

Privately Employed, Print Oriented, Professionally Educated, Less Experienced, and Badly Paid: A Professional Profile of Kerala Journalists

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Abstract

The present study, a part of author's PhD thesis, tries to understand the professional characteristics of journalists in Kerala. Every aspect of a journalist's professional life including his professional education, experience, and income become very significant in the processing of news as the way news as a social construct is shaped is highly influenced by the characteristics of journalists. The public perception about the world is mediated. And it is the media that tell the audience 'not what to think but what to think about.' Unquestionably, it is the mediators of reality or the news people who tell the audience what to think about. A survey of 541 Kerala journalists revealed that the media profession in this part of India is mostly privately owned, concentrated in three major cities and dominated by print journalism. Indicating the professionalization of the field, most of the journalists are professionally educated but less experienced and badly paid.

Keywords

Kerala Journalists, Indian Journalists, Underpaid Profession, Survey of Journalists, Journalists in 21st C.

Introduction

Why is it necessary to enquire the professional characteristics of the processing hands of the media content? The public perceives the world around

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them as directed by the media which tells them ‘not what to think but what to think about.’ The public agenda is mainly set by the newsworthy information processed by journalists. Again, ‘political economy’ of the media organization and of the journalists play a crucial role in setting up the public agenda as the newsworthiness of these events is shaped in the news desk (Herman & Chomsky, 1989). Here, the question who tells the media what to think about is vital.

Studies about journalists across the world revealed that the way news as a social construct is molded and the newsroom practice as a professional trait is fostered are based on the demographics of the media persons. In this context, it becomes inevitable to check how far these communicators are professionals while processing the news as they are the mirror bearers of the society. Undoubtedly, the media as well as the media persons, which together constitute the fourth estate in a democracy needs thorough examination to unearth the influence of the professional variables of journalists in shaping the media content.

The quality of professional life of media persons is as important as the field as they act as the ‘eyes and ears of the general public’ in a democracy. In this way, every aspect of journalist’s professional life including his motivation, work culture and the very practice as a journalist become significant in the processing of information. The present study tries to examine the professional variables of journalists in Kerala to understand the implications of these characteristics on the quality of journalism as a social service as well as a business. This study is, especially relevant, as there are a few studies done on Kerala journalists in similar fashion.

Media in Kerala

The beginning of media in Kerala can be traced back to Rajyasamacharam in 1847 for print and Travancore Broadcasting in 1943 for broadcast and Deepika online in 1998 for online media. The National Family Health Survey (2015-16) ranked Kerala - a state with highest literacy rate - first in the country in terms of daily media exposure of the people. N Ram rightly observed that “Kerala is the classic Indian case of politicization spreading to large sections of the population and creating a newspaper-reading culture” (Ram, 2011). Professional characteristics of journalists in Kerala is vital, in this respect, as they process the content to keep such a society informed and critically aware. According to the PRDD (2015), there are 75 dailies including tabloids, 65 Television channels, 7 radio stations and 10 news websites in Malayalam to cater to media requirements of 3.69 million audience.

Review of Literature

Researchers of mass media in India focused on effects of mass media and the reception of its content for so long. Studies on media persons and production process heaved less attention and their studies were restricted to famous personalities in the field. On the other hand, journalists and their profession were researched in depth in different parts of the world including many developing nations in Asia. The reviewed studies may give some insights into their professional characteristics of journalists across the world.

Mwesige (2004), Lo, Chan, and Pan (2005), West (2011), Mellado and Humanes (2012), Nygren and Degtereva (2012), Godler and Reich (2012) and Skovsgaard (2014) reported that professional characteristics of the individual journalists may influence their perceptions and may decide the way news were processed. The logics of success and the professional assessments held by journalists were opposing depending on the professional characteristics that determined how journalists read the situations. The way news as a social construct was shaped and the newsroom practice as a professional trait was nurtured were based on the professional characteristics of news processors along with their production environment.

