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**THE REPORTING OF DISASTER IN GLOBAL  
NEWS MEDIA: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS  
OF MEDIA COVERAGE OF HURRICANE  
HARVEY AND THE 2017 SOUTH ASIAN  
FLOOD**

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# ABSTRACT

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In the present age of globalization, people primarily learn about international disasters through global media. How the news media select and frame news of the disaster essentially defines people's understanding of any disaster. This study compares the 2017 media coverage of Hurricane Harvey, in the United States, and the South Asian flood which hit Bangladesh, India & Nepal. The study examines how five global media outlets (The New York Times, The Guardian, the Cable News Network (CNN), the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), and Al Jazeera) handled the volume of coverage as well as how the reports were framed.

The study follows a frame analysis approach as the news media not only informs people about the disaster but also shapes our understanding of the disaster using specific framings.

The findings show that there is a remarkable difference in the volume of coverage between the two disasters with Hurricane Harvey getting substantially more media coverage than the South Asian flood. Moreover, analysis of the news articles showed that reports of both disasters used six different frames: the human-interest frame, the disaster-measurement frame, the disaster-management frame, the humanitarian frame, the political frame and the climate-change frame. In addition, all five news outlets followed a similar trend when using the frame types to report the two disasters. However, there are considerable qualitative differences in how each frame was used for reporting Hurricane Harvey and the South Asian flood.

**Keywords:** *Disaster, Globalization, Global Media, Frame Analysis*

The originality of this thesis has been checked using the Turnitin Originality Check service.

## **List of Abbreviations**

AP	Associated Press
BBC	British Board Casting
CNN	Cable News Network
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

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## 1. Introduction

In 1968, Hannah Arendt discussed the immense impact globalization was having on the life of people across the globe. She wrote, "...for the first time in history, all peoples on earth have a common present ... Every country has become the almost immediate neighbor of every other country, and every man feels the shock of events which take place at the other end of the globe" (Arendt, 1968, p. 83). If we look at the world today, we find Arendt's description remains equally applicable. The rise of global media through technological advancement and globalization has changed traditional concepts of time and space. Cottle (2009) shared similar views of global media: "the parameters of existence and imagined horizons now extend beyond neighborhoods and nations, cities and countries, encouraging a sense of the world as a singular, shared, space" (p. 1).

In today's interconnected world, the impact of a disaster is not felt solely within the boundaries of the affected country because of our "consciousness of the world as a whole" (Cottle, 2009, p.1). As a consequence, the frequency of natural disasters, deemed international in nature, have increased dramatically in recent years. For example, "the total number of natural disasters has quadrupled in the last two decades, most of them floods, cyclones, and storms. Over the same period the number of people affected by disasters has increased from around 174 million to an average of over 250 million a year" (Cottle, 2009, p. 42). Hence, a global effort is necessary in facing up to these disasters. As Cottle (2009) goes on to argue, our recognition of, and response to, natural disasters basically rely on the news media: international disasters "become defined and deliberated, constructed and contested in the contemporary news media" (p. 1). In 2016 there were 8,733 people killed as a result of 342 natural disasters across the world ("Annual Disaster Statistical Review 2016: The numbers and trends - World", 2018), constituting a total loss of \$175 billion globally (Riley, 2018). So, in confronting the disaster, news coverage not only defines the current response but also helps shape policy to prevent disasters looking forward (Van Belle, 2000, pp. 50-51).

However, few of these disasters received similar levels of news coverage. For instance, Joye's (2010) analysis about the media coverage of natural disasters revealed around three-quarters of all disaster events between 1986 and 2006 were neglected by Dutch newspapers, and most of these happened in less-developed countries (p. 253). Whether a disaster gets media coverage or not, and how the disaster is covered, has a real consequence for the life of the victims. This is because media coverage largely determines the aid policy of the government through the shaping of public opinions (Dwight, 2018). Similarly, the humanitarian response to a disaster from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) mostly rely on the media coverage because NGOs primarily depend on public donations for their

charity work. For instance, Americans donate around \$1.2 million for every New York Times article on a foreign disaster (Van Belle, 2000, p. 51). To sum up, news media not only alert people about the disaster but also determine people's response by informing public opinion.

This study examines media coverage of two disasters in 2017: Hurricane Harvey in the US and the South Asian flood, which affected Bangladesh, India, and Nepal. On 17 August 2017, Harvey formed as a tropical storm about 250 miles east of Barbados. However, on 24 August, it was recategorized as a major hurricane moving towards Texas. The next day, it hit between Port Aransas and Port O'Connor as a Category 4 storm with winds of 130 mph. The following day it was downgraded to a tropical storm and moved back to the Gulf of Mexico before its second landfall in Cameron, Louisiana. Harvey caused major flooding in Texas and Louisiana, and it was estimated that around 27 trillion gallons of water were dumped as rain between the 25th and 30th of August. According to National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)'s assessment report, a total of 105 Americans lost their lives and the estimated economic damage was around \$125 billion ([www.weather.gov](http://www.weather.gov)).

At around the same time, from July to October 2017, the three South Asian countries of Bangladesh, India and Nepal were affected by one of their worst floods in recent history. During these four months, around 40 million people were directly affected by the flood and around 2,670 people died (2,170 in India, 160 in Nepal, and 340 in Bangladesh). The economic cost of the flood was estimated at around \$3.5 billion (Kron, 2017).

The study analyzes news reports about Hurricane Harvey and the South Asian floods published by Al Jazeera, BBC, CNN, The New York Times, and The Guardian. At present, global news infrastructure primarily dominated by the English-speaking western nations (countries like US and UK) and this is often reflected in their bias towards disasters in the West at the expense of disasters in the non-western nations. Previous studies of global media coverage between western and non-western disasters focused on the quantitative differences, such as the relative volume of media coverage. However, in addition to the quantitative difference of the media coverage, this paper studies how reporting of the disasters present events and those affected. This research also examined the media representation of the victims in developed countries with comparison to the victims in developing countries.

## 2. Is Disaster A Media Construction?

Walter Lippmann, in his seminal work *Public Opinion* (1922), argued that the role of news media was to construct public opinion. He suggested that the outside world was too complex to fully understand for ordinary people. He wrote, "The world we have to deal with politically is out of reach, out of sight, out of mind. It has to be explored, reported and imagined. Man is no Aristotelian god contemplating all existence at one glance" (p. 29). Lippmann went on to say that, in general, people depended on news media to get to know the outside world. Furthermore, he said that the pictures in our head about the outside world were pictures constructed by news media (Lippmann 1922). Maxwell McCombs (2011) summarized Lippmann's argument about the role of news media in constructing public opinion. He said that the news media were the bridge between that world outside and the pictures in our head; the pictures were the reflection of the media and not necessarily of what was happening in the outside world ("Max McCombs on Agenda-Setting Theory", 2019). McCombs (2011) went further and argued that the news media were the primary source for the general public to get information about events in the outside world, and in that process news media not only informed us about an event but also gave it a meaning which might differ from the truth. In his words, "What we know about the world is largely based on what the media decided to tell us" (McCombs, 2011, p. 2). He went on, "Therefore, the picture in peoples' minds about the outside world is significantly influenced by the mass media, both what those pictures are about and what those pictures are" (McCombs, 2011, p. 17).

