

Challenges to Rural Journalism in Pakistan

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This paper provides an insight of the miserable condition of the rural journalism in a country like Pakistan. People living in the rural areas of the country are playing a vital role in the national development but they are facing the feelings of deprivation and isolation. The local and regional media are passing through a great crisis while the rural journalists and correspondents are neither facilitated by the government nor supported by their media organizations. This study is based on a survey of a sample of 500 rural journalists working nation-wide in the nooks and corners of the country. It was found that the national mainstream newspapers do not give proper coverage to the issues and problems of the rural areas. The urban based mainstream newspapers and television channels give coverage to urban issues because of the market trend and the financial priorities. It may lead to the phenomenon of communication imbalance and the feelings of deprivation among the rural communities. It has been recommended that the media organizations should eradicate the division of rural and urban and they should give a reasonable coverage to the issues and problems of the rural communities.

Keywords: Rural journalism, correspondents, security, challenges, resources, communication imbalance

Rural journalism has always been suffering a miserable status in Pakistan. While the urban journalists have got a pivotal position in the modern-day Pakistan, their rural counterparts are still lagging behind in their professional journalistic status. The tremendous boost and development in the field of mass media in Pakistan also made a significant impact on rural journalism in the recent years but rural journalists are still considered as second class journalists. Freedman (2009) stresses that free media can play a vital role in democratic societies of the world. Ponkey (2013) stated that Pakistani journalists were facing problems that affect their ability to serve the country and its people. Keeping in view the important role of media it is pertinent here to have a look on the development of Pakistani media in the recent years as these developments influenced rural journalism. Earlier there were only a few media outlets in Pakistan including a few newspapers, a few magazines and only one state-controlled television channel known as Pakistan Television Channel (PTV). But now in 2015, there are a number of international standard newspapers and magazines being published from different cities and towns of Pakistan. More than 100 television channels have been licensed to operate in the country while several foreign TV channels have got landing rights from Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) including channels like BBC and CNN (PEMRA, 2014). Some of the national TV channels have got gorgeous popularity among people of Pakistan. These include television channels like Geo TV, Dunya TV, ARY, Dawn News and Express News. Due to revolution in the electronic media, many things have been changed. Now it has become almost impossible to hide some information or to display one-sided image of a picture. The talk shows of the private television channels have become very much popular in which political leaders of different parties debate on national issues. These programs have started a new era of political debates and discussions and these programs are playing a pivotal role in enhancing the political awareness among the masses of Pakistan. These developments in the media structures have influenced the patterns of rural journalism in the country. Earlier, they were attached with newspapers and news agencies but now television channels need their services. Many of them joined different television channels as rural correspondent for their audio-visual coverage. The availability of the digital devices like smart phones and tablets with still and video cameras also changed the patterns of the media coverage. On the other hand, rural journalism is still in a crisis situation in countries like Pakistan and the rural journalists are still considered as a lower class journalists as compared to their urban counterparts. Market trends and financial priorities of the media organizations mainly set their agenda. Advertising revenue and the governmental support is considered crucial for the survival of media organizations (Shoemaker & Reese,

1994) and both of these supports come from the urban areas. Hence economic priorities of the media organizations also become hurdle in the coverage of the issues and events of rural communities.

Under-representation of Rural Areas in Mainstream Media

Rural areas are heavily ignored by the mainstream national media in almost every part of the world. Freedom of expression is considered a fundamental human right in the whole world but people living in the rural areas are not given chance to express their views and comments. Their issues are not highlighted by the mainstream national media. Most of them are still away from the online media and even social media because much of them do not have a computer or internet availability to express their concerns and share their views. Rural women are especially ignored by the media and their role in the development of economic and social development of the society is mostly ignored. The UNESCO adviser on communication and information in Asia, Dr W. Jayaweera (2003) underlined the need for extending media coverage to the rural areas with special focus on women. He was addressing a seminar that was presided by the Director UNESCO office in Islamabad. He said that the mainstream media ignores rural areas in their coverage. He further informed that UNESCO was trying to help set up community radio stations to highlight the social and economic issues and enhance local communities' access to information. As a pilot project the UNESCO also selected 250 families that will receive information and communication technology. The speakers of the conference on rural journalism emphasized for the improvement in the levels of freedom of expression and quality of production to have a greater impact on the awareness level of the people living in the rural areas of Pakistan. There is still a long way to go and several barriers to remove. There is a need to raise the professional competence of journalists about the problems and challenges of the people living in the rural areas. There is a need to give proper coverage to the problems of the people living in the villages and small towns including the problems of lack of health and educational facilities. Research shows that rural areas are getting better coverage of their issues in the advanced countries of the world as compared to the past. The report "Media Coverage of Rural America 2004 vs. 2002" shows that the number of news stories of rural areas was found greater in 2004 than it was in 2002. The researchers examined 529 news stories in ten leading American newspapers with the help of Lexis-Nexus and found that the number of news stories published in 2004 was greater than the number of news two years ago. (Lichter, R.S. 2004).

