

# ***The Role of Media in Propagating Pakistan Scheme in NWFP***

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## **Abstract**

*The power of news media to set a nation's agenda, to focus public attention on a few key public issues, is an immense and well documented influence. Not only do people require factual information about public affairs from the news media but also learn how much importance to attach to a topic on the basis of the emphasis placed on it in the news. This power of media contributed significantly to propagate the agenda of freedom fighters of the Sub-Continent. The Indian National Congress had launched its propaganda campaign to influence the public opinion and increase the number of its supporters. Later the promoters of the League's agenda also entered this arena and launched their propaganda to convert Muslims to the League's ideology.*

## **Introduction**

The role of media in shaping public perception and opinions about significant political and social issues has long been the subject of both speculation and research.<sup>1</sup> It is widely accepted that what we know about, think and believe about what happens in the world, outside of personal firsthand experience, is shaped, and some would say orchestrated, by how these events are reported in

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1 J. Wilson & S. Wilson, *Mass Media, Mass Culture: An Introduction* (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2001), p.10.

the newspapers and communicated through the medium of radio and television.<sup>2</sup>

The basic function of media is collection and dissemination of news and information. The media collects news from all four corners of the world and then spreads it in all directions for the information of the people. The media supplies the latest news to people and keep their knowledge up-to-date. It helps the people to keep themselves well informed about the changing events in their own country as well as abroad. The media in other words is called the mirror to world affairs. It brings countries and people together and makes them feel that they belong to one and the same human family or the vice versa.

Media has a twofold relationship with the public. Firstly, the media also influences the public opinion and is a great source of expressing it. Media's propaganda influences thinking of people, thus, it shapes the public opinion. People form their opinion about various national, international, social, political and other matters or events that come to them through media. For this purpose print media publish critical articles and electronic media arrange talk shows and air documentaries to help the readers, listeners and viewers to develop good judgment and taste.<sup>3</sup>

Secondly, media is a powerful weapon in the hands of people and acts as their chief spokesman and fights for public rights and liberties. On the one hand media criticizes government policies and on the other hand, it does a lot to mould public opinion in its favor. That is why, the public opinion on political, economic and other issues, is considerably influenced by media. As most of the people cannot form any opinion about any happening, media guides them in this respect.

Besides giving news to make people well informed, the media has great educational value. It discusses and publishes articles on social, economic, political, literary and scientific topics. Through these articles people acquaint themselves with latest political

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2 Barry Fields, "School Discipline Coverage in Australian Newspapers: Impact on Public Perception, Educational Decision and Policy", [online article]; available from <<http://www.arre.edu.au/05pap/fie05290.pdf>>; accessed 10 June 2008.

3 Muhammad Ali Chiragh, *Propaganda* (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 1983), pp. 15-25.

developments and scientific discoveries. Thus media has a great job in the field of education as well.<sup>4</sup> Apart from these basic functions; the media is also a source of public entertainment. In short, media is great power in the world and has become the potent voice of people.

Media has been active in playing its role in shaping public opinion in South Asia before independence. A dominant segment of the media promoted the noncommunal nationalist cause of the Indian National Congress while pro-Muslim League media supported the two nation theory and other policies of the League. Those papers that favoured the League's ideology advised the Indian Muslims to take active part in the activities of the All India Muslim League. These papers regarded the AIML, the sole representative political organization of the Indian Muslims.<sup>5</sup>

Like national media the media of NWFP also played a vital role in expressing the grievances of the Muslims and at the same time helped in bringing greater awareness and unity with regard to the idea of the Muslim nationhood. The League was well organized in other parts of united India but the Frontier province was its weak side. The NWFP was a Muslim majority area but the Congress had an upper hand there. The League had to find some way out to cope with the problem. Along with other measures it decided to use media as its tool to achieve this objective. The media worked as a factor in giving breakthrough to the All India Muslim League in Frontier. A close observation of the events shows that Muslim League strengthened its roots with the help of media. The media generously supported and promoted its ideology. It projected the League as a sole representative and protector of Muslim interests. The Congress was labeled as Hindu party working on its project to subjugate the Muslims for ever. The result of this media support was conversion of this province to the League's ideology. They started thinking on the same lines which League had drawn for the Muslims of the Subcontinent.