Similarly, Joye (2011, p. 256) suggested that news media had an immense ability to constitute a disaster event by informing and providing a certain picture of the disaster: "News media play an important role in giving publicity and meaning to global suffering, as it is mainly through media reports that the world perceives international risk situation". Franks (2013) and Cottle (2014) also debated the defining power of news media to constitute a disaster. Cottle (2014) said that news media constructed a disaster by informing about it and telling us what and how to think about it. Suzanne Franks (2013) argued that our understanding of almost all disasters was defined by the news media. She boldly stated that a disaster effectively only exists if it is covered by the media. According to Franks (2013), the news media construct a disaster by selecting a disaster. She (2008, p.27) wrote, "Disasters—natural or man-made—exist only when they are covered by the media. Plenty of terrible things happen that remain unreported. Most disasters are known only by those directly affected". For

instance, the famine in Ethiopia only got the world's attention in 1984 after the BBC report made by Michael Buerk, even though it had been a crisis since 1982 (Franks, 2008).

News media not only inform us of a disaster but also tell us what to think about it (Franks, 2013, p. 3). A majority of the citizens of the US have no direct experience of any disaster and a third of them learn of a disaster via the news (Van Belle, 2000, pp. 50-51). Therefore, "News media play a basic role in giving publicity and meaning to global suffering, as it is mainly through media reports that the world perceives international risk situations. In general, many scholars claim that disasters and other instances of risk are essentially media constructs: they exist only when covered by the media" (Joye 2010, p. 262).

## **2.1. Newsworthiness and Disaster**

While it is true that terrible things happen, Suzanne Franks said, "most of the world's horrors never get any airtime at all" (Franks, 2013, p. 3). For example, "On September 11, 2001, in the USA nearly 3,000 people died in terrorist attacks which headlined the news for a very long time. That same day approximately 2,400 people died of hunger while 6,020 children were killed by diarrhea and another 2,700 by measles. The suffering of those 11,120 people remained invisible to the world, though" (Joye, p. 47). There is no clear-cut answer of why an event becomes news while another is simply ignored by the news media.

Though there is no simple answer as to why all disasters don't get the same airtime or even become news, there are some relevant factors, such as geographical proximity and socio-economic status, which can be used to explain this complex phenomenon of disaster newsworthiness.

Galtung and Ruge (1965), in their groundbreaking study, identified 12 factors that determined the news value of an event. Moreover, they gave details and a comprehensive explanation about the newsworthiness of an event. These included

- i. The more distant a nation is, the more will an event have to satisfy the frequency criterion.
- ii. The more distant an event, the less ambiguous will it have to be.
- iii. The more distant the nation, the more consonant will the news have to be.
- iv. The higher the continuity effect, the lower can the threshold be.
- ix. The lower the rank of the person, the more unexpected will the news have to be.
- v. The higher the composition effect, the lower can the threshold be.
- vi. The less negative the news, the more important the frequency condition.
- vii. The lower the rank of the nation, the lower must the cultural distance be.
- viii. The lower the rank of the nation, the more consonant will the news have to be.
- x. The lower the rank of the nation, the higher will the person have to be on that nation to make the news.
- xi. The lower the rank of a person, the more negative will his actions have to be.
- xii. The less personal the news, the more negative will it have to be."



(Galtung & Ruge, 1965, p. 81-83)

While Galtung and Ruge analyzed the factors that influence the news value of an event in general, Joye (2010) specifically focused on what makes a disaster event newsworthy. According to Joye (2010), geographical and economic proximity as well as severity are the key factors for determining the newsworthiness of a disaster. For instance, the story of a disaster in a high-income country is usually seen as more newsworthy than one happening in a low-income country (Joye, 2010). Equally, a disaster in a low-income country will get more news coverage the larger its magnitude (Joye, 2010, p. 262). He also stated that media coverage of a disaster is significantly influenced by "the power relation and divisions that characterized our contemporary worlds" (Joye, 2009, p. 45).

Guy Golan (2006) examined the news value of an international event and identified four key variables that determine the news value of an international event. He stated, "These include deviance (Shoemaker et al., 1986), relevance (Chang et al., 1987), cultural affinity (Hester, 1973) and location in the hierarchy of nations (Chang, 1998)" (Golan, 2006, p. 323). For instance, in covering an international event, news media historically preferred to cover an event in a developed nation while often ignoring events in developing nations (Golan, 2006, p. 324). Nourbakhsh, Liu and Shah (2017) examined the factors that determine the news value of a disaster and identify three key variables e.g. "large scope, high impact and potential geopolitical relevance" (Nourbakhsh et al., 2017, p. 1). Gans (1979) argued that the level of negativity associated with an event is a determining factor for being selected as a piece of news. According to Belle (2000), the most important factor in determining news value of a disaster is the number of casualties and, following that, cultural affinity and geographical distance (Belle, 2000). In a study of determining factors in US media, Jeong and Lee (2017) found that the magnitude of a disaster (measured in number of deaths or economic losses) is the most "consistent" and "significant factor" in determining the level of media coverage (Jeong and Lee, 2017, p. 1). Equally, Simon (1997), in examining the US media coverage of foreign disasters, found that the magnitude of a disaster (number of deaths) is the key factor in its news value.

In contrast, other studies show that the severity of a disaster is not always the determining factor for media coverage. For example, Adams (1986) analyzed the relation between the magnitude of a disaster and its likelihood of being selected as news and found that the relationship between them is not significant. Similarly, the finding of the CARMA report (2006) is that there is no relation between the severity of disaster and media coverage; instead, "Western self-interest is the pre-condition for significant coverage of a humanitarian crisis"(CARMA Report, 2006, p. 5). There are some factors such as social, political, economic and cultural factors that play an significant role in defining the

news value of a disaster (Jeong and Lee, 2017). Atad (2017) found that the news coverage of a disaster is based on four types of proximity (economic, political, cultural and geographic) between the media's national country and the reported country. Also, her research showed that political and economic factors also play an important role in whether the media cover a disaster.

## **2.2. News Coverage Disasters in the Countries of Global North and South**

News media play a central role in informing the public of international disasters, and according to Joye (2010) "...disaster and other instances of risk are essentially a media construction" (p. 262). However, not all disasters get into the news nor do they get equal coverage (Joye, 2009). Altheide (1976) stated that the news media is biased in terms of how it collects, analyzes, and presents an event as news. Entman (2009) argued that media's bias is related to how media exercise their power. For example, there are three types of media bias: distortion bias (in which false or distorted information is presented), content bias (in which one-sided news is presented), and decision-making bias (in which a journalist's preferred position is presented in the news) (Entman, 2009, p. 334)

Franks (2006), in her analysis of the CARMA report, talked about existing bias in news media surrounding coverage of the disasters in the countries of global south and north and she wrote "...disasters hit hardest in the poorest parts of the globe. Ninety-eight percent of those killed or affected by disasters each year come from the developing world. The average disaster death toll in poorer countries is over a thousand. When disaster does happen in richer countries, the average death toll is 23. So, the impact of the disaster is very uneven. Similarly, our reporting and perception of disasters are also uneven" (Franks, 2006, p. 281). For instance, almost half of all disaster events that occur in the countries in the northern hemisphere get reported in the media, whereas, only 6% of disaster events occurring in the south are covered by the media (Joye, 2010, p. 262).

In general, the media tend to cover negative events more than positive ones and in the case of a disaster in the developing world, the international media tend to show a "negativity bias". For instance, "media tend to report more frequently or intensively on topics with a negative connotation such as catastrophes, crime or threatening political and economic developments, in comparison to positive events" (Berlemann & Thomas, 2018, p. 2). Similarly, international media often provide a sensational and distorted picture of a third-world disaster by reporting on negative aspects such as "the prevalence of looting, crime, panic, and helplessness among victims, the unfair distribution of aid, and local incompetence" (Daniel, 2002, p. 35).

