

# REPRESENTATION OF TERRORISM IN THE MEDIA: A STUDY ON THE HOLEY ARTISAN ATTACK

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## Abstract

*This paper investigates the role of the media in response to the Holey Artisan attack that occurred in first July of 2016. The motivations that contributed media roles are, increased competition fuels the commercialization of news, TRP oriented media focuses on unusual dramatic aspects of event, one source of media tends to prove themselves more exclusively than others. These motivations are driven from the CNN factors. The role of the media has been described under three main categories, the mass media and the social media and international media. Role of the domestic mass media are rational vilification of government, reliability of the sources of information, maintaining moral code of journalism, foreword on the stability of the country, representing the public pulse, further initiatives by the mass media, measures to check controversial issues and follow up of the incident. International media was barely sketched the incident comparing to the domestic and social media. The role of the social media is spreading news of threat faster than other media, threat seems real, espial in social media, massive publicity on global platform and chance of spreading rumor without verification. These roles have been discussed with the lens of Burnhurst's Culpable and Vulnerable Model of Media (1991).*

**Keywords:** Terrorism, media, Holey Artisan attack, social media and citizen journalism, CNN Factors, Culpable and Vulnerable model of media.

## INTRODUCTION

The term 'terrorism' covers a great diversity of groups with different origins, purposes, targets and different causes. The effectiveness of the terrorist act lies not in the act itself, but in the public's or government's reaction to the act. Modern media technology and communications satellites have a remarkable effect to draw the attention.

The Holey Artisan attack is an example where the attacker needed the national and international attention. Through the media coverage, eventually they received immense attention in both national and international media. People who have

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access to social media were very active throughout the time of the attack and aftermath as well.

This paper is concerned with the question of how the media portrayed the Holey Artisan attack. The role of the media and motivations behind the media role will be discussed in the following phases of this paper. The domestic print and electronic media, international media websites and social media came under this study to find out the role of the media. Both primary and secondary sources of data have been used to this study. In terms of international media, data were collected only from secondary sources. The role of the media has been addresses under three categories of media, domestic mass media, social media and international media.

The present study aims to investigate the question, how the media represented the Holey Artisan attack, what are the motivations behind the representations of the attack in media and what are the roles played by the media. Through the analyzing of Holy Artisan Bakery case, this paper will evaluate the following narrated assumptions as the driven motivation behind the role of the media. These are:

- television rating point (TRP) oriented media focuses on unusual dramatic aspects;
- one source of media tend to prove themselves more exclusively than other; and
- increased competition fuels the commercialization of news.

The role of the media in covering any terror act is important in many aspects as the media often influence the public pulse and may draw the attention of the respective authority on certain aspects.

#### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Following are the two key objectives of the study

- To find out the motivations behind the representations of the attack in media
- To find out the role of media in response to the Holy Artisan Bakery attack

#### BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

On 1st July 2016 a group of armed militants attacked into an eatery in Dhaka's diplomatic enclave Holey Artisan Bakery, Gulshan. The militants held about sixty hostages, including many foreign nationals. To meet such an unprecedented security situation, Operation Thunderbolt was implemented jointly by the Bangladesh Army, navy, air force, police, Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB), Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) and Special Weapons And Tactics (SWAT). Around 5 a.m. of the second July 2016, the joined team was getting prepared to begin massive operation. Around 7:40 a.m. the security forces begin "Operation Thunderbolt" and barge in the restaurant and it ended around 8: 30 a.m. in the Saturday morning. Two policemen and six militants were killed and one militant

was captured. Among hostages twenty were found dead including nine Italian, seven Japanese, three Bangladeshi and one Indian.<sup>1</sup>

During the operation Thunderbolt, the role of the media (mostly electronic media) was censurable. Despite of the prohibition of the commandos, they started telecasting the whereabouts of the incident 'live'. Around 11.30 of the July 1, 2016, the RAB DG Benazir Ahmed requests TV channels to stop live telecast.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, international news agency also started to telecast the news of Dhaka Attack. Around 4:20 a.m. of the late night, Italian state TV claimed seven Italians among the hostages.<sup>3</sup> These types of news spreading put a panic impact over the people. Another storm was going on through the social networking sites such as 'Twitter' and 'Facebook'. People all over the country started using a 'hashtag' called #savedhaka; #dhakaattack etc. to draw the attention of the international community through their social media accounts.

#### METHODOLOGY

This study adopted qualitative method of analysis where primary and secondary sources of data are used. Content Analysis method was adapted to analysis the gathered news.

As of record, in 2016, there were seven news channels and fifteen electronic channels during that period. For this study, *The Daily Star* and *The Daily Ittefaq* have taken as the sample of print media. *Jamuna Television* and *Independent Television* have taken as the sample of electronic media. Facebook has been taken as the sample of social media. Purposive sampling method is applied. Researcher has chosen fifty-six Facebook profiles of respondents purposively on the basis of their activity on social media and instant reactions on social media on certain incidents. The CNN and BBC were chosen as the sample of international media. News articles published in these respective websites came under this study.

Primary Data were collected through the interview from the Journalists who reported the Holy Artisan attack and made the desk report, and head of the marketing and sales (to know the profit-making policy). As of secondary data, the websites and Youtube channel of the certain television channels were studied to know their program schedules and other shows.

#### LITERATURE REVIEW

In this section, a number of existing studies are reviewed to find gaps in the literature. The paper titled 'Terrorism, Media and the State: An Incestuous Spiral' focused on the relation between terrorism and publicity. The changes that occur due to the emergence of new forms of media and the regulation and responsibility

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1 The Daily Star. "Blood, Shock, Horror." July 3, 2016.

2 The Daily Star. "TIMELINE Friday Night attack." July 3, 2016.

3 *ibid*