Anti-CAA Protest of Mangaluru and Representation of Minorities

Arron Prashanth Menezes
Research Scholar of Journalism and Mass Communication, Kuvempu University

Professor Poornananda D S

Professor of Journalism and Mass Communication, Kuvempu University

Abstract: Global research reifies how 'Protests' and the 'Protest Paradigm' are given due recognition and wide-spread coverage by the Media in matters of dissent. This is however missing in the Indian context when it comes to protest news coverage challenging the status quo; they are often treated critically and the protest paradigm neglected at times. The aim of this study is to analyse whether the protest paradigm was utilised by mainstream newspapers while covering the 2019 Anti-CAA protest in Mangaluru. And in order to validate this, the study has taken up the protest and its news coverage in four Kannada Dailies (N = 392) to develop a concise understanding of how the protest paradigm presents itself within the sequence of such events. The findings accordingly indicate that the objectives of the protest were side-lined while the protesters' actions dominated the coverage. The evidence further supported the government's stance on delegitimising the protestors and their protest, and how it sought to magnify any act of violence resulting from the protest.

Keywords: Content Analysis, Protest Paradigm, Mangaluru, Anti-CAA Protest.

In India, which shares land borders with six countries, citizenship is a contentious issue. According to Census 2011, India houses nearly five million immigrants and as of 2019, 95.3% of them came from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.¹ This goes in to show that citizenship issue protests have a long-standing history in India, especially in the Assam region which shares its borders with Bangladesh. The same was observed when the citizenship law was amended in 2019, resulting in nationwide protests against it. The above should be analysed in the context of Bangladesh's birth as a nation in 1971 and how it created an exodus of Bengali Muslims and Hindus to Assam, causing unrest and fear in the minds of the Assamese. This sparked an Anti-Immigrant movement

in Assam in 1979 and some semblance of peace was formed with The Assam Accord in 1985 that stood as a Memorandum of Settlement (MoS) duly signed by the leaders of the Assam Movement and the Government of India.

The Assam Accord² was a system that legitimised citizenship status of those entering Assam from erstwhile East Pakistan on the basis of the date of entry before 24 March 1971, and the deportation of illegal aliens after 24 March 1971. The Supreme Court of India in 2005 scrapped The Illegal Migrant Determination by Tribunal Act (IMDT) of 1983 as it felt proving if someone is an alien or not fell on the complainant and this didn't necessarily result in the deportation of the foreigner. Prior to this, the 1983 Act had always referred to all immigrants as either foreigners or aliens without dividing them on the basis of religion. The Citizenship Act of 1955 saw its first amendment in 1985 and subsequently in 1992, 2003, 2005 and 2015.3 The 2003 amendment for instance added the concept of 'illegal immigrants' whereby it made them ineligible for citizenship whether by means of registration or naturalisation, and declared their offspring as illegal immigrants. It also necessitated the Government of India to institute a National Register of Citizens (NRC) in accordance with the citizenship rules of 2003. The same rules were implemented in Assam under the aegis of a 2014 Supreme Court ruling.

The Citizen (Amendment) Bill passed in the Lok Sabha on December 10, 2019. Prior to this, protests had already erupted across Assam and the other North-eastern states—all while the bill was being tabled by the government — that the new act completely ignored the Assam Accord which had till then identified all illegal Bangladeshi migrants—be it Hindus or Muslims—as illegal migrants. What the new Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) sought to do were bifurcate migrants on the lines of religion and segregate them as refugees and infiltrators. The Citizenship Amendment Bill (CAB) thus declared all Muslim migrants from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan as 'infiltrators' while Hindus and other non-Muslim migrants from the same countries, as 'refugees'. The Bill in a way heightened the fear that a massive influx of Bangladeshis would cause an existential crisis to the Assamese and other ethnic groups of the region by usurping their language, culture and identity.⁴

Though protests against the bill began in Assam initially, it soon spread to every nook and corner of India with dissidents pointing out that the bill was Anti-Muslim and that Indian Citizenship be granted to Muslim refugees and immigrants as well. Police brutality and cracking down on agitations at the behest of the Central Government at Delhi's Aligarh Muslim University and Jamia Milia Islamia, further led to nationwide public outcry and disapproval from students of all communities.⁵ Indian metropolitan cities like Delhi, Jaipur, Kolkata, Mumbai, Hyderabad, and Bengaluru, took a more proactive stance with regard to the protests. Rallies against the Bill were also organised in Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Bihar, Telangana, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala respectively and 27 people nationwide lost their lives in police firings.⁶

Karnataka alone witnessed 82 protests within the span of a month since the passage of the bill in the parliament.⁷ Protests in Mangaluru saw the deaths of two men—Abdul Jaleel and Naushin Kudroli—in police firing⁸, and this subsequently led to the imposition of Section 144 and suspension of internet services for 48 hours.