The western/international news media consider the lives of the people of the Third World to be less valuable than the people of the developed world (Adams, 1986; Joye, 2009). To explain why news media consider the lives of westerners to be more newsworthy than others, Joye (2000) referenced Edward Said's orientalism which believed that the West has a stereotypical view of non-western nations and considers their culture as inferior to the West's. He argued that this orientalist view is deeply embedded in western news media and sees the lives of western people as superior to non-westerners (Joye, 2009). Similarly, Adams (1986), in talking about the hierarchy of death in which western media give more value to the lives of westerners in comparison to the lives of non-western people, suggested, "...the death of one West European equaled three East Europeans equaled nine Latin Americans equaled 11 Middle Easterners equaled 12 Asians" (Adams, 1986, p. 122).

### **3. Research Questions**

The overall aim of this study is to understand how global news media cover disasters, both qualitatively and quantitatively, affecting developed and developing countries. Specifically, the study examines news coverage of Hurricane Harvey and the South Asian floods, both in 2017. It looks at the following questions:

1. What are the frames used to cover the news of Hurricane Harvey and the South Asian floods by the global news media?
2. How are the frames used to report on the two disasters?
3. Do the two disasters get equal coverage by the global media?

### **4. Data**

The aim of the study is to examine the news coverage of the two disasters in the global media. Five global news media outlets (The New York Times, The Guardian, CNN, BBC, and Al Jazeera) were selected for this study as these outlets are considered as the most prominent global media outlets based on their global outreach and ability to set the news agenda.

The analysis was based on four months' news coverage from the day after the two events were first identified. Specifically, only news about the South Asian floods published between 01 July and 31 October 2017 was included in the study, while for Hurricane Harvey, the news was published between 17 August and 16 December. The four months' timeframe for this study was selected to get as clear as possible an understanding of how these two disasters were framed as well as any significant differences in the framing between the two.

News about the two disasters included news statistics, opinion column, op-ed and photo stories. “Hurricane Harvey” and “South Asian flood 2017” were the respective search keywords. By using these selected keywords, the news was directly downloaded from the web portal of the five aforementioned media outlets. A total number of 228 news articles were collected, of which 182 were about Hurricane Harvey and 46 about the South Asian floods.

Data analysis of this study was conducted in two steps. The first was to identify and define the frames, requiring an in-depth reading of the news articles. The frames were: i) the human-interest frame, ii) the disaster-measurement frame, iii) the disaster-management frame, iv) the humanity frame, v) the political frame and vi) the climate-change frame. In the second step, a coding format was developed using Microsoft Excel. Then the data was collected from the news articles for analysis

## **5. Methodology**

The main objective of this study is to examine the coverage of the disasters from both the developed and developing countries in the global news media, thus facilitating a straight comparison. Therefore, a frame analysis approach was taken in conducting the research. Frame analysis is a popular approach used in many areas of social science, especially in media studies. Erving Goffman (1974), in his book *Frame analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience*, first introduced the concept of frame analysis to examine the process of deconstructing the “organization of experience” of the people (p. 11). In frame analysis, Goffman’s aim was to “...isolate some of the basic frameworks of understanding available in our society for making sense out of events and to analyze the special vulnerabilities to which these frames of reference are subject... I assume that definitions of a situation are built up in accordance with principles of organization which govern events-at least social ones- and our subjective involvement in them; frame is the word I use to refer to such of these basic elements as I am able to identify” (Goffman, 1974, p. 10). Goffman argued that the primary frameworks are the first point of the organization: “a primary framework allows its user to locate, perceive, identify and label a seemingly infinite number of concrete occurrences define in its term” (p. 21). In frame analysis, frames act as the “principles of organization which govern events” and “our subjective involvement in them” (pp. 10-11). Reese (2001) also focused on how meanings are constructed through the process of framing, and he referred to framing as the “way to understanding the world” by “using all of the available verbal and visual symbolic resources” (p. 11). He stated that:

“Frames are organizing principles that are socially shared and persistent over time, that work symbolically to meaningfully structure the social world: Organizing: Framing varies in how successfully, comprehensively, or

completely it organizes information; Principles: The frame is based on an abstract principle and is not the same as the texts through which it manifests itself; Shared: The frame must be shared on some level for it to be significant and communicable; Persistent: The significance of frames lies in their durability, their persistent and routine use over time; Symbolically: The frame is revealed in symbolic forms of expression; Structure: Frames organize by providing identifiable patterns or structures, which can vary in their complexity” (Reese 2001, p.11).”

In addition, Reese (2010, p.21) argued that “the frame is always an abstraction and finds its manifestation in various locations”, which means the meaning of a frame could vary from person to person. In addition, Gamson and Modigliani (1989) argued that frames are the fundamental way to interpret an event through the process of the organization of the information. According to them, the frame is the “central organizing idea for making sense of relevant events, suggesting what is at issue” (p. 3). Similarly, Chong, and Druckman (2007) suggested frames are “the process by which people develop a particular conceptualization of an issue or reorient their thinking about an issue” (p. 10).

It was Robert M. Entman who popularized the use of the framing analysis in communication studies, especially in news analysis. Entman (1993) argued that framing is the way to understand the “power of a communicating text” (p. 51). He later called framing “the process of culling a few elements of perceived reality and assembling a narrative that highlights connections among them to promote a particular interpretation” (Entman 2007, p. 164). Entman argued that in news reporting journalists often focus on certain aspects of a situation while ignoring the others. He defined using frames “to select some aspects 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 for the item described” (Entman 1993, p. 52). Furthermore, he identified four functions that frames perform: “...define problems (determine what a causal agent is doing with what costs and benefits, usually measured in terms of common cultural values); diagnose causes (identify the forces creating the problem); make moral judgments (evaluate causal agents and their effects); and suggest remedies (offer and justify treatments for the problems and predict their likely effects)” (Entman, 1993, p. 53). In the same paper, he also argued that the frames’ meaning is determined by the locations and he identified four locations in the communication process: the communicator, the text, the receiver, and the culture (p, 52). Thus, framing is “the process whereby communicators act—consciously or not—to construct a particular point of view that encourages the facts of a given situation to be viewed in a particular manner, with some facts made more noticeable than others” (Kuypers, 2010, p. 300). Similarly, Pan and Kosicki (1993) stated “Framing analysis is presented as a constructivist approach to examine news discourse with the primary focus on

conceptualizing news texts into empirically operationalizable dimensions—syntactical, script, thematic, and rhetorical structures—so that evidence of the news media’s framing of issues in news texts may be gathered” (p. 55). In addition, Gitlin (1980) said that the framing process is “unavoidable” for organizing news because media frames are persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation, of selection, emphasis and exclusion, by which symbol-handlers routinely organize discourses whether verbal or visual” (p. 7). Terkildsen and Schnell (1997) argued that “framing is important whenever an issue can be presented in multiple ways which may potentially influence how people think about an issue” because of its ability to put certain meaning in the news about an event (p. 881). Therefore, frame analysis of the news is the way to understand how news media construct the meaning about an event. D’Angelo (2010) agreed and stated “Framing analysis affords boundless opportunities to understand how instances of an evolving narrative form –‘hard’ and ‘soft’ stories that ‘break’ or ‘continue’ in formats ranging from packages, side-bars, analyses, editorials, and panel discussions — construct meanings of seemingly isolated incidents and events” (pp. 57-58).”

## 6. Findings

In the first part of this topic, we present the six frames used for reporting the disaster. Then, the paper presents findings about the volume of coverage as well as the use of frames in the two disasters. Third, it presents how the six frames are used to report the two disasters.

*Firstly*, this study has found that there are six frames used to report the news about Hurricane Harvey and the South Asian flood. These frames are as follows:

**I. The Human-Interest Frame:** The human-interest frame presents news from an emotional angle or personalizes the story to attract the reader or audience. These types of news frames tend to overdramatize coverage, are usually written in an extreme, frightened, angry, or exciting style, or use reporting that expresses the emotions or feelings of reporters. Neuman et al. (1992) found that the human-interest frame is one of the most frequently used frames in news because of its ability to attract readers. For instance, the following report tells the story of a volunteer who was helping the victims of Hurricane Harvey.