However, the situation is different in the developing countries of the world. For example, a study conducted in the historic city of Aligarh in Uttar Pradesh province of India revealed that the newspapers do not give proper coverage to the issues and problems of the rural areas (Khatti, 2011). The researcher stated on the basis of his research that the Indian newspapers avoid publishing the real problems of the communities living in the rural areas because of the market trends and financial constraints. These are just two examples, one from an advanced country and the other from a developing nation. The situation in Pakistan is adverse than India as the number of news stories about the issues and events of the rural areas remain very low in Pakistani media. Memon (2013) states that the journalistic autonomy in Sindh is limited mainly due to the policies of media organizations. He argues that the rural areas of the interior part of Sindh province are highly ignored by the mainstream media.

Rural areas play a pivotal role in a country's economy. Especially the biggest profession of a country like Pakistan is agriculture which is totally based in rural areas. Rogers and Shoemaker (1971) found that television play an important role in agricultural development of a country. Farmers play a significant role in the economy of our country but the mainstream Pakistani media seldom give coverage to their issues and problems. On the other hand, the urban based television channels do not give a reasonable coverage to the problems of the people associated with the profession of agriculture who live in the rural areas. People living in the urban areas are not at all aware of their problems like hike in fertilizers' prices and electricity tariff, shortage of water for irrigation, damages of crops by insects etc. Most of these issues are ignored by the mainstream print and electronic media. Zia and Khan (2011) also stated that the Pakistani media gives a little priority to agricultural sector. They conclude: Regardless of rapid growth of electronic media in Pakistan, particularly television, there is only one dedicated channel for agriculture sector (Sohni Dharti) out of 82 TV channels. Indeed, a single agricultural channel is inadequate for an agricultural country having 67 percent of total population living in rural areas and 44.7 percent of it connected to farming (Zia and Khan, 2011).

In a study Ali (2010) found that in Pakistan rural areas attract media coverage mainly during disaster situation like floods and earthquakes. She also found that the Pakistani media is biased towards the

coverage of rural women and they depict men in strong key roles and depict rural women as dependent on men. The researcher mentioned that in most of the visual coverage during the floods in 2010 the rural women were showed clad in purdah (veil). Abbasi (2015) mentions that the areas of the Southern Punjab have been ignored by the mainstream traditional media but now social media have emerged as a vital tool for spreading education in this part of the country.

Communication Imbalance

The dominance of the urban based journalism creates feelings of deprivation and isolation. The situation leads towards the phenomenon of communication imbalance between the urban and rural areas of the country which is harmful for the socio-economic development of a society. The feelings of deprivation of the rural areas may lead towards social and economic isolation. It may divide society into fragments instead of strengthening the society with the emotions of unity and harmony. The balance of communication is vital for a society to survive in today's advanced world. People living in the urban areas are already enjoying uncountable facilities that are not available to the rural communities. The communication imbalance between the urban and rural areas adds the feelings of deprivation among the people living in rural areas. The people of the rural areas are playing a very important role in a society like Pakistan. They need to be equally treated with the people living in cities. This is a basic requirement for the national integrity of a country like Pakistan.

Yet there is another vital factor for this situation. All of the prominent and mainstream media organizations, whether print or electronic, are based in big cities of the country where they have employed a reasonable number of journalists, both reporters and editors, for their round the clock news bulletins and periodic publications especially daily newspapers. But these full time urban based journalists can hardly cover the events and issues taking place in their residential cities. They cannot report the events happening in the rural areas especially the far away areas of the country. Therefore the media organizations have to depend on their correspondents living in the towns and villages of the all four provinces and other areas like tribal areas and northern areas of the country. The journalists living in the rural areas of the country are playing an important role in the media industry of Pakistan. They are associated with national media organizations based in the big cities of the country. Some of them work for some local and regional newspapers.