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4 *Encyclopedia Americana*, Vol. 16, (Connecticut: Grolier International, 1986), pp.183-86.

5 Mehdi Hassan, "Muslim press and the independence movement", [online article]; available from <<http://DAWN.com>>; accessed 15 June 2008.

This paper focuses on the contribution and effect of media in freedom politics of NWFP. The central question addressed in this paper is: why did the League had little influence as compared to Congress till 1946 elections in NWFP and what made her popular in the referendum of 1947 in which she swept the ballot? The paper also focuses on League's strategy to cope with the Frontier's problem. It is, in fact, an attempt to look at the issue impartially with the perspective of a social scientist.

### **Pro-League Media**

The news gathering and news writing system has been working in the Subcontinent since long. The newspapers of that time were pen-newspapers and were simply considered as government gazettes. People had little concern with them. The modern press was introduced by the British in India. Initially it was in the control of the foreigners but later on local people also took interest in it and started their own newspapers.<sup>6</sup> In the beginning its role was informative and educative but later on political parties and interest groups used it to mould public opinion in their favor.

Just like other parts of the Subcontinent the journalistic activities started in NWFP in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The first Urdu newspaper of NWFP namely *Murtazai* appeared in 1854 from Peshawar. Later on many newspapers appeared and played their informative and educative role in the province.<sup>7</sup> But here I will focus only on those papers that supported the League's cause and popularized its agenda. The important papers sympathetic to League's agenda are introduced below:

The Weekly *Pakistan* began to be published from Abbottabad in 1935 under Ghulam Hussain Kazmi. It can be said that the word Pakistan was given popularity in Hazara by this weekly. The weekly supported the League's cause. In this way it familiarized the term Pakistan among the people, made them politically conscious and directed them towards a new goal. By doing so the weekly *Pakistan* displayed a remarkable role in Pakistan movement, in strengthening the Muslim cause and carrying the

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6 Bilqees Irshad, "Journalism in Hazara" (Unpublished M.A Thesis, Department of Pakistan Studies, Government Postgraduate College Mansehra, 1998), p. 8.

7 *Ibid.*, p.21.

message of the League to the villages of Hazara. It closed down in 1938.<sup>8</sup>

The Weekly *Nojawan-i-Sarhad* was started by Taj Muhammad Khan from Huripur in 1938. Its policy was anti-Congress and pro-League. It became a daily during the World War II and was shifted to Abbottabad but soon was reverted to weekly due to scarcity of financial resources.<sup>9</sup> This weekly played an effective role to support the Muslim struggle for freedom and for achieving their sovereign state. It made people of the region politically conscious and prepared them to support the cause of the League.<sup>10</sup> Its circulation continued even after independence.

The Weekly *Al-Jahad* was launched by Mian Shumsul Huda from Mansehra in 1944. Its policy was against Congress and it used to speak on behalf of the Muslim League.<sup>11</sup>

These papers propagated the League program in Hazara region. The strategy was to highlight the League activities and criticize the Congress and its ideology of Indian Nationalism. The work of these papers had been so effective that in the elections of 1946 the Muslim League got nine out of ten seats of Hazara. In other parts of the NWFP, the performance of the League was poor. It could win only 17 seats out of 38 reserved for Muslims.<sup>12</sup>

*Turjuman-i-Sarhad* was started by Malik Amir Alim Awan in 1926 from Rawalpindi and in 1933 was shifted to Peshawar where it became a famous, regularly published weekly of NWFP. The paper was anti-Congress and gave coverage to the League activities.<sup>13</sup>

*Khyber Mail*, owned by Mr. Sanaullah and edited by Haroon-ur-Rashid, a first successful English weekly newspaper was started

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8 Daud Kausar, *Tareekh-i-Mujahideen-i-Hazara* (Abbottabad: H.S. Printers, 1975), p.202.

9 Ajmal Malik, *Sahafat Suba Sarhad Main* (Lahore: Qaumi Publishers, 1980), p.87.

10 Bilqees, *op.cit.*, p.39.

11 *Ibid.*, p.41.