Overall, these agitations from all corners of the country against the Act came to be collectively known as 'the Anti-CAA protests'. Coastal Karnataka consists of Dakshina Kannada, Udupi, and Uttara Kannada districts. Different communities and religions have lived here together and prospered for centuries. These include followers of Jainism, Buddhism, Christianity, Sufism, and Islam. Kannada, Tulu, Konkani, and Byari are some of the prominent languages spoken here and represent the diversity of the region.

Mangaluru is the biggest city in Dakshina Kannada and its district headquarters too. The city has the distinction of giving Karnataka its very first Kannada newspaper, 'Mangalura Samachara'. The newspaper that began in 1843 laid stress on communal harmony in the region. The Press's growth in the region has been phenomenal when compared to other parts of Karnataka. Mangaluru continues to enjoy a vibrant media presence even to this day with the print, online media and local television networks. Vartha Bharati, Hosa Diganta, Karavali Ale, and Jaya Kirana which are published from Mangaluru have large circulations. Daiji world, Mangalore Today, Mangalorean, and Coastal Digest are web news portals and Daiji world TV, V4 Channel, and Namma Kudla are local cable TV channels. As per the Registrar of Newspapers for India (RNI) 2019-20 annual report, Vijaya Karnataka remains Karnataka's largest circulated daily followed by Prajavani, Udayavani and Vartha Bharati.9

According to the National Law School India University (NLSIU) report religious minorities sum up 16 percent of Karnataka's total population which is higher than what constitutes the national average. Muslims were the majority among the minority followed by Christians and Jains.¹⁰ The 2011 census places Dakshina Kannada's population as constituting of 67.18 percent Hindus, 24.02 percent Muslims, 8.20 percent Christians, 0.50 percent Jains, 0.03 percent Sikhs, and 0.02 percent Buddhists. Mangaluru city alone was composed of 8.99 percent Hindus, 17.40 percent Muslims, 13.15 percent Christians, 0.21 percent Jains, 0.08 percent Sikhs, and 0.05 percent Buddhists.¹¹

Dakshina Kannada had hardly seen any communal riot prior to 1967. In 1968, a major riot broke out in Mangaluru leading to the death of one person.¹² It was however the demolition of Babri Masjid in 1992that saw a rise in communal tensions in coastal Karnataka and such incidences became all the more violent and frequent.¹³ Since then, the coastal districts of Karnataka have been witnessing numerous communal clashes and they significantly tend to rise during the election calendar year and continue post elections.¹⁴

There has been a 60 percent increase in communal incidents from 2005. From six reported incidents in 2005, the number has steadily risen in 2015

to 226 in Udupi and Dakshina Kannada districts.¹⁵ In 2008, police records show Bajrang Dal activists, a right-wing group, attacking a nunnery in Mangaluru. Within the next few hours, 15 more churches were attacked by Hindutva activists in coastal Karnataka.¹⁶ Mangaluru's history with communalism for the outside world however starts with the January 2009 pub attacks where Sri Rama Seen activists—another right-wing group—assaulted and molested girls who were partying. It became national news.¹⁷ Many traces the origins of this vigilantism to the 1998 communal riots of Surathkal, one of Mangaluru city's major suburbs. It all began with a right-wing group called Hindu Jagarana Vedike attacking a Muslim man for dating a Hindu girl. The ensuing riot claimed the lives of eight people.¹⁸ From January to August 2015, Mangaluru had seen nearly 139 incidents of communal violence.¹⁹ These increased by 37 percent from 2014 to 2017 in Karnataka, leading it to be classed as one of the five states from 2008 to 2017 with the most communal incidents ever.²⁰

The Indian Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) stopped gathering and sharing data on communal/religious riots in the Lok Sabha from 2018 onwards—something it had done till 2017. The responsibility of now gathering and sharing such data lay with the respective state governments as Law & Order was a state subject.²¹ The 21 cases relating to communal violence and cow vigilantism from 2014 to 2019 were dropped in Karnataka by various trial courts between October and December 2020. The cases were dropped following requests made by ministers and elected representatives.²²

Literature Review:

Numerous studies have shown how mass media has disseminated and reinforced prejudicial beliefs and attitudes towards immigrants. Studies report that media tend to portray them negatively and stereotypically, the dissemination of which causes a shift in audiences' opinions and attitudes.²³ The academia in particular has been according a lot of attention to Mainstream media and their reporting of social movements since the late 1960s.²⁴ Previous research suggests that mainstream media coverage worldwide follows a 'protest paradigm' where protesters are demonised and their causes marginalised.²⁵

"The media and movement need each other. Media need stories that are dramatic and full of spectacle, and the movement needs to increase its support base and political effect." Once the protest grows larger and starts to engage media attention, it often ends up being portrayed as marginalised, hostile, or even antagonistic. The vast research on media reporting of different movements over time supports this claim. The media inflated Vietnam's anti-war protests as extremist, often highlighting its violence²⁷; the 2003 anti-war movement stopped getting positive coverage once the war began²⁸; and the labour protests weren't photogenic enough for prime-time news.²⁹ In the longitudinal framing of Indigenous protests, it was more likely that disruptive tactics would appear on the front page.³⁰ For instance, the abortion law protests were portrayed as violent³¹, the Nirbhaya Gang