There is a huge gulf between the full time journalists living in the urban areas and the rural journalists living in the far flung areas. They are completely different in terms of their educational background, experience, professional skills, and especially, the wages and privileges. The media personnel living in the big cities are enjoying a good lifestyle with a lot of privileges and benefits in the society. Despite of their very significant role in the media organizations, the rural journalists most of the times are ignored by their organizations as well as by the governmental organizations. They face multifarious challenges and problems while performing their professional requirements. This article focuses on the problems and challenges being faced by journalists and media correspondents working in the rural areas of the country. Following are the most common characteristics of the rural journalists of Pakistan.

Journalists without salaries

Most of the times, rural journalists have to work without proper salaries. Most of the media organizations do not pay salary to their rural correspondents. Madni (2011) mentioned this issue in his article titled as "KP journalists face problems" published in weekly Pulse Islamabad that most of the times media organizations do not pay salaries to their rural correspondents and sometimes they even do not pay the actual expenditures on the reporting of news events. In a research study Babar (2010) found that rural journalists do not get salary from their media organizations.

Very few organizations pay them a small honorarium, stipend or remuneration basically to meet their expenditures of reporting or production charges for video coverage etc. There is no system of regular salaries for the rural journalists working as correspondents of media organizations. Even the Jang Group, the largest media group of the country does not pay any kind of remuneration or honorarium to their rural correspondents. Many rural journalists have to work without any kind of financial benefit from the media organizations. Normally, they are jobless people who want to do reporting as their hobby or just for fun and not as a profession. Some people do their other jobs or business etc. who also act as rural correspondent for some newspaper or TV channel only for satisfaction or to be recognized as a journalist in the society. In some situations, even some shopkeepers become the rural correspondents of some

newspapers just to boost their daily sales. They expect that when people would come to them with a request to send their news stories to their newspapers for the publicity purpose, their local business will also flourish. Ponkey (2013) found that many Pakistani journalists run their side business projects to meet their both ends because they are not sufficiently paid.

An interesting phenomenon happened when the newspapers launched their television channels in the beginning of the first decade of the new millennium. As a result of this development the same rural correspondents were asked to work for these TV channels in addition to the newspapers. Therefore, the rural journalists had to work both for the print as well as for the electronic media. This is important to mention that some the television channels like Dawn News, ARY Digital, Samaa TV, Dunya News and Geo News pay some modest remuneration to their rural correspondents.

Lack of Education and Experience

Lack of educational qualification and professional experience is a big problem for the rural journalists in Pakistan. Normally, well-educated and experienced journalists migrate to urban areas for better job opportunities and facilities. Only less educated young men with almost no experience remain there in the villages and small towns. Many rural journalists are having not at all any college degree or any kind of journalistic experience. This deficiency directly affects the media content produced by the rural journalists. Most of the reports submitted by these journalists lack professional journalistic requirements. Normally, their reports are poorly written with a lot of grammatical and spelling mistakes. Therefore, the editorial staff of the media organizations has to rewrite the reports of the rural journalists to meet the minimum professional standard for publishing or broadcasting.

Culture of Exploitation

There is a stigma on the rural journalists of Pakistan that they exploit people to take their personal benefits from them. It is reported that many of them demand bribe or gifts from the people who have their vested interest in some special kind of news story. Sometimes, they exploit wealthy people asking them to pay money otherwise they would publish or broadcast some news story against them. This attitude paved path for yellow journalism in the country (Riaz, 2005). It has raised questions on the sacredness of the profession of journalism in Pakistan. The culture of journalistic exploitation has spread all over the country. Babar (2010) says that although many journalists are earning a very less amount of money, some of them made millions from the same profession. He pointed about the malpractices of the profession of journalism in the country.