*“He recalled one local volunteer who was going door to door, flagging down rescue vehicles and helping his neighbors get into them safely... ‘He’s risking his own life’, Faddek said. ‘He could have*

*just gone AWOL, got rescued and gone to higher ground and be having a nice steak meal, but no — he's staying behind ' '. (cnn.com)*

**II. The Disaster-Measurement Frame:** The disaster-measurement frame is a quantitative presentation of the impact of any disaster and is frequently used in post-disaster reporting. This is because it is easy for readers to understand the impact of the disaster by knowing about the death toll or financial loss. For example, take this news report about the number of people killed and affected in the Houston city area as a result of the cyclone.

*“At least five people were reported dead in and around Houston on Sunday morning and emergency services workers were responding to large numbers of distress calls as catastrophic flooding hit the nation’s fourth-largest city and a metropolitan area with a population of more than 6 million”. (The New York Times, 27 August 2017)*

**iii. The Disaster-Management Frame:** The disaster-management frame reports on how the government, or non-governmental organizations relating to disaster management, organize the resources and responsibilities for dealing with the humanitarian aspect of the disaster. This type of news focuses on disaster preparedness, response, mitigation, and recovery. For instance, the following part of the news report tells about the search and rescue effort of a volunteer group to support the Harvey victims.

*“‘Since Monday morning at 1 a.m., we’ve pulled out 81 people, six dogs and one cat,’ said Arik Modisette, 29, a sales representative for a construction company and a former soldier who lives in Lufkin, Tex., about 120 miles northeast of Houston. Asked if he had hesitated before deciding to come to Houston, Mr. Modisette replied, ‘No, it was no matter what, they need us. Let’s go.’” (The New York Times, 28 August 2017)*

**IV. The Humanitarian Frame:** The humanitarian frame focuses on the action or work of an individual, group or organization to support the victims of a disaster. The following report shows the US government effort for supporting illegal immigrants.

*“The adviser said undocumented immigrants seeking government help should not be worried about their immigration status ‘unless they’ve committed a crime on top of coming here illegally’. No one would be denied help based on their legal status and shelters would not be subjected to inspections.” (The Guardian, 31 August 2017)*

**V. The Political Frame:** The political frame presents the news in a way which shows agreement or disagreement between or among individuals, groups or organizations. For example, this report talks about the need for global cooperation for fighting against climate crisis.

*“As the world has long recognized, most recently at the Paris summit meeting on climate change in December 2015, poor nations will need a helping hand from rich ones as they transition to cleaner, low-carbon energy sources. This is not something the Trump administration seems inclined to offer, any more than it seems inclined to listen to the scientists, join with other nations to combat the problem or do something about America’s own greenhouse gas emissions...That’s unconscionable, even borderline nuts, especially now that President Trump himself has seen at first hand the results of inaction.” (The New York Times, 31 August 2017)*

**VI. The Climate-Change Frame:** The climate-change frame reports how climate change has caused or impacted the disaster in question. This frame covers how different aspects of climate change, such as rising temperature, increased human intervention in the environment, or the changing pattern of the seasons, link to the origin of the disaster and how it intensifies the scale of the disaster. For instance, this news story reported the link between climate change and Hurricane Harvey.

*“What can we say about the role of climate change in the unprecedented disaster that is unfolding in Houston with Hurricane Harvey? There are certain climate change-related factors that we can, with great confidence, say worsened the flooding.” (The Guardian, 28 August 2017)*

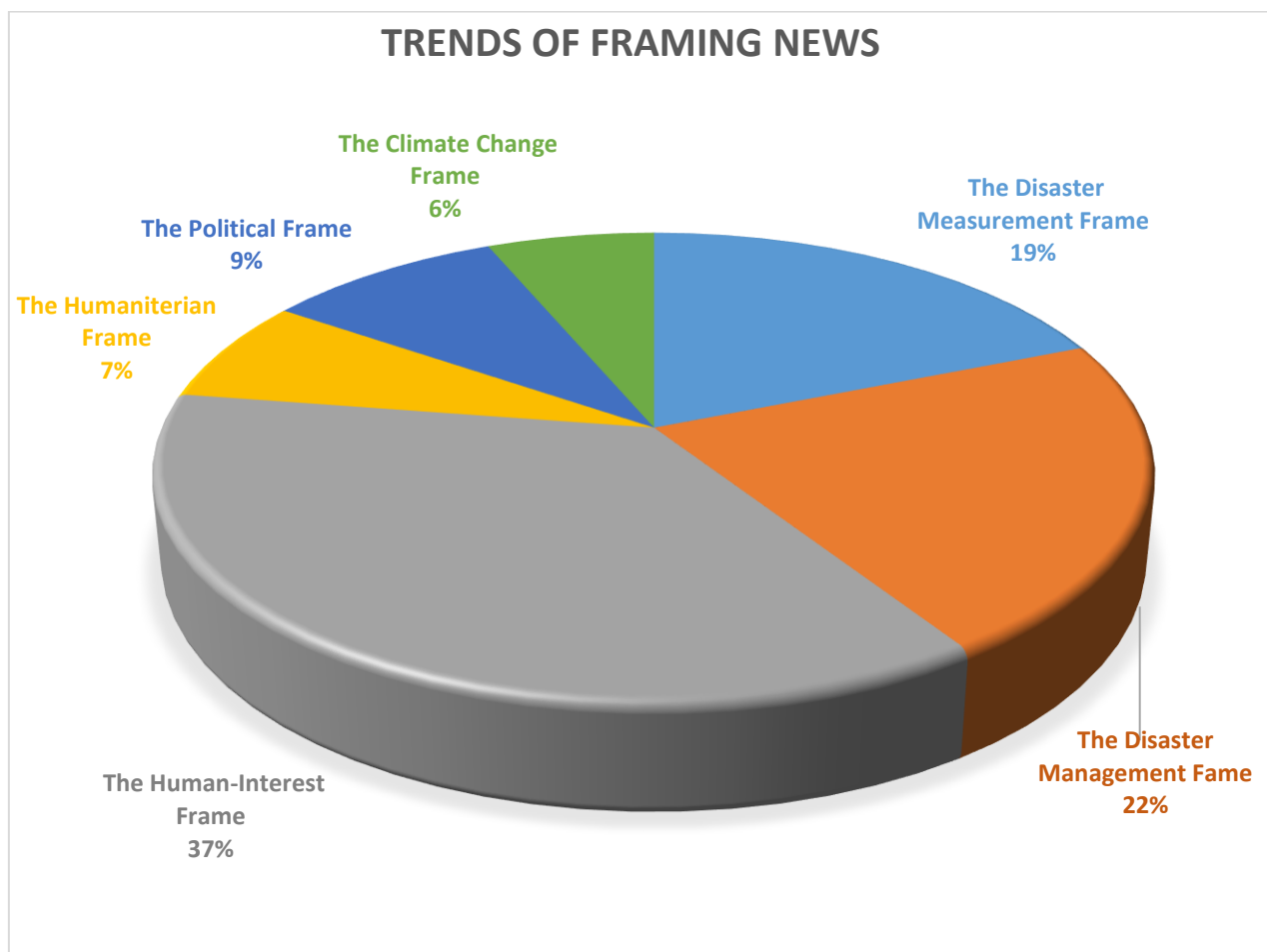
**Secondly**, this part discusses quantitative aspects of the findings. To begin with, the following table shows the number of news reports published about Hurricane Harvey and the South Asian flood by the five global media outlets. It shows that the total number of news items published about the South Asian flood is significantly lower than the corresponding number of items published about Hurricane Harvey, 46 versus 182 respectively. Regarding Hurricane Harvey, The New York Times published the highest number of reports (63), followed by Al Jazeera (36), CNN (34), The Guardian (27) and the BBC (22). In the case of the South Asian flood, the BBC published the highest number of reports (15), followed by Al Jazeera (12) and the Guardian (7). The New York Times and CNN each just published six reports about the South Asian flood.