Rape protests were portrayed as those that justified anger, violence and hooliganism³², and the Film and Television Institute of India (FTII)strike news narrowed its focus on the conflict, vandalism and hunger strike³³, and the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) protests were deemed as antinational.³⁴

The media often turn hostile towards protests.³⁵ The Protest Paradigm is defined as "routinised template for creating protest stories naturalised through journalistic socialisation."36 The Protest Paradigm consists of 'news frames, official sources and definitions, public opinion invocation, demonization'.37 delegitimization, and The 14 "Protest Paradigm characteristics within stories carrying war protest marginalisation devices. They are: 1. General lawlessness, 2. Confrontation with police, 3. The freak show, 4. Romper Room/idiots at large, 5. Carnivals, 6. Actual statistics, 7. Generalisations, 8. Witness accounts, 9. Official sources, 10. Protest as treason, 11. Protest as anarchy, 12. Protest as anti-troops, 13. Inclusion of counter-demonstrators, and 14. Historical comparisons."38

Studies show that protests are often marginalised through the usage of these devices in media coverage.³⁹ The 'narrative structure of the news' advocates the status-quo⁴⁰; the focus is more on the harmful implications of protest, as well as the troubles faced during a protest. The protests that turn violent are accorded⁴¹ more critical news coverage by the media.⁴² The media are controlled by the hegemony in society to uphold the status quo, which in turn serves the interests of those in power. The protest studies have been categorised into three types: 1) Transnational studies i.e. analysing the coverage of the protests of one nation's news media in another nation; 2) Comparative studies i.e. examining protest coverage in domestic and international media, and 3) Idiographic studies pertaining to local media coverage of local protests in a single nation. The studies detailed below try to examine these categorisations.⁴³

The news coverage of indefinite hunger strike by Anna Hazareon April 5, 2011, at Jantar Mantar, Delhi in the 'The Times of India' and 'The Hindu' was analysed, where protesters and their actions dominated the news. Two-thirds of sources were protesters and a quarter were administrative sources. The marginalisation device used here chose to blame the protesters for the violence indiscriminately.⁴⁴ On the whole, protests were viewed as a legitimate part of the political process by the media. It was also noticed that progressive newspapers failed to sympathise with the protestors. There was a centre-left government in power and ideological affinity with the government tilted the news stories in its favour.

The coverage of Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) Fee Hike Protests from October 25, 2019, to December 25, 2019 were retrieved from the online archives of *The Times of India* and *The Hindu* for analysis. The study shows that these news stories emphasised the violence and disruption caused by the protest instead of making the government responsible for degrading the quality of public education. The news was heavily reliant on official sources, and negligent towards those of the protesters. The news stories were highly

supportive of the status-quo and police action and the overall coverage was episodic. The news coverage about the protest and protesters was negative in tone.⁴⁵

In the study of media coverage of the 2016 Dalit Protests in Mumbai, a thirty-day news stories from 26 June to 25 July 2016 were analysed. The articles from *The Times of India* and *The Hindu* were examined. The protestors in these stories received an overall positive coverage. The official sources dominated the news stories and the protesters too were given enough space. Moreover, legal proceedings taking place along the protest were given secondary importance as opposed to that accorded for the conflict arising due to the incident. These news stories were published in the same city as where the protests took place and both were English newspapers.

Research outside India has shown the presence of the Protest Paradigm in the protest news coverage. Shahin et al. noticed that Indian Media chose not to delegitimise the actions of the protesters.⁴⁷ Raj and Sunitha Chitrapu support this hypothesis, whereas Kumar Avneesh and Lakhan claim Indian Media delegitimised the actions of protesters and have added the protest paradigm in their news coverage.⁴⁸ All three studies analysed English language newspapers in order to assess the Protest Paradigm in the news media. Such studies were however lacking when it came to India's regional language press. The present study thus tries to examine the coverage of Anti-CAA protest in Kannada language newspapers to find out whether the Protest Paradigm was used in their news coverage or not.

Research Questions

- Did the newspapers use the protest paradigm in constructing news about the Anti-CAA protest?
 - What were the sources that dominated the protest news?
 - Did the news stories delegitimise and demonise protestors?
 - How were minorities presented in news stories?

Method:

Four Kannada newspapers—*Udayavani*, *Vijaya Karnataka*, *Prajavani* and *Vartha Bharati*—were selected for a quantitative content analysis in order to address the research questions proposed by the study. While *Udayavani* is published from Manipal, Udupi District, and Bengaluru, *Vartha Bharati* is published from Mangaluru. *Prajavani* and *Vijaya Karnataka* which are published from Bengaluru have their Mangaluru editions.