The conflict between professional goals and organizational goals influenced the journalists' professional autonomy negatively as per the report of Skovsgaard (2014). According to Reinardy (2014), TV news workers' job satisfaction was correlated with perceptions of work quality, autonomy, organizational support and workload. All these factors had a significant, positive and moderate correlation with job satisfaction except workload that exerted a negative correlation. High levels of workload and low levels of organizational support led to low levels of job satisfaction. Further, professional characteristics like region and type of media in which media persons work, their experience, salary range, the field of work and the employer pattern have the capacity to affect the journalists' view and the way they assess the profession (Reinardy and Crawford, 2011; Massey and Elmore, 2011; Tsui and Lee, 2012).

Professional characteristics like ownership pattern, working region, type of medium, salary range, professional education, media experience and level of competency have remained as the central variables of journalistic studies as they are indicators of professionalization. Essentially, they are likely to have a far-reaching effect on news content especially on what is selected and how it is reported (Shoemaker & Reese, 1991). The present study sought professional characteristics including nature of employment, working region, type of media, the field of work, professional education, media experience, monthly income, beat specialization, the inspiration for work, competency, and professional organization membership. Professional character of a journalist in Kerala will

definitely reflect how far media in the state is professionalized by the time of the study.

Journalism researchers in India, especially in Kerala, scarcely studied the implications of journalists' professional characteristics on the news decisions they made as such if not as the part of a related study. The professional characteristics of Kerala journalists will not, in fact, contrast to their counterparts in the profession around the world.

Study Objectives

How professional are the journalists in Kerala when compared to journalists from other parts of the world? What all the ways by which the Kerala journalists are similar or different with their colleagues around the world? Studying Kerala journalists' professional characteristics is the lone answer to this question. The objectives of the present study are:

- To identify the nature of employment, working region, type of media, the field of work and professional organization membership of journalists in Kerala.
- To understand the professional education, media experience, monthly income and beat specialization of Kerala journalists.

Study Methodology

The Public Relations Department Directory (PRDD) of the Govt. of Kerala enlisted 3104 media persons including those who work outside Kerala for Kerala based media houses. From this population, a sample of 541 media persons, one-sixth of the population, spread across various media like print, electronic and online platforms were surveyed to realize the objectives. Theoretically, the proportion for sampling for a population of 3500 was 346 (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). The journalists were well represented in terms of major professional variables like region, medium, professional education, experience and income.

Samples were collected from four stratum – North Kerala, Central Kerala, South Kerala and outside the state but within India where Kerala journalists have a visible presence - using stratified random sampling method to ensure proper representation. Care was taken to ensure the proportionate representation of the type of media – Print, Radio, Television, and Online – from each region. Similarly, within each type of media, adequate representation of various possible variables including medium, professional education, experience and income was ensured. The questionnaire enquired the

respondents about their professional characteristics including region, type of media, salary range, experience, the field of work and ownership pattern.