Security Concerns for Rural Journalists

Journalists' security is a worldwide issue of significance. In the developing countries like Pakistan this issue has become pretty much important due to a number of events happened in the recent past. The problem of the security threats to journalists is heavily associated with the continuing war against terrorism on the both sides of the Durand line, 2640 kilometer long border line between Pakistan and Afghanistan. As a result of ongoing war on terror, militancy increased in the tribal areas of the country. American drone attacks in the tribal areas also boomed the fire of resistance and revenge in these areas. These areas have been a center of the militant activities of the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). A report issued by the Rural Media Network Pakistan (2013) states that the security of media persons is one of the biggest hurdles in media reporting in Pakistan. The report further says that there is no arrangement for the security of the rural journalists either from the authorities or from the media organizations.

The history of the last decade is full of events of murders and kidnappings of the rural journalists in Pakistan. Especially, the media correspondents working in the tribal areas of Pakistan are living in high risk situations. To write a report against the militant groups in the tribal areas of the country is really a very challenging job to do with a risk of life-threat. Rural journalists who cover sensitive issues like terrorism and war against terrorism face a lot of pressures from different segments of life including the pressure groups and the intelligence agencies. The problem of insecurity of the journalists has been recognized worldwide. For example, an American organization The Committee to protect Journalists (2013) reported that Pakistan has become one of the most dangerous places on earth for the journalists. The report stated that 52 journalists have been killed in Pakistan since 1992 till now. One of the prominent Paris-based organization Reporters without Borders claimed that Pakistan had the second highest death toll for journalists after Iraq in 2008 (Reporters without borders, 2008). The same organization declared Pakistan as the deadliest country ranked 151 among 178 countries worldwide on the press freedom index 2011-12.

Pakistan has been sandwiched between Afghanistan (150) and Iraq (152) (Reporters without borders, 2012). A report issued by International Media Support (2009) has also unveiled the threats and issues of security for the Pakistani journalists. The report says:

Pakistan ranks as the most deadly country in the world for journalists. The security and safety situation in the conflict-affected areas, the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and North West Frontier Province (NWFP), are the most grievous. Here journalists face propaganda, threats, coercion, and targeted killings. Some areas are effectively no-go areas for journalists; and the journalists working in the conflicts epicenters have adapted to self censorship in order to not antagonize the conflicting parties (International Media Support 2009, p.6).

Lack of Professional Training

The practice of professional training for rural journalists seldom exists in the country. This phenomenon exists in many parts of the world. Even in the world's most advanced countries like the USA training opportunities for the training of rural journalists are scarce (Denton, 2012). A few efforts have been made in the recent past to train rural journalists. Some international organizations like FES of Germany have sponsored training workshops but these efforts are not sufficient. Actually, the training problem is a complex issue because the nature of job of the rural journalists in Pakistan is different from other parts of the world. The training model of the international funding agencies normally does not work properly in Pakistan. Furthermore, majority of the rural journalists could not have any opportunity to attend a training course for reporting news. Neither the Government nor the media organizations took any step to professionally train the rural journalists to produce media reports of good quality and high standard. Most of the rural media reporters working in the media organizations have no opportunity for their professional training. They are unaware of the use of latest media technologies. They just learn from others working in the field. The lack of professional training can be felt in the news stories and video films produced by the rural journalists. In most of the developed countries, media organizations arrange comprehensive training courses for their urban as well as rural journalists. The journalists are trained how to report the issues and events and how to make good news story. But in countries like Pakistan the situation is totally different. Anas (2010) stressed in his article that the rural journalists should be appointed on regular basis and they should be provided proper professional training to bring out better news from rural areas. There is a great need to launch professional training programs for the journalists living in the rural areas of the country. Their proper training can result in the production of good news stories for the media organizations. International media organizations like UNESCO and USEFP should launch training programs for the rural journalists working in the far- away areas of the developing countries like Pakistan. Universities and media houses can play a real significant role in training the rural journalists in Pakistan.

Lack of Access to Sources of Information

Pakistan Right to Information Act 2013 and Freedom of Information Ordinance 2002 provide legal right to every citizen of Pakistan to have access to information but practically journalists face many difficulties to have an access to official documents. The situation is more adverse with the rural journalists. Normally, rural journalists have lack of access to the sources of information. Unlike the sharp and active city reporters, the rural correspondents are not able to reach to the sources of information. Most of the times, they rely on the easily available information from different people. That is the reason that big news stories seldom come from the rural areas. Mostly, big news stories are originated from the urban areas and big cities. In general, the rural media correspondents rely on press releases issued by individuals and organizations etc.

