

A Study on Perception about Features of Investigative Journalism amongst Broadcast Journalists

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Abstract: - With increase in the democratic political systems across the globe the institution of Press is becoming more and more relevant. Amongst the kind of stories done by these journalistic organizations the one which stands out are Investigative stories. As a specific field of practice it started in USA in mid-19th century but it has been around for quite some time and few scholars claim it was practiced as early as sixteenth century. The difference between Investigative journalism & regular journalism is another point of debate where few believe all journalism is investigative journalism and few others treat it as a distinct field. There is also multitude of thoughts when it comes to defining investigative journalism, there is not a single definition which is agreed upon by everyone. Some scholars prefer a fixed definition carved out over a period of time in USA and some believe it is not applicable everywhere in same sense. Despite all these differences one thing which is common across globe is that investigative journalism is practiced and respected everywhere & it is evolving & thriving everywhere as a natural corollary of democracy. The broadcast medium like all other mediums embraced investigative journalism & it is practiced by all. The major objective of this study is to develop better understanding about the perception of broadcast journalists about the investigative journalism. Keeping in mind this objective the investigator decided to survey broadcast journalists from broadcasting organizations.

The present study was survey in nature. The sample of the study comprised of 141 broadcast journalist belonging to different editorial departments of national news channels in India. The findings of the study revealed that broadcast journalists perceive factors like increased education & public awareness, civil society, Constitution, increased reach & usage of internet, growth of social media, and increased usage of smart phone as fairly supportive and political system, legal system, judicial system, corporates & industries as least supportive for the investigative journalism in India.

Keywords : Support for Investigative journalism in India, broadcast Medium in India

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

This year India is celebrating its 75th year of independence, for one of the largest & youngest democracy in the world this is indeed a big moment of pride. The way a new nation on world map took shape and the institutions were created, supported and maintained during this course has been a learning for not only for India but for multiple nations globally. The role played by legislature, executive and Judiciary not only helped in maintaining the systems up to great extent they paved way for the new institutions to come in existence and contribute towards the development and growth of the nation. Albeit this journey has not been a study ride, there have been up's and downs and it had its own share of controversies too. These controversies in most cases had its roots in the work of people keeping a continuous and close vigil and formed the fourth estate or pillar of democracy "the Indian press". They played most crucial role by keeping a

close eye on all three other pillars and from time to time ensured that they whenever other three pillars deviated from the functions originally envisaged for them it is brought to the public scrutiny. Through their work they have also ensured social changes which needed awaking of public at large. (Ram N, 2011) [8]

From time to time the work of press or journalists were also evaluated and put through enquires & inquires. The one of most important phase in this process was the press restrictions placed during emergency of 1975 but the press bounced back in era followed by emergency. (Ghosh, 2016) [3] There has been continuous growth in the scope of work along with changing means and modes which changed over period of time & Indian press has been keeping up with the pace. The modes through which the work of journalist reaches out to public have undergone great changes, the newspapers soon created space for radio news and the advent of television gave a whole new dimension to news coverage.

The privatization of news channels and launch of 24x7 news channels created a news rich world which is always breaking some or the other news. The change in technology made news gathering and collection much easier as world became 'digitally one' and the growth of Internet and worldwide web is changing world much faster than we can even imagine. (Gaur, Kumar, 2019) [2] The new ways of engaging in journalist practices, interpreting data and going beyond the geographical borders of countries is now new normal. This newness in journalism have created an environment where multiple sub-fields in journalism are flourishing. With everything around changing at such a fast pace even the journalism as a field is always in the state of flux but one form of journalism which is standing steadfast, rather getting stronger day by day is Investigative journalism. The growth of investigative journalism also had its share of complications and quite often they have been targeted for the motive, ways, processes followed for these kind of stories. (Protest, 1991) [7] In broadcast medium with the use of spy cameras and sting operations felicitated the on camera evidence and became popular both amongst viewers and broadcast journalists but at the same time they became infamous on same grounds which have been raised and discussed about investigative journalism in print medium. [6]

India has witnessed rise and fall of governments, the Emergency, wars, subversion of constitution, distortion of civil services, corruption at multiple levels of governance and bureaucracy, Social evils and malpractices all leading to feeding the media in order to divert and deflect attacks on the ruling government, the rich, the powerful, the corrupt & society at large. As an extremely vital means of accountability, substantial part of one of the four pillars of democracy, means of valuable public service, and how it is endangered by multiple said and unsaid factors (the rich, the powerful and the corrupt). It is also termed by many and as is also witnessed in current day scenario, just another method of journalistic practice used to spike ratings by many broadcast media moguls.