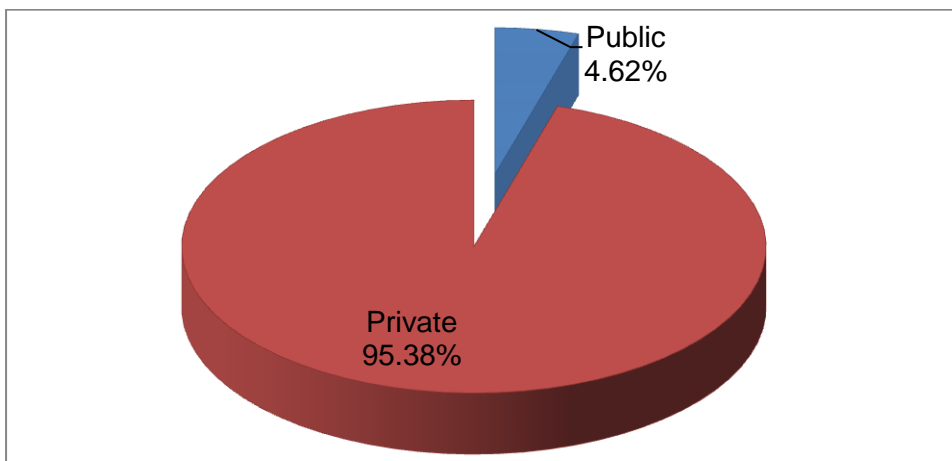
Analysis

Media scholars across the globe eagerly studied the professional characteristics, as those assisted in creating national professional portraits of the journalistic folk. For Weaver, reasons behind this enquiry is important; firstly, as journalists have multiple characteristics, attitudes, and behaviors that depend on the specific setting; secondly, as journalists have similarities that cut across the boundaries of geography, culture, language, society, religion, race, ethnicity; and thirdly, as journalists are generally more demographically representative of their own societies (Weaver, 2005). Professional characteristics taken for the study were employer pattern, working region, type of media, the field of work, professional education, experience, monthly income, beat specialization and professional organization membership.

Employer Pattern

Most of the news media in Kerala as well as in India are under the ownership of private companies or trusts. On the other hand, news broadcast via Radio is monopolized by All India Radio (AIR), the government-owned Radio. And Doordarshan (DD), the government-owned TV, employed a small fraction of journalists in comparison with other news broadcasting news channels. Taken this into account, most of the samples were collected from private owned news media and most of the samples from the public sector were gathered from the AIR and the DD.

Figure 1: Employer Pattern wise Distribution of the Journalists

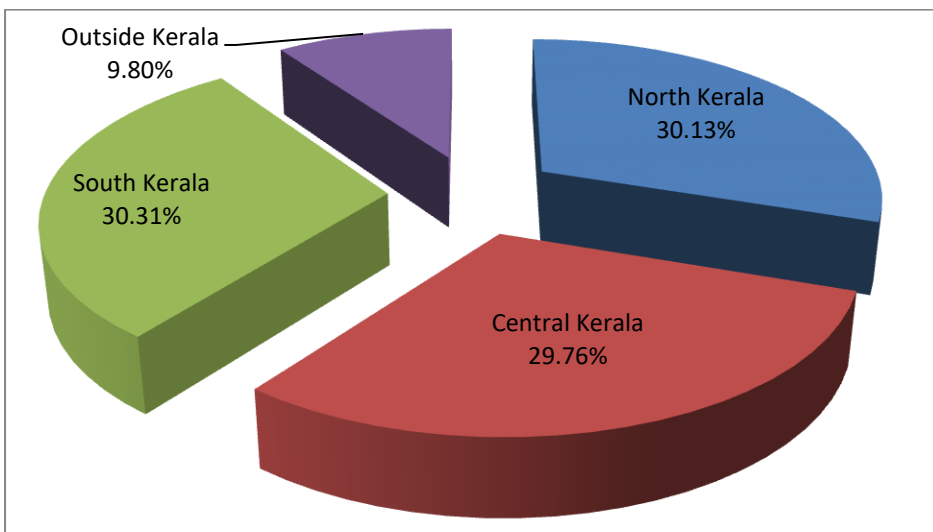


The sample (N=541) collected from Kerala giving proportionate representation to the journalists from public and private owned news media. In this way, most of the media persons in Kerala were from privately owned media (95.38%) and a small number of journalists from public owned media (4.62%). Unsurprisingly, news media in Kerala is in the hands of private owners.

Working Region

Media in Kerala, including print and broadcast, is concentrated mainly in three major cities in the state namely Thiruvananthapuram, the state capital, Ernakulam, the economic capital, and Kozhikode, the central city in Malabar. They also represent southern, central and northern regions of the state respectively. Historically and culturally, the traditions of these three regions are distinct while southern Kerala was under the Travancore Kingdom, the central part was dominated by Cochin Dynasty and Northern Kerala was a part of Madras Presidency under the British. Consequently, they still represent different socio-political and dialectic traditions that may have an influence on the journalistic practices. In addition to this, Kerala journalists have a visible presence outside Kerala, where workplace situation is totally different. Given this, the sample was collected from all the four regions.

