

Role of Media in Climate Change, Environmental Justice, and Disaster Risk Management

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.63163/jpehss.v4i1.1248>

Abstract

The significance of media in climate transformation, promoting environmental justice, and containment of the threat of calamity has become more relevant. This leads to shaping the masses. This impacts the longevity of creating the community, as well as the choice of policy. The media comprises the social, digital, and conventional news outlets. This is essential in the propagation of scientific knowledge. It encourages discussions on how the environment could be ethically conducted and puts the most at-risk communities in the limelight. The media can be used to amplify the voices of marginalized groups. The effect of this on climate change is disproportionate. It promotes environmental justice. The media is a key player in dispensing early alerts in crises. This is a way of coordinating the emergency responses. Also, it informs the people of risk-reduction strategies. But the challenges encountered by fake news, biased reporting, and the absence of representation are still immense. To have an impact in promoting climate action, it is necessary to ensure the capacity of the media to provide timely, accurate, and inclusive reporting. This enhances social justice and boosts the preparedness and resilience of communities at risk of disasters.

Keywords: Media, Climate Change, Environmental Justice, Disaster Risk Management, Communication, Resilience.

Introduction

Various themes concerning climate change have been changing in the last few years. They do this from their primary area of study to a significant public concern. This is because it has a global impact on economies, communities, and natural systems. Numerous media outlets, such as newspapers, radio, television, and digital platforms, serve as important bridges. This is between the public and scientific communities. They create tools from this complex climate data. The perceptions of the public and comprehension are shaped by this. Research indicates that international media are important. This is to educate the audience on the dangers. This is associated with climate change. It affects how people perceive changes in the environment. Pro-

environmental actions from people are also encouraged by this. This is the exposure to this climate change knowledge. The media is used to do this. A rise in consciousness is favourably correlated with it. Additionally, this promotes measures to address environmental problems (The Role of Change Risk in Climate Assessment in Pro-environmental Behaviour and Exposure of the Media to the Change of Climate Information, 2024, May 11).

While it is important for the coverage of the media for awareness, this is the representation of environmental issues, which varies greatly across contexts. Research on Pakistani media shows a shift in coverage of climate and environmental issues. These are often underrepresented as compared to political or economic news. This suggests that the priorities of the editorial influence how these environmental risks are framed and understood by the public (Effects of Climate Change on Society: An Analysis of the Role of Pakistani Media, 2025, March 3).

This is the limited coverage that can undermine the urgency of the public and also hinder long-term engagement with climate issues. Furthermore, the studies of newspapers that report in Pakistan show that environmental disasters and crisis events tend to dominate coverage. This is done with less emphasis on the causes of the systemic issues, the policy responses, or the dimensions of equity (Exploring the Climate Change Reporting in Pakistani newspapers, 2025, August 19). All of these findings point to the agendas of the media. This greatly influences the opinion of the public and emphasizes the need for more consistent and impartial reporting of the environment. Beyond raising awareness of equality and concerns of justice, the media has a significant impact. Vulnerable and underprivileged groups are disproportionately affected by climate. But attaining justice for the environment demands both acknowledging the realities of science and elevating the voices of those who are most impacted. This study focuses on the coverage of Pakistani media. This is both domestically and internationally. It highlights how the media frequently fails to sufficiently draw attention to the unequal burden that threatens the place of climate on underprivileged groups. This restricts the comprehension of public justice of climate and its moral ramifications (The Role of National and International Media in Pakistan during the Climate Crisis, 2025, March 3).