As much as it put to use for or has been conceptualized to rectify the wrongs in the society, facilitating the prevalence of justice over injustice or unjust practices, acting as a shield for any nation at large, it would be too idealistic an approach to overlook that the techniques of investigative journalism can also be put to commercial, partisan or corrupt use by the rich, the powerful and those with vested interests. And that this is prevalent not only in India but also happens in many different countries today became evident as researcher read through the diverse essays in "Making Journalists: Diverse Models, Global Issues: edited by Hugo de Burgh.

Nonetheless, the investigative journalism & its perception amongst Broadcast journalists in India is dependent on

multiple factors like support by other departments etc. (Kaplan, 2008) [1] which in turn will decide pace & direction of the craft in future.

RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Like all fields investigative journalism also had its own share of hits and misses but it is in favor of society at large that investigative journalism should survive, rather in developing countries like India it should thrive. This will only be possible if we could figure out what are factors which affect perception amongst broadcast journalist about investigative journalism. Since the broadcasting is team work an investigative journalist needs support and expertise of all its team members for effective & efficient execution on investigations. As amongst the academician there is no consensus on one definition of investigative journalism, in case of practitioners it becomes way more complex. In broadcast collective effort is required which means from the cameraman to video editor to the editor of channel everyone have role to play and this is the reason why their perception about investigative journalism as field and what are its features become paramount and hence this study.

OBJECTIVE

The objective of the study was as follows –

1. To study the perception towards features of investigative journalism amongst broadcast journalists.

Sample

Total 141 broadcast journalist were selected randomly as sample. The sample comprised of graduate and postgraduate professionals from the different editorial departments of the national news channel. All these were between the age group ranging from 20 to 60 years, out of these 13.5% are in age bracket 20 to 30 years, 41.8 % are in the age group of 30 to 40 years, 41.1 % are in age group of 40 to 50 years and 3.5% are in age group of 50-60 years. Out of these 82.3% are males and 17.7 % are female. In terms of educational background 69.5% are from mass communication, 9.9 % from arts, 7.1 % from science & Technology and 13.5 % are from other educational background. These are also representing different verticals of editorial department as 58.2 % are from output, 29.8 % are from Input & assignment and 12.1 % from programing (Special & weekend programing). From work experience point of view 51.8 % of journalist have 15 plus years of experience followed by 24.1 % with experience of 10 to 15 years, 14.9 % with experience of 5 to 10 years and 9.2 % respondents have work experience of 0 to 5 years. In terms of present association 81.6 % of these journalists are presently working with some or the other

National TV News channel & 18.4% are working as freelance broadcast journalist.

Research Tool

A perception scale was developed by the investigator to compare the perception of broadcast journalists towards investigative journalism. There were 7 items in the scale. The Research tool crafted and used by the researcher for this survey consisted of questionnaire related to study. To capture, understand and study the perception of broadcast journalist about these factors 7 descriptive rating scale type questions were included in the survey questionnaire. The reason for opting for descriptive rating scale is that these factors play their role in varying degree and are perceived by the investigative journalist in the different manner. Each item was rated on the five point scale. The options were from lowest to highest.

Procedure of data collection

The data for this study was collected by adopting random sampling technique. The research tool developed by the researcher was shared with 141 broadcast journalists which

were randomly selected. These broadcast journalists were surveyed using both online and offline mode. For online mode the tool was created with the help of Google forms and a web link was created by the Google Forms. Through this web link which was shared though SMS & whatsapp message with the samples selected randomly they recorded their responses online with the help of internet and google form browser. In case of offline mode the hard copy in form of printouts of research tool was given to randomly selected sample and collected back along with their responses once they have completed the survey. **Analysis**

The collected data were analyzed with the help of frequency & percentage.