Figure 2: Region-wise Distribution of the Journalists



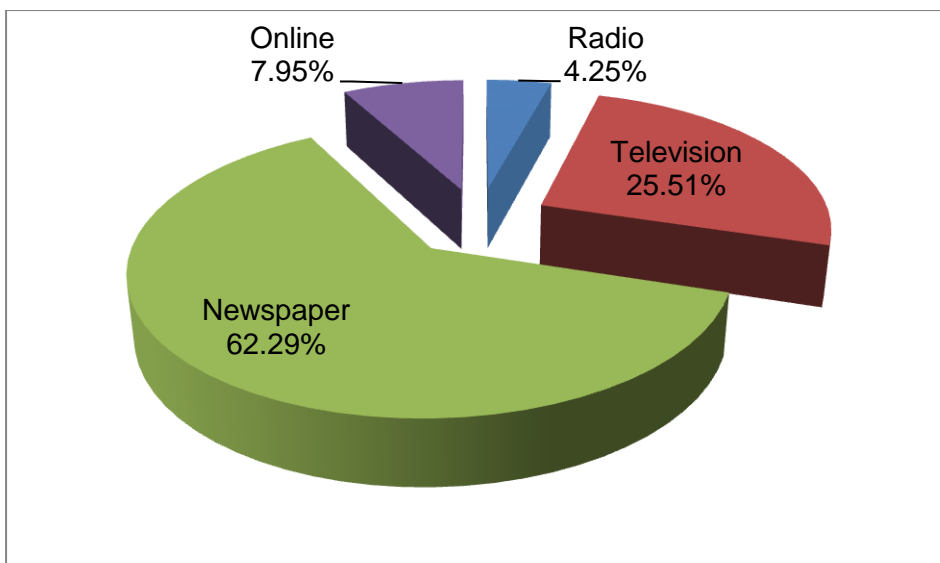
The sample (N=541) collected from three regions in Kerala with almost equal representation – (North = 163, Central = 161, South = 164). In addition to this, considering the presence of Kerala journalists in Indian metros outside the state, data were collected from 53 journalists. Consequently, journalists from South (30.31%), Central (29.76%) and North (30.13%) regions of Kerala along

with a fair number of journalists from outside Kerala (9.8%) were included in the study. From each region, the majority of samples were taken from regional journalistic centers/districts; Kozhikode (41.72%) from North, Ernakulam (52.8%) from Central, and Thiruvananthapuram (50.6%) from South whereas most of the samples from outside Kerala was collected from Delhi (84.9%), the national capital.

Type of Media

Print journalists dominated the media world throughout the history of journalism. But with the advent of online journalism, the trend faced threat and many of the print media houses shrunk their journalistic force to focus their online edition. As a result, the number of print media journalists tends to shrink especially in the developed nations. At the same time, print journalists' dominance in the media field tends to continue in the developing nations like India (Ram, 2011). The present study is conducted among news persons working with Radio, Television, Daily Newspaper and Online news websites and portals.

Figure 3: Media-wise Distribution of the Journalists



In proportionate with journalists' population in media, Print journalists (62.29%) constituted the majority of the sample followed respectively by Television (25.51%), Online (7.95%) and Radio (4.25%).

Region, Media and Sample Distribution

Multistage stratified randomization of data firstly concerned with four regions in and outside the state and then four different media. Researcher managed to collect a somewhat proportionate number of journalists from each media within a region.

