WORKING CONDITIONS OF JOURNALISTS AS A RESEARCH FIELD: REVIEW LITERAURE

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ABSTRACT

Journalism is a dynamic profession. Journalists are the watch-dogs of Government. The proliferation and convergence of media lead to diminishing the status of journalists in different countries. The working conditions of journalists influencing the content. In most of the countries journalists were not given full freedom and face job security and low payment with high workloads. The most of the journalists were dissatisfied with the prevailing working conditions. This article purpose is to focus on the working conditions of journalists in India and abroad.

Keywords: Working conditions, Journalists, media, Journalism, Journalistic studies

I. Introduction:

Journalists played a significant role in the forging of the modern state and discursive norms, practices and organisational mechanisms enfolding successive sections of the population into democratic society (Torben et. al 2004).

It is clear that journalists’ and news organisations’ dominance in terms of information provision and breaking news has been challenged by the rise of the internet and social media, that news organisations are operating across more platforms, and that journalists are being required to engage with audiences in more ways than the past (Gade and Raviola, 2009). These developments alter the conditions of the legacy journalism profession (Russo, 1998; Aldridge and Evetts, 2003; Deuze, 2005) and raise many questions. These include assessing the positive potential of new developments for journalism and news, but also concerns over the work pressures and emotional demands on journalists and worklife balance, whether healthy workplaces can be maintained that provide professional growth and development, recognition, social interaction, and supportive management, the viability of long-term employment, job satisfaction, the extent to which journalists are forced or willingly enter journalistic entrepreneurship, who will provide compensation and benefits required in the future, who is a journalist, and whether one can maintain a profession when such change and uncertainty exists (Rottwilm, 2014). Understanding how journalists make sense of the changes and its implications for their careers is crucial. (Robert G. Picard 2015)

II. Review of Literature:

Initially, research on journalists were under taken during the 20th century in Germany and the US and it was become widely accepted among scholars in the year 1970. According to Johnstone et al, the first studies on journalists concentrated on sociological aspects of journalists and focused on three main issues of media, like transmission of information to society, impact of the diffusion of information on society and business of media. Weaver and Wilhoit (1986 & 2012) surveys examined the changing nature of the role of journalists, their attitudes, beliefs and the effects of new technology on journalists work Hanitzsch observes similarities among every journalist in different countries in aspects of professional routine, editorial procedures and socialization process, professional views and practices of journalists in different countries that were influenced by the national media system of which they were a part it (Bashir 2011).

A Study of Occupational stress and job satisfaction in media personnel assigned to the Iraq war (Neil Greenberg et al 2003) revealed that journalists living conditions deteriorated during the assignment and the pressure to be the first to a story led to unsafe conditions and unnecessary risk taking.

While studying working conditions of Taiwan journalists, Ven-hwei Lo (2004) found salary, perceived job autonomy were the most important indicator of working conditions. Status of Women Journalists in the Print Media was initiated by the National Commission for Women to look into matters disturbing the role of women working in the print media, it was executed by the Press Institute of India (PII), through empirical data that was collected from almost all the States and Union Territories of the country. The questionnaires were distributed in three languages to journalists across the country, from Punjab and Shillong in North and North East India to Kanyakumari in the South and from Calcutta in the
East to Kotah in the West. The study reveals that women in the regional, vernacular press are lagging far behind their colleagues in the English language press. There is a vast difference in the wages earned by those in English national newspapers and those in the regional media. The survey also revealed that several newspapers are reluctant to employ women because they would take maternity leave or have to be provided transport after night duty. Sexual harassment at work is a reality (PII report 2005). Media Studies Group (2006) study showed that there were only 17% women in key positions in media organizations. English electronic media was found in a better position with having a greater participation of women with the figure of 32%. The study reveals a token representation of female journalists as low as 2.70%. There were six states and two union territories which have zero percent of women at the district level while Andhra Pradesh tops the list with 107 women journalists at districts (Avaneesh et al. 2006) Only half percent German journalists satisfied with the daily workload, job security and with their income. (Siegfried Wiesenberg 2005).