Table 1: Number of articles about Hurricane Harvey and South Asian flood-2017

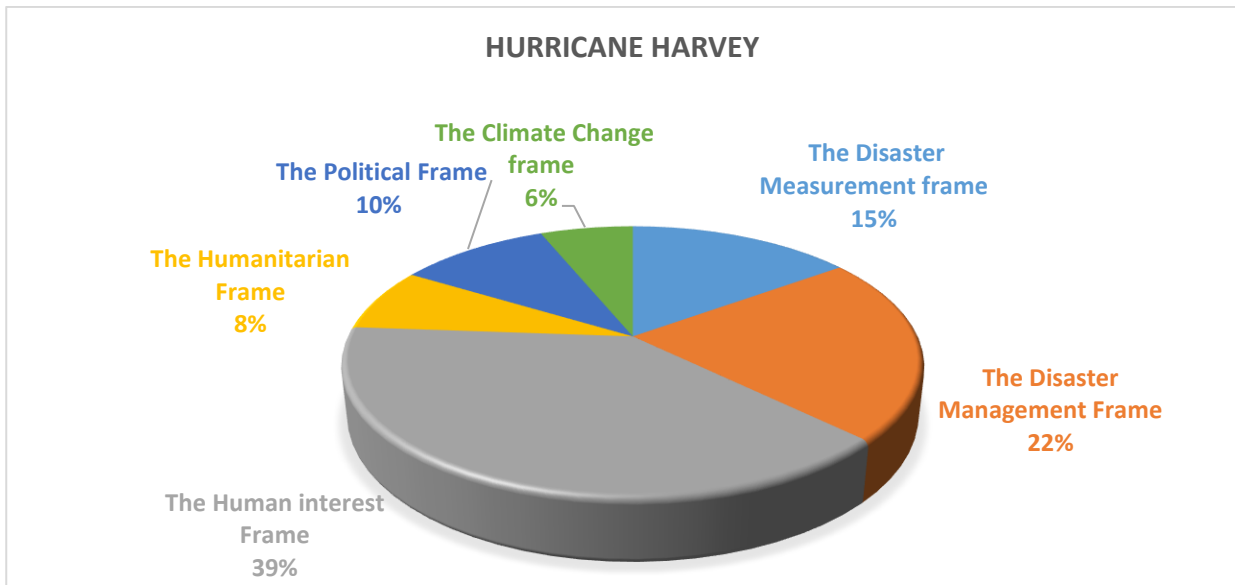
	Hurricane Harvey	South Asian flood-2017
Al Jazeera	36	12
BBC	22	15
CNN	34	6
The New York Times	63	6
The Guardian	27	7
Total	182	46

Pie chart 1: Types of frames used in covering the news of the two disasters



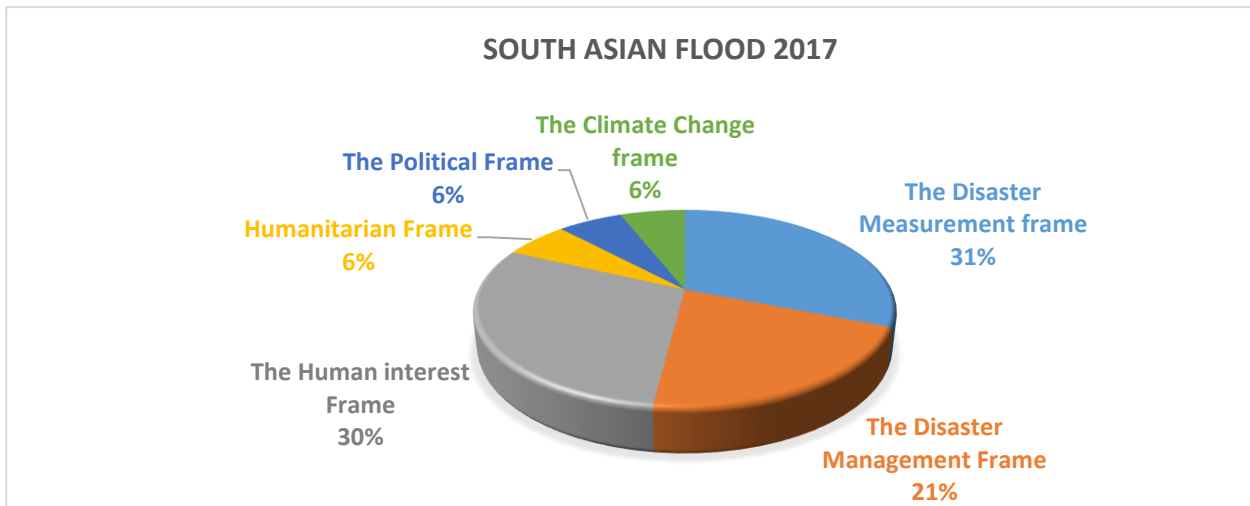
Pie-chart 1 displays the overall split of the types of frame used for reporting the two disasters. It shows journalists favored the human-interest frame most (37%), followed by disaster-management (22%), while the disaster-measurement frame accounted for 19%. The political, humanitarian, and climate-change frames combined accounted for only one fifth of the total frames used.

Pie-chart 2: Types of frames used in covering the news of Hurricane Harvey only



Pie-chart 2 displays the overall split of the types of frame used for reporting Hurricane Harvey by the five global media outlets. It shows that the human-interest frame was most dominant with 39%, whereas the climate-change frame was the lowest accounting for only 6% of the news.

Pie-chart 3: Types of frames used in covering the news of the South Asian flood only



Pie-chart 3 displays the overall split of the types of frame used for reporting the South Asian floods. It illustrates that the disaster-measurement frame and the human-interest frame together comprised three-fifths of the total, with 31% and 30% respectively. The disaster-management frame was the

third most used frame with 21%. The remaining frames, namely the humanitarian, political, and climate-change frames, accounted for just 6% each.

Table 2: Split of frame type across the five global media outlets

Name of the news outlets	The Disaster-measurement frame (%)	The Disaster-management frame (%)	The Human-interest frame (%)	The Humanitarian frame (%)	The Political frame (%)	The Climate-change frame (%)	Total (%)
<b>Hurricane Harvey</b>							
Al Jazeera	15	29	32	4	15	5	100
BBC	22	17	48	5	5	3	100
CNN	17	16	49	8	5	5	100
The New York Times	11	23	43	13	12	7	100
The Guardian	12	25	37	4	12	10	100
Total (%)	15	22	39	8	10	6	100
<b>South Asian Flood in 2017</b>							
Al Jazeera	34	31	27	4	4	0	100
BBC	30	5	55	10	0	0	100
CNN	46	16	23	0	0	15	100
The New York Times	19	24	19	5	19	14	100
The Guardian	30	25	25	10	5	5	100
Total (%)	31	21	30	6	6	6	100

Table 2 shows the trends of using frames by each media outlet to report Hurricane Harvey and the South Asian flood. This illustrates the proportional similarity of the using frames for reporting the two disasters.

*Thirdly*, the research examined how the news of Hurricane Harvey and the South Asian flood were framed.

## I. The Human-Interest Frame

This study found that news coverage about Hurricane Harvey and the South Asian flood used the human-interest frame to focus on stories about the victims' suffering, their day-to-day fight to overcome the impact of the disaster as well as stories of groups or communities working together in the time of crisis.