Table 1: Region-wise Distribution of Journalists by Media

Media	Region				Total
	South	Central	North	Outside Kerala	
Radio	11 (47.8%)	5 (21.7%)	4 (17.4%)	3 (13%)	23 (100%)
Television	47 (34.1%)	36 (26.1%)	29 (21%)	26 (18.8%)	138 (100%)
Newspaper	92 (27.3%)	105 (31.2%)	118 (35%)	22 (6.5%)	337 (100%)
Online	14 (32.6%)	15 (34.9%)	12 (27.9%)	2 (4.7%)	43 (100%)
Total	164 (30.3%)	161 (29.8%)	163 (30.1%)	53 (9.8%)	541 (100%)

Pearson chi-square = 3.160^a, p-value = .000

Though most journalists in Radio (47.8%), Television (34.1%) and Online (32.6%) were from South and Print journalists (35%) from North, medium wise distribution of journalists within the region is more or less in proportion with their population. These varied in accordance with the region-wise concentration of media in Kerala and the difference is significant (p-value = .000).

Field of Work

Field of work of a journalist may have an influence on his/her professional variables like job satisfaction, freedom etc. For this study, journalists' fields of work were identified as reporting, editing, news management and photo/videography.

Table 2: Field of Work of the Journalists

Field of Work	Frequency	Percent
Reporting	308	56.9
Editing	145	26.8
News Management	29	5.4
Photo/Videography	59	10.9
Total	541	100

The majority of the samples (56.9%) were from the reporting field. One-fourth of the journalists were from editing (26.8%) and photo/videography

journalists constituted the third majority (10.9%) and the least number of media persons were from news management field (5.4%). Reporting continues to be the glamorous and most desired field in the profession as far as its social status and recognition are concerned.

Professional Organization

Professional organizations are the sources of the power of negotiation of employees in the field. The researcher identified four professional unions of working journalists in Kerala. This may be due to the constraints to become a member or lack of interest/trust in such associations.

Table 3: Professional Organizational Membership and the Journalists

Media	Member/Organization				No Membership	Total
	KUWJ	KJU	KNEF	DUJ		
Radio	8 (34.8%)	1 (4.3%)	1 (4.3%)	0	13 (56.5%)	23 (100%)
Television	41 (29.7%)	2 (1.4%)	3 (2.2%)	3 (2.2%)	89 (64.5%)	138 (100%)
Newspaper	175 (51.9%)	11 (3.3%)	7 (2.1%)	0	144 (42.7%)	337 (100%)
Online	13 (30.2%)	1 (2.3%)	0	0	29 (67.4%)	43 (100%)
Total	237 (43.8%)	15 (2.8%)	11 (2%)	3 (0.6%)	275 (50.8%)	541 (100%)

Pearson chi-square = 37.129^a, p-value = .000

Surprisingly, a simple majority of the journalists (50.8%) were not members of any organization of working journalists. Most of the journalists who are part of an employee organization belonged to Kerala Union of Working Journalists (43.8%). Others belonged respectively to Kerala Journalists Union (2.8%), Kerala News Employees Forum (2%), and DUJ (.6%). Journalists in newspapers (57.3%) were more likely to be unionized while their counterparts in online (67.4%), television (64.5%) and radio (56.5%) were less likely to be unionized. And unionization tendency of journalists differed significantly across media (p-value = .000).

Professional Education

The more the journalists are professionally educated the more will be the spread of professionalization in the journalism field. Not majority of journalists across nations reported having a professional education so far despite two or three nations like Chile and Brazil. Majoring in journalism gradually becomes vital to enter the profession in Kerala as the study indicated which was different from other parts of Asian continent as previous studies reported (Weaver & Willnat, 2012).

Table 4: Professional Education of the Journalists

Media	Professional Education				Total
	No Media Education	Certificate/ Diploma Course	Degree	PG & Above	
Radio	2 (8.7%)	10 (43.5%)	5 (21.7%)	6 (26.1%)	23 (100%)
Television	32 (23.2%)	60 (43.5%)	13 (9.4%)	33 (23.9%)	138 (100%)
Newspaper	63 (18.7%)	166 (49.3%)	14 (4.2%)	94 (27.9%)	337 (100%)
Online	5 (11.6%)	27 (62.8%)	2 (4.7%)	9 (20.7%)	43 (100%)
Total	102 (18.6%)	263 (48.6%)	34 (6.3%)	142 (26.2%)	541 (100%)