Udayavani and Vijaya Karnataka are known for their pro-Hindu bias; Prajavani has a centrist stand; while Vartha Bharati carries more news about minorities and critical reports on Hindu fundamentalism. For analysis, seven issues from each newspaper's circulation between December 20, 2019, and December 26, 2019, were selected. The coverage that began with accounts of the protests in the beginning gradually shifted into a politician's blame-game and call for justice.

All the stories pertaining to the Anti-CAA protest in Mangaluru were examined during the said dates. Individual news stories were used as unit of analysis while Letters to the Editor and Editorials were used to understand the newspapers' position on the said issue and assess public opinion simultaneously. The basis of the analysis was the number of stories published and it showed a significant positive correlation between the amount of space and the number of items given. The studies have shown that the results are always the same no matter if one takes space or frequency count of items.⁴⁹

Analysis:

Anti-CAA protest Coverage:

A total of 392 Anti-CAA protest news items appeared in the four newspapers mentioned above between December 20 and 26, 2019 were selected. *Udayavani* carried 93 items of which 83 were straight news stories, three articles, three letters to the editor and two photo stories. *Vijaya Karnataka* had 59 items of which 53 were straight news stories, two articles, two editorials and two photo stories each. *Vartha Bharati* had 130 items; 112 were straight news stories, five editorials and four letters to the editor, it also had seven articles and a photo story and cartoon/illustration each. When it comes to *Prajavani*, 100 were straight news stories, two were articles and editorials each, five were cartoons/ illustrations and three were letters to the editor out of the total 112 items.

Anti-CAA protest stories within the seven days period accounted for 15.83 percent of the total number of stories published. *Prajavani* carried the highest percent 18.27 of Anti-CAA protest news followed by *Vartha Bharati* 18.08. *Udayavani* gave 14.56 percent of coverage and *Vijaya Karnataka* gave the lowest coverage of 11.37 percent among all the newspapers. *Vijaya Karnataka* which is the largest circulated newspaper in the state and gave the lowest coverage to the protest (Table 1)⁵⁰

Among the news items/stories published, *Prajavani* had the highest percentage and *Vijaya Karnataka* the lowest. In *Vartha Bharati*, five out of six editorials were about the protests, whereas *Udayavani* did not carry a single editorial. *Prajavani* and *Vijaya Karnataka* published two editorials each.

Table 1 Anti-CAA Protest news in Newspapers

	The Cart House In House Papers											
Udayavani				Prajavani			Vijaya Karnataka			Vartha Bharati		
	All News Items	Protest news items	Protest	All News Items			All News Items	Protest news items	% Protest News	News	Protest news items	% Protest News
News Story	553	83	15.01	489	100	20.45	469	53	11.30	597	112	18.76
Photo Story	22	2	9.09	28	0	0.00	12	2	16.67	41	1	2.44
Cartoon/ Illustration	0	0	0.00	22	5	22.73	0	0	0.00	6	1	16.67

Editorial	6	0	0.00	6	2	33.33	6	2	33.33	6	5	83.33
Article	21	3	14.29	23	2	8.70	17	2	11.76	26	7	26.92
Column	7	0	0.00	18	0	0.00	12	0	0.00	30	0	0.00
Letter to Editor	16	3	18.75	25	3	12.00	2	0	0.00	9	4	44.44
Info graphics	0	0	0.00	2	0	0.00	1	0	0.00	4	0	0.00
Total	625	91	14.56	613	112	18.27	519	59	11.37	719	130	18.08

Both government and police action were questioned in the editorials of *Vartha Bharati*. For example, the headlines of the five editorials that *Vartha Bharati* published during the protest were 'Attempt to recreate Jallianwala Bagh?'⁵¹, 'Mangaluru violence: CC TV images are questioning the police'⁵², 'Mangaluru Police firing needs a higher enquiry',⁵³, 'Prime Minister's play of lies on the Ramleela grounds',⁵⁴ and 'Give gallantry award to police for the firing'⁵⁵. The two editorials in *Prajavani* titled 'Respect the right to protest, use of force by police is unacceptable'⁵⁶, and 'Inciting statements must be curbed'⁵⁷, questioned the actions of the police and the politicians.

In the two editorials of *Vijaya Karnataka*— 'Kerala's act is reprehensible'⁵⁸ and 'Vandals must compensate the loss'⁵⁹—Keralites were questioned for protesting against the Chief Minister of Karnataka in Kerala. These protests were held to condemn the Karnataka government's stand on holding Malayalis responsible for the Anti-CAA Mangaluru protests and detaining Malayali journalists covering the incident. *Vijaya Karnataka's* second editorial in specific supported the government's strategy of curbing the protest by making the protestors pay for any loss of property.

As far as the percentage of news items are concerned, 16.51 percent of these were straight news stories, 19.23 percent letters to the editor, and 37.50 percent Editorials (Table-2).