Firstly, this human-interest frame gives impact by telling the story of individual suffering. The following part of the report shows the impact of the disaster in every aspect of peoples' lives from religious, cultural, economic to physical aspects.

*“For Abdul Rauf, a father of six, life has never been worse... ‘We did not buy any new clothes this Eid, and this has never happened before’, he said, referring to the Muslim holiday last week. ‘We go to sleep hungry, unable to even fill our stomachs with water because the hand pumps are churning out such dirty water. ’” (The New York Times, 7 September 2017)*

Secondly, the human-interest frame tells the tragic story of victims of the disaster. The following news story reports the grief of a mother who lost her child in the flood.

*“Afsari, a mother of four, rushed out of her hut with her children to look for help. All of them were knocked down by the current. She tried to hold the hand of her youngest child, who was 2. Her grip slipped and her son was washed away... Afsari spoke in near whispers outside her mildewed hut. She said she planned to use the \$6,200 from her son’s death to educate her three surviving children... ‘I want them to get out of this village,’ she said, an empty look in her eyes.” (The New York Times, 7 September 2017)*

Thirdly, journalists often choose to tell a story about the suffering of minority groups in society such as the poor, women, or children. The following report by CNN about a victim of the flood in rural Bangladesh illustrates the suffering of a mother and her two children.

*“Mother of two, Adere Begum, 34, was at home in the village with her daughters when the flooding began. ‘The water was up to our knees inside. There were snakes in the water and my children were very scared,’ said Begum, who lost much of her livestock, including ducks, chickens, and cows in the floods.” (cnn.com, 1 September 2017)*

Or the following report, which tells the story of the hopelessness of a homeless man living on the street in Houston who does not know how he will survive after Hurricane Harvey.

*“‘I have no place to go and it's going to get worse,’ he said Saturday, his T-shirt blowing in the breeze. ‘A hurricane is coming, and I don’t know how I’m going to live through it.’” (The New York Times, 27 August 2017)*

Fourthly, in disaster coverage, journalists often report their own experience as a witness of the disaster. In the following story, a journalist from Al Jazeera describes his experience of the impact of Hurricane Harvey.

*“‘My first view of Hurricane Harvey was from above, aboard one of the last flights allowed to land in Houston...The spirals of white clouds spread across the horizon. It was a magnificent and troubling*

*sight... When my camera crew and I pushed off into the rain, we quickly realized how close we were to the flood. As we began to pass abandoned cars to our left and right, we made a hasty retreat. But our plight was nothing compared with the massive amount of people currently trapped in their homes.’” (Al Jazeera, 27 August 2017)*

However, the human-interest frame also shows journalists taking two different approaches between the reporting of Hurricane Harvey and of the South Asian flood. In reporting the hurricane, the journalists tend to take a highly personalized approach and often give vivid descriptions of the victims’ suffering. They also do not hesitate in expressing their own personal emotion in the report. However, this sort of empathic reporting was missing from the reports about the South Asian flood.

## **II. The Disaster-Management Frame**

The analysis indicates that news stories that come under the disaster-management frame show both praise and criticism of the organizations’ activities and offer commentaries on the involvement of communities and general people in the disaster-management activities.

Firstly, this theme of the news covers the immediate response of the government in supporting the victims of the disaster. The news usually focuses on various activities related to disaster preparedness, search and rescue, and emergency aid. The following news report details federal government provision of immediate support for the victims of Hurricane Harvey.

*“Boats and helicopters were used to distribute food packets, medicine, and drinking water to those affected and some 200,000 people have been provided with temporary shelter across 250 relief camps set up by the authorities in schools and government buildings.” (The Guardian, 27 August 2017)*

Secondly, the disaster-management frame often includes reports of good management practices done by government or non-governmental organizations. For example, the following news report talks about the success of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Society preparations which helped to reduce the impact of the flood in Bangladesh.

*“Everywhere I go, I see the results of good disaster risk reduction and education by dedicated local Bangladesh Red Crescent volunteers. Houses are elevated, belongings stored high. Even cattle, sheep and goats have their platforms on which to stand as the waters rise.” (The Guardian, 12 September 2017)*

Thirdly, this theme of the news focuses on the area where the government fails to provide proper support to the victims of the disaster. This news report criticizes the government for failing to support the victims of Hurricane Harvey.

*“According to interviews with dozens of storm victims, one of the busiest hurricane seasons in years has overwhelmed federal disaster officials. As a result, the government’s response in the two biggest affected states—Texas and Florida—has been scattershot: effective in dealing with immediate needs, but unreliable and at times inadequate in handling the aftermath, as thousands of people face unusually long delays in getting basic disaster assistance.” (The New York Times, 22 October 2017)*

Fourthly, another dominant theme of the disaster-management frame focuses on the activities of the general public in managing the impact of the disaster. The following New York Times extract details how the people affected by Hurricane Harvey came together to help the victims of the disaster.

*“The volunteer rescue boat and many others like it are a sign of how the response to one of the worst disasters in decades in Texas has been, in many ways, improvised. Recreational vehicles—airboats, Jet Skis, motorized fishing boats—have rushed to the aid of people trapped in their homes, steered by welders, roofers, mechanics, and fishermen wearing shorts, headlamps, and ponchos. The working class, in large part, is being saved by the working class.” (The New York Times, 29 August 2017)*

### **III. The disaster-measurement frame**

The disaster-measurement frame is one of the most commonly used framing techniques for reporting of disasters. The study found stories based on the disaster-measurement frame focused on four thematic areas: descriptions of the magnitude of the disaster, the amount of economic loss, the human cost in terms of the number of lives lost or people affected, and damage or destruction of the physical infrastructure.

Firstly, descriptions of the nature of the disaster are an essential theme which aim to give readers an overall picture of the magnitude or severity of the disaster. Journalists usually collect information about the disaster from the government institutions and scientific organizations. The following extract from a New York Times status update collected its factual information (category of the cyclone, wind speed, and current location of the eye of the storm) from the National Hurricane Center.

*“Hurricane Harvey made landfall on the Central Texas coast as a Category 4 storm late Friday, according to the National Hurricane Center...The eye of the storm swept ashore with 130-mile-per-*

*hour winds about 9:45 p.m. between Port Aransas and Port O'Connor, just northeast of Corpus Christi.” (The New York Times, 25 August 2017)*

Secondly, news of the economic impact of the disaster is another crucial theme whereby the journalist collects data from dedicated government institutions and research organizations. The following extract from a New York Times story highlights the likely economic impact of Hurricane Harvey. To make their report more credible, the journalists used data from three organizations about their prediction of the possible economic damage caused by Harvey.

*“• RMS, a risk-modeling firm based in California. It estimated the cost at \$70 billion to \$90 billion as of Thursday. • Moody’s Analytics, a research firm. It estimated between \$86 billion and \$108 billion on Friday. • Chuck Watson, a disaster modeler with Enki Research. He estimated \$72 billion to \$85 billion on Thursday.” (The New York Times, 1 September 2017)*

Thirdly, another theme under the disaster-measurement umbrella is reporting on the loss of human life and the number of people affected by the disaster. The following extract reports on the cost of human life due to the South Asian flood. This news story also reports how many people have been affected by the flood across three countries.

*“More than 1,000 people have died in floods across South Asia this summer, and as sheets of incessant rain pummeled the vast region on Tuesday, worries grew that the death toll would rise along with the floodwaters... According to the United Nations, at least 41 million people in Bangladesh, India, and Nepal have been directly affected by flooding and landslides resulting from the monsoon rains, which usually begin in June and last until September.” (The New York Times, 29 August 2017)*

Fourthly, the impact of the disaster on the physical infrastructure in the affected areas is also a common subject of disaster news coverage. The following extract describes how the flood has destroyed infrastructure, including school buildings, leading to the disruption of children’s education or displaced several million people.