Problem of the Statement

The linked concerns are still inadequate and uneven despite the growing dangers to the environment and coverage of the media on climate change. In situations like Pakistan, where the vulnerability to climate is severe, this is especially true. Additionally, research shows that political and economic issues are frequently given precedence over environmental reporting in the media of Pakistan. This leaves the public under-informed about the causes, consequences, and urgency of climate change and related disasters (Is Pakistan's Media Ignoring Climate Change? 2024, March 12). This lack of consistent and in-depth coverage undermines the public understanding, effectiveness, and engagement with one of the most critical issues. This affects the national and global well-being. Moreover, where changes in climate and events of the disaster are reported, this media framing tends to be descriptive. This is rather than analytical or solution-oriented. Content analyses of newspapers in Pakistan reveal that this coverage frequently focuses on descriptions of episodic events. This is done without contextualizing them within a broader climate and without reducing the risk frameworks appropriately (International Social Science Council (ISSC) Standing Committee on Social Science Data Archives, 1969). These patterns of reporting restrict the audience and the root causes of systemic problems. Additionally, this reduces the chances of an informed public. This is to express their opinions and support policies. Long-term resilience and environmental justice depend on this. Another significant problem is the unequal access to reliable climate data. Different societal groupings do this. Also, it is found that underprivileged and isolated populations struggle to access reliable news concerning the environment. This is evidence of the awareness and agility of the most vulnerable group to the effects of climate change. Such an

information gap also brings out the disparities in environmental justice. It is appalling that communities are already disadvantaged socially and economically. Because of this, they are being less engaged in decision-making and communication procedures. The structural issues also receive focus due to these global developments in environmental journalism. Examples of this are fake news, intimidation of journalists, and insufficient funding for investigative reporting on climate. Studies have revealed that a good number of journalists are pressured. They tend to self-censor because of fear or institutional support not being there. This is due to a lack of training. This poses an even greater challenge to the media to educate the masses about the dangers of climate change and remedies for the same (Nearly Half of Journalists Covering the Climate Crisis Globally Received Threats for their Work, 2024, June 5). While many studies examine media coverage of climate, they tend to be *event-driven or descriptive* rather than analytical or interpretive. Resilience or Rhetoric? (A Framing Analysis of Flood Disaster Reporting in Pakistan's Media 2025, October 28). Much of the global literature on the communication of climate and the effects of the media comes from the *Global North*, with far fewer studies focused on the *Global South*. This includes Pakistan (A Systematic Review of the Literature on Climate Justice: A Comparison between the Global North and South, 2024, November 13).

Although digital platforms are recognized as important tools for raising awareness of climate change, existing research has not fully explored how *social media ecosystems influence public perceptions, misinformation spread, and engagement patterns*. This is especially about image or video platforms and non-English content (Promoting Reliable Knowledge about Climate Change: A Systematic Review of Effective Measures to Resist Manipulation on Social Media, 2024, October 31). There is also limited systematic research on how the media represent *environmental justice concerns*. This specifically concerns the voices and lived experiences of marginalized and vulnerable populations. Literature tends to focus more on the broad impacts of climate change than on the ethical dimensions of justice in media narratives. This is especially true in developing countries (A Systematic Review of the Literature on Climate Justice: A Comparison Between the Global North and South, 2024, November 13). Studies on media and disaster risk management often treat components such as early warnings, coordination of emergencies, and recovery in isolation. There is a lack of *holistic communication models* that show how different channels of media interact to support integrated reduction of risk and preparedness strategies (Adanlawo & Chaka, 2025).

Scope of the Study

The importance of this study is proved by the fact that it illustrates the role of the media in significantly contributing to knowledge on climate. This creates attitudes and perceptions of the people towards the environment in society. Past studies show that the media have a strong role in creating awareness among the masses about climate change, but they tend to be shallow and inconsistent. This is more so in less developed nations such as Pakistan, where the coverage is not coherent and is poorly arranged. This is a measure of long-term awareness and action. (International social science council (ISSC) Standing Committee on Social Science Data Archives, 1969). The research makes a significant contribution to the body of knowledge on the relationship between media representation and environmental justice. Another important aspect of environmental justice is equality and non-discrimination. That is what happens to the marginalized due to a lack of representation of communities in making environmental decisions. Recent reports have indicated that the media does not always provide an accurate representation of the expected perspectives of the disadvantaged. Climate change has a severe effect on this. It intensifies the disparity in the availability of discourse and knowledge to the populace. Our job assists in the further explanation of the importance of media representation, which could promote social justice and emphasize marginalized groups, and thus, help to raise awareness about these disparities. This