Lack of Access to New Media Technologies

Most of the rural areas of the country are still going on the old traditional track without having access to internet and latest media technologies. According to a recent survey only 1.3% rural homes are equipped with internet connections as compared to 17.4% of the urban homes (Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey, 2014). Because of the unavailability of the internet connectivity most of the rural correspondents of the Pakistani newspapers are deprived of the modern facilities of information gathering and processing. Unavailability of the internet multiplied by financial problems, and low education rate might be the biggest obstacles for the lack of latest media technologies. It results in slow and poor quality of the news reports they send to their organizations. Furthermore, local and regional newspapers being

published from different big and small cities also lack latest media technologies because of their limited financial resources which result in poor quality production of the newspapers and magazines.

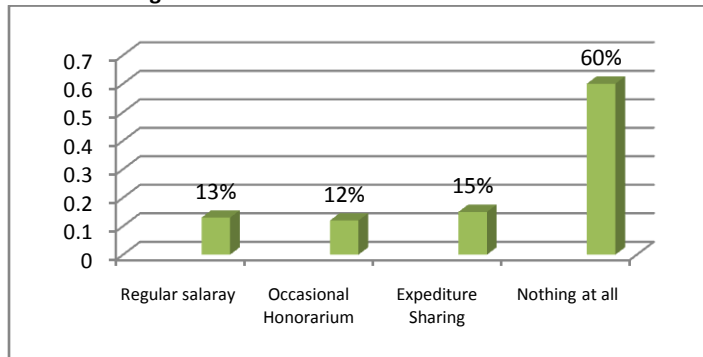
Research Methodology

A self-administered survey of the rural journalists was conducted to investigate their problems. A sample of 500 rural correspondents was selected from all over the country. 100 respondents each were selected from the provinces of Punjab, Sindh, KPK and Azad Kashmir while 50 each from Baluchistan and Northern areas of the country. Purposive sampling method was adopted for this research being the most appropriate research method for this kind of study. The survey was administered with the help of a group of volunteer students of Mass Communication and local press clubs in different parts of the country. The questionnaire was distributed through personal visits of the surveyors. Most of the respondents were contacted at the local press clubs and the offices of the unions of journalists. Majority of the rural journalists highly cooperated and filled their questionnaires. These respondents were associated with television channels, newspapers, magazines and news agencies working in the big cities. Many of them (170 out of 500) were found simultaneously associated with more than one organization.

Findings of the Study

The most important question from the respondent journalists was about their salaries and financial benefits from the media organization for which they perform the duties of a correspondent. Majority of the respondents (60%) replied that they neither receive any kind of salary nor other financial benefit from their media organization. Fifteen percent (15%) respondents replied that their organization gives them some money for sharing the expenditures of mail, fax and stationary etc. Twelve percent (12%) told that they get occasional honorarium from the organization they work for while only 13 percent replied that they get a regular salary from their media organizations. The figure 1 elaborates the responses of the respondents in this regard. The results indicate that the rural journalists are not paid for their job. Respondents informed that although the owners of the media organizations earn huge profits but they are not ready to pay salary to them.

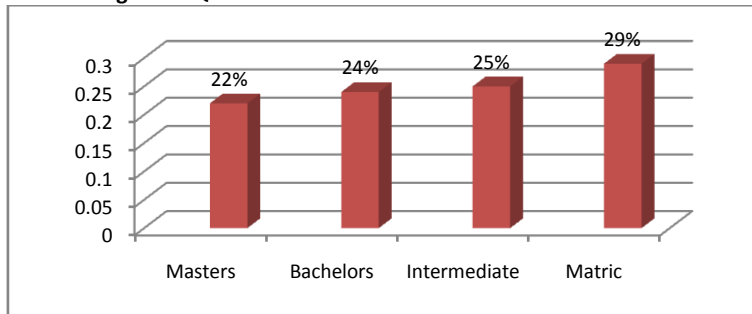
Figure 1: Salaries and Other Financial Benefits



The next question was asked about the reason why they work for the organization if they were not paid. It was an open ended question. Most of the rural journalists replied that they work for the media organizations only for their satisfaction and not for the salary. Some stated that they took it as their hobby. Some stated that they wanted to be recognized in the society as a journalist and hence they were happy to work for media as a correspondent, even without salary.