*“The International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) says the fourth significant floods this year have affected more than 7.4 million people in Bangladesh, damaging or destroying more than 697,000 houses.” (The Guardian, 31 August 2017)*

However, there is a clear difference between how information is used when reporting on Harvey and on the South Asian floods. In the case of the floods, the news informs of the total number of people

affected and killed, as well as of damages to the infrastructure. However, none of the news outlets reported economic damages caused by the flood. Whereas with Hurricane Harvey, a wide array of information was relayed, including the damage to physical infrastructure, the loss of human life, the economic cost, the wind speed, the precise category of the cyclone, the level of rainfall, not to mention the number of people rescued. Here, for example, The New York Times reports “*Hurricane Harvey spawned 57 tornadoes inland and 18 different parts of Texas were deluged with more than 4ft of rain*”, while The Guardian states “*some 200,000 people have been provided with temporary shelter across 250 relief camps set up by the authorities in schools and government buildings*”.

#### **IV. The Humanitarian Frame**

The humanitarian frame reports on how human virtues such as love and compassion toward each other drives individuals and groups of people to support the victims of the disaster. The news coverage of Hurricane Harvey and the South Asian floods reports how individuals—rich and poor alike—as well as various groups and organizations, driven on by Mankind’s basic ethics of altruism, supported the victims of the disaster.

Firstly, the following BBC news item about Hurricane Harvey reported how the general public came together and formed a volunteer group to support the victims of the cyclone. It also shows how individuals came to Texas from other parts of the US to support the cyclone-affected people spurred on by feelings of self-responsibility.

*“The so-called Cajun Navy, run by volunteers, has stepped in with their boats to help people affected. A volunteer from the Cajun Navy, which has no connection to the US Navy, also spoke to the American news network about how he was inspired after receiving help during Hurricane Katrina. Joshua Lincoln said as soon as he heard about Houston, he had to leave work and help. ‘In my life, I’ve been through a lot of storms including Katrina,’ he said. ‘Seeing how people in Texas responded and helped us in a disaster kind of tugged at my heart.’” (bbc.com, 29 August 2017)*

Second, this theme includes reports of donations or financial support for the victims of the disaster by individuals, celebrities, politicians, or the rich. For example, The New York Times reported “*Michael Dell, Tech Billionaire, Pledges \$36 Million in Harvey Relief*” (1 September 2017). The previous day, The Guardian had also reported, “*Donald Trump has also pledged to donate \$1m in personal funds to the relief effort*” (31 August 2017).



Third, this theme of the news focuses on the power of humanity over law. For example, the New York Times reported on the flood-affected Indians who crossed the border with Bangladesh to take shelter and the Bangladeshi border guards who did not prevent them crossing. This story also mentions how local Bangladeshis came forward to help the flood-affected Indians in Bangladesh.

*“India has erected a forbidding barrier of concertina wire along the thousands of miles of border between the two countries. Indian border guards routinely shoot Bangladeshis attempting illegal crossings and kill 50 or more every year...The Bangladesh border guards, however, did not try to prevent the Indians from crossing to escape the floods. The Indians are reported to have found shelter not just on streets, but also in Bangladeshi homes. A resident said they ‘stood by the flood-affected Indians.’ Common sense and humanity prevailed over jingoism and xenophobia on the India-Bangladesh border.” (The New York Times, 1 September 2017)*

Fourth, besides the reporting of how people come forward to support fellow human beings, some reports also focus on human action in support of other animals who get affected by the disaster. The following news story reported how the flood was endangering the life of the last-surviving Indian one-horn rhinos which are at risk of extinction from being over-hunted by poachers.

*“Endangered rhinos flee from Indian floods into poachers’ hands...a herd of endangered rhinos fleeing the deadly floods sweeping northern India now faces another threat, wildlife officials said on Monday: poachers are stalking the animals in the few areas of high ground to which they have managed to escape... the authorities said baby rhinos were particularly at risk. Last year, 17 one-horned rhinos were killed in floods.” (The New York Times, 11 July 2017)*

## **V. The political frame**

The political frame presents the news in such a way that it emphasizes agreement or disagreement between individuals, groups, or organizations. This study finds that the reports using the political frame focus on four particular thematic areas: conflict between elected or public officials, disaster-related activities of the political leader as well as the local and federal elected officials, and cross-border activities for fighting the disaster.

Firstly, under the political frame journalists often report on conflicts which have arisen out of the disaster. Disaster, as a political issue, always creates tension among key stakeholders who are responsible for managing it, and this can lead to competition and ultimately, conflict. This extract

from The New York Times describes the conflict between two elected public officials from different political parties.

*“The Democratic mayor of Texas’ largest city and the Republican governor have been publicly clashing over Hurricane Harvey for more than a month, at times turning one of the worst natural disasters to strike the state into a politically tinged feud...Mayor Sylvester Turner and Gov. Greg Abbott disagreed over whether to evacuate the Houston region, with the governor urging residents to ‘strongly consider’ leaving and the mayor telling people to stay in their homes and ride out the storm.” (The New York Times, 29 September 2017)*

Secondly, journalists often use the matter of political cooperation in their reporting of the disaster. This theme focuses on how competing powers come to a consensus and agree to work together to manage the impact of the disaster. The following news extract reports that members of the US Congress of both the Democratic and Republican parties agreed to work with the US president to fund a recovery package for the victims of Hurricane Harvey.

*“The president promised Monday to push a major recovery package through Congress and predicted, with some justification, that it would garner widespread bipartisan support — even though his conservative Republican allies opposed a similar aid package for Northeast states after Hurricane Sandy in 2012.” (The New York Times, 29 August 2017)*

Thirdly, the political frame often reports on the visit of the president or prime minister of a country to the disaster-affected area. Visiting the disaster-stricken areas and talking with the victims is more of a symbolic political move by the leader than a real management activity. The following extract from The Guardian tells of the US president’s plan to visit the area hit by Hurricane Harvey.

*“Trump and his wife, Melania, will travel back to Texas and Louisiana on Saturday, Sanders added. The tentative plan includes the Houston area in Texas and possibly Lake Charles, Louisiana, but this may change depending on conditions. The president visited Corpus Christi and Austin on Tuesday.” (The Guardian, 1 September 2017)*

The New York Times also reported on a prime ministerial visit to the flood-affected areas of India.

*“This weekend, Prime Minister Narendra Modi flew over the devastation in Bihar, where more than 400 people are believed to have died in floods in recent weeks.” (The New York Times, 29 August 2017)*

Fourthly, this type of news focuses on regional or global cooperation to tackle the impact of the disaster. The following report from The New York Times explains that it is very difficult, if not impossible, for a single country to tackle a disaster like the South Asian flood which affected three neighboring countries. Therefore, there is no alternative but for cross-country cooperation to effectively manage the flood.

*“There is a limit, though, to what Bangladesh can do by itself. Floods are a trans-national affair, and when the big river systems running across China and India and then pouring into Bangladesh go into their seasonal churn, borders mean little. During the floods, this time, 800 Indians from the state of West Bengal bordering Bangladesh sought shelter in Lalmonirhat, a northern district of Bangladesh...The increasing frequency and intensity of floods point to the need for cross-border cooperation on shared rivers. India, being both the bigger country and the one upriver, has to take the lead. That means signing water-sharing agreements, which have been pending for two decades. It also means rethinking India’s frighteningly dangerous river-linking project that harks back to an era of grandiose development schemes.” (The New York Times, 1 September 2017)*

## **VI. The climate-change frame**

The study found that the climate-change frame broadly falls into three thematic areas, as follows:

Firstly, this kind of report focuses on the link between climate change and the intensity or impact of the disaster. For example, the following paragraph from The Guardian describes how various aspects of climate change are thought to have increased the magnitude of Hurricane Harvey and which will lead to intensified activity and destruction in all cyclone-affected areas.