Table 2 Percentage of News Items

	News Story	Photo Story	Cartoon/ Illustration	Editorial	Article	Column	Letter to Editor	Infographics
Udayavani	553	22	0	6	21	7	16	0
Prajavani	489	28	22	6	23	18	25	2
Vartha Bharati	597	41	6	6	26	30	9	4
Vijaya	469	12	0	6	17	12	2	1
Karnataka								
Total	2108	103	28	24	87	67	52	7
Protest new items	348	5	6	9	14	0	10	0
Percentage	16.51	4.85	21.43	37.50	16.09	0.00	19.23	0.00

Table -3 Correlation Coefficients between the Newspapers in covering Anti-CAA Protest News

Newspapers	Vijaya Karnataka	Prajavani	Vartha Bharathi				
Udayavani	.606	.900**	.090				
Vijaya Karnataka		.278	709 [*]				
Prajavani .432							
**.The correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed).							

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

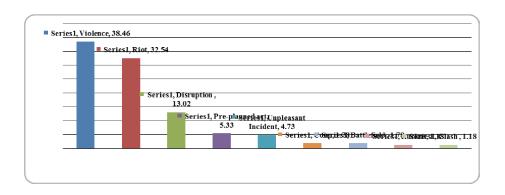
There is a significant correlation between *Udayavani* and *Prajavani* in Anti-CAA protest news coverage among the four newspapers. On the other hand, both *Vijaya Karnataka* and *Vartha Bharathi* portray a negative correlation. Whereas there is no correlation between the coverage of *Vijaya Karnataka* and *Prajavani* (Table -3).

The News Frames:

The protest was framed as violence, disruption, pre-planned act, unpleasant incident, coup, battlefield, ruckus, and clash. Noticeably, there was no focus on why the protest was carried out nor was any space devoted for the protestors' point of view in these news reports.

While the violence frame employed in these stories stood at 38.46 percent, the riot frame was 32.54 percent, and the disruption frame 13.02 percent. Moreover, the protest got framed as a pre-planned act in 5.33 percent of stories and as an unpleasant incident in 4.73 percent of stories (Figure -1).⁶⁰ If violence occurs, the police are framed as victims and the protestors as perpetrators. If violence by the police does occur, it isn't questioned as they are the restorers of social order. This goes on to show that the media has been assertive in framing social movements as violators of socio-behavioural norms.⁶¹

Figure -1-Frames in the protest news



Journalists often cast the protest as a battle between the protestors and the police, rather than as an intellectual debate between the protestors and those they oppose. In this news coverage, the emphasis was on violence and riot. The reports contend that protestors disturbed the public peace, and the police restored the situation to normalcy.

The narrative structure focused on violence, disruption of day-to-day life and the political blame game. The party in power blamed the opposition and MLA UT Khader while Congress and JD(S) blamed the party in power. *Udayavani* and *Vijaya Karnataka* gave more coverage to both violence and while the coverage in *Vartha Bharati* and *Prajavani* focused more on the enquiry about police firing and victim compensation.

All the newspapers portrayed the protestors and police as two opposing forces in direct confrontation with each other. Images of stone-pelting and burning tyres were also carried out in these stories and *Vijaya Karnataka* went so far as to even publish photos of injured police. The police commissioner's statements about the large number of protesters at the site of the incident and the injuries suffered by the police gained widespread coverage while the death of two civilians at the hands of the police weren't given significance. Only *Prajavani* and *Vartha Bharati* provided more coverage about these deaths and details pertaining to their demise. The coverage later on turned to disruptions caused to the common people and businesses. To its credit, *Vartha Bharathi* covered a significant portion of the news concerning citizens and politicians calling for an investigation into police shootings and fatalities.

The coverage focused on the protest rather than the underlying issues that caused these events in the first place. As much as 93.65 percent of news stories resorted to episodic framing and 6.35 percent to thematic framing (Table-4). This is how news framing of stories can influence the public's perception to the cause of a policy problem and episodic framing usually focuses on event-centred information.⁶² To illustrate this further, one needs to look at how the news story perceives poverty: Episodic framing makes the individual responsible for his poverty while thematic framing provides more detailing on the causes for his poverty. It is quite evident that the Anti-CAA protests in Mangaluru were dominated by episodic framing.

Table 4
Episodic and Thematic stories

Frames	Frequency	Percent		
Episodic	339	93.65		
Thematic	23	6.35		
Total	362	100.0		

While accounts of protest violence, masked protesters pelting stones at police and burning tyres, and protesters trying to barge into the armoury were amply covered, the views of those protesting were significantly ignored. Only the victims of the police firing and their families were given some coverage.⁶³ The journalists in general try to construct their narratives around the event rather than on the issues or ideology of the movement.