Pearson chi-square = 21.123^a, p-value = .012

The majority of journalists hold a diploma/certificate course (48.6%) followed by those who completed professional PG (26.2%) or degree (6.3%). And a remarkable portion of the journalists was not professionally educated (18.9%). Overall, the vast majority of journalists (81.1%) were professionally educated and others were not (18.9%). When comes to media, Television (23.2%) followed by the newspaper (18.7%) tended to accommodate more journalists with no professional education whereas more or less than nine-tenths of journalists in Radio (91.3%) and online (88.4%) were having a professional education. Of professionally educated journalists, majority in all media (radio=43.5%; television=43.5%; newspaper=49.3%; online=62.8%) tended to have certificate/diploma in journalism. About half of journalists in Radio (47.8%) and nearly one-third of journalists in Television (33.3%) and newspaper (32.1%) and more than one-fourth of online journalists (25.4) secured at least a degree or PG in journalism. The difference in the dissemination of journalists with or without media education across media yielded statistical significance (p-value = .012). Professional training in journalism is a prerequisite for being hired as a journalist as far as media in Kerala is concerned.

Experience

The more one works for an organization the more he/she will adapt to the ideology and policy of the same and will normally prefer not to change the institution. Since the generations of journalists face varying challenges from one another, their priorities may change by time and that will ultimately result in job attitudes they preserve (White, 1997).

Table 5: Experience of the Journalists

Media	Professional Experience					Total
	Up to 5 Years	6-10 Years	11-15 Years	16-20 Years	Above 20 years	
Radio	3 (13%)	4 (17.4%)	4 (17.4%)	2 (8.7%)	10 (43.5%)	23 (100%)
Television	70 (50.7%)	41 (29.7%)	15 (10.9%)	9 (6.5%)	3 (2.2%)	138 (100%)
Newspaper	109 (32.3%)	81 (24%)	65 (19.3%)	41 (12.2%)	41 (12.2%)	337 (100%)
Online	19 (44.2%)	11 (25.6%)	7 (16.3%)	2 (4.7%)	4 (9.3%)	43 (100%)
Total	201 (37.2%)	137(25.3%)	91 (16.8%)	54 (10%)	58 (10.7%)	541 (100%)

Pearson chi-square = 56.778^a, p-value = .000

More than one-third of journalists (37.2%) were having up to five years of experience and one fourth were with 6-10 years of experience (25.3%). Merely, one-tenth of the journalists was on the field for more than two decades (10.7%). Again, one-tenth of the journalists (10%) was experienced 16-20 years whereas a simple minority of journalists (16.8%) was moderately experienced (11-15 years). When comes to media, most of the radio journalists (79.6%) held more than 10 years of experience whereas most of the Television journalists (81.8%) followed by the majority of journalists in Online (72.1%) had up to 10 years of experience. The newspaper had a comparatively balanced proportion of journalists in terms of experience through the experience categories. Majority of journalists in Kerala (63%), in general, and Television (81.8%), Online (72.1%) and Print (56.3%) journalists in particular were having less than a decade of experience when the majority of the radio journalists (69.6%) had more than 10 years of experience. Professional experience of journalists significantly varied across media (p-value = .000).

Income

Income might have strong relation with quality of media content. Researchers found that unethical journalism in one way or other related to poor pay. Journalists with poor pay and high workload and family responsibilities tended to compromise over the objectivity of news. It also adversely affected journalist's commitment and urged them to migrate from one institution to another (Ileri, 2015). Journalists under study were grouped into five - Up to Rs.10000, Rs.10001-20000, Rs.20001-30000, Rs.30001-40000 and Above Rs. 50000 - on the basis of their monthly income.