12 Daud Kausar, *op.cit.*, 226.

13 Muhammad Latif, "Malik Amir Alam" (Unpublished M.A Thesis, Department of Pakistan Studies, Government Postgraduate College Mansehra, 1992), pp.35-36.

in 1932 from Peshawar.<sup>14</sup> During League's struggle to get foothold in the province this paper gave generous coverage to the League activities in propagating its program to make her popular among the masses of the NWFP. The following comments of *Khyber Mail* illustrate how it supported the League's cause:

While everywhere else in India the Muslims are closing their ranks and achieving greater and greater harmony of aims and ideals, in this land of Pathans there is only disruption and disunity. While in other Muslim provinces the impending political changes, which promise to lead India to a new era of complete independence, have stimulated an active spirit of compromise among the various Muslim political parties, here by a queer tyranny of misfortune we are only drifting away from each other.<sup>15</sup>

The *Khyber Mail* was the paper that prominently displayed the activities of the Muslim League.

Apart from aforementioned papers some papers from other parts of the British India also entered the NWFP and affected public opinion in urban areas of the Frontier. *Dawn*, started in 1942 from Delhi,<sup>16</sup> and *Nawa-e-Waqt*, started in 1940 from Lahore,<sup>17</sup> propagated League's program and became its mouthpiece. These papers reached the Frontier and slowly and gradually succeeded in shaping public opinion in favor of the League. *Pakistan Times* appeared on February 4, 1947 and played decisive role in critical days.<sup>18</sup> This paper also reached urban centers of the NWFP. The Muslim League comparatively became more influential in media targeted areas. Out of three it had won two seats of Provincial Legislature from Peshawar city in 1946 elections. The results of 1946 elections show that Muslim League was benefited by the media support.

### **Propagation of League's Agenda**

“The power of news media to set a nation's agenda, to focus public attention on a few key public issues, is an immense and well

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14 Omer Amer, *A History of Press in NWFP* (Peshawar: Free Lance Research Publications, n.d.), p.107.

15 *Khyber Mail*, 7 March, 1947.

16 M.S. Naz, *Akhbar Naveesi Mukhtasar Tareen Tarikh* (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 1980), p.311.

17 *Ibid.*, pp.323-24.

18 *Ibid.*, pp.311-12.

documented influence. Not only do people require factual information about public affairs from the news media, readers, listeners and viewers also learn how much importance to attach to a topic on the basis of the emphasis placed on it in the news.”<sup>19</sup>

The print media played effective role in Hazara to propagate League’s program but remaining NWFP was still in the grip of the Congress. To cope with this problem the League focused on this region and its leadership selected sensitive issues for propaganda. The strategy proved very effective and people started distancing themselves from the Congress and its program. The media worked well to popularize the League programme. The coordination of print and electronic media achieved that once seemed impossible.

The Muslim League was the oldest political party of the Frontier but was not heard of since its establishment in 1912.<sup>20</sup> After reorganization, its movement in Frontier started in 1938. Though the Quaid had toured the NWFP in 1936 in connection with the forthcoming elections but nothing came out of that tour.<sup>21</sup> The League could not issue its party ticket even to a single candidate. It was formed in the assembly which provided her an opportunity in May 1943 to form its Ministry under Sardar Aurangzeb that was later on lost due to the vote of no-confidence in 1945.<sup>22</sup>

After almost ten years once again Jinnah arrived in NWFP on November 19, 1945 to ask the people to vote for the League and Pakistan. He was given a warm welcome by the local Leaguers.<sup>23</sup> During this time many people were attracted to the League including Aminul Hasnat (the Pir Manki), Fida Muhammad Khan,

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19 Maxwell McCombs, “The Agenda Setting Role of the Mass Media in Shaping of Public Opinion,” [online article]; available from <<http://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/dps/extra/McCombs.pdf>>; accessed 16 June 2008.

20 Dr. Riaz Ahmad (ed), *The Frontier Muslim League 1913-1947: Secret Police Abstracts* (Islamabad: NIHCR, 2008), p.1.

21 Mian Ziauddin, *Memoirs of a Pakistan Diplomat* (Peshawar: University Book Agency, 1976), p.54.

22 *Ibid.*, pp.66-69.

23 Zia Ahmad, “Quaid-i-Azam’s Visits to NWFP” (Unpublished M.A Thesis, Department of Pakistan Studies, Government Postgraduate College Mansehra, 2003), p.44. See also, Muhammad Shafi Sabir, *Quaid-i-Azam Aur Suba Sarhad* (Peshawar: University Book Agency, n/d), p.113.