Protest News Sources:

Any person quoted in a story automatically qualifies as a source. In the current context, only those identified in the news stories were counted as sources, and those quoted in headlines or the lead paragraphs became major sources. As sources, politicians dominated the protest news stories. Politicians were cited as the primary sources in 58.90 percent of the stories. In which 57.56 percent of the stories quoted opposition party members and 42.43 percent quoted ruling party members. Only 10.91 percent of the stories lacked a source. The percent of stories quoting the police as a major source was 7.47; a mere 2.10 percent of stories quoted the victims as the major source of their news (Figure-2). BS Yediyurappa, former chief minister of Karnataka, was quoted 32 times, while Siddaramaiah, the opposition leader (Congress), was quoted 16 times and HD Kumaraswamy of (Janata Dal, Secular) 13 times. As for official sources, Dr. P S Harsha—police commissioner of Mangaluru—was quoted 14 times and the overall police sources stood at 26, including the commissioner.

Ten stories quoted Hindu outfits as their major sources as opposed to seven stories that quoted victims' families or relatives as major sources in news stories. While information given by politicians or police officials was more often used without reactions from the victims or people involved in the protest, victims or protesters' statements were seldom carried out without the reactions from the authorities concerned. There was no voice of protesters in the entire news coverage.

Sources remain one of those critical inputs in building news stories and frames for journalists. They are engaged to give perspective and balance to a news story.⁶⁴ The media, for instance, uses a variety of sources—government officials to interest groups—to create influential and exertive content.⁶⁵

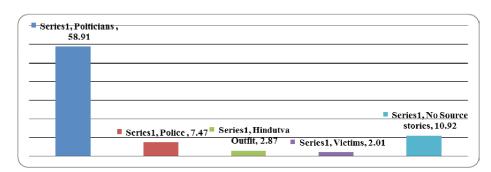


Figure-2: Sources of protest news

Politicians and official sources (police) serve as legitimising agents for the press. Non-official (victims) sources are often side-lined as independent sources as there's no formal structure for news generation. The nature of reporting events thus favours those in power at the expense of the protesting group. Without adequate access, their definition of protest is either marginalised or ignored altogether. Most studies on sources indicate it is officials from the government who are quoted frequently as sources and their number range from one-third to three-quarters⁶⁶. This similarity can be found in the Anti-CAA protest coverage. The majority of the sources quoted were politicians; officials came second and the victims last.67 The journalists need to recognise why it is important to "speak for oneself," and provide a forum in their reporting where both the 'affected' and their advocates can be heard. This requires the journalists to discern and validate their sources. Agenda-setting is integral to the media and their presentations influence how people conceptualise and evaluate new findings of human behaviour. It thus becomes a political prerogative to bring such voices to the fore.

History has given us enough examples of how media articulation even as quotes can add an important balance to the reporting and introduce neglected viewpoints into the public discourse. It is thus imperative for journalists to routinely consult and quote non-political and non-authoritative voices if they really want to get the whole story and not just bits of it. The negative framing and exclusion of protesters' voices happen when protestors target political issues. The focus is more on the reactions of those in power than others. The media through its social control function undermines those on the margin—like protest groups challenging the status-quo—and cover news told and dictated from the perspective of the powerful.

Public opinion:

Out of 10 'Letters to the Editor', three each were from *Udayavani* and *Prajavani*, and four were from *Vartha Bharati*. The letters in *Udayavani* and *Prajavani* questioned the protesters for violence though they supported the right to protest. Even politicians were questioned for misguiding the protesters. In *Vartha Bharati* readers questioned the police action and demanded an enquiry into the incident. The letters in *Udayavani* and *Prajavani* meanwhile supported the status-quo, while *Vijaya Karnataka* did not publish any letter regarding the protest. ⁷⁰The newspapers supporting the status-quo tend to disfavour the protestors by invoking public opinion against them.

Delegitimised and Demonised

Several characteristics of the Protest Paradigm can delegitimise and demonise a protest. For instance, the news focused on the police commissioner's claims about the violence. They were in turn supported by the ruling party's politicians who said the victims in the police firing were actually perpetrators who incited violence at the protest and that they weren't locals but rather people from Kerala.⁷¹The framing devices used to delegitimise the protest include "trivialisation, polarisation, emphasis on internal dissension, marginalisation, disparagement by numbers, disparagement of the movement's effectiveness, and reliance on statements by government officials and other authorities" (27-28).

The ruling party described the protest as a riot and the newspapers covered it as the 'Mangaluru Riot'. *Vijaya Karnataka* even dedicated a page named 'Citizenship Act Conflict', in the local news section. Newspapers carried statements of the politicians from the ruling party that delegitimised and demonised the protesters.