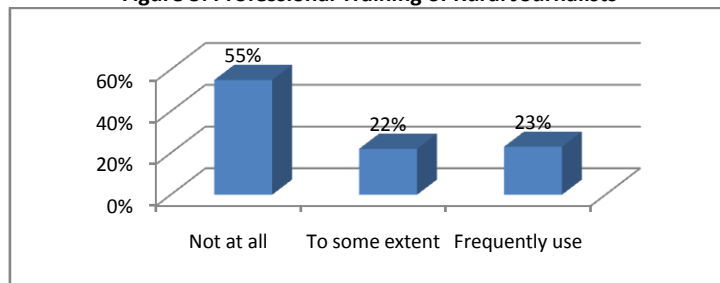
The next question was about their education level. As stated by Shoemaker and Reese (1994) that the educational level of journalists affect the quality of media content they produce. We seldom find some spelling or typographical mistake in the mainstream newspapers because their journalists are normally highly qualified and well educated. As per the results of the survey, almost 22 percent rural journalists stated that they were Master's degree holders while 24 percent were having Bachelor's degree. Twenty five percent (25%) replied that their education level was intermediate while remaining 29 percent rural journalists admitted that were only matriculate (10th grade). Figure 2 elaborates the education and qualification level of rural journalists in Pakistan.

Figure 2: Qualification Level of Rural Journalists



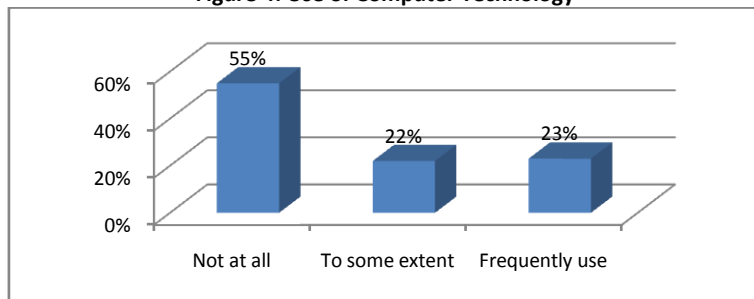
The next question was about the professional training of journalism. The respondents were asked whether they got any kind of professional training of reporting news of events and issues or not. A great majority 78% replied that they did not get any kind of professional journalistic training of reporting or editing during their professional life. However, 17% of them replied that they attended some short courses of reporting and writing news during their job. Only five percent of the respondents replied that they got university education of journalism and mass communication before or during the performance of their job. Figure 3 shows the responses of the respondents. The picture is much clear from these results that a great majority (78%) of the rural journalists are not at all professionally trained for their job. The ratio of the educated correspondents is very less in Pakistan. The lack of professional training directly affects the content they produce.

Figure 3: Professional Training of Rural Journalists



The next question was asked about the use of computers and internet. Again most of the respondents (55%) replied that they never used computers or any other technical device like i-pad or tablet for their professional activities. Some 22 percent of the respondents informed that they sporadically use computers and internet for information gathering and delivery of their reports to their respective media organizations. Almost a quarter of the respondents (23%) replied that they frequently use computers and other technical devices with the help of internet for the performance of their professional activities. Most of the respondents who replied the frequent use of the modern technologies belong to big towns with the availability of internet services. However, some of them use wireless internet service provided by some internet provider companies. They are associated with the electronic media organizations of the country where quickest response is a pre-requisite of the organizations. The figure 4 depicts the results in this regard.

Figure 4: Use of Computer Technology



The respondents further told that the reasons for not using the latest media technologies lie in their financial limitations, unavailability of the internet connection and non-cooperative behavior of their organizations. They informed that many of them were not at all familiar with the use of these

technologies. Some of them told that they were unable to purchase and use this kind of technological devices.