RESULTS

- Perception towards features of investigative journalism amongst broadcast journalists.

The results are given in following table:

Table 1: Frequency, Valid percent and Chi Square value for features of Investigative Journalism

Is different from regular journalism as it is exclusive and original in nature?			
	Frequency	Valid Percent	Chi square value
Always	61	43.3	124.617 *
Never	4	2.8	
Mostly	75	53.2	
Rarely	1	0.7	
Involves in depth research on a subject systematically and proactively starting with a hypothesis?			
	Frequency	Valid Percent	Chi square value
Always	74	52.5	92.674 *
Never	12	8.5	
Mostly	51	36.2	
Rarely	4	2.8	
Deals with subject matter which is of public importance and brings out the wrong doings or abuse of power?			
	Frequency	Valid Percent	Chi square value
Always	57	40.4	69.865 *
Never	18	12.8	
Mostly	62	44	
Rarely	4	2.8	
Goal is to bring Social Justice and accountability?			
	Frequency	Valid Percent	Chi square value
Always	61	43.3	67.766 *
Never	15	10.6	

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Mostly	58	41.1	
Rarely	7	5	
Means exposing financial corruption only?			
	Frequency	Valid Percent	Chi square value
Always	9	6.4	43.142 *
Never	40	28.4	
Mostly	63	44.7	
Rarely	29	20.6	
Requires analyse of public documents and data to make public secret or hidden facts?			
	Frequency	Valid Percent	Chi square value
Always	38	27	81.440 *
Never	13	9.2	
Mostly	78	55.3	
Rarely	12	8.5	
Requires specialized training for broadcast Medium?			
	Frequency	Valid Percent	Chi square value
Always	72	51.1	73.723 *
Never	18	12.8	
Mostly	45	31.9	
Rarely	6	4.3	

From the above table 1, it is clear that the chi square value is significant at 0.01 level with degree of freedom equals to 3. It means the responses are not distributed equally. Also with the above data we can deduce that;

- 53.2 % broadcast journalists perceive investigative journalism is mostly different from regular journalism as it is exclusive and original in nature.
- 52.5 % broadcast journalists perceive investigative journalism always involves in depth research on a subject systematically and proactively starting with a hypothesis.
- 40.4 % broadcast journalists perceive investigative journalism always deals with subject matter which is of public importance and brings out the wrong doings or abuse of power.
- 43.3 % broadcast journalists perceive goal of investigative journalism is mostly to bring Social Justice and accountability.
- 44.7 % broadcast journalists perceive investigative journalism mostly means exposing financial corruption only.
- 55.3 % broadcast journalists perceive investigative journalism mostly requires analyse of public documents and data to make public secret or

hidden facts.

- 51.1 % broadcast journalists perceive investigative journalism always requires specialized training for broadcast Medium.

CONCLUSION

The respondents clearly understood & responded to the questions regarding support investigative journalism get from the different sub structures of the society. They have clearly rated these sub structures as supportive as they perceive them. These sub structures represent the external environment in which investigative journalism operates and their support is crucial for the growth and development of the investigative journalism.

The findings of this study reveals that the broadcast journalists clearly understood & responded to the questions regarding factors which act as support for them follow investigative journalism. The respondents have clearly rated these factors as important as they perceive them. These factors have direct impact on the understanding of broadcast journalist about the investigative journalism & hence impacting the execution & effectiveness of the investigative journalism in broadcast medium in India. Interestingly a majority of broadcast journalist finds investigative journalism is mostly different from regular journalism as it is exclusive

and original in nature at the same time a considerable number perceives it is always exclusive and original. Same is the case with inquiry about subject matter which is of public importance and brings out the wrong doings or abuse of power & inquiry about the goal of Investigative journalism is to bring Social Justice and accountability.

These factors represent the understanding about the investigative journalism amongst the broadcast journalist as they are not only important from the practice point of view they also have impact on the growth of investigative journalism by broadcast journalist.

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