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Article:	Identifying Problems and Prospects of Media Professionals Working in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: A Case Study of Peshawar Based Journalists
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ABSTRACT

The study conducted to find out problems related to journalist's career as well as to search out the media professionals view point regarding journalists' problems in Peshawar. Data collected from the Peshawar press club journalists comprises 363 members. It is found that 86% of the respondents consider permanent job category is related to good performance while 89% of the respondents termed job insecurity do affect journalists' professional performance. The chi-square results showed that proportion of male views is not significantly different from female regarding the job performance. Both of the genders believe that if the job will secure the performance would be fruitful. The results specified no significant association between status and job security because a significant proportion of married views is significantly different from unmarried regarding the job security. The Chi-square test for independence showed there is no significant association between status and administrative rules. Study concluded that media professionals are facing problems due to job security, administrative and financial problems.

Keywords: Journalists problems, Peshawar, job security, administrative interference, financial problems.

Introduction

Journalism is a profession concerned, almost, with every conceivable field of life. The vitality of the profession is evident from the fact that its scope of activities ranges from socio-economic life of people to the field of politics, education, literature, health sector and such other subjects interwoven in the fabric of society including the day to day life in conflict zones, wars and during natural calamities etc. (Safdar et al., 2019; Safdar et al., 2018; Shabir et al., 2015d).

Almost nothing is excluded from the journalism domain and a journalist tells about day to day happening concerning a society, a region, a country or the world at large and inform about different kinds of developments taking place in various fields of life and its impact on human lives (Safdar et al., 2018; Safdar et al., 2016). It is a journalist behind the driving seat 'to inform, to educate and to entertain' masses while working in various capacities as reporter, sub-editor, correspondent, new desk in-charge and performing professional responsibilities in certain other capacity (Naqvi, 1994; Safdar & Kahn, 2017; Shabir et al., 2015a).

Keeping in view the vital functions a journalist perform it is obvious that a journalist needs special setup and working environment to render his duties to the utmost of his capacity in the larger interest of the society, state and world at large. But the one aspect that so far caught little attention and if so dealt and touched upon sporadically was to whether the working environment a journalist has to work in as conducive enough enabling him to fulfill his professional obligations in the desired way. Situation at times indicated that besides security issues, journalists face administrative, financial and job security problems as well which are eating into the vitality of the profession.

Significance of the Study

In the current research study, 'problems and prospects of media professionals: a case study of Peshawar based journalists', the researchers wanted to probe and highlight the nature of the problems that a journalist confronts and its impact on the whole process of journalism itself (Shabir et al., 2015b; Shabir et al., 2015c).

The study undertaken has been designed to assess as to what are the administrative, financial and job security problems faced by journalists in Peshawar and to surface the underlying issues that cause hindrances to journalists in performing duties in various capacity and in various media outlets in the capital city Peshawar. The researchers wanted to establish the factual position of the nature of problems of journalists in Peshawar to help develop the exactness of the issues.

The importance of the research lies in the domain to substantiate through the study as to what are the actual problems that media practitioners are entangled with in Peshawar. The study also holds its importance in the domain of coming up with suggestions for the remedies of the problems of journalists developed after exhaustive study to reach to the core of the issues in this regard.

Still further the study intended to come up with rational suggestions to all concerned quarters including owners of media organizations so they may take the required steps and actions for the solution of these problems that in turn will help develop standardized media practices to the benefit of both media professionals and the state at large.

Peshawar Press Club

Peshawar Press Club is the hub of journalistic activities in Peshawar and almost all working journalists in various media organizations in Peshawar or either its members or visit it for day to day coverage of events, press conferences and seminars, workshops or to cover protest rallies and demonstration by political parties or other organizations in the Peshawar Press Club jurisdiction.

Started with the objective of finding a common place of get-to-gathers for journalists in Peshawar, The Peshawar Press Club, with passage of time also becomes a landmark for initiative of journalism on modern lines in Peshawar.

Thus besides catering as a gathering place for media persons the purpose of the Peshawar Press Club also finds its place among other things to promote and work for enhancing professional capacity and becoming bearer of high integrity to one's field; to school new professionals in journalism field in a practical working environment; to throw in for maintaining media independence and journalists, and to take up the good end of toward developing better communication skills and to enhance environment of understanding among the people.

The Peshawar Press Club (2010) has more than 407 journalists as its members performing duties in more than 35 organizations both print and electronic media, Peshawar Press Club was established back in 1964 in a single room at Dean Hotel in Saddar area in Peshawar which is now replaced by a trading center with the name of Deans Trade Center.