Surprisingly, a significant portion of the journalists (15%) was not even paid the monthly salary of more than Rs. 10,000. Though one-seventh of the journalists (14.6%) was moderately paid an amount of Rs. 30001-50000, they are just at the payment level of a Lower Division Clerk in the state. To be specific, most of the journalists in Television (84%), Online (83.7%) and

Newspaper (78.3%) were poorly paid whereas in Radio more than half of the journalists were either moderately or well paid (52.2%). In general, the vast majority of the journalists in Kerala (78.9%) were poorly paid, one-seventh of journalists was (14.6%) moderately paid and just a few journalists (6.5%) were well paid.

Table 6: Salary Range of the Journalists by Media

Media	Salary Range					Total
	Upto Rs.10000	Rs.10001- 20000	Rs.20001- 30000	Rs. 30001- 50000	Above Rs.50000	
Radio	1 (4.3%)	7 (30.4%)	3 (13%)	4 (17.4%)	8 (34.8%)	23 (100%)
Television	25 (18.1%)	54 (39.1%)	37 (26.8%)	18 (13%)	4 (2.9%)	138 (100%)
Newspaper	47 (13.9%)	130 (38.6%)	87 (25.8%)	52 (15.4%)	21 (6.2%)	337 (100%)
Online	8 (18.6%)	16 (37.2%)	12 (27.9%)	5 (11.6%)	2 (4.7%)	43 (100%)
Total	81 (15%)	207 (38.3%)	139 (25.7%)	79 (14.6%)	35 (6.5%)	541 (100%)

Pearson chi-square = 37.500^a, p-value = .000

Again, journalists in Radio (52.2%) received better payment of Rs. 30001 and above followed by journalists in the newspaper (21.6%), online (16.3%) and Television (15.9%). Salary range wise difference of journalists across media found to be highly significant (p-value = .000).

Interestingly, majority of the journalists fall under the low-income category of \$2-\$10 (Rs 122 - 710) per day. Though most of them identify themselves as middle class people like their fellow Indians, 'many of these were people hovering closer to \$2 than \$10 in daily income, and thus still a way from the transition to middle-income status' of \$10-\$20 (Rs 710 - 1420) per day (Kochhar, 2015).

Beat Specialization

Researcher's interest was put on specialized journalists as they were allowed to follow the work they loved the most. They were impressed by the finding that journalists with special beat tended to have more satisfaction than their unspecialized counterparts. The role of beat specialization of journalists in Kerala may have the same effect as it had on journalists across the world. A total number of journalists specialized in a particular beat may show the importance of that beat in this part of the country.

Table 7: Beat Specialization and the Journalists by Media

Media	Special Beat		Total
	Special Beat	General	
Radio	7 (30.4%)	16 (69.6%)	23 (100%)
Television	39 (28.3%)	99 (71.7%)	138 (100%)
Newspaper	100 (29.7%)	237 (70.3%)	337 (100%)
Online	12 (27.9%)	31 (72.1%)	43 (100%)
Total	158 (29.2%)	383 (70.8%)	541 (100%)

Pearson chi-square = .147^a, p-value = .986

More than one-fourth of the journalists were given special beat (29.2%) and others (70.8%) covered news in general. Journalists across media reported not much difference in terms of specialization as more or less than 30 percent of them in every media (radio = 30.4%; television = 28.3%; newspaper = 29.7%; online = 27.9%) were having specialization in one or in another beat. Expectedly, the difference was not statistically significant (p-value = .986).

Further analysis of the data shows that most journalists specialized in politics (N=66) followed by arts (N=35), region (N=34), sports (N=32), court & crime (N=14), science (N=12), and religion (N=7). Some of them covered two or three special beats as they were asked for.

Conclusion and Discussion

Professionally speaking, most of the journalists taken for the study (N=541) worked under a private employer (95.38%), equally distributed across regions (South - 30.31%, Central - 29.76% & North - 30.13%), belonged to print media (62.3%), hailed from reporting field (56.9%), and had no membership in working journalists' unions (50.8%). Exploring the second objective of study, it was shown that more than half of the Kerala journalists were professionally educated (81.1%), had below 10 years of experience (53%), were badly paid (78.9%), and covered news in general (70.8%).

