

Communicating Cosmic Success: India's Space Diplomacy and Global Media in the Age of Chandrayaan-3

¹Ruchika Dhruwey., ²Dr. Vikas Rajpopat

¹PhD Scholar in the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, Guru Ghasidas Vishwavidyalaya (a Central University), Bilaspur (C.G)

²Assistant professor in the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, Guru Ghasidas Vishwavidyalaya (a Central University), Bilaspur (C.G)

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates, using the Chandrayaan-3 lunar mission, how media communication shapes India's space diplomacy and global image. Through an analysis of Indian and international media narratives, the study looks at how the mission was presented and how this framing supported public diplomacy initiatives and soft power projection for India. By means of a theoretical framework combining Agenda- Setting Theory, Narrative Paradigm Theory, and Soft Power Theory, the study exposes the strategic interaction among media coverage, narrative paradigm theory, and nation branding in thereby raising India's profile as an emerging space power.

Emphasising India's technological capability and scientific ingenuity, the results show that worldwide media outlets—including the BBC, The Guardian, CNN, and The New York Times—regularly presented Chandrayaan-3 as a historic and pioneering success. By means of this agenda-setting role, the media raised global awareness of India's space aspirations, therefore improving the country's profile internationally. Moreover, the way the story was written around Chandrayaan-3—emphasizing themes of tenacity, national pride, and peaceful exploration—resonated emotionally with different viewers, so cultivating identification and respect.

By means of the successful communication of Chandrayaan-3, India efficiently used its scientific achievements to enhance its soft power, thereby fostering goodwill and so strengthening its status as a trustworthy and responsible world actor. Showcasing government, culture, and innovation as cornerstones of India's international identity, the mission also provided a vehicle for public diplomacy and nation branding. This study emphasises how important strategic media participation and story framing are to furthering national objectives in a highly linked society.

Keywords: Chandrayaan-3, Space diplomacy, Soft power, Global Media, Nation branding, Media framing, India lunar mission

INTRODUCTION

International communication has evolved quickly in the past few years. Following World War II, the tensions resulting from the Cold War dominated world communication, casting the former Soviet Union against the United States and its allies. Much of the rhetoric, news space, face time, and worry addressed some aspect of government control of mass media, or the impact of governments and other entities on free speech, or the free movement of information or data over international borders. Likewise, reflecting a communist against democracy divide, much of the international news on both sides of the Atlantic had an East/West orientation. The elements supporting world communication changed drastically with the fall of the former Soviet Union and communism as a key global power. No longer did crises all around produce massive conflicts between two superpowers. More importantly, the end of communism meant the death of the Soviets as adversaries of the

free flow of information and the free press. Many editors' and producers' views also reflect the end, disregarding, or at least diminishing of the value of international news coverage. That obviously altered for a bit following September 11, 2001. Currently the only superpower in the globe is the United States.

There is no significant foreign military threat to the United States, even while other economic organisations, including the European Union and portions of Asia, constantly compete with it in the worldwide market. Still, there are fresh foes and dangers lurking around nowadays. To attack the Western countries, the Taliban, al-Qaeda, the Islamic jihad, suicide bombers, radicals, and a great number of terrorist groups all throughout the world have adopted fresh weaponry. Mostly low-tech, the new weaponry are cellphones, netbooks, the Internet, social networking sites, video cameras, Twitter, Facebook, and other tools. The Cold War era nuclear bomb terror has been supplanted by improvised explosive devices (IEDs). This global terrorist epidemic has once more seen a small editorial change towards more coverage of world events. The "good guys against bad guys" mindset is resurfacing. Many hues of terrorists are substituting communism as the wicked force. The modern Evil Empire is the Middle East and other countries hosting and arming radicals.

Many media analysts do research in strictly English-language environments or in national settings. In terms of publishing and pedagogy, these professional standards have helped them really nicely. These days, technological, migratory, linguistic, and politico-economic changes make it very necessary for us to examine the media in their worldwide context and stop monolingual disciplinary parthenogenesis. This does not mean that this book will address every area of the globe with the same degree of knowledge and sensitivity. Rather, it means that the idea that the complexity of processes absorbed in the media renders linguistically, analytically, and geographically limited approaches to the topic simply impossible guides us. As matter of fact, technologies like the internet and telecommunication satellites cross boundaries. Media giants and global companies *avant la lettre* have long done exactly that, seldom limited themselves to national boundaries. Media work, too, regularly breaks bounds. And enormous migration and the dissemination of ideas make extrapolating from English-language work almost ridiculous. Travelling to far-off locations, anthropologists sought middlemen who could translate for them into indigenous languages. That is unacceptable behaviour decades ago in their industry; so, it should be in ours as well.