After sometime the press club was shifted to Old Municipal Committee Building, now hosting a women college, at Chowk Yadgar area in Peshawar. However, no sooner, was journalists there to sit to professional activities that with the pulling down of the building they were left without a place to work in and attend press conferences and carry out other journalistic activities.

It was after eight years that on December 21, 1974 Peshawar Press Club again saw its set up at a small portion at Peshawar Museum situated near Khyber Bazaar. With passage of time as media professionals got increased in numbers a separate building for the press club was necessitated. A year after the start of new millennium, Peshawar Press Club is now hosted by a separate building on Sher Shah Sori Road opposite Railway Station in Peshawar cantonment area since 2001.

Being engaged in various journalistic activities to host including press conferences, seminars, and media workshops, Peshawar Press Club is a hub of gathering for media persons from across the province as well as the country at large to hold meetings, discussions related to media professionalism and issues related to it and any other activities including recreational gatherings.

Shamim Shahid (2009) mentioned in booklet Constitution of Peshawar Press Club the rules and regulations for the membership and management that the Article-ii, also called Article of Association, that the day to day affairs of the press club is managed by five-member cabinet including The President, The Vice –President, The General Secretary, the Joint Secretary and the Finance Secretary with the help of 10 member governing body elected on yearly basis through the votes of members of Peshawar Press Club.

According to Article-iii, Membership, Constitution of Peshawar Press Club (2009), for working journalist to become full member of Peshawar Press Club will have to spend four years in the professional field. After getting registered with the club on joining any media organization, a journalist is given associated membership after two-years and on completion of further two-years he is given full membership.

Objectives of the Study

The research study is conducted with the following objectives in mind to evaluate.

1. To evaluate journalists' problems in Peshawar.
2. To dig out the administrative problems of the journalists in Peshawar.
3. To search out the job security problems to the journalists.
4. To search out the financial problems to journalists in Peshawar.
5. To search out suggestions for the solution of the problems.

Literature Review

According to Stifung (2012) the largest of developing scenario for media in Pakistan during the last three years is hindrances in its way on account of ever deteriorating law and order situation with growing violence faced by journalists both at the hands of lawbreakers and at cases due to law enforcement personnel as well. In 2011 the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) placed Pakistan second most insecure country for journalists across the world.

The Stifung while mentioning ‘economic difficulties for journalists on the raise’ stated that journalists in Pakistan are confronted with increasing degree of financial problems and their issues regarding economic hardships in the media industry during the previous three years has become multifarious. Sacking from job and cut backs has resulted in increasing level of employee’s uncertainty of job.

The Media Commission Report (2013) stated in its recommendations stressed that print and electronic media outlets are needed to take steps, both in their individual capacity and through their relevant representative organizations, to do away with shortcomings and improve standards.

Qiyasee (2012) has mentioned that at publishing of news at times he would receive threats resulting in urges him sometime from within to leave the field of journalism but than considering it an obligatory duty decided to stay on. As against the past now people come down on violent acts resulting in deaths of several journalists’ overtime. With the passage of time the profession is becoming difficult to work in.

Tariq (2013) in her article said that though the Right to Information Act as a document seems good but people are in doubt about the practical usage of RTI Act in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The doubts find roots from the background that RTI progress in the country somewhat comes up as top-down scheme. Only the practical implementation will do good to the people for which RTI stand envisaged.

Shabir (2012) stated that in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) the working female journalists confronts many problems during their infield duty of reporting as they have to face problems while on way to attend their offices and also travelling back home. The situation accompanying certain other problems is a check negatively affecting women journalist’s day to day lives both in the personal and professional capacity to work. These problems results in hindering them to render their professional duties in the real sense of the word and to convey the issues in its intended form been covered by them.

The Center for Research and Security Studies (2012) report said that journalists instead of being facilitated to have access to information are most of a time forced into hush up about certain information and do not reveal it. Some information is treated as restricted in nature in the domain of definite potent venues even remain out of access to those concerned government authorities as well.

The report “Journalism in Conflict areas of Pakistan” by Bilal, et.al (2011) mentions that the required support is not extended to journalists and that media outlets are also lacking the attention regarding training arraignment for safety to be given to the respective journalists. The space for in-ordination between journalist’s and media organizations and lack of confidence level are adding to the catalog of problems. The central issues of concern to journalists linger on in the domain of job protection, threat factors, short of necessary equipment’s, lack of training programs and paltry payments as salary to them.