paper is based on risk communication during a disaster. It is another interesting contribution. The use of media has taken over awareness. It transfers to the real-world implications in the case of preparedness. This assists in assuaging risk and coordinating a response. According to a study conducted in Pakistan, crisis communication is significant in times of natural disasters. To this, the use of digital platforms is applied. It also incorporates social media, which is yet to be fully exploited. This highlights the importance of evaluating the potential of the media to enhance the resilience of communities and early warning systems (An Analysis of Environmental Disasters in Pakistan Using E-governance for Crisis Communication, 2024, May 19). The impact of education on determining media literacy is also discussed in this study. This also contributes to preparing for the interaction with the people on environmental-related issues. Social media campaigns have been demonstrated to promote sustainable behaviour and involvement of the people in the fight against climate change. Nevertheless, the knowledge deficiency among the media still blocks productive communication and contact with the audience (The Role of social media in Promoting Climate Change Awareness and Media Literacy in Sindh, Pakistan, 2025, August 27).

Justification of the Study

Declines of the environment and changes in climate have become critical all over the world and have impacted vulnerable nations disproportionately. This is encompassed in Pakistan, where they are subjected to extreme weather conditions. Not only this, but they also face floods, droughts, and pollution despite minimally contributing to global emissions. Recent reports show that Pakistan has been among the most affected by climate change. This has profound effects on lives, livelihoods, and the development of trajectories (China and Pakistan: A Journey Together in Building Environmental Stability and Justice, 2024, December 27). Media serve as primary channels through which scientific data, developments of policy, and risk warnings of risk are transmitted to societies. However, critiques of practices of media in Pakistan and similar contexts highlight that reporting of climate is often episodic, lacks depth, and prioritizes sensational events over sustained, solution-oriented discourse ('Media Must Do Sustainable Climate Reporting to Solve Climate Crisis', 2025, February 8).

In many cases, issues of the environment are framed in many ways. This fails to build a long-term understanding of the public or encourage proactive engagement with strategies of mitigation and adaptation. Moreover, environmental justice issues are the fair treatment and inclusion of marginalized communities. This is disproportionately affected by environmental harms and is infrequently addressed in mainstream media narratives (How to Reduce the Effects of Climate Change, 2023, July 9). Without the inclusive representation, the discourse of the public and responses to the policy may overlook the realities of the lives of those who are most at risk. Additionally, effective risk communication of disasters, particularly before and during emergencies related to climate, remains an under-researched area. This has significant implications for the resilience of the community and preparedness (Roundtable Conference on Climate Change and the Role of Media at the Institute for Strategic Studies, 2023, November 28).

Research Objectives

- I. To evaluate the influence of Media communication on public awareness and understanding of climate change and environmental issues.
- II. To assess the role of media in representing issues of environmental justice.
- III. To analyze the effectiveness of media in disaster risk communication.

Research Questions

- I. What impact does media coverage have on the general knowledge of the public and comprehension of change and other environmental issues?

- II. How does media represent the justice of environmental problems, impacted by environmental risks and climate change?
- III. How well does the media convey information about disaster risk to improve community readiness and response?

Literature Review

Media and Climate Change Communication

Scholars have shown that there is an increasingly highlighted importance of the role that the media play in shaping public awareness, attitudes, and understanding of climate change. Media serve as the intermediaries that translate complex scientific information into comprehensible content. They do this for general audiences. This influences how risks of climate are perceived and acted upon. A meta-analysis of research on media and communication about climate change demonstrates that while global media engage with climate change, they do so in different ways. These studies are disproportionately focused on Western contexts and traditional media. This leaves the gaps regarding the representation in Asian, African, and digital media environments. The need for more inclusive and geographically diversified research on climate communication strategies is highlighted by this discrepancy (Climate Crisis and Media: A Meta-analysis, 2023, February 15).