Scholars must be nimble, hybrid, governed neither by the humanities or the social sciences, nor by the parent disciplines mentioned in chapter 1 – and assuredly not by one language – but by a critical agenda that enquires *cui bono*: who benefits and loses from governmental and corporate manoeuvres, who complains about the fact, and how can we learn from them?

At a moment when the Global North uses culture as a selling point for deindustrialised societies, and the Global South does so for never-industrialized ones? This connects also to a political endeavour. Academic theory and research as well as cosmopolitan pledges to social and cultural fairness have attracted subjugated groups entering academia for the first time over the past 50 years. Thus, the appeal of studying the media not only at the conventional scholarly metropolises of the United States and the United Kingdom, but also in Colombia, Brazil, Mexico, Turkey, India, and other significant sites that are all too accustomed to be theorised and analysed; and all too unfamiliar with being regarded as the sources of ideas, not only places for their application.

Emerging in the late 1990s, "global media studies" is an interdisciplinary rubric used in the social sciences to characterise the convergence of fields of research usually known as "international communication" and "comparative media systems," or "national cinema," and "world cinema," in the humanities. It reflects conceptual, disciplinary, and ideological shifts we explore in this chapter and expand over the book.

Notwithstanding recent developments and its name notwithstanding, English-language research still dominates the subject, particularly works starting and expanding from the United States (Graham, 2015).¹¹ Following an overview of this background and responses against it, we examine the recent development of global media studies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Global media policy is a young field, a "embryonic field. [with] no systematic articulation of concepts and approaches." "The diversity, dynamics and complexity that characterise its governance landscape; one that acknowledges existing Definitional attempts and yet contributes to the elaboration of a holistic approach able to transcend different terminologies and theoretical assumptions," Raboy and Padovani 2010: 150–1 demand a theory to explain. Sandra Braman suggests a thorough, theoretically based, methodologically operationalisable definition of media policy that is transferrable into law (this betrays a very US orientation, as, in the great majority of countries, public policies and programs are essentially independent of law other than in terms of enabling legislation). She also contends that media policy coexists with information policy, defined as all law and regulation across an information production chain including creation, processing, flows, and use (2004a: 153). Likewise, Marc Raboy (2007) defines media policy as efforts by both state and nonstate players to shape the media.

This range of influence presents analytical and defining difficulties. One analytical challenge is the capacity to "develop tools for making micro-level observations of patterns without losing sight of the macro-level of reality of experience," (Chakravartty & Sarikakis, 2006: 3). Media strategy, then, consists on several forces interacting in different ways. Thus, the phenomena of media precession—that is, the interaction between two systems whereby a decision or event in one changes the axis along which decisions or actions in the other can take place—for instance, the interaction between coproduction film treaties and the NICL or patent and anti-trust laws. Braman proposes "linking analysis of several types of decisions in order to understand the implications of their interactions" (2004a: 167) to help one to grasp this complexity. Globally, this complexity is exacerbated by policy interdependence reflecting the rise of networked forms of organisation. International organisations are becoming crucial for many nations in determining media policy, not less than national governments. In the realm of information infrastructure, for example, Europe's Economic Commission has applied competition legislation to member states. Furthermore creating interdependence and complexities are North-South relations (Braman, 2004b; Chakravartty and Sarikakis, 2006). Such intricacy demands the multisited political economy and ethnography detailed in chapter

Driven by the changing role of the nation-state in forming policy, the evolution of "North–South relations," and the "material and symbolic dimensions of the reregulation of global communication policy" in the light of the rise of the market, international/multilateral organisations, and civil society – often at the expense of national sovereignty – global media policy has undergone several shifts since World War II (Chakravartty and Sarikakis, 2006). Consequently "there is constant innovation, genres are blurred, players have multiplied, and policy subjects are now often networked rather than autonomous entities" (Braman, 2004a: 161). Global media strategy should be defined considering corporate globalisation, international politics, the evolving function of the nation-state, and the development of civil society (Raboy, 2007: 344).

Global Media Governance

The concept above captures some of the elements that helped "global media governance" to become a media policy tool. Originally referring to "rules that help to reduce transaction costs," this concept of governance evolved in new institutional economics to become Global governance defined in international relations the operations of international organisations and agreements not centrally under control. According to James N. Rosenau (1992: 6), "governance without government presumes the absence of some overall governmental authority at the international level." This idea of a nonhierarchical, participatory, adaptive world fits neoliberal opposition to centralised economies and powerful governments. Thus, a difference results between "good" and "bad" government (Puppis, 2010:137). Sometimes referred to as a "New Medievalism," this movement undermines central state control in favour of a patchwork of groups, locales, and internationalisms (Strange, 1995: 56). It usually advocates light control as strong interests allegedly run themselves ethically. Lindblom, along with hard-core Marxists, would chuckle despondingly while futurists and neoliberals grinned broadly at such fabulations. Under this situation, the state's function is to support social, political, and economic ties; the latter takes a privileged place. Not to distribute resources on a social equitable basis, a "promotional state" is committed to "infrastructure regulation and the new forms of intervention created to act upon media content in a space of global flows" (Abramson, 2001: 301). Drawing on Canada as an example, Bram Dov Abramson

contends that direct results of national government action are media policies allowing the globalisation of media enterprises. Under such conditions, "rerouted through the market," regulation was distributed rather than destroyed or shunned aside. The fragmentation of regulation itself—that is, the movement which shapes media globalisation becomes harder and harder to follow—regardless of the sector—telecommunications and media (2001: 316).

Globally media governance then essentially refers to global media deregulation and increasing public ignorance of how media capitalism operates. Global governance was first described by the Commission for Global Governance in 1995 as the total of the several ways people and institutions, public and private, handle their shared concerns. It is an ongoing process whereby different or opposing interests could be satisfied and cooperative action could be undertaken. It covers official institutions and policies enabled to enforce compliance as well as unofficial agreements between people and institutions either accepted or seen to be in their best interests (Ó Siocrú and Girard, with Mahan, 2002: 15).

Global governance happens "where the object and actors that define state intervention have changed from centralised state bodies focussing on domestic performance of the national economy to "partnerships" between private actors, non-governmental organisations.... and state bodies to coordinate the delivery of social goods and services at the local level," Paula Chakravartty and Katherina Sarikakis write (2006: 38).

Media governance thus consists in "the entirety of forms of collective rules in the media sector" (Puppis, 2010: 138) - a "framework of practices, rules, and institutions that set limits and give incentives for the performance of the media" (Hamelink and Nordenstreng, 2007: 232). Key institutions engaged in global media governance include the International Telecommunication Union, World Trade Organisation, UNESCO, the World Intellectual Property Organisation, and the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) in addition to transnational corporations and the myriad nongovernmental organisations generally known under the sobriquet "global civil society."

Global media governance provides transnational companies and global civil society prominent positions in policy-making at the national and transnational levels since media governance comprises a mix of state and nonstate norms, practices, and centres of power. Seán Ó Siocrú and Bruce Girard (together with Amy Mahan) presented two plausible global media governance scenarios. One is a dominating trade and liberalisation model, "envisages current dominant trends proceeding several steps forward." Drawing on the example of NWICO (2002: 172, 176), the second, "multilateral cooperation rebirth," envisions the democratic heart of media and communications governance structures revived.

Many researchers and professionals working with the worldwide internet find interest in governance. Actually, "internet governance" has been in use for longer than "media governance," most likely because it analytically and ideologically speaks to the global, networked, multifarious, neoliberal, and rather nonhierarchical mythology of the internet. William H. Dutton and Malcolm Peltu break online governance into three categories: non-internet centric development, internet-centric, internet-user centric development (2007: 64). The internet-user centred category addresses usage or abuse of the internet by individuals, groups, or companies for legal, unlawful, suitable, and unsuitable purposes. Policies anchored in entities and jurisdictions across but beyond the internet, for example political expression, copyright, and intellectual property rights, fall under the non-internet-centric group.

Mostly, global internet governance has focused on two problems. First is cooperation among state, corporate, and civil society participants across national lines over legal matters. The second mostly addresses access and inequality, the digital divide, particularly in underdeveloped nations all around. Concern regarding the US government's control of root servers, which gives it a dominating role in the technical functioning of the worldwide internet, is one recurrent topic in discussions on global internet-governance (Dutton and Peltu, 2007: 67–8).

Research Objectives

1. To examine how Chandrayaan-3 was framed in Indian and international media narratives.

2. To analyze how India leveraged Chandrayaan-3 as a tool of space diplomacy and global image-building.

Research Question

How did the communication and media coverage of Chandrayaan-3 contribute to India's space diplomacy and soft power projection on the global stage?

Theoretical Framework

Agenda-Setting Theory

Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw's Agenda-Setting Theory holds that the media tells people what to think about rather than what to believe. The media defines the public agenda and affects the relevance of subjects in public debate by choosing which problems get covered and how much attention they get. Public diplomacy and nation branding are profoundly affected by this idea since governments and companies can use media channels to emphasise particular national characteristics, laws, or cultural components, therefore influencing world views and priorities. In the digital era, when social media and global news cycles magnify states' capacity to shape what topics are covered on the world scene, the agenda-setting role is absolutely vital.

Narrative Paradigm Theory

Walter Fisher's introduction of the Narrative Paradigm Theory asserts that human communication is essentially narrative in character. Not only via rational arguments or factual reporting, but also through stories people make sense of the world and communicate. Within the framework of public diplomacy and nation branding, this idea contends that creating gripping narratives that appeal to global audiences is the best approach a nation can use to help define its image. States can build identification, trust, and emotional involvement by narrating tales that reflect national values, culture, and goals, therefore strengthening their soft power initiatives and making them unforgettable.

Soft Power Theory (Joseph Nye)

By bringing the idea of influence through attraction rather than force or payment, Joseph Nye's Soft influence Theory transformed the knowledge of international affairs. "The ability to obtain preferred outcomes by attraction rather than coercion or payment," Nye describes soft power. This kind of influence depends on the political principles, cultural background, and foreign policies of a nation, particularly in cases when these are regarded as reasonable and appealing by others. Among the examples are the worldwide impact of American films, music, and colleges as well as the attraction of democratic values and open societies. Nye contends that soft power, which helps nations reach their objectives by persuasion and voluntary alignment rather than force or incentive, is as vital—if not more so—in the modern, linked globe. Furthermore strongly related to credibility and reputation is soft power; a country losing credibility runs the danger of losing soft power and worldwide reputation.

Public Diplomacy and Nation Branding (Anholt, Nye)

Practical uses of soft power are public diplomacy and nation branding. Often employing cultural exchanges, international broadcasting, and educational initiatives, public diplomacy—direct communication and interaction with foreign publics—builds mutual understanding and beneficial relationships. Leading researcher in nation branding Simon Anholt stresses the need of using marketing and branding strategies to shape and control the international reputation of a country. Anholt's "Nation Brand Hexagon" model emphasises as pillars of a nation's brand important aspects including governance, culture, people, tourism, exports, and investment. While nation branding addresses a more all-encompassing strategy to improve a nation's competitive identity and worldwide impact, public diplomacy is regarded as a subset of nation branding, concentrating on the political and cultural elements of a nation's image.

Public diplomacy and nation branding both seek to build a positive and enduring image of a nation, therefore enhancing its soft power. In a globalised world when a nation's political, economic, and strategic interests can be greatly influenced by reputation, credibility, and cultural appeal, these approaches become ever more vital.

All things considered, Soft Power Theory, Agenda- Setting Theory, and Narrative Paradigm Theory offer basic models for comprehending how nations could affect world events and public opinions. By means of media, cultural interaction, and narrative, public diplomacy and country branding operationalise these theories to establish national reputation and accomplish foreign policy goals by attraction rather than compulsion.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design:

This study employs a qualitative, comparative content analysis approach to examine media framing of India's Chandrayaan-3 mission across diverse national and international news outlets.

Sample Selection: A purposive sampling strategy was used to select media sources that represent a broad spectrum of perspectives and geographies. The sample includes:

Indian media: Indian Express, SwarajyaMag

International media: BBC (including regional services such as BBC Pidgin), The Guardian, New York Times, CNN, ABC Australia, and selected outlets from BRICS countries and South Asia (including Pakistani media coverage) to capture diverse global reactions.

The total sample comprises approximately 10 articles and live coverage reports published between July 2023 and December 2023, covering the lead-up, landing event, and immediate aftermath of the Chandrayaan-3 mission.

Selection Criteria: Articles were selected based on relevance to the Chandrayaan-3 mission, prominence (front-page or lead stories), and availability of full text for analysis. Both news reports and opinion pieces were included to capture framing nuances.

Data Collection:

News articles and live coverage transcripts were collected from official websites and archives. Key excerpts and headlines were documented to illustrate framing patterns.

Analytical Procedures: The analysis followed a thematic coding and framing analysis methodology:

Coding: Using an iterative process of open, axial, and selective coding, textual data were broken down into meaningful excerpts and labelled with descriptive codes representing emerging themes such as "historic achievement," "India's space power," "global cooperation," and "technological innovation" .

Framing Analysis: The study used frame analysis theory to look at how the media made sense of the event by looking at framing devices (like the metaphor "historic moon landing"), reasoning devices (which highlighted justifications and consequences), and implicit cultural phenomena (like national pride and soft power narratives)..

Comparative Analysis: We looked at the differences and similarities in how Indian and worldwide media frame stories, as well as how Western, BRICS, and South Asian outlets frame stories. This was done to see how India's space success might affect the world and diplomacy. **Language and Presentation:** The study was done with careful language editing to eliminate redundancy and confusion, which made it easier to understand and read. To back up the findings and show how framing tactics work, direct quotes and detailed instances from the news coverage were used.

Limitations and Scope: The study looks at well-known English-language media, but it would be helpful for future research to include regional language outlets and social media conversations to get a better picture of how people react to soft power and public opinion outside of traditional news media.

News coverage

BBC: “Historic moon landing” — first at lunar south pole

Chandrayaan-3: India makes historic landing near Moon's south pole

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-66594520>

BBC Live Coverage: India makes history as Chandrayaan-3 lands near Moon's south pole

<https://www.bbc.com/news/live/world-asia-india-66576580>

The Guardian: India lands spacecraft near south pole of moon in historic first

<https://www.theguardian.com/science/2023/aug/23/india-chandrayaan-3-moon-landing-mission>

Indian Express: ‘India’s emergence as a space power’: How global media covered Chandrayaan-3’s successful Moon landing

<https://indianexpress.com/article/india/chandrayaan3-space-power-international-media-coverage-8906748/>

SwarajyaMag: Here's How Global Media Covered Successful Moon Landing

<https://swarajyamag.com/world/heres-how-international-media-covered-indias-chandrayaan-3-moon-landing>

New York Times: “In Latest Moon Race, India Lands First in Southern Polar Region”

<https://www.nytimes.com/live/2023/08/23/science/india-moon-landing-chandrayaan-3>

CNN: Here’s what India’s historic lunar lander found on the moon — and what’s next

<https://edition.cnn.com/2023/09/07/world/india-lunar-lander-chandrayaan-mission-orbit-science>

Data from India's moon mission supports long-standing theory about the moon's history

<https://edition.cnn.com/2024/08/23/science/lunar-magma-ocean-chandrayaan-3>

ABC Australia: India launches its latest lunar rocket Chandrayaan-3 as it works toward Artemis Accords goal of manned mission to the Moon

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-07-14/india-to-launch-moon-rocket-chandrayaan-3/102583926>

India's Chandrayaan-3 makes historic landing on the lunar south pole

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-08-23/india-moon-lander-makes-historic-landing-on-moon/102768378>

Framing of Chandrayaan-3 in Media

Global Headlines and Tone

Emphasising both the technical accomplishment and its larger relevance, international media mostly presented Chandrayaan-3's lunar landing as a historic and innovative success for India. Headlines for major outlets

including the BBC, The Guardian, The New York Times, CNN, and ABC Australia included "historical moon landing," "India makes history," and "massive moment for India."

Emphasising the uniqueness of the accomplishment and offering live coverage with emotional responses from correspondents on the ground, BBC characterised the event as a

"historic landing near Moon's south pole."

The Guardian dubbed it a "historic first," explicitly tying India's performance to its rise as a major space exploration participant.

Adding to the achievements of its own space program, the New York Times observed that India became the first nation to reach the lunar south pole in one whole. Underlining the mission's relevance for world research as well as India's position in the space community, CNN concentrated on the scientific and strategic relevance of the southern pole region.

Comparative Architecture

Many studies compared India's success with recent failures by other nations, most notably Russia's Luna 25 catastrophe, underlining the difficulties of lunar landings and the reputation connected with this achievement. Joining the US, China, and the old Soviet Union, the media frequently noted that India is now only the fourth nation to land softly on the Moon.

Story of National Redemption and Pride

Media narratives further highlighted the letdown of Chandrayaan-2's failed landing in 2019, thereby portraying Chandrayaan-3 as a tale of tenacity and atonement for India's space programme. Often emphasised were the emotional responses of ISRO officials and the countrywide festivities, hence strengthening national pride.

Space Diplomacy and India's Global Image

India as Emerging Space Power

With some publications claiming that the mission "bumps them up the space superpower list," the success of Chandrayaan-3 was usually interpreted as proof of India's ascent as a significant space power. Media coverage of India positioned it as one of a new wave of spacefaring nations able of both independent innovation and international collaboration.

CNN and The Guardian pointed out India's alliances with France and the US as well as its participation in international initiatives like the Artemis Accords, therefore strengthening India's status as a global superpower in space.

From the BBC's Pidgin service in Nigeria to major Western publications, Indian Express and Rediff showed the worldwide respect India acquired with coverage in various languages and regions.

Diplomatic and geopolitical consequences

Days after Russia's unsuccessful endeavour, the timing of the landing was seen as symbolically significant; some experts interpreted it as a change in the geopolitical scenario of space exploration. The Washington Post referred to India as "a country with growing ambitions in space," while other accounts linked the success to more broader narratives about India's technical development and global aspirations.

International Viewpoint and Soft Power

Suggesting a boost to India's worldwide image and soft power, the extensive, positive media coverage stood out as a clear contrast to the sometimes critical coverage on Indian politics and economy in the Western press.

Presenting the mission as a showcase of the scientific prowess of the nation and a uniting event for Indians everywhere, it was seen as such.

"This is a massive moment for India — and it bumps them up the space superpower list." Rebecca Morelle is BBC Science Editor.

"The successful landing marks (India's) emergence as a space power." The Guardian

Summary Table: Media Framing and Diplomatic Impact

Aspect	Media Framing	Diplomatic/Global Image Impact
Achievement	“Historic,” “First at lunar south pole”	Elevated to elite group of spacefaring nations
Tone	Laudatory, emotional, prideful	Positive, celebratory, respectful
Comparative Context	Contrasted with Russia’s failure, past Indian setback	Seen as a comeback and leap forward
Strategic Significance	Emphasis on scientific/strategic value of south pole	Recognition of India’s ambitions and capability
Global Perception	Coverage in multiple languages, regions	Enhanced soft power and international stature

Analytical Overview

Not only a scientific triumph for India, the successful landing of Chandrayaan-3 near the lunar south pole in August 2023 was a masterclass in the coordination of space diplomacy and worldwide image-building, enhanced through deliberate media outreach. Using the Agenda- Setting Theory, Narrative Paradigm Theory, and Soft Power Theory as analytical lenses, this paper investigates how Indian and foreign media framed the event and how this coverage supported India's soft power and diplomatic goals.

1. Media Framing and Agenda-Setting

According to Agenda- Setting Theory, media inform viewers on what to think about rather than what to believe. Regarding Chandrayaan-3, foreign and Indian media ranked the mission first on the worldwide news agenda. Headlines as "Historic moon landing" (BBC), "India makes history" (BBC Live), and "India lands spacecraft near south pole of moon in historic first" (The Guardian) guaranteed that India's accomplishment dominated the world's attention.

Through inundating news cycles with the story of India's lunar success, the media transformed the mission from a national scientific event into a worldwide monument. The coverage established the agenda for public debate on India's technological capacity, scientific aspirations, and position in the new space race as well as on space exploration. This broad awareness helped India present itself as a modern, creative, and capable country, therefore influencing the worldwide public agenda in its best advantage.

2. Narrative Construction and Emotional Resonance

According to Narrative Paradigm Theory, perceptions are shaped in great part by storytelling. Story elements abound in the coverage of Chandrayaan-3 by the worldwide media: the drama of a past failure (Chandrayaan-2), the tenacity of Indian scientists, the emotional celebrations at ISRO, and the symbolism of being the first at the lunar south pole. Audiences all around connected to these tales, which turned a technological accomplishment into an engaging human narrative of resiliency, hope, and national pride. Particularly Indian media, presented the expedition as a redemption narrative and evidence of indigenous inventiveness. International publications embraced these ideas, sometimes contrasting India's triumph with previous failures by other space powers (most famously Russia's Luna 25). This story not only humanised the

goal but also encouraged identification and respect among viewers worldwide, hence supporting India's reputation as a rising, relevant, and respected actor on international scene.

3. Soft Power, Public Diplomacy, and Nation Branding

Joseph Nye's soft power theory emphasises in international relations the need of attraction and persuasion. By showcasing scientific ability, technical self-reliance, and peaceful exploration, Chandrayaan-3 evolved into a vehicle for India's soft power, hence increasing its appeal. With India embracing international cooperation and scientific data exchange, therefore enhancing its reputation as a responsible and transparent global partner, the achievement of the mission was celebrated as a win for all mankind.

By means of meticulous image selection, public diplomacy and nation branding were operationalised. Using social media, news conferences, and worldwide outreach, the Indian government and ISRO made sure the mission was perceived as a gift to world knowledge and cooperation rather than as only a national success. Here Simon Anholt's Nation Brand Hexagon is clear: government (efficient, open space agency), culture (celebration of scientific success), people (resilient and creative), and investment (India as a hub for reasonably priced, dependable space technology).

The positive framing of international media helped India's worldwide brand be recalibrated in contrast to often negative coverage of Indian politics or economy. From the BBC's Pidgin service to big Western and Asian outlets, the mission was reported in several languages and locations, hence doubling its soft power dividends.

4. Strategic Outcomes and Global Impact

The global media's agenda-setting and narrative construction around Chandrayaan-3 directly contributed to India's space diplomacy. The mission's timing, soon after Russia's failed attempt, positioned India as a leader in the new lunar race and a credible partner for future international space collaborations (e.g., Artemis Accords). The emotional and aspirational storytelling built identification and goodwill among foreign publics, while the demonstration of technical competence attracted interest from potential partners and investors.

By leveraging media coverage through the frameworks of agenda-setting, narrative, and soft power, India effectively used Chandrayaan-3 as a tool of public diplomacy and nation branding. The mission not only advanced India's scientific agenda but also elevated its status as a global influencer, demonstrating how cosmic success can be communicated for maximum diplomatic and reputational impact.

The media coverage of Chandrayaan-3, analyzed through the lenses of agenda-setting, narrative paradigm, and soft power, reveals a sophisticated interplay between communication, diplomacy, and national image-building. India's strategic use of media narratives transformed a lunar landing into a global statement of capability, aspiration, and leadership—cementing its place in the annals of space exploration and international relations.

CONCLUSION

In India's scientific path as much as in its strategic communication and worldwide image-building, the Chandrayaan-3 mission marks a turning point. Agenda-Setting Theory allowed the mission's broad and favourable coverage in Indian and foreign media to guarantee that India's lunar accomplishment dominated world conversation, therefore establishing the nation at the head of the new space competition. Emphasising resilience after Chandrayaan-2, the emotional triumph of ISRO scientists, and the symbolism of the first lunar south pole landing, the Narrative Paradigm Theory shows how powerfully compelling storytelling—that which turned a technical event into a universally relevant tale of aspiration and perseverance.

Most notably, the goal reflected Joseph Nye's Soft Power Theory. India's soft power was strengthened by its capacity to inspire admiration and respect by peaceful, creative, and cooperative space exploration, hence transforming it from a technological leader to a country able to inspire worldwide audiences. This impact was enhanced by the government and ISRO's deft application of public diplomacy and nation branding techniques, therefore presenting India as a reliable, forward-looking, inclusive space power.

India's proactive communication combined with the overwhelmingly good framing of international media has changed global impressions and strengthened India's legitimacy and attractiveness on the international scene. The success of Chandrayaan-3 goes beyond mere scientific accomplishment; it is a case study in how countries could use media, narrative, and soft power to influence world opinion, promote diplomatic goodwill, and improve their global reputation. India's cosmic victory shows the great power of strategic narrative and media interaction in the search of national objectives and global influence in the era of immediate communication and linked audiences.

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