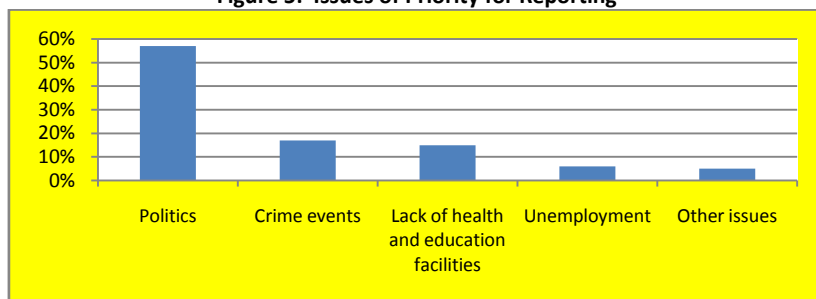
Coverage of rural areas news by the newspapers

The respondents were asked a question about the acceptance and publication of their news stories in their respective newspapers. It was found that the newspapers only publish a few news stories from a huge number of news items they send to their newsrooms. A greater number of the news stories of the rural areas are not published because of the limitations of space in newspapers. Here, the issue of priority of news emerges that is a matter of concern for the civil society. The rural correspondents were found extremely upset by the acceptance of their news stories by their media organizations stationed in the big cities of the country. A great majority (77%) of the respondents was found completely dissatisfied with the number of their news stories published in their newspapers. Some 13 percent rural journalists of the study replied that to some extent they were satisfied with the number of news stories that are accepted and published in their respective newspapers. Only 10 % respondents were found completely satisfied with the acceptance and publication of their news reports in their newspapers.

Issues of the Rural Communities in Pakistan

People living in the rural communities have a great variety of issues and problems in their daily lifestyle. Most of these problems are different from those faced by the people living in the urban communities. Some of the most important issues and problems of the rural areas include local politics, agricultural problems, unemployment, lack of health and educational facilities and crime events like murders and robberies etc. The district and rural correspondents of the newspapers are supposed to report these issues and events as a part of their job. A question was asked from the respondents about the most important issue of their community which they consider to cover and report to their newspaper organization. Fifty seven (57 %) of the respondents replied that they prefer political news as the most important news to cover and to send them to their organizations for publishing purpose. It may include the activities of political parties and local political leaders. They put a huge pressure on the rural journalists to publish their statements and other news reports. 17 % respondents replied that they prefer crime news than any other kind of news stories because these are the most important events for the society. Although crime rate is much lesser in the rural areas of Pakistan than in the cities, but sometimes big incidents like murders and robberies take place which need media reporting. 15% rural journalists included in the study responded that for them lack of health and educational facilities was the most important issue to cover and report for their media organization. Six percent respondents replied that unemployment was the most important issue for them to report because it is directly related with the economic prosperity and even crime. Five percent respondents replied that they prefer other issues to report. Figure 5 reveals the responses of the rural journalists in this regard.

Figure 5: Issues of Priority for Reporting



Conclusion

The research study reveals some important findings paving path for synthesizing a better model of rural journalism. It has been found that the media organizations do not give an adequate and reasonable coverage to the issues and events of rural area communities. It is a matter of concern for the civil society, media and the government that almost 70% people living in the villages and small towns of the country are ignored by the mainstream national media. The problems and issues of the rural communities are not properly addressed and given coverage by the national newspapers mainly because of the market trends and financial priorities. Since the advertising income comes from the urban areas, these areas are preferred for the media coverage. The local and regional newspapers are in a miserable condition and unable to play a real significant role in the highly modernized world of latest technologies. In these circumstances this is the duty of the mainstream national media to play

their role for highlighting the real issues and problems of the people living in the rural areas. Unfortunately, rural areas are under represented by the Pakistani media especially newspapers. It has also been found that the mainstream national newspapers' correspondents working in the rural communities are facing a lot of problems to perform their professional duties. They are neither welcomed by the government agencies nor supported by their own media organizations. They are playing a vital role with their own zeal and zest but their work is normally not appreciated. Keeping in view these hard realities it is recommended that the media organizations, relevant governmental organizations and the civil society at large should play their role for strengthening rural journalism in Pakistan. The ministry of information of the federal government should play a pivotal role in strengthening and encouraging local and regional newspapers being published from the big and small cities. There is a need of some proper salary structure for the rural journalists and correspondents of national media organizations. The government and the media organizations should develop an infrastructure for the professional training of the rural journalists. They should be facilitated to have access to modern media technologies including computers and internet connections. They should be trained to make the best use of latest media technologies. There is a great need to eradicate the phenomenon of communication imbalance in the society. These steps are vital to bring a real positive change in the rural journalism in Pakistan.

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