*“In conclusion, while we cannot say climate change ‘caused’ Hurricane Harvey (that is an ill-posed question), we can say is that it exacerbated several characteristics of the storm in a way that greatly increased the risk of damage and loss of life. Climate change worsened the impact of Hurricane Harvey.” (The Guardian, 28 August 2017)*

Secondly, this theme focuses on how human activities such as deforestation or the use of fossil fuel contribute to climate change and its negative effects. This following extract from The Guardian illustrates how decades-long oil extraction leads to rising sea levels which, in turn, contribute to an increase in the water surge during Hurricane Harvey which caused more damage.

*“Sea level rise attributable to climate change – some of which is due to coastal subsidence caused by human disturbance such as oil drilling – is more than half a foot (15cm) over the past few decades ...That means the storm surge was half a foot higher than it would have been just decades ago, meaning far more flooding and destruction.” (The Guardian, 28 August 2017)*

Thirdly, the report is prepared in such a way that readers can understand in simple terms how climate change increases the intensity and frequency of disasters. This extract from The New York Times illustrates the global impact of temperature rises.

*“Warmer weather heats the oceans, which causes more evaporation, which increases moisture in the atmosphere, which then falls as driving rain. Warmer oceans also rise, partly due to thermal expansion, which in turn threatens low-lying areas; among climate scientists, Bangladesh has for years been the poster child of nations that are likely to face famine, flooding and forced migration as a result of rising sea levels caused by global warming.” (The New York Times, 31 August 2017)*

## **7. Discussion**

This study has examined the news coverage surrounding Hurricane Harvey and the South Asian flood of 2017 in five global news outlets: The New York Times, The Guardian, BBC, CNN, and Al Jazeera. The aim has been to address crucial questions concerning the nature of the media coverage of the disasters in developed and developing countries. By using the framing analysis approach, the study has investigated whether the western disaster, as well as the western victims, have been presented differently in global media in comparison with the non-western disaster and its victims. This research has revealed a noticeable imbalance in the volume of coverage devoted to the two disasters, with considerably more reports being devoted to Hurricane Harvey, even though the South Asian flood was equally severe and with much greater loss of human life. Finally, the news analysis comparing the two disasters has shown a similar trend of using frames for reporting, however, there is a visible difference in how the frames have been used for reporting the two disasters.

In terms of the number of news items covering each disaster, analysis supports the finding of other studies (e.g. Joye 2010, Franks 2006 & Adams 1986) that have identified that global news outlets report natural disasters in the west more frequently than those in the developing world. For example, Anushka Shah (2017) examined 1,500 English language news outlets across the world on the media coverage of Hurricane Harvey and the 2017 South Asian flood. She found that Hurricane Harvey got over three times as much media coverage than the South Asian flood even though the total number of deaths and refugee displacements were respectively 17 and 1,366 times higher than for Hurricane

Harvey. Similarly, this study has shown that Hurricane Harvey got around four times more coverage than the South Asian flood.

Shah (2017) argued that the lack of physical infrastructure or resource was one of the key reasons why disasters in third-world countries got limited coverage in comparison to disasters in the West (for example, Associated Press (AP) has one local bureau in every state in the US but only one per country elsewhere, while Reuters has 22 offices in the US but only 19 across all of Asia and four across Africa). However, Shah's (2017) study also found that English language news outlets in India also gave more coverage to Hurricane Harvey than the flood in India. In the same study, she also found that the English language news outlet in Nigeria showed a similar trend and gave Hurricane Harvey more coverage than the flood in Nigeria (Shah 2017). Moreover, Al Jazeera, which has its headquarters in Doha in Qatar, followed the other four news outlets in this study and published more stories about Hurricane Harvey than the South Asian flood. The Guardian and the BBC, both of whose headquarters are in London, followed a similar trend. Therefore, the finding of Shah's study, as well as this study, has clearly illustrated that there is a global consensus among news media, whether local or global in operation, that disasters in the developed world are more newsworthy than in the developing world. Moreover, this study has found that all five global news outlets show an almost similar trend of using frames for reporting both disasters. For example, the human-interest frame, the disaster-measurement frame, and the disaster-management frame were the top three frames used for both Hurricane Harvey and the 2017 South Asian flood.

The study has found that the news outlets follow similar trends of using frames for covering the two disasters. However, the study has also identified distinct differences in how the frames are used in the two cases. Firstly, in the case of the disaster-measurement frame, no media outlets reported the economic impact of the South Asian floods even though all five published several reports about the economic cost of Hurricane Harvey. In the case of the South Asian flood, the news outlets all published reports about just two variables: the total number of people killed or affected, and the damage to infrastructure. By comparison, in case of the Harvey, all sorts of information (economic losses, infrastructure damages, wind speed, category of the cyclone, level of rainfall, number of people rescued, etc.) was reported in support of the severity of the disaster.

Secondly, this study has found significant differences in how individuals' hopes were presented using the human-interest frame. In covering Hurricane Harvey, journalists frequently added their personal experiences in reports telling the stories of hurricane victims, whereas, in the coverage of the South Asian flood, there appeared to be no attempt made by journalists to include their personal experiences.

For instance, journalist Heidi Zhou-Castro reported that people in Houston were unable to move because the road was submerged under floodwater from the hurricane; she also added her own experience of getting back to her hotel under threat of the floodwater. The likely explanation for this difference in reporting could be the source of the stories. Richard Sambrook (2010) argued that international news outlets have cut the number of overseas-based correspondents in recent years due to economic pressure. For instance, The New York Times sent over two dozen reporters to cover Harvey, whereas it sent a single journalist to cover the floods in the three South Asian countries. This decision to cut the number of foreign correspondents in developing countries is more evidence of western media bias. However, due to the development of the mobile internet and social media, it is now easier to collect stories from remote areas. Therefore, the observed difference is more likely the result of editorial policy rather than a simple limitation of the reporting.

To conclude this section, the study has found the astonishing similarity of how frames are used for reporting Hurricane Harvey and the 2017 South Asian flood. However, there are some frames which are used differently for reporting the two disasters. More importantly, the victims of Harvey present as “us” whereas flood-affected peoples in South Asia are being labeled as “others” who are culturally distant. This issue highlights the embedded bias in the global media against the victims of disasters in non-western countries.

## **8. Conclusion**

This research intended to analyse the similarity and differences in the news coverage of the disasters in developed and developing countries. As follows, this study examined the news about the hurricane Harvey and South Asian flood in 2017. It focused on the three key aspects of news coverage about the disasters. In the first place, it looked at the volume news about Harvey and South Asian Flood. The finding has shown a striking imbalance in the amount of reporting, hurricane Harvey got above four times more coverages than South Asian flood. Next, it looked at the frames used to report the disasters, and the result has shown that there were six frames used for reporting the two disasters. In conclusion, it analysed how the frames used to report Harvey and South Asian Flood. The result has shown that all the news outlet used the same frame to address a similar aspect of Harvey and South Asian flood. However, the findings revealed the striking contrasts of how each of the frames used for reporting Harvey and the South Asian flood. To end, the finding supports the claim that global media bias toward western disaster that why all the media outlets devoted much more attention to Hurricane Harvey than South Asian flood, as well as victims of Harvey presented as “us” whereas victims of South Asian flood seen as “others”. As news media plays the primary role to build public opinion, so

it is critical to comprehend the difference in the reporting of the disaster in the developed and developing world. For many countries in the developing world international help is essential to recover from a disaster. This international help is primarily dependent on how global media cover that disaster. Therefore, there is considerable scope for further study to find the reasons why global media gives considerably less attention to the disaster in the developing world in compare to the disaster in the developed world.

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