The reports questioned the protesters' integrity and claimed that the protest was pre-planned and that people from Kerala organised the protest. The reports also accused the Congress party of indulging in vote-bank politics by means of disinformation. For example in *Udayavani* dated December 25, 2019, it was stated that the Mangaluru riots were pre-planned and had the backing of the SDPI⁷², PFI⁷³ and the Congress party. The paper also claimed that the protest had the bearings of a Kashmir-style attack and the intentional creation of aruckus.⁷⁴

Another report on December 21, 2019, said that when there were small communal skirmishes, religious fundamentalists from Kerala who had close contact with the Congress party entered Mangaluru, indulged in violence and returned to Kerala.⁷⁵ The report on December 20, 2019, said that 'Kerala's outlaws' masterminded the Mangaluru violence.⁷⁶ Similarly, the news report on December 20, 2019, stated that the Congress leaders were opposing Citizenship Amendment Bill for vote bank politics and the party was provoking violence and misleading the innocent people.⁷⁷

In *Udayavani*'s December 25, 2019 news report, the protest was labelled as a ploy to disrupt peace. According to the daily the **violence** in Mangaluru was **pre-planned** by **communal organisations**⁷⁸ and *Vijaya Karnataka*'s another report on December 26, 2019, said that **Kerala students** who stayed in hostels and rented rooms **were involved in the riot**.⁷⁹ The report in *Vartha Bharati* too voiced a similar opinion on December 22, 2019, when it claimed that people from Kerala were responsible for the protest. This was hinted in another report that said that people **arrived from outside the district with their faces covered** and pelted stones like **Kashmiri protesters**.⁸⁰

The news reports highlighted the violence that occurred during the protest and supported the measures taken to quell it; but the reasons for the protest were missing from the coverage. In *Vijaya Karnataka*'s December 24, 2019 report, it was claimed that since the man who died of bullet injuries had his face covered with a towel was proof enough that he propagated the violence.⁸¹ *Udayavani*'s report on December 26, 2019, framed the protest as, 'Masked Goondagiri' and demanded the incident be treated as an act of treason.⁸² In *Vartha Bharati*'s report on December 20, 2019, the protesters were described as rioters who were ready to kill the police.⁸³ *Vartha Bharati*'s report on December 22, 2019, said that within 24 hours of the inciteful speech Mangaluru was on fire with masked faces pelting stones and

hurling petrol bombs.⁸⁴ In another report on December 20, 2019 protesters were portrayed as infiltrators. UT Khader was accused of being a traitor who was speaking on behalf of the terrorists.⁸⁵

Several reports justified police firing in which two protesters were killed. The *Vartha Bharati*'s report on December 23, 2019, said the firing was ordered when protesters **tried to burn the police station**, pelted stones and **tried to take hold of weapons from the police armoury.** In *Prajavani*'s report on December 21, 2019, it was implied that those who protested were not innocent and that they had to face the consequence of their actions. *Vartha Bharati*'s report on December 21, 2019, questioned the police for not takingstringent actions against the protesters while they damaged public property. The report also supported the police countermeasure.

The act of protest was stated as treason against the state. This could be seen in *Udayavani*'s report on December 20, 2019, where opposing CAA was called as an act of **appeasing another country**. Again, *Udayavani*'s report on December 20, 2019, said that opposing the amendment of the Citizenship bill, was **anti-national** and **treason**, whereas the action taken by police, was supported as being lawful. December 20, 2019, was supported as being lawful.

The protesters on account of their religion were portrayed as 'the other' in news reports. *Prajavani*'s December 21, 2019 report notes that the protesters had political backing and rioted by spelling out their religion through means of their clothing and by uttering the prophet's name. The report also noted that the sterile leadership of 1947 wasn't in power anymore to accept all demands of the rioters. Thanks to the traitors for indulging in violent protests against CAA, this protest helped increase nationalistic fervour. Vijaya Karnataka's report on December 26, 2019, notes that around 1600 police cases were terminated, which were filed on these hooligans and proselytising organisations, this helped breed younger Tippus in the society who were now rending peace apart in the name of a protest. *Udayavani*'s report on December 20, 2019, states that the fearmongering mentality was present in the religion of the protesters.

Media are not a powerful source of communal ideologies, but ideas are articulated, worked on, transformed and elaborated through them.⁹⁴ Such open pronouncement and depiction in the media make it a legitimate discourse and increase public acceptance of communalism. Everyday conversations fed by media sustain communalism as an active cultural and political force.

No doubt, these newspapers had varying degrees of affinity when it came to supporting the status-quo or questioning it; *Vartha Bharati* and *Prajavani* did for instance question the status-quo but none of them supported the protest. *Udayavani* and *Vijaya Karnataka* weren't appreciative of the Anti-CAA protest in Mangaluru. *Udayavani*'s article, 'Opposition to the CAA by Mamata isn't right'95 and *Vijaya Karnataka*'s articles 'Why is the opposition opposing the CAA'96 and 'To understand religious persecution one must read *Lajja*'97 appeared to be aimed at marginalising and delegitimising the protest. Only *Vartha Bharathi* and *Prajavani* covered the

news of police barging into a hospital and firing teargas shells ostensibly for nabbing the protesters. Udayavani and Vijaya Karnataka didn't cover this news. The coverage nevertheless lacked a basic understanding of the movement and its demands. Instead, members of the movement were portrayed as radicals, goondas and youth who were intent on disrupting the public order through violence. The media can delegitimise movement through varied framing devices. When you compare the selective nature of followed by *Udayavani* and *Vijaya* Karnataka that contributed to delegitimising and trivialising the protestors and the movement.98 The reports were found lacking when it came to understanding and explaining the reasons behind the protest and why there was opposition to the amendment. The whole protest coverage was about violence. The "news often concerns the event, not the underlying condition; the person, not the group; conflict, not consensus; and facts advancing the story, not the one explaining it."99

Representation of Minorities:

Media is known for propagating stereotypical perceptions about minority groups leading to the reproduction of racism and ethnicism in society.¹⁰⁰ Some of the terminologies and adjectives used to describe the people involved in the protests were negative in tone and presented Muslims in stereotypical roles.

