

ATTITUDE OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS TOWARDS CITIZEN JOURNALISM

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Introduction

The press, or journalism, is often referred to as the fourth estate of the democracy. It also acts as the watchdog for a healthy democracy. This is a huge responsibility, indicative of the important and integral role that journalism plays in our society. According to Michael Schudson,

Journalism is “the business of a set of institutions that publicizes periodically (usually daily)

Information and commentary on contemporary affairs, normally presented as true and sincere, to a dispersed and anonymous audience so as to publicly include the audience in a discourse taken to be publicly important.”

Two models that are used to understand the media business – the market model and the public interest model – provide different frameworks within which to analyze and understand this tension between business interests and the public interest that exists in journalism. The basic difference between the Market Model and the Public Sphere Model is the way in which they view people: the Market Model sees people as consumers whereas the Public Sphere Model sees people as citizens. The development and rise of the Internet as a new form of mass media has brought journalism one step closer to this ideal.

Citizen journalism is one of many buzzwords that were born as a result of the development and rise of the Internet. Citizen Journalism is affecting the daily lives of people as well as the journalists and those working in various media industry. Keeping in this point of view , Researcher took interview of professional Journalists to know their attitude towards citizen journalism . The list of professional journalists were taken on the base of contacts in media

provided by mentor , as they knew many suitable people through their line of work. This way researcher took the interview of 15 professional journalists. 10 of them interviews were recorded and 5 were conducted through email as the media professionals are very busy.

The responses were recorded and analyzed along with literature. The results found many positives and negatives of the citizen journalism.

Citizen Journalism is still a new form of mass communication with the rise of internet. The professional media a journalism for people by journalists. While citizen journalism is a journalism is done for people , of people and by people. The study and interviews of professional journalists found many positive aspects of citizen journalism . The professional Journalists are looking this field very lucrative. But they raise the issue of authenticity and accuracy. Another advantage of citizen journalism Mr Rohit Sardana points out its ability to improve the mainstream media.

Finally, the speed at which citizen journalism can deliver news is unprecedented.

Review of Literature

Review of literature plays a vital role in a research work. It directs the researcher in proper planning and execution of research work. It also broadens the mental horizon and thought process of researcher. This research paper conducted to know the attitude of professional Journalists towards Citizen Journalism. Many studies have been conducted by the researchers in the foreign context but very few studies or negligible amount of research have been undertaken in Indian context. Below is the review of existing studies to find out the research gap:

Sneep (2013) explored the role of new media during the Egyptian revolution. The basic aim of this study was to find out how people used it, what type of new media they used, when and how they felt about this. Interviews were the main methods to obtain the data, as well as literature research. The results of this research showed that new media enables people to exchange experiences and facilitates local-global connections, linkages between people on Tahrir square in Cairo and elsewhere in the (Arab) world.

Chris Hogg (2010) made a comparison among the citizen journalism websites, mainstream media websites and news paper websites. The content analysis method was applied to compare the content of the both type of websites. The study found that citizen journalism complements rather than replaces commercial news sites.

Objective of the Study

To know the attitude of professional journalists towards citizen journalism

Research Methodology

An Interview schedule is the guide an interviewer uses when conducting a structured interview. The order of the questions, the language of the questions and arrangement of parts of the schedule are not changed. However an investigator can explain the questions if the respondent faces any difficulty. It contains direct questions as well as question in tabular form. Schedule includes open ended questions. Open ended questions allow the respondent considerable freedom in answering.

An Interview schedule was designed with open ended questions. The schedule were asked from the 20 journalists as per their availability. The responses were recorded in a digital recorder. Ten of them were from Zee News and 10 were from Aaj Tak and Star News. Appointments were taken from 30 Journalists but only 20 were available for the interview.

Analysis & Results

Democratic Potential

From the notion that journalism is a pillar of democracy (Hutchins, 1947) Citizen Journalism has democratic potential. Citizens have become more responsible. It is definitely a effective attempt to strengthen the democracy . It is the diversity of voices. Citizens have different views on the same issues a different angle of the incident and different style of writing. A Citizen can raise the voice against the issue not covered by the professional Media. (Anchor, Interview of Romana Izhar Khan, Zee News) Rather it is the need of the society Since it has wider reach to the public and It gives the opportunity to the citizens of raising the voice (Senior Reporter,

interview of Mr Rakesh Taneja, Zee News). It also may be called individual journalism. (Producer, Interview of Amit Prakash, Zee News) It gives individual an power of raising voice against the wrong happening in the society. (Pramila Dixit, aaj Tak) Sometimes Professional media is not able to reach in the every corner of the society but citizen journalism is possible if people take it as their moral responsibility (Sushil Pawar, VT Editor, Star News)

There are few people of the team who will decide the content what the millions of people will watch. So some citizens of the society feel that citizen journalism has democratic potential.

Integrated with Professional Journalism

Professional journalism is adopting Citizen journalism to take the participation of citizens. In comparison of earlier professional media has become more interactive. So it also adopts the issues and stories of citizen journalism. Rather Zee news runs the program based on citizen journalism aap ki aawaz is also a segment where people speak to the channel through skype. Then Professional media inspects