

# DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF TV JOURNALISTS

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**Abstract:** A study on demographic and socio-economic status of journalist may reveal information leading to the formulation of policy for the betterment of them. In India, only two studies available on demographic and socio-economic status of print journalist but to the best of our knowledge no study reported on the TV Journalist. In this study, an attempt was made to investigate the demographic and socio-economic status of TV journalists. The majority of respondents were of 26-35 years, males, the Hindus, members of backward castes, non-smokers, graduates, married, had two to three dependants, had permanent job, working as sub editors and earning monthly salary of Rs. 20000-30000. The results of the study suggested that TV journalists are characterized by moderate socio-economic status

**KEYWORDS:** Broadcasting, News Channels, Journalists, Media, Television, Media Management

## I. INTRODUCTION

Journalism is a dynamic profession and a new force for many developments and achievements (Hendricks, 2010). 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). Journalists are not only storytellers but also act as watchdog of the society in different dimensions. According to the Ministry of Information and broadcasting, a total of 1101 private satellite TV channels were granted permission as per its website. The number of TV households in India reported to be 181 million in 2016 with a penetration of 63% (FICCI 2017) with a viewership of 8-10%. Regional news channels constitute lion share in among the news channels. Opening of more TV channels resulted in the employment of many journalists.

To the best of our knowledge, in Indian context only three studies are available on the socio-economic status of print journalists (Chintamani, 2013; SathiReddy, 2015; Neeraj, Jaipur national University) but no study reported on the TV journalists. Insecurity has become an acute ailment afflicting media professionals. Most journalists beginning from editors to reporters are employed on contract basis with an exit clause that permits them to leave or be fired on a notice of short-time. It was observed that journalist have lost the courage to speak up or write about any issue that owners and managements do not want them to, including the issue of their own (Samrat, 2017). The working journalists Act, 1955, recommended certain provisions such as minimum wages, leaves with pay, the minimum period of notice and working hours, for print media journalists but no act made in case of journalists working in electronic media. A study on demographic and socio-economic status of journalist may reveal information leading to the formulation of policy for the betterment of them. Therefore, in the present study an attempt was made to study the demographic and socio-economic status of TV journalists.

### Material and methods

In this study, a total of 470 respondents belonging to 19 news channels of Hyderabad, Telangana were explained the aim and objectives of the study and requested to participate in the study. A total of 202 subjects (43%) responded and formed the sample of the study. A structured self administered questionnaire was designed to elicit information from the respondents of the study. To test the whether the designed questionnaire serves the intended purpose and fulfilling the objective of the study, a pilot study was conducted on 20 subjects (10%). A self administered questionnaires were handed over to the respondents

and were requested to fill the questionnaire when they are at their leisure time and return to the researcher. The questionnaire contained 17 items covering demographic, socio-economic status and behavioural traits

**Statistical Analysis:** Continuous variables were expressed as mean and standard deviation. Categorical variables were presented as frequencies and percent. All statistical analyses were carried out using SPSS version 13.

### Results

Demographic and socio-economic status of TV journalists are presented in table 1. Average age of the TV Journalist was found to be 34 years. The majority of respondents belong to the age group of 26-35 years, males, the Hindus, members of backward castes, non-smokers, graduates, married, had two to three dependants, had permanent job, working as sub editors and earning monthly salary of Rs. 20000- 30000. Among the TV journalists who had journalism related educational qualification, the majority of them were recipients of post graduation in journalism. Only 23 percent had house ownership and three percent were doing secondary job. The majority of spouse of TV journalist were found to be home makers only It was found that 37.% of respondents were not receiving regular salary.

### Discussion:

Average age of journalists in the present study was 34 years which is in contrast to 33.1 years in China(Zhang and Su, 2010), 38.6 years in Korea(Son et al.2009), 35.1 years in Malaysia(Tamam et al.2009), 35.6 years in Chile(Claudia Mellado-2009),45 years in Taiwan(Lo, 2004), 55 years in Australia(Josephi and Richards, 2010) and 42 years in Finland(Raeymaeckers et al.2007).The respondents of the present study more or less similar to the average of the Chinese, Korean and Malaysian Journalists but younger than the journalists of the Australia and Finland. These observations suggest that relatively younger people are entering into the journalism may be due to passion or not availability of jobs in other industries.

The majority of the study participants were found to be belonging to the age category of 26-35 years (52.4%) and the least representation was observed in the age group of 56-60 years (1%). Against the age group of the subjects of the present study, the largest workforce were found to be in age group of <30 years in Singapore(Hao and Cherian George,2009) ; 25-34 years in Taiwan (Lo,2004); ≥55 years in Australia(Josephi and Richards, 2010); 25-29 years in United Kingdom (Sanders and Hanna2010); 41-50 years in Netherland(Pleijter et al.2006); 36-45 years in Spain(Farias et al.2009); and 35-44 years in Switzerland(Bonfadelli et al.2008). The largest age group of respondents of the present study is more or less similar to the largest age group of the journalist of Singapore, Taiwan, United Kingdom and Switzerland and lower than the large age group of the journalist of the Australia and Netherland. This also suggest that younger people representing the media in majority of the countries. Larger younger people in the present study may also be due to the recent starting of the courses in Journalism and newly pass out from the educational institutions representing the human resource in the newly established TV channels.