Khan (2011) said that Pakistani media, particularly local one, is gripped with various kinds of issues and confronting many problems. He mentioned government apathy and lack of help to support media on financial and policy fronts in the country. He pointed out that though government do not pay adequate attention to local press, nevertheless political parties at local level do resort to it for their political campaigns. He further stated that the

government while ignoring local media is not only disadvantage for the media but it also affects local political parties as well. While drawing comparison between the governments in Pakistan and that of India, he said that the latter is encouraging local journalists through financial and technical support.

Sumeera (2011), while drawing conclusion of her research study on “Problem facing by Pakistani journalist: a critical analysis” stated that the ratio of journalists working in urban areas of the country have a monthly salary range between five to eight thousand rupees and majority of them are working as temporary or on contract basis. In her research findings she said that journalists facing low salary issues are searching for switching over to other organizations if offered high salary adding that the ratio of such journalists is 58 percent. She contended that a large number of journalists in Pakistan are confronting financial issues corresponding to the high price hike in the country. Coming up with suggestions for the solution of journalists’ problems in the country, she said that government and media organizations should offer regular jobs to journalists to enable them to overcome financial issues. She said that financial problems affect journalists’ professionalism negatively and remained prone to exploitation and that a journalist cannot be expected to work against corruption and exploitation if he himself is unable to make his both ends meet.

Conceptual Framework

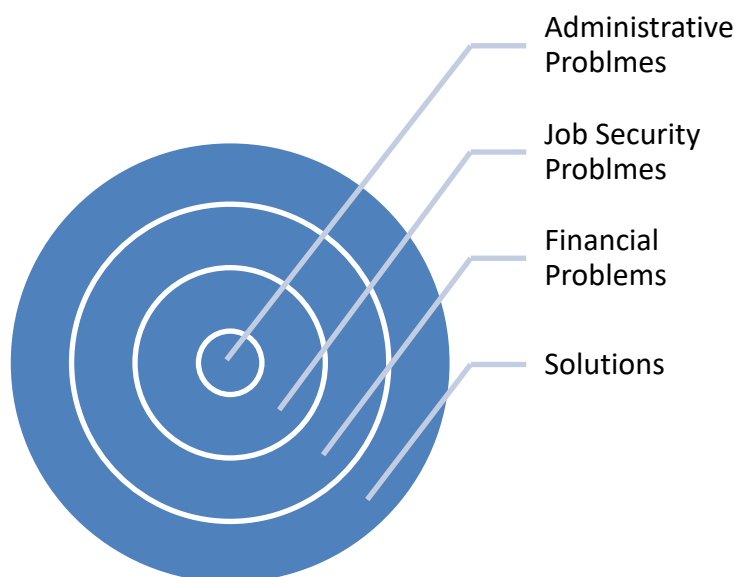


Figure 1: *Conceptual framework of current research study*

Hypotheses

- It is more likely that Peshawar based journalists are facing financial and job security problems.
- It is more likely that Peshawar based journalists are facing administrative problems.
- Male and female journalists have the same job problems in Peshawar based media organizations.
- Married proportions of the journalists are more concerned about job security than unmarried journalists in Peshawar based media organizations.
- There is no difference between married and unmarried journalists about administrative problems faced in Peshawar based media organizations.

Research Methodology

Research Methodology holds the key to process for research. It is the core of procedure essential to fetch the research to completion as without research methodology to adopt for any research to be carried out cannot be completed and is not possible. It is the way which a researcher opts and continues along with for findings and results of the study. Current research adopted survey research method to measure phenomenon of concern. The universe of the study was Peshawar based journalists which are the members of the Peshawar press Club. The population of the study was limited to a specific area of district Peshawar wherein the case study under investigation was Peshawar based journalists and to evaluate their problems.

Sample & Sampling Method

The sample of the study is 407 journalists in district Peshawar because all the members of the Peshawar Press Club as same which is the hub of journalistic activities in Peshawar and serve as a platform for almost all journalists in Peshawar affiliated with various print and electronic media organizations in the city. According to Wimmer, Roger D. & Domnick (1987) the selection of sampling method varies from situation to situation and a researcher which takes into account every member of population under the research study is called "census". They added that at times due to time constraints or limited resource a researcher selects or take a sample from the population under the study which represent the characteristics of the whole population of the research study. The researchers collect the data from the respondents by Purposive sampling to evaluate the problems and prospects of Peshawar based journalists. The method is selected because the area of the study is focus to same tendency.