A sociological study on journalists revealed that most of the journalists satisfied with their present job, median salary was found be Rs. 7500 and 60 percent of journalists would continue in journalism. Around 20 percent of journalist felt job insecurity and 60 percent justified using microphone and camera for professional purpose while disposing their duties (V.Sathi Reddy, 2005). Hong Kong journalists felt low salary was the reason behind to leave journalism, and satisfied with intrinsic, relational aspects of their jobs (Joseph M. Chan, et al. 2006). As far as working conditions, especially non daily newspapers journalists satisfied with personal and professional life. Out of 18 work satisfaction factors, Hungarian journalists gave the worst ratings to opportunity for professional travel abroad. (Maria Vasarhelyi 2006). Arab journalists expressed desire to change the policies of those governments and in some cases, the governments themselves, as evident in the news media’s role in the Arab Spring, journalists were trying to re-discover that passion, re-engaging with their own pan-Arab identity. (Lawrence Pintak and Jeremy Ginges, 2006).

A conducive environment at the workplace encourages employees to work effectively and promotes a harmonious understanding among peers. Most Indian studies have pointed out that women journalists are given soft beats such as education, entertainment and fashion. This study exposed that male journalists beats such as automobiles, crime, politics and business. Caste is often examined as one of the variables in sociological studies in India as it impacts social life. It helps an individual to better her/his life or it may deprive her/him an opportunity (Anita & Murthy, 2007). While studying Finnish journalists working conditions, two issues brought some joy and satisfaction to the journalists: the chance to influence one’s own working hours and the atmosphere in the work community. (Jyrki Jyrkiäinen and Ari Heinonen, 2007). In Karnataka, most of the women journalists reveal that they were deprived of basic needs in the workplace and not able to garner any support from journalists unions (Manjunath, 2007).

The New Zealand sub editors working in journalism for the longest period and fairly happy with media freedom where as television journalist earning the most. (Geoff Lealand and James Hollings, 2007). The Japanese journalist expressed that system of long life employment breaking down & workforce mobility rising (Shinji Oi et all, 2007). Ram Prasad (2007) found that journalist in Tanzania and Nepal considered their profession important and joined it because they believed in their goals of informing the public and building society. The US journalists were strongly committed to public service journalism and continue to learn new skills and techniques to do more work even as newsroom staff’s were being downsized, affecting job satisfaction and career commitment. (Bonnie J. Brownlee and Randal A. Beam, 2007). A study on Israeli journalists revealed that journalists facing problematic working conditions: low pay, limited job security, and frequent encounters with pressures, threats and harassment. (Yariv Tsafati and Oren Meyers, 2008). The most of the UAE media practitioners were foreigners, obtained high level of job satisfaction and three quarters of the journalists said that their job conditions were either good or very good. (Mohamed Kirat, 2008). The Canadian journalists expressed uncomfortable with media convergence and concentration of ownership (Marc-François Bernier and Marsha Barber, 2008). The study of Thomas et al. (2008) revealed that pay and job security aspects were more important than other aspects. In Russia, journalists privileged group, many hold a second job where as broadcast journalists were not had a choice to hold second job (Svetlana Pasti, 2008). The majority of Columbian journalists dissatisfied with their salaries, social security and looking for other options in order to survive because of precarious working conditions. (Jesus Arroyave and Marta Milena Barrios, 2008).

The Belgian salaried journalists were more worried about their job than freelance journalists and subject to the international trends of multi skills, flexibility, and increased job mobility (Karin Raeymaeckers, 2009). The Danish journalists enjoy a greater sense of autonomy (newspaper) than
Journalists at other types of news media. (Morten Skovsgaard et al 2009). The Korean journalists expressed that display creativity in their job was the most stressful factor and considered salary as the most important aspect of their job. ( Young Jun Son et al 2009). The Ezhar Tamam et al (2010) taken job satisfaction, job related aspects for the study purpose and found job security and pay were very important aspects of Malaysian journalists. The Slovenian journalists rank "job autonomy" as the most important aspect their job, followed by income, pay and job security (Peter Lah and Suzana Žilič-Fišer, 2009). The Spanish journalist expressed job insecurity was a deep seated problem for them and agreed on the reason for poor working conditions in their profession (Pedro Farias, 2009). The Swedish majority journalists agreed that profits were more important to their news organisation than good journalism and newsroom resources have been shrinking & two factors that were responsible for their low level of satisfaction were the increased workload for low pay, and job insecurity (Jesper Strömbäck, 2009). The Brazilian journalists need to possess journalism degree and a professional license registered at the Ministry of Labour as required by Brazilian law since 1969. The elimination of the college diploma in journalism as a requirement to enter the profession remains a major source of tension for journalists. (Heloíza Golbspan Herscovitz, 2009). The Chilean journalists were relatively satisfied with job, biggest complaints was associated with their salary and with the possibility of reconciling their work and family life. (Claudia Mellado 2009).