In *Udayavani*'s news story titled 'Khader's role in violence', the protesters (Muslims) were framed as 'religious fundamentalists.'¹⁰¹ The media often speculate on the Muslim identity of terrorists and characterises Muslims as those prone to violence and religious extremism.¹⁰² In another news story of *Udayavani*, titled 'Demands incident to be filed as treason', the protest was described as 'masked goondagiri', blaming the protesters for vandalism.¹⁰³ In *Udayavani*'s news story titled 'Mangaluru riot was systematically planned', the protesters were referred to as those belonging to 'communal organisations' suggesting that the protest was communal in nature. The word 'communal' when references were made to Muslims saw to it that the protest was delegitimised with arguments that it wasn't the sum total of everyone's decision.¹⁰⁴

Vijay Karnataka's news story titled 'Misguided by established interests', used derogatory words and portrayed Muslim organisations as 'proselytising organisations' that were 'breeding young Tippus.' In another news report titled 'UT Khader must answer why the state has to burn', the protesters were referred to as 'infiltrators' and the Muslim leader Khadar was condemned as a 'terrorist who was a traitor to the nation'. The report was full of stereotypical images of Muslims. 106

Negative images and phrases attributed to Muslims were repeatedly presented in news stories: 'Kashmiri protesters' 107, 'Kashmir-style attack' 108, 'illegal infiltrators' 109, 'invoking the prophets name', 'traitors indulging in violent protests' 110, 'our Hindu dharma', 'Bin-Laden will not be born' 111, 'to appease another country', which was indirectly hinted at Pakistan 112, 'fear-

mongering mentality was present in the religion of the protesters'¹¹³, 'votebank'. The creation of vote banks, states that it is more of a political move than actual religious or communal behaviour; most political parties propagandise indulge in harking about the herd mentality amongst the Muslims. The creation of votebanks, states that it is more of a political move than actual religious or communal behaviour; most political parties propagandise indulge in harking about the herd mentality amongst the Muslims.

All these words and phrases in the news that came from the right-wing sources described the protesters as violent, unruly and anti-national. As previous research points out most news coverage tends to increase when there are issues related to the rights of minorities.¹¹⁶

News can affect how people understand a movement and connect with it. The portrayal is of immense value as it helps an incident to develop into a mass movement, thereby garnering support from all corners. Examining the news coverage in this regard gives us a picture of how the media influenced the public's perception of the anti-CAA movement.

The protest in Mangaluru was framed as violent and riotous in *Udayavani*, *Vijaya Karnataka*, *Prajavani* and *Vartha Bharati*. The results corroborate the earlier studies, which found that the protest paradigm was employed by the media to marginalise and delegitimise protests.

It needs to be noted that news stories covered in this study didn't always contain all the characteristics of the protest paradigm. But when taken in its entirety, the coverage of the protest and the news that followed had a cumulative effect in framing the superseding events and protesters negatively. Among the frames that dominated the protest stories were violence and riot. Another frame that dominated was disruption; there was a systematic lack of coverage pertaining to the protest. The newspapers only covered the incident while missing out on the background of the protest and why it was organised. This certainly limited the ideology of protest to only acts of violence, riot and disruption. A majority of the protest news was episodic especially when describing the events as they happened; there was a clear lack of initiative while placing the issue in perspective. Only 6.35 percent of the stories of protest were in the thematic frame that gave depth and analysis.

Politicians as sources were the dominant and primary definers of the Anti-CAA protest. No other source came close to defining the issue; the protesters were not given space to voice their opinion regarding the protest. Politicians influenced the public discourse regarding the Anti-CAA protest. Only seven news stories carried the victims' side of the story; five news stories appeared in *Vartha Bharati*, one in *Prajavani* and one in *Vijaya Karnataka*. *Udayavani* had no space for the protest victims or the protesters.

By choosing to report exaggerated numbers of protesters, stone pelting, injury to the police, disruption of day-to-day activities, and not providing in-depth coverage of the movement's origins, ideology or goals, the articles sort to delegitimise the protests among its readers. Moreover, certain words and phrases mentioned in these stories resorted to negativity and stereotyping while addressing the minorities. The newspapers attempted to create a negative opinion among the public about the protests and

undermine the democratic right to protest by branding the organisations and protestors involved as 'anti-national'.

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