Higher proportion of the subjects in the study is males (94.1%) and females are least represented (5.9%). This observation is in agreement with studies in Netherlands(Alexander et al. 2006) and Canada(Bernier and Barber) in contrast with the studies of Singapore(Hao and George, 2009), New Zealand (Lealand and Hollings,2007) , Unite States(Brownlee and Beam, 2007) and Finland(Jyrkiäinen and Heinonen, 2007). Low representation of women than men may be due to the demand of long working hours, commitment to the family and difficulties associated with profession.

The majority of journalists are the Hindu (87.1%) followed by the Muslims (7.9%) and the Christians (4%) and this reflects population trend in the present study. Studies of eleven countries showed that that journalists come predominantly from the established and dominant cultural groups in society(David Weaver and Lars Willnat).

An Indian study revealed dominance of journalists belonging to Upper (70%) followed by Backward(23%) and Scheduled tribes and castes(<3%) (Reddy, 2005). In the present study, those belonging to back ward dominated (55.4%) followed by upper castes (39.1%), scheduled tribes( 3%) and scheduled castes(1%). Composition of caste status of respondents of the present study reflect the population caste distribution of the state of Telanga. It is interesting to note that 1% percent of journalists declined to reveal their caste status may due to the progressive thinking or fear of consequences associated with revelation of caste status. Jodka and Newman (2010) study on 25 companies including media observed that factors like kinship, regional stereotypes, caste, social and economic background, recommendation, educated parents and urban

preference, play an important role, and at times supersede meritocracy. It appears as opined by Shivnarayan Rajpurohit (2014) that some of the reasons may not apply to media recruitment and merit may not be the sole criterion for hiring. Representation of journalists belonging to Scheduled Castes is only 3% though they constitute 20% of the population (Subramania, 2011). This suggests that to increase their representation in media, providing reservation in media may be one of the social measures.

Smoking behaviour was observed only in 17.3% respondents of the present study, whereas half of them were found to be alcoholics. High pressure of the job, frequent social gathering or invitation to the parties in association with job might have encouraged the subjects of the present study for the frequent alcohol intake. Moreover, alcohol intake in the State of Telangan is culturally accepted practice. This may also be one of the reasons for more number of alcoholics in the respondents of the present study.

Higher proportion (73.3%) of the journalists in the present study were married and 27% of them never married. Among studies on journalists from 31 countries, only journalists from 14 countries reported higher proportion of married (Weaver and Willnat, 2012).

The majority of spouses of the television journalists are home makers (65.4%) followed by private (30.4%) and government employees(6%). This suggests that majority of the journalists are the sole bread winners of the family. This may also reflect the practice of involvement of male in livelihood earning than female seen in Indian society. With the changing attitudes of society, availability of opportunities and requirement of both couples to work to meet the ends of the family members is reflected by working status of spouses of 36% respondents of the present study.

The majority of journalists in the present study were graduates (54.5%) followed by post-graduates (41.1%) whereas study on print journalists from Jaipur reported that majority of respondents were post-graduates(Neeraj). About 2% of journalists had higher and research degrees. In contrast to the present study, among Chinese journalists higher proportion of them had post-graduate followed graduation educational qualification (Luo, et al. 2001).The majority of TV journalists of the present study had journalism related qualifications and significant percent of TV journalists has non-journalism related qualification. This higher proportion of subjects having journalism related qualification may be due to availability of courses in large number of educational institutions . There is a need to impart skills among those who have no journalism related qualifications by encouraging educational institutions to start courses in evening times or distance mode.

Higher percent of Television Journalists had two to three dependants in their families. Dependents may include spouse, children and parents. The least percentage(4.5%) of TV Journalists possess more than four dependents. This suggest that majority of respondents of the present study had nuclear families and maintain small family size may be due to economic constraints or leaving their joint or extended families at their native places or the demands of the job.

Analysis on the type of employment among TV Journalists showed majority of them had permanent type of employment. This is in agreement with studies reported in Slovenia (Lah and Žilič-Fišer, 2009),Sweden(Strömbäck) and Switzerland (Bonfadell et al. 2008). This reflects that most of the journalist would like to have a job on permanent basis rather temporary so that they can enjoy full freedom and good financial benefits.

The majority of respondents of the present study were working as Sub editor (26.2%) followed by Reporter (16.3%),Senior Sub editor (11.9%) and Senior Reporter (10.4% ) respectively. The percent of journalists involved in technical jobs were of the following: output editors (6.4%), input editors (5.9%), programme producers (10.9%) and News producer (3.5%). Higher proportion of journalists involvement in journalism related jobs may due to passion in journalism or opportunities associated with journalism related activities or expertise or lack of technical skills to opt in technical professions or lack of enthusiasm or job opportunities associated as technocrats.