Zhang and Su’s (2010) study on Chinese journalists found that those working under the contract system had higher rate of job mobility than those who were working in government agencies & institutions. Majority of the journalists had not given any answer to the question if given the second chance will they opt their job again. The China journalists felt that media career as a brief & shifting job. Television journalists considered criticism from authority department as a significantly more stressful influence. The Australian journalists considered themselves first & foremost watchdog on government and most of the journalists satisfied with the working conditions (freedom & pay, Beate Josephi et al 2010). A survey on British journalists revealed that the introduction of new media technology had brought increased workloads, and in some cases rising stress and longer hours. (Karen Sanders et al 2010).

The study of Sindh journalists found that half the journalists moderately satisfied with their profession and their financial conditions, mostly, they were unpaid and underpaid. (Bashir Ahmed Memon 2011). A study by Ranu Tomar (2011) in Delhi found that women lack basic facilities like transport, maternity leave, childcare etc. in their organisations.

A study on Global science journalists London unveiled that most of the science journalists were happy in their profession and found that global south journalist were younger than the western regions. (Martin W. Bauer, 2012). The professional, working and economic conditions of most Spanish journalists had worsened substantially since the beginning of the crisis in 2008 and the problems increased in 2012. (X Soengas Père et al 2012).

A study on US News broadcaster workers revealed that broadcast journalists afforded by their newsroom organizations, the freedom and resources to routinely conduct their work had managed to found a great deal of job satisfaction. (Scott Reinardy 2012). The Swat district journalists of Pakistan expressed that majority (86%) of reporters do not felt any stress in their work environment. An overwhelming majority (92%) of respondents felt proud of being journalist (Yasir Waseem et al 2012).

The Kenyan journalists were highly satisfied with profession but at the same time highly dissatisfied with their income level. The major predictors of job satisfaction found to be income, job autonomy and job security. (Kioko Ireri-2013). The Czech Republic journalists do not consider integrated newsrooms as something that would influence their work. They pay more attention to the length of their section or the position of their section in the newspapers or a TV/radio program. (Lucie Macku 2013).

The Socio economic conditions of Kannada print Journalists (V Y Chintamini 2013) were found to be deteriorated over the period. Most of the kannada print journalists were paid low salaries. A study on working women journalists conducted by Akhileshwari (2013) reveal that English media persons were well paid off, when compare to vernacular press. Women journalists were allotted soft beat news only. A study conducted by Devender Bhardwarj (2014) on women journalists revealed that women’s family and social responsibilities were major a hindrance for the working women journalist to continue their job.

A study on Bangladesh electronic media journalists found that presence of professional stress and identifies six variables (Insecure job climate, income & family pressures, deadline, workload, unclear objectives, and Inadequate support) influencing determinants causing stress(Kazi Nazmul et al 2015). A study (Pillai 2015) on non journalists of print media in Kerala, too revealed that stress in the workplace reduces productivity, increases management pressures, and makes people ill in many ways, evidence of which is still increasing.
One more study on women journalists based in Karnataka unveiled that women were seen enjoying almost a similar status on par with men. Women were rarely considered as inferior and most of the women journalists in the English electronic media had handled risks and proved their capability. Kannada print and electronic media did not enjoy the status as the women in English media (Naik Manjusri 2016).

A study by Ranu Tomar (2017) on Women journalists from four cities Bhopal, Indore, Jabalpur and Gwalior found that woman, as an earning member do not liberate her socially or economically notwithstanding the fact that a working daughter-in-law was socially much celebrated personality. This study revealed a constant struggle of women journalists with multiple patriarchal structures in marriage and motherhood.

working conditions


The variable such as pay, promotion, work relationships with supervisors and co-workers, communication among organizations, use of skills and abilities were found in Ofili A.N, et al, study. And in other study, income, work, operational conditions, supervision, communication, co-workers, promotion, fringe benefits, contingent rewards, logistic service was considered as considered as job satisfaction measuring variables (Hiwot bezabh).

In any field for the disciplinary evaluation, theoretical development is probably the main concern. Latin American journalists, the use of theories was not very common (Claudia Mellado-2009).

Conclusion: One of the most important indicators of the working conditions of journalists is their level of job satisfaction, which in some cases is linked to their perceived autonomy or freedom. Job satisfaction of journalists in many countries is linked to pay and job security as well as perceived autonomy, but other conditions are also important, especially journalists’ perceptions of how well their news organizations are doing in informing the public and their relationships with their supervisors and peers on the job. Intention to stay in journalism seems more dependent on the attractiveness of alternative jobs.

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