The analysis of professional characteristics of sampled journalists helped the researcher to construct a professional portrait of a typical Kerala journalist. Notably, most of the news media in Kerala as well as in India are under the ownership of private companies or trusts. On the other hand, news broadcast via Radio is monopolized by All India Radio (AIR), the government-owned Radio. And Doordarshan (DD), the government-owned TV, employed a small fraction of journalists in comparison with other news broadcasting news channels. Again, when it comes to the working region, media in Kerala, including print and broadcast, is concentrated mainly in three major cities in the state namely Thiruvananthapuram, the state capital, Ernakulam, the economic capital, and Kozhikode, the central city in Malabar. They also represent

southern, central and northern regions of the state respectively. Considering media wise distribution of journalists, Kerala followed the global trend as print media journalists dominated the profession. It was so throughout the history of journalism. But with the advent of online journalism, the trend faced threat and many of the print media houses shrunk their journalistic force to focus their online edition. However, print journalists' dominance in the media field tends to continue in the developing nations like India (Ram, 2011).

. Media field in Kerala is in the path of rapid professionalization as indicated by the increasing presence of professionally trained journalists. It is also evident in the mounting number of institutions offering various journalism courses in the state. Advanced technological and digital news environment is indeed in need of trained journalists. However, beyond technical soundness, the way trained young journalists contribute to the quality of journalism in Kerala is an area for further exploration. On the other hand, professional experience of journalists in this part of the world is considerably low as majority of them had below 10 years of experience.

No wonder that the number of journalists assigned to special beat indicated that the media in Kerala is more concentrated on politics than any other beat available in the region. Being apolitical is a difficult task in Kerala, a southern state in India known for its political literacy. N Ram (2011) rightly identified Kerala as the 'classic Indian case of politicization' that spread across the population amounting to create a newspaper-reading culture.

Shockingly, the vast majority of the journalists in Kerala were badly paid, and just a few journalists were well paid and a significant portion of the journalists was not even paid the monthly salary of more than Rs. 10,000. The personalized pressure of financial and material influence and organizational pressure of profit orientation resulted in sweethearting. Newsworthy stories that may adversely affect the funding agencies and the specific audience of the media are neglected or edited. On the other hand, stuffs that are not newsworthy may find place or time in media. These are in essence are part of sweethearting, 'the practice of giving customers unauthorized discounts' causing loss of quality in the profession of journalism. Income might have strong relation with quality of media content. Researchers found that unethical journalism in one way or other related to poor pay. Journalists with poor pay and high workload and family responsibilities tended to compromise over the objectivity of news. Ireri (2015) rightly observed that the poor pay adversely affected journalist's commitment and urged them to migrate from one institution to another seeking better payment.

Limitations of the Study

Though the study will provide certain insights into the professional characteristics of media persons in Kerala, there are limitations to it. A multi-approach/method that can also extract personal characteristics and its influence in the profession would be bettered in this kind of explorative study. However, care was taken to control the possible limitations by sorting out the duly filled data and to by delimiting the analysis strictly to the objectives.

Recommendations

Considering the results and so its implications for the study, the researcher puts forth the following recommendations to the media managements/organizations, journalists, government, audience/viewers and to the academia.

- Managements/organizations have the responsibility to ensure that the journalists receive a decent salary to run his/her family smoothly at par with modern living standards following the wage board recommendations. If not, journalists may resort to sweethearting to find their livelihood which may diminish the quality of news itself.
- Government should ensure that the media organizations strictly follow Majithia wage board recommendations and they do not appoint journalists under technically modified designations to escape the wage board recommendations.
- Working journalists' unions must address the representation issue of the field to convert the journalistic field gender, caste and class sensitive. They also should make use of their capacity to bargain with the media organizations for the better work environment and the implementation of wage board recommendations.
- Readers/viewers should attain the media literacy to recognize the fact that professional characteristics of journalists like under payment may affect free and fair news reporting in this part of the world.

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