Analysis of monthly income of TV Journalists showed that the majority of them had a monthly income Rs.20001-30000 and this observation is in agreement with the study on journalists from Jaipur(Neeraj). Only 4 % of TV Journalists had a monthly income of Rupees less than 10000. This suggests that those involved in TV journalism are living descent if not luxurious life. A significant percent (37.1%) of TV journalists reported that they were not getting their salary on time .It shows that journalist's salaries were

not disbursed regularly. This also suggests the role of journalist unions, labour departments and government to suggest not only measures for the betterment of the lives of the journalists and enforcement of welfare measures.

Only three percent of were involved in secondary job while the majority of them had no job other than primary. This suggest majority of them preoccupied with primary job had no time to spare for second job or lack of energy or opportunity to be involved in secondary job. It was observed that Broadcast journalists are less likely to hold second jobs. TV and radio stations insist upon exclusive commitments from journalists, while print media, which are often affiliated with larger corporations, do not object employees honing their talents with friendly publications. Another reason is that print journalists typically work alone whereas broadcast journalists collectively produce programs ( Pasti et al. 2008). It is interesting to note that some journalist opined that doing second jobs is unethical practice. This may be due to gain confidence or impress or to avoid consequences from the management people they may have given diplomatic answers. The majority of the respondents of the present study reported living in the rented than own houses. This may be due lack of resources to own the houses or not interested to own houses in the place of working.

The results of the present study showed that majority of TV journalists are characterized by moderate socio-economic status. Enforcement of journalists act recommendations made for print journalists to TV journalists may improve their socio-economic status. Studies are needed to identify the barriers for enforcement of recommendations of journalists.

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<i>Demographic</i>			
<i>Age(years)</i>			
	(n=202)	Percent	
21-25	11	5.4	
26-30	53	26.2	
31-35	53	26.2	
36-40	41	20.3	
41-45	33	16.3	
46-50	6	3.0	
51-55	3	1.5	
56-60	2	1.0	
Mean±S.D	34.02±6.79		
<i>Gender</i>			
	(n=202)	Percent	
Male	190	94.1	
Female	12	5.9	
<i>Religion</i>			
	(n=202)	Percent	
Hindu	176	87.1	
Muslim	16	7.9	
Christian	8	4.0	
decline to reveal	2	1.0	
<i>Caste</i>			
	(n=202)	Percent	
OC	80	39.6	
BC	112	55.4	
SC	2	1.0	
ST	6	3.0	
decline to reveal	2	1.0	
<i>Behavioural traits</i>			
	(n=202)	Percent	
Smoking	35	17.3	
Non-smoking	167	82.7	
Teetotallers	101	50.0	
Alcoholics	101	50.0	
<i>Marital status</i>			
	(n=202)	Percent	
Married	148	73.3	
Un-married	54	26.7	
<i>Spouse working status</i>			
	(n=148)	Percent	
Private	45	30.4	
Government sector	6	4.0	

Home makers	97	65.4	
<i>Educational qualification</i>			
	(n=202)	Percent	
Graduation	110	54.5	
Post- graduation	83	41.1	
M.Phil	5	2.5	
Ph.D	4	2.0	
<i>Journalism related qualification</i>			
	(n=202)	Percent	
Journalism related	105	52.0	
Journalism not related	97	48.0	
<i>Journalism qualification</i>			
	(n=105)	Percent	
Diploma	47	44.7	
Post graduation	51	48.5	
Mphil	6	5.7	
PhD	1	0.9	
<i>No. of dependants in the family</i>			
	(n=202)	Percent	
One	28	13.9	
Two	68	33.7	
Three	61	30.2	
Four	36	17.8	
More than four	9	4.5	
<i>Type of Employment</i>			
	(n=202)	Percent	
Permanent	146	72.3	
Contractual	19	9.4	
Temporary	33	16.3	
Freelance	4	2.0	
<i>Designation</i>			
	(n=202)	Percent	
Sub editors	53	26.2	
Reporter	33	16.3	
Senior sub editors	24	11.9	
Senior reporters	21	10.4	
Chief sub editors	4	2.0	
Chief reporters	7	3.5	
Input editors	12	5.9	
Bureau chief	3	1.5	
Output editor	13	6.4	

Deputy editor	2	1.0	
Assistant editor	1	.5	
News producer	7	3.5	
Program producer	22	10.9	
<i>Income</i>			
	(n=202)	Percent	
Below10000	8	4.0	
100001-20000	57	28.2	
200001-30000	89	44.05	
30001-400001	26	12.8	
40001-50000	16	7.92	
>50001-55000	6	2.97	
<i>Salary payment status</i>			
	(n=202)	Percent	
Regular salary on time	127	62.8	
Irregular salary	75	37.1	
<i>Secondary job status</i>			
	(n=202)	Percent	
Secondary job	6	3.0	
No secondary job	196	77.2	
<i>House Ownership</i>			
	(n=202)	Percent	
House ownership	46	22.8	
No House ownership	156	77.2	

**Table 1: Demographic and Socio-economic status of TV Journalists**