Raja Haider Zaman, Nawab Muhammad Ali Khan, Habibullah Khan, Khan Abdul Qayum Khan and Mir Alam.<sup>24</sup> The Congress contested the elections on the issue of keeping India united while the League campaigned on the platform of Pakistan and had to prove that influence of the Khan Brothers and Congress had waned.<sup>25</sup>

In the elections of 1946 the Congress party won 30 out of 50 seats in the NWFP Legislative Assembly. Of 38 Muslim seats the League won only 17.<sup>26</sup> The Congress Ministry was formed under Dr. Khan Sahib. Then onwards the League changed its strategy for winning support of the people and selected sensitive issues for propaganda. The pro-League media projected them in the same vein to win more people to the League.

The “Direct Action Day” of 16 August 1946 proved disastrous for communal harmony of India. In retaliation of Bengal riots, the Hindus of Bihar massacred large number of Muslims there. The League protested against organized Hindu brutality and brought stories of violence to the NWFP and arranged public meetings to show torn pages of the holy Quran and blood stained clothes to the people.<sup>27</sup> The press also painted gloomy picture of sectarian violence of Bihar, thus, serving the cause of the League to widen the gulf between Muslims and the non-Muslims in the NWFP.<sup>28</sup> Since it was the only province of the proposed Pakistan where the League was not in power, it was essential for them to wrest it from the Congress. Without winning the people and conveying its message through media to them it was difficult for the League to win support for Pakistan in this province.<sup>29</sup>

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24 Muhammad Ijaz, “The All India Muslim League in NWFP” (Unpublished M.A Thesis, Department of Pakistan Studies, Government Postgraduate College Mansehra, 2008), pp.78-79.

25 Syed Waqar Ali Shah, *Ethnicity, Islam and Nationalism: Muslim Politics in the North West Frontier Province 1937-1947* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1999), p.160.

26 M. Anwar Khan, *The Role of NWFP in the Freedom Struggle* (Lahore: Research Society of Pakistan, 2000), p.206-7.

27 Ijaz, *op.cit.*, p.92.

28 M. Anwar Khan, *op.cit.*, p.226.

29 Waqar Ali Shah, *op.cit.*, p. 201.

In the midst of communal frenzy, Nehru decided to visit the NWFP in October 1946. The Leaguers seized the opportunity to intensify their propaganda, especially among the tribesmen. When Nehru reached Peshawar airport he was greeted by a large and hostile League's demonstration. In Waziristan the next day Nehru had an extremely hostile reception of the tribal leaders. In the North of the province the reception was even worse. Nehru's visit had done more to strengthen communalism than the Congress Ministry.<sup>30</sup> The *Nawa-e-Waqt*, *Tarjuman-e-Sarhad* and *The Khyber Mail* gave full coverage to this visit of Nehru by painting its very gloomy picture to show that Frontier's Muslims had rejected the Hindu Congress.<sup>31</sup>

In December 1946, Nandihar tribes of Hazara attacked Oghi and Battal (business centers in the North of Hazara District) and plundered Hindu and Sikh businessmen. These business centers were sacked in way that some lives were also lost. The Government imposed fine on the tribes for their heinous act but the League criticized Government's step saying that it was pro-Hindu and anti-Muslim.<sup>32</sup> This was the beginning of the communal strife in the NWFP. The *Tarjuman-e-Sarhad* and *Nojawan-e-Sarhad* gave coverage to these events and aroused communal feelings among the Muslims who hitherto had been living in peace and harmony with their non-Muslim neighbors. As a result, riots started in NWFP. The Hindu-Muslim riots aroused people's feelings. With the outbreak of violence and rioting, their sense of belonging to greater Muslim community became stronger. The League had waited for such an opportunity for a long time and this time succeeded in winning their full support. The news of the outburst of communal violence and atrocities against Muslims were published in the province at the highest possible pitch. The Bihar massacre of 1946 provided the League with its best weapon for winning over the sympathies of a large segment of the Muslims.<sup>33</sup> *Tarjuman-e-Sarhad* called Bihar events a "cultural

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30 H.V. Hodson, *The Great Divide* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1985), pp.279-81.