Framing and Agenda-Setting in Environmental Reporting

The prioritization of media and presentation of the climate disaster and storylines have been extensively examined using framing theory and agenda-setting. Nepal and Pakistan are examples of South Asian environments. Climate events are typically covered in this medium in an episodic and reactive manner. Floods are one example of this, as opposed to an ongoing discussion of reasons. This is a result of policy responses or adaptation tactics. Sensationalist and political blame frames are frequently used in media coverage of Pakistan, including significant floods, according to studies. Local voices and community viewpoints are frequently marginalized as a result. This is in favour of political narratives and immediate effects (Raza et al., 2025). Similarly, studies on Nepali media show that coverage of climate is primarily event driven. Instead of systemic mitigation and difficulties in governance, this focuses on exposure and adaptation. These trends show that although media coverage of climate issues has become more visible, there is still a lack of strategic framing that encourages long-term participation and educated speech in public (Media Portrayal of Climate Change and Renewal Energy in Nepal, 2025, January 23).

Media and Environmental Justice

The significance of inclusive images in the media to draw attention to the change and environmental hazards is presented by research on environmental justice. Vulnerable and underprivileged communities are disproportionately impacted by this. Localized studies show that the views and experiences of these communities are frequently underrepresented in the media, even though the literature worldwide recognizes this relationship. Inequalities in awareness, responses to policy, and allocation of resources may be sustained as a result. Examining how disasters in the Global South are covered by international media reveals how narratives of Western Centricity can cover the adaptation of local experiences and resilience. This leads to a distorted perception of fairness and vulnerability in climate conversation (Khawaja et al., 2025).

Media's Role in Disaster Risk Management

The media plays an important role in disaster risk communication. From early warning distribution to response coordination following a crisis, they accomplish this. Research on the role of media in Pakistan shows that while coverage rises dramatically during disaster reaction and recovery, phases of risk reduction and preparation frequently receive insufficient attention. This lessens the ability of the media to support proactive resilience-building (Role of Pakistani media in mitigating disaster, 2019, February 15). Research on social media as a crisis communication tool shows that

disaster management authorities are increasingly using sites like Facebook and Twitter. This is to engage communities and share real-time updates. Nevertheless, there is still a lack of systematic integration of these techniques into official disaster risk management frameworks, and their usage varies (E-governance for Crisis Communication: A Study of Environmental Disaster in Pakistan, 2019, May 19).

Social Media, Public Engagement, and Media Literacy

The rise of Social media has changed how information about disasters and climate change is shared and received. Research also examined how social media has a major impact on Pakistan. Studies also focused on how Pakistan is significantly affected by social media. This contributes to promoting awareness of climate and literacy of the media. This is especially true among younger and connected populations. However, researchers argue that campaigns must be contextually customized and include grassroots voices. This is to effectively enhance engagement of the public and support community-driven action (The Role of Social Media in Promoting Climate Change Awareness and Media Literacy in Sindh, Pakistan, 2025, August 27).

Research Methodology

This study will be conducted with the help of a mixed-methods research design. This combines both qualitative and quantitative. It tries to offer an in-depth understanding of how the media influences change communication in climate, environmental justice, and risk management. A mixed-method is also helpful in exploring statistical patterns and trends. The research approach is a general logic and reasoning that guides how the study will respond to its research questions and objectives. In studies on climate communication, mixed approaches are becoming more and more advised. This is due to their capacity to handle complex and multifaceted phenomena and triangulate results for increased validity. Structured surveys will be part of the quantitative component. A representative sample of media and stakeholder audiences was given this. This is to measure attitudes, awareness, and perceptions. It has to do with how the media covers climate and natural disasters. In the meantime, semi-structured interviews with journalists, representatives of the media, and community members will make up the qualitative component. This is to comprehend framing techniques, their difficulties, and ethical issues in environmental reporting. A probability sampling methodology will be used as the sampling strategy for this investigation. This guarantees a known and non-zero likelihood of selection for every member of the defined population. As a result, the results are more representative and broadly applicable. In particular, simple random sampling will be used in this study. In quantitative research, this probability sampling strategy is commonly used. This means that each member of the target audience has an equal chance of being included in the sample.

