do Indian print and digital media differ in their textual and visual framing of the conflict through peace and war journalism indicators?**

A comparative analysis reveals that both textual and visual coverage were mostly framed using war journalism indicators. However, the intensity and specific patterns of framing varied between print and digital media outlets, as well as between textual and visual formats. The study

compares both within each outlet across print and digital media by coding both text and visuals separately for war, peace, and mixed frames.

*Framing of Texts*

In the Times of India, 69.94% of the text stories had a war-related theme, 27.17% had a peace-oriented theme, and 2.89% fell into a mixed group, showing a greater war tendency. With 62.67% of stories focused on war and only 31.33% on peace, 5.99% were mixed-oriented in The Hindu. Among the digital platforms, Newslick exhibited the highest reliance on war-oriented framing, with 88.88% of the textual content being war-oriented and only 11.11% adopting peace frames. The Scroll also had a similar pattern, with 69.07% of stories that aligned with war journalism and only 27.83% on peace journalism, and 3.09% categorized as mixed journalism across its 97 stories.

Print outlets (The Hindu and Times of India) showed a strong dominance of war journalism, while digital platforms (Newslick and Scroll) displayed an even more war-oriented framing, with Newslick topping the charts with 89% carrying war journalism indicators.

*Framing of Visuals*

Visual framing across print and digital media weighed heavily towards war journalism. In the print category, the TOI featured 89.29% war visuals, while the TOI showed presence in 85.79% of the stories. Scroll depicted war visuals in 88.04% and Newslick in 77.14% of the stories. Peace-oriented visuals remained consistently lesser at 23% of the total 672 visuals. Overall, all four platforms exhibited war framing in more than 75% of their visuals, with Times of India recording the highest at 89.29%.

*Textual and visual framing within each outlet*

The following table further illustrates the differences between textual and visual representations within each outlet:

These trends imply that visuals strengthen conflict narratives more than texts in both print and digital media. The images typically showed the scenes of violence, destruction, and elite individuals, emphasizing the major indicators like “visible effects of war” and “elite-oriented,” shaping the public perceptions aligning with war.

The most prominent indicator across the visuals was visible effects of war, appearing most frequently in both

**Table 4:** Distribution of textual story framing by outlet

Media outlet	Total stories	War journalism (%)	Peace journalism (%)	Mixed journalism (%)
The Hindu	213	62.67%	31.33%	5.99%
Times of India	346	69.94%	27.17%	2.89%
Newslick	72	88.88%	11.11%	0%
Scroll	97	69.07%	27.83%	3.09%

**Table 5:** Distribution of visual frames by outlet

Media outlet	Total visuals	War journalism (%)	Peace journalism (%)
The Hindu	183	85.79%	14.20%
Times of India	327	89.29%	10.70%
Newslick	70	77.14%	22.85%
Scroll	92	88.04%	11.95%



**Table 6:** Text and Visual Segregation for “The Hindu” and “Times of India”

Outlet	Format	War (%)	Peace (%)	Mixed (%)
The Hindu	Text	62.67%	31.33%	5.99%
	Visuals	85.79%	14.20%	0%
Times of India	Text	69.94%	27.17%	2.89%
	Visuals	89.29%	10.70%	0%

**Table 7:** Text and Visual Segregation for “Newsclick” and “Scroll”

Outlet	Format	War (%)	Peace (%)	Mixed (%)
Newsclick	Text	88.88%	11.11%	0%
	Visuals	77.14%	22.85%	0%
Scroll	Text	69.07%	27.83%	3.09%
	Visuals	88.04%	11.95%	0%

text and visuals. This suggests that the coverage was mostly focused on the immediate effects of violence, including deaths, injuries, and physical destruction of war, while ignoring the conflict’s structural or historical roots. “Elite oriented,” which came from direct parties involved in the conflict, was the second most prevalent visual indicator. One such opinion post, “Why Biden Lied on Gaza Hospital Attack,” which was published in Newsclick on October 20, only featured remarks from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the US president, and other prominent figures. This reliance on elite sources emphasizes how elite actors and leaders serve as the main conflict narrators.

Images of battle tanks, damaged infrastructure, and covered corpses dominated the visual coverage of all four outlets. On October 26, Newsclick published a photo of the murder of the family of journalist Wael Al-Dahdouh of Al-Jazeera’s Arabic bureau in Israeli bombing (Newsclick, 2023). The image showed Wael carrying out his journalistic duties while standing in front of a destroyed structure. These visuals highly contribute to the story of war journalism and strengthen the audience’s perception of it as a typical activity seen in any armed conflict.

## DISCUSSION

This research studied the usage of war and peace journalism frames in coverage of the Israel-Palestine Conflict by Indian print and digital media. The study differentiated between the text and visual representations of the same. The findings of the study showed war journalism frames being used more often than peace journalism frames. Several indicators of war journalism frames, including “Visible effects of war,” “Elite orientation,” and “Difference orientation,” recurred most frequently, suggesting that conflict reporting remains event driven, elite centric, and polarized.