Research Tool

The researchers undertook survey research to evaluate Peshawar based journalists' problems. As a data collection tool from the target audience, the researchers prepared a questionnaire. To evaluate the problems and prospects of journalists in Peshawar, the researchers developed a comprehensive, logical and well-coordinated questionnaire in a clear language to get response on it from the targeted respondents. To help overcome hesitation and to avoid any prospect of tiring of respondents close ended questionnaire was prepared except for two open-ended questions. Keeping in view the purpose of the study a total of 25 questions were prepared out of which two questions were kept open-ended to get suggestions from respondents on the problems of the research study. The questionnaire was further refined and organized after getting input from 40 senior most and seasoned journalists in Peshawar among which the questionnaire was distributed as a pilot study to proceed toward locating and investigating the journalist's problems exhaustively.

Data Collection & Analysis

The researchers distributed the questionnaire to the target respondents in district Peshawar among the journalists working in various media organizations in Peshawar and engaged for professional activities on the platform of Peshawar Press Club. The questionnaire was recollected after duly filled by the target respondents by themselves. For accuracy in findings of the research study and balance and objectivity in results, the researcher used SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences version-19) the data analysis. Out of the contents of the research data to develop tables, graphs and charts and for compiling, composing and shaping the questionnaire and the thesis script in English language the researcher used MS Word and MS Excel.

Operational Definition of Variables

Administrative Problems: By Administrative problems, the researches means issues faced by journalists related to various problems created by a media organization for a journalist.

Job Security Problem: By Job Security problem, the researcher means the issue of uncertainty among journalists about continuity of their jobs in media organizations.

Financial Problem: By Financial problem, the researcher means the problems of low salary offered to journalists in media organizations.

Results

Table 1: *Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents (n=363)*

Characteristics	Variables	% & F
Gender	Male	92.6% (336)
	Female	7.4% (27)
Age	<= 24	2.1% (11)
	25 – 32	45.7% (166)
	33 – 42	52.2% (186)
Status	Single	32.8% (119)
	Married	67.2% (244)
Association	Print media	81.2% (295)
	Electronic media	18.8% (68)
	Metric	2.5% (9)
Education	FA	5.8% (21)
	BA	8.8% (32)
	B.Com	0.6% (2)
	B.Sc	0.6% (2)
	BS	0.8% (3)
	MA	78.2% (284)
	M.SC	1.4% (5)
Per month salary	M.Phil	1.4% (5)
	Rs. 5,000-10,000	11.3% (41)
	Rs.11,000-20,000	32% (116)
	Rs. 21,000-30,000	37.5% (136)
	Rs. <=31,000	19.3% (70)

Table 1 shows the data of selected respondents. A total of 363 respondents of Peshawar based journalists were selected as sample. The table shows the demographic characteristics of respondents who filled the questionnaire.

Table 2: *Questions, options and responses of respondents (n=363)*

Questions	Options	Responses	
		F	%
Professional Experience of Respondents	1-2 Years	25	7
	3-4 years	62	17
	5-9 years	131	36
	10-15 years	102	28
	More than 15 years	43	12
Media Association Level	Local	24	7
	Regional	16	4
	National	266	73
	International	57	16
Type of Media Affiliation with	TV	69	19
	Radio	11	3
	Newspaper	267	73
	News Agencies	10	3
	Magazine	4	1
	Others	2	1
Type of Media Association	Government TV Channel	7	2
	Private TV Channel	62	17
	Govt. Run Radio	2	1
	Private Run Radio	11	3
	Govt. News Agency	4	1
	Private News Agency	6	1
	Daily Newspaper	269	74

	Weekly	2	1
Duty Type	Reporting	249	68
	Sub-Editing	84	23
	Photography/Cameraman	24	7
	Free Lancer	6	2
Job Status	Permanent	96	26
	Contract	157	43
	Temporary/Ad-hoc/Daily wages etc	110	31
Job Security Problems	All Journalists	82	22
	Most of them	234	64
	Some of them	27	7
	None of them	20	5
Effects of Job insecurity on professional performance	Yes	325	89
	No	24	7
	Don't Know	14	4
Options for other jobs	Yes	288	79
	No	48	13
	Don't Know	27	8
Low Salaries	Yes	329	91
	No	34	9
Media organization pay low salaries	All of them	14	4
	Most of them	316	87
	Some of them	33	9
Salary Raise time frame	Every year	48	13
	2-3 years	45	13
	4-5 years	61	17