Primary data from a variety of sources will be gathered as part of the study's data collection procedure. Structured questionnaires will be used to gather primary data. This is given to a purposively chosen sample of one hundred respondents who are media consumers, community media members, and specialists in environmental communication. Additionally, significant stakeholders, media experts, and chosen journalists will participate in semi-structured interviews. A content study of media outputs will be carried out to supplement these direct sources. This is the case with newspaper articles, radio reports, and posts made on social media. These mixed data collection methods, comprising surveys, interviews, and content analysis, will ensure an appreciation of quantifiable patterns as well as contextual dynamics of media, which is pertinent to the objectives of the study when combined. The validity and reliability of the data collection tools and procedures will be reviewed in this study. This is to ensure that the findings are reliable and of good quality in the research. Interpretation of the interview guides and interview questions will also be conducted by experts to make it legitimate. Standardized instruments and the use of

precise operational definitions, along with consistent application methods, will be used to achieve reliability and to promote clarity and consistency amongst items.

The data is organized into meaningful patterns on the topics and analysis segment. This is directly related to the objectives of the study through the analysis of the qualitative and quantitative data. It is collected through surveys, interviews, and examination of media content. This area investigates the frequency and the salience of climate change issues in media coverage. According to the research carried out in Pakistan, climate-related problems are often unreported. This is unlike the case with political and economic news. It leads to a reduction in the awareness of the public about the hazards to the environment. This is a theme that examines the media coverage of climate change. The literature findings indicate that most reports of climate change tend to favour the short-term effects of climate change. This is in contrast to the root causes or remedies. It dictates the priorities in which the viewer's perceive climate change. This theme depicts the presence or the absence of voices in the media by affected populations. The media often overlook the realities of vulnerable communities, and this is the information that can be found in the literature. This prohibits equitable representation in the discourse concerning the environment. This theme examines the media coverage of justice, rights, and accountability. Environmental justice campaigns are of this kind. Climate rights supported through media campaigns evidence the relationship between a new narrative and social justice and climate change.

This problem is concerned with the distribution of preparedness information and disaster alerts by the media. Research on the Pakistani media points out the major gaps in active disaster communication. This is especially before the occurrence of events. This topic illustrates the role that the media plays in the provision of information after disasters, the coordination of relief, and real-time updates of crises. It has been found that the media reacts and recovers in a better way. This has the potential of being constrained by depth and local empowerment.

Discussion

Research Objective 1: Influence of Media on Public Awareness of Climate Change.

Findings of this investigation agree with the previous research. This implies that Pakistani media reports on climate change are rather balanced and often insignificant. There is an influence on the level of public awareness. Based on empirical studies, sensational events of calamities are usually prioritized in the environmental reporting in Pakistani media. Due to this, the public is only getting involved in a spasmodic manner and not consistently. Due to this low visibility, viewers can recall past events of extreme occurrences, but they still have no comprehensive view of long-term climate change processes, consequences, and control methods. The manner in which climate change is framed is important as it demonstrates the way that viewers conceptualize and experience the issues regarding the environment. As it can be concluded, the news storylines for Pakistani media are characterised by research on Pakistani media, as either crisis, human influence, or the economic effects. Subtler anecdotal knowledge and pro-environmental responses are consequently enhanced.

Research Objective 2: To Assess the Role of Media in Representing Issues of Environmental Justice.

The examination indicates that the disparity in environmental justice is quite broad. This is an illustration of how the media depict the experiences of the marginalized and vulnerable groups. The macro-level calamity is also a widely-publicized disaster when it comes to coverage of it in Pakistani media literature. This affects political narratives that lack local views or those related to the lives of underprivileged groups of people. This lack of empathy and the awareness of society on the equity of environmental risks. Giving less emphasis to climate justice problems, the media narration emphasizes bigger national or global aspects. This tendency reduces the chances of audiences associating the material of the media with social justice activism. This legacy commemorates the structural inequalities of the discourse of the masses.

Research Objective 3: To Analyze the Effectiveness of Media in Disaster Risk Communication.

As the media coverage grows, qualitative observations in Pakistani settings prove this. This will happen during and after a disaster. Responsibilities are preventive risk messaging, requirements regarding preparation, and initial warnings. This pattern does not favour the comprehensiveness of proactive resilience and community preparedness that rely on media capabilities.

The journalists and media appear to be more effective at the response and recovery stages. This would be significant to connect viewers with the relief operation and share real-time news. Nevertheless, studies also indicate that reports frequently prioritize dramatic effects over useful advice, especially in times of crisis. It can raise awareness without necessarily promoting long-term resilience or coordinated action.

Conclusion

This research paper concludes that the media have substantial yet underutilized potential. This is to contribute to awareness of climate, environmental justice advocacy, and risk of disaster management. By prioritizing conversations of sustained climate, amplifying marginalized voices, and integrating communication of early risk, media can actively support informed public engagement, equitable attention to policy, and greater societal resilience. This is in the face of escalating challenges to the environment. Future research should compare the coverage of media and its patterns across countries and cultures. This is particularly between the *Global North and South*. This is to understand how media systems, resources, and socio-political factors influence the communication of climate (A Systematic Review of the Literature on Climate Justice: A Comparison between the Global North and South, 2024, November 13).

Looking at the spread of fake news and control on multiple internet sources. Other social networks, which are localized and rich with images, are present in this category. It is able to increase general understanding and help define the right countermeasures. Researchers should also test interventions. It involves media literacy campaigns and corrective information strategies. Promoting reliable knowledge about climate change (Ibid, 2024, October 31). In future studies, the two-way communication strategies are supposed to be studied. This indicates that communities are actively engaged in the feedback and content generation processes. This enhances joint decision-making, applicability of the local market, and confidence in relaying risks (Adanlawo & Chaka, 2025). Expanding the research issue of the depiction of marginalization, equity, and power in media. This will involve environmental reporting that will make people more aware of the contribution of the media towards promoting inclusion and justice. This should involve qualitative analyses of the viewers and the content (A Systematic Review of the Literature on Climate Justice: A Comparison between the Global North and South, 2024, November 13).

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Annexure 1: Interview Questionnaire

These are some of the questions that are asked in the interview.

Section A: Demographic Information

1. What is your name?
2. What is your gender?
3. What is your age group?
4. What is your occupation or role in the community?
5. What district or area of Balochistan do you belong to?

Section B: Basic Questions According To Research Objective 1

6. How do you choose which environmental or climate change-related stories to publish in your media outlet?
7. What difficulties do you have when explaining complex scientific facts regarding climate change to laypeople?
8. Based on your observations, how do audiences often react to tales about climate change? Do they show interest, worry, or confusion?
9. How do you believe public knowledge and understanding of long-term environmental challenges beyond urgent, destructive occurrences are influenced by media coverage?
10. What tactics, if any, does your organization employ to educate audiences on the causes and effects of climate change?

Section C: Questions Based on Research Objective 2

11. How do you report on the effects of climate change that disproportionately harm marginalized or vulnerable communities?
12. Could you explain any initiatives your media organization undertakes to incorporate the perspectives of low-income, rural, or other underrepresented communities in environmental reporting?
13. Do you think that media attention raises awareness of environmental justice issues? How, if at all? If not, why not?
14. What limitations have you encountered when attempting to cover topics about environmental justice or climate equity, such as editorial policies, time, or resources?
15. In your reporting, how do you strike a balance between social justice concerns and environmental hazards?

Section D: Questions Based on Research Objective 3

16. How ready do you think your media outlet is to provide information about risk reduction and early warnings in the event of an environmental disaster?
17. When reporting on disaster events, what kinds of information? Do you give priority?
18. When reporting on disasters, how do you work with authorities and scientific institutions?
19. In comparison to traditional media, how do you think social media contributes to the communication of urgent danger information?
20. How may media coverage be enhanced to promote greater community readiness before disasters?