31 *Nawa-e-Waqt* (Lahore), 1 November, 1946; *The Khyber Mail*, 3 November 1946.

32 Waqar Ali Shah, *op.cit.*, pp. 194-95, also, M. Anwar Khan, *op.cit.*, p. 229.

33 M. Anwar Khan, p. 260.

extinction campaign”.<sup>34</sup> Public opinion gradually changed in favour of the League and its demand for a separate homeland for Muslims.

The Frontier’s League launched Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) in February 1947. In a public meeting of 20<sup>th</sup> February a resolution was passed criticizing Congress ministry’s enforcement of black laws and forcibly reconverting Basanti, a Sikh woman converted to Islam but was surrendered to her family by the government, to Sikhism.<sup>35</sup> This act of the government was taken as anti-Muslim. An appeal was made to all the Muslims to participate in CDM to make it a success. The civil disobedience in fact became anti-Hindu movement because Congress was projected as a Hindu party and its ministry in the NWFP as a Hindu Ministry. Those days’ political developments in Punjab influenced the Frontier politics. The League had launched vigorous civil disobedience movement against the government of Sir Khizar Hayat, the premier of Punjab. When he realized that the situation had gone out of his control he tendered his resignation on March 2, 1947 in order to restore peace in the province.<sup>36</sup> The success of its civil disobedience in Punjab boosted the morale of the League in the Frontier and its leadership started demanding resignation from Dr. Khan Sahib. The League intensified its protest activities which took it near to its goal. The politics went communal. The communalization of politics in NWFP had generated feelings of insecurity among the non-Muslims.<sup>37</sup>

After this series of events, the League’s movement for Pakistan had entered a decisive stage. More effective propagation of its programme could produce much better results. Along with agitation it focused on conveying its programme through media. The combination of *Sada-e-Pakistan*,<sup>38</sup> a newspaper started for a specific purpose in 1947, and the *Pakistan Radio*,<sup>39</sup> a secret radio

34 *Tarjuman-e-Sarhad*, August 30, 1946.

35 M. Anwar Khan, *op.cit.*, p. 228.

36 Syed Mujawar Hussain Shah, *Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar: A Political Biography* (Lahore: Qadria Books, 1985), p.144.

37 Waqar Ali Shah, *op.cit.*, p. 202.

38 Dr. Riaz Ahmad, *op.cit.*, p.345.

39 *Ibid.*, p.348.

station installed to propagate Pakistan Scheme, worked very well for League's campaign and attainment of its objective in the Frontier.

*Sada-e-Pakistan*, an unauthorized news sheet appeared regularly, containing pro-Muslim League propaganda and attacks on Congress. The issue continued in Peshawar city, in which was published a daily bulletin of pro-Muslim League news. It is said that the paper was published from the basement of Syed Qamaruzaman's residence at Peshawar. According to this unauthorized paper the struggle then going on was between the forces of Pakistan (the land of the pure) and Kafristan (the land of the infidel). The League was declared the representative of Pakistan while the Congress was labelled as the representative of Kafristan.<sup>40</sup> The religious status of Ghaffar Khan, Dr. Khan Sahib, Maulana Abual Kalam and other pro-Congress Muslims was questioned. To this Paper the decision was in the hands of the Muslims whether they wished to experience the curse of hell or wanted to enjoy the blessings of heaven. This propaganda was to shape the public opinion of the people of NWFP, in favor of Pakistan.<sup>41</sup>

The most surprising was the "*Pakistan Radio*" broadcast of the Muslim League version of events in the Frontier. It started its broadcast in April 1947 targeting the people of central NWFP and parts of tribal area. The news broadcast was both in Pashto and Urdu. After recitation from the Holy Quran the radio broadcasted details of Muslim League's meetings and activities at various places. These items followed the details related to atrocities and repression of the Congress Government in the NWFP.<sup>42</sup> It is not known that who provided this facility of broadcast to the League. It seems that League resources were limited and making arrangements for a radio station was not simple. Perhaps some pro-League retired and serving Government servants had provided this facility to popularize League version in Congress dominated

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40 Muhammad Younis Sethi, *Subhe Jamal* (Lahore: Jung Publishers, 1995), p.397.