The prevalence of war frames reinforces Galtung’s foundational critique that legacy media, a big contributor

to mainstream media, still emphasizes violence-oriented narratives over peace-oriented perspectives. Despite decades of normative advocacy for peace journalism, the findings suggest the war-oriented reporting continues to be the dominant narrative in conflict coverage. This pattern aligns with prior studies on coverage of Kashmir Conflict, the Russia-Ukraine war, and the Pulwama-Balakot attacks (Sreedharan, 2009; Arulchelvan, 2023), indicating the dominance of war frames is not just episodic but infused in different geopolitical contexts. Moreover, it favors the argument that peace journalism still remains more aspirational than institutional within newsroom practices.

Although digital media showcases a slightly higher use of peace journalism indicators compared to print media, the divergence was not substantial enough to indicate a structural transformation in conflict framing. It also contradicts the earlier claims by Aslam (2016), highlighting the role of digital media in offering alternative narratives during conflict and fostering audience engagement. Instead, it supports the arguments by Fahmy and Hussain (2023) who stated that digital platforms often recreate the dominant conflict narrative. The reason for this may be attributed to relatively more editorial freedom with digital platforms; thus, they are able to represent independent news media in India. (Prasad, 2021; Kumari et al., 2024). The shift of narrative from conflict towards peace is challenging as war frames prevail in digital media despite its potential for peace journalism.

The near absence of indicators like “invisible effects of war,” “people-oriented,” and “multi-party-oriented” clearly depicts a lack of peace-building stories. Peace journalism focuses on contextualization, multiple voices, and long-term consequences, yet these elements are largely overshadowed by immediate, event-focused reporting. This gap between peace journalism framework and its empirical practice suggests that peace journalism faces significant institutional constraints within media environments.

This study explains the structural and systemic constraints that limit the practical implementation of peace journalism frames due to their sourcing patterns. The overreliance on international wire agencies—for instance, around 73% of TOI reports and 63.5% of The Hindu reports are sourced by the international wire agencies—shows the global news flow in domestic conflict narratives. Elite-centric and dramatic narratives are cited due to editorial hierarchies, limited newsroom resources, reliance on wire services, and high demand for real-time digital reporting. (Frangonikolopoulos & Kalfeli, 2024). These findings resonate with the hierarchy of influence model (Reese & Shoemaker, 2014) and Hanitzsch’s (2007) conceptualization of journalism culture, suggesting that the barriers to peace narratives are not just ideological but deeply institutional ones.

The visual analysis further strengthens the theoretical implications. The presence of war-related visuals, including graphic casualty images, destruction, and military activity, indicates how visuals reinforce the conflict-centric narrative. While the analysis of visuals demonstrates important dimensions overlooked in peace journalism as it is traditionally focused on textual media coverage (Batool et al., 2015; Lacasse and Forster, 2012). This study shows the visual elements can independently amplify the war orientation, even when the accompanying text is neutral or peace-oriented in nature. The presence of violent imagery alongside balanced text suggests multimodal dissonance, which magnifies conflict salience. This finding indicates the limitation in peace journalism framework, which has insufficiently theorized the independent framing of visuals.

Overall, the study showcased the slight use of peace-oriented frames by digital media in expanding media narratives; war journalism remains structurally dominant across both legacy and digital media in India. By placing these findings in peace journalism theory, digital media debates, and models of news production, the study adds to ongoing debates on the feasibility of practicing peace journalism in contemporary times.

## CONCLUSION

This study aids in the advancement of the peace journalism framework in the Indian media context and extends its methodological scope to visual and textual content. This area remains unexplored in peace journalism scholarship. By analyzing four major English language outlets across print and digital media platforms in their coverage of the Israel-Palestine conflict, the study offers empirical insights into how war and peace journalism frames operate within contemporary Indian media systems.

Beyond the empirical findings, the study contributes to current discussions in peace journalism by showing the persistent use of war-oriented narratives even in evolving digital media systems. The findings suggest the challenges of implementing peace journalism are not merely professional or ideological but deeply embedded within institutional routines, sourcing practices, and competitive news values, which privilege elite voices, immediate reports, and dramatization. This has broader implications for conflict reporting, as this will reinforce the visible violence and binary framing rather than fostering dialogue.

The study brings attention to the structural and systematic constraints that shape conflict reporting in India. In the global context, the practicability of peace journalism is determined by structural, institutional, and technological realities. The reinforcement of visible violence and binary framing, rather than multi-party dialogue and contextual depth, reflects broader patterns within contemporary news production. These structural

pressures limit the translation of peace journalism from normative ideal to routine practice.

From the standpoint of media ethics, the result emphasizes the need to shift beyond the formal commitments to balance and neutrality towards a more reflexive engagement in framing choices, including visual depiction. The study's integration of textual and visual research showcases how multimodal news creation changes conflict narratives, indicating the ethical standards for conflict reporting should also apply to sourcing patterns, headline development, and images. The study shows the need for re-evaluating the role of media as an agent of peace rather than a harbinger of war.

The study, however, has certain limitations. The number of outlets is limited to four news organizations, and the total sample consists of 1400 stories and photographs. The language of choice—English—doesn't fully represent the linguistic diversity of the Indian media. The three-month sampling period reflects the early stage of conflict, during which events were rapidly evolving. Additionally, the manual coding used for the interpretation of peace and war journalism indicators carries a degree of inevitable subjectivity.

Future research may expand the scope of peace journalism analysis to regional language news outlets to better understand the socio-political context that shapes the framing of conflict. The shift in conflict framing over a long period of time can be studied by longitudinal studies, which may provide deeper understanding of how the conflicts are framed when they evolve over time.

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