	More than 5 years	5	1
	Unspecified	178	49
	Don't know	26	7
Organizations rules and regulations for promotion and salary raise	All of them	38	11
	Most of them	45	12
	Some of them	139	38
	None of them	101	28
	Don't know	40	11
Working hours schedule	All of them	30	8
	Most of them	92	25
	Some of them	96	27
	None of them	104	29
	Don't know	41	11
Working hours duration	1-4 hours per day	9	2
	5-8 hours per day	102	28
	9-12 hours per day	174	48
	13-16 hours per day	67	18
	Others	11	3
Less staff more work load	Yes	305	84
	No	31	9
	Don't know	27	7
Over burden problems	Overburdened with beats	155	43
	Overburdened with news stories to file	119	33
	Overburdened with news stories to edit	56	15
	Others	33	9

Work load effect on quality and contents	Maximum affect	289	80
	Minimum affect	59	16
	Little affect	12	3
	No affect	3	1

Table 2 shows the responses of respondents in frequency and percentage to know the problems and prospects. The questions were divided into three main segments i.e. administrative problems, job security problems and financial problems of journalists belonging to Peshawar KPK.

Hypotheses Testing

For current study survey method used and data collected from public sector university students of Punjab, Pakistan. Results made by applying chi-square test.

$$\chi^2 = \sum_{i=1}^n \left(\frac{(O_i - e_i)^2}{e_i} \right) \text{ and under } H_0 \chi^2 \sim \chi^2_{\alpha, (c-1)(r-1)}$$

Table 3: Mean, Standard Deviation, P-value and association of assumed hypotheses

Hypothesis	M	SD	X ²	Df	P-Value	Association
It is more likely that Peshawar based journalists are facing financial and job security problems	2.79	.821	33.118	3	.000	Significant
It is more likely that Peshawar based journalists are facing administrative problems	2.66	.900	24.883	3	.000	Significant
Male and female journalists have the same job problems in Peshawar based media organizations	2.35	.854	20.206	3	.000	Significant
Married proportions of the journalists are more concerned about job security than unmarried journalists in Peshawar based media organizations	2.47	.534	2.694	3	.441	Not Significant

There is no difference between married and unmarried journalists about administrative problems faced in Peshawar based media organizations	2.51	.669	3.228	3	.231	Not Significant
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Significant P-value at <0.05

M=Means, SD= Std. Deviation, X^2 = Person Chi-Square, Df=Difference

Discussion & Conclusion

The study justified that respondents considered high job security depends upon good performance. The results of the study explored that most of journalists have job security problems. Job insecurity does affect journalists' professional performance. The findings of the data proved that journalists are paid low salaries as compared to other jobs. It is also found that respondent considered most of the media organizations are paying low salaries to journalists. In term of salary rise of journalists' majority respondents replied that salary do not rise on regular basis. Responding to query, the respondents replied that media organizations do not increase salaries from time to time. The results also illustrated that most of the respondents considered there is no specific time period salary raise.

In term of rules and regulations for raise of salary, the study justified only some of the media organizations have set rules and regulations for promotion and salary raise for journalists in term of duty working hours, the results of the study explored that there are no specific working hours and usually journals give duty 9 to 12 hours per day. In term of workload, the study explored that media organizations keep less staffer for more work load management it also finds that less staff and more work burden put journalists under problem. This condition with less staff and more work load affect and compromise quality and contents of journalistic profession.

Exploring suggestions from respondents on solution to the problems faced by journalists the data showed that there should be job security and personal security for journalists to continue their jobs satisfactorily and professionally sound. Salary should be raised on regular and increment on annual basis will help boost up journalist's professional performance and to overcome financial problems. Organizations should give journalists up-gradation on performance. There should be scheduled working hours for journalists which by no means should be more than 8 working hours a day.

The results derived from data prove the objectives of the study that Peshawar based journalists confront problems and are facing administrative, job security issues. The results of the study also prove the objectives that journalists working in various media organizations in Peshawar are gripped with financial problems. The study also incorporates the objective of coming up with suggestion for the solution of the problems faced by journalists in Peshawar.

Recommendations

- Journalists should be employed on permanent positions in various media organizations with legal protection to dispel their fear of expulsion from job and the high job security in case of permanent position will enhance their professional efficiency and performance.
- Media organizations should pay salaries to journalists corresponding to price hike; salary raise should be on regular basis with annual increase system and on time payments to journalists.

- Government should have a kind of check on media organizations to ensure and implement certain rules and regulations regarding adequate salaries, annual based salary rise for journalists.
- Media outlets should have more incentive packages and medical allowance etc. for journalists to attract high caliber man power in the field of journalism to take the profession as a permanent job.
- Media houses should ensure set working hours for journalists.
- Media organization should hire adequate staff corresponding to work load management to ensure quality production and contents.

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