41 Iqbal Riaz, *Tehreek-i-Pakistan Aur Suba Sarhad* (Peshawar: Azeem Publishing House, n.d), pp.77-79.

42 Amjad Hussain, *Aalam Main Intikhab: Peshawar* (Toledo: USA: Literary Circle, 1999), p.396.

Muslim majority province of the North West. Anyhow, its propaganda campaign was fruitful and after achieving its objective the radio went silent. Thereafter no body heard anything about it.

Gradually “*Pakistan Radio*” programs became so popular that people had started informing one another about timing and contents of its programs. The radio aired programs that conveyed to the listeners that the League was holding its public meetings and processions successfully and demanded the resignation from the Congress Ministry and the creation of Pakistan.<sup>43</sup> According to the radio Islam was in danger and could not be safeguarded unless Pakistan was attained.

The “*Pakistan Radio*” alleged that the attitude of Congress Ministry towards Muslims was discriminatory where without any reason Muslims were fired from their service to replace them with non-Muslims. One such incident narrated was the dismissal of Khudadad Khan of Mardan, serving as *Kanoongo*. The pro-League media projected this dismissal as an attempt of the Congress to deprive the Muslims of their due rights.<sup>44</sup>

In those days the media also highlighted sectarian differences to widen the gulf between the Muslims and the non-Muslims of the NWFP. Various stories were coined and spread. The most important one was that of Bassanti Devi, a pregnant Sikh woman kidnapped and converted to Islam and married to one Mr. Muhammad Zaman of Hazara. The authorities recovered her and handed over to the then Premier, Dr. Khan Sahib, who called her family and new husband and asked her where she wanted to go. She opted for her family.<sup>45</sup> This action of the premier was criticized by the League protesters and pro-League media. By adopting this strategy, the media wanted to discredit the Congress Ministry. The League had lost the elections of 1946 which were fought on the issue of Pakistan. Though the Congress had captured more Muslim seats than the League, but later on the situation changed. The League made a mass contact to win hearts of people.

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43 Dr. S. M. Asif Ali Rizvi, “NWFP: A Case Study of its Political Evolution with Special Reference to the Frontier Muslim League”, *Historicus*, Vol. XLVI, No.2 (April-June 1998): p. 51.

44 Amjad Hussain, *op.cit.*, p. 397.

45 Ijaz, *op.cit.*, p. 97.

The media provided full support to the League for attainment of its goal. The Congress started losing ground in the changed scenario.

The unrest and successful Muslim League agitation in the NWFP persuaded the British authorities to study the situation before announcing any scheme affecting the future of the province. To read the situation Lord Mountbatten, the last Viceroy of India, reached NWFP on April 28, 1947 and met with all concerned to break the deadlock.<sup>46</sup> Dr. Khan Sahib gave him the option of Pakhtunistan, an independent state of the Pakhtuns, while the Leaguers demanded fresh election. They were of the view that the Congress ministry had lost the confidence of the masses and did not possess the right to rule the province any more.

The viceroy after further deliberations and negotiations announced the transfer of power scheme on 3 June 1947. According to the 3<sup>rd</sup> June Plan the Frontier had to decide its future through referendum.<sup>47</sup> The League strategy proved a success in the province. Unlike other provinces the Frontier was to go through the ordeal of plebiscite in the coming July. The Congress local leadership criticized the 3<sup>rd</sup> June Plan and demanded amendment in it. Their demand was to include the option of Pakhtunistan as well along with the options whether the people of NWFP wanted to join India or Pakistan.<sup>48</sup> But this option was not considered. As a result the Frontier Chapter of the Indian National Congress decided to boycott the referendum.

The League went very active to win desired support in the province where she had lost election on Pakistan in 1946. Large number of public meetings was arranged for mass contact. Local as well as the central leadership addressed those gatherings and their contents and details appeared in the media. As date of referendum approached, the pace of the referendum campaign increased. Numerous League leaders of the Punjab and other provinces visited the Frontier and addressed meetings. The speakers pointed out that the Muslims in the Frontier should unite with their fellow

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46 Rizvi, *op.cit.*, p. 51. See also, Muhammad Shafi Sabir, *Tareekh-i-Suba Sarhad* (Peshawar: University Book Agency, 1986), p.1020.

47 Abdul Wali Khan, *Facts are Sacred* (Peshawar: Juan Publishers, n.d), p.147.

48 Syed Asif Ali Rizvi, *Suba-i-Sarhad Main Aeeni-o-Syasi Irtaqa ka Tajziyati Mutala*," *Fikr-o-Nazar*, Quarterly, International Islamic University, Islamabad, p.66.

Muslims in other provinces in order to establish a strong united Pakistan. Ghaffar Khan and the Congress were criticized.<sup>49</sup>

The referendum was held from 6 to 17 July. It went decisively in favor of the Frontier Province joining Pakistan. In his letter of 23 July the NWFP Governor provided the details of the results to the Viceroy. When compared the results of the referendum with those of the elections held in the winter of 1945-46 the following figures appeared:<sup>50</sup>

a) General Elections 1946:	
i. Total Electorate	604,563
ii. Total Votes for Congress	160,229
iii. Total Muslim League Votes	146,119
iv. Total Votes Cast	347,632

The franchise was restricted in the elections. The people who had the right to cast their vote were small in number. The elections held in 1945-46 for the provincial legislative council did not give victory to the Muslim League. The turn out was 57.5 percent. The League secured 146,119 votes out of 347,632 polled and won 17 seats with 42 percent votes. The Congress polled 160,563 votes and won 19 seats reserved for the Muslims. There was a difference of 14,110 votes that had given two extra seats of the Legislative Assembly to the Congress. For the time being the League had failed to prove its claim of being the sole representative of the Muslims.

b) Referendum 1947:	
i. Total Electorate	572,798
ii. Total Votes for India	2,874
iii. Total Votes for Pakistan	289,244
iv. Total vote Cast	292,118

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49 Riaz Ahmad, *op.cit.*, pp. 360-62.

50 Latif Ahmad Sherwani, *The Partition of India and Mountbatten* (Karachi: Council for Pakistan Studies, 1986), p.150. See also, Juma Khan Sufi, *Bacha Khan, Congress and Nationalist Politics in NWFP* (Islamabad: Vanguard Books, 2006), p.255.

With the support of media the League changed the whole scenario within one year. The 3<sup>rd</sup> June Plan provided that referendum would be held in the NWFP to decide whether it wanted to join Pakistan or India. The year-long hard work proved beneficial for the League. Although the Khan Brothers, Abdul Jabbar Khan and Abdul Ghaffar Khan, leaders of the Frontier Congress, announced boycott from the referendum but it did not work. The voters came out to cast their vote for joining Pakistan. The turn out was 51 percent. The votes cast for Pakistan were 289,118 and that for India 2,874. Thus 99 percent of the people voted for Pakistan. This was a big leap forward.

The Government authorities declared that the referendum was free and fair while the Frontier Congress labeled it as one sided affair.<sup>51</sup> The aforementioned figures show that League had succeeded in winning NWFP to make it a part of Pakistan.

### **Conclusion**

In the end, it can be concluded that during “1940-47” the media was deputed to the politics of the Subcontinent where two major political parties were fighting for the cause of freedom but had set different goals for themselves. The newspapers reflected this division. The nationalist press was owned by Hindus, to promote the political consciousness of united India. The other was called the Muslim press, which supported the Muslim League and its demand for the partition to bring about an independent state for the Muslims.

The NWFP was not exception to the above trend. Media worked as a factor in giving breakthrough to All India Muslim League in this province. *The Khyber Mail*, *Tarjuman-e-Sarhad*, *Nojawan-e-Sarhad*, *Sada-e-Pakistan*, *Nawa-e-Waqt* and “Pakistan Radio” propagated League’s agenda in NWFP and projected it as a sole representative of the Muslims of the Subcontinent. This changed its people’s worldview. Earlier they were under the influence of Khan Brothers who followed the line drawn by Congress for them.

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51 Ijaz, *op.cit.*, p.107.

The winter elections of 1945-46 contested in the name of Pakistan were lost by the League. But within a year this loss was recovered when the League achieved victory in the referendum of July 1947. Both print and electronic media had played a significant role in making it possible. The pro-League media responded to the Congress propaganda very effectively and gave awareness to the Muslims of this province. This awareness helped them in taking decision in favour of Pakistan with overwhelming majority in the referendum held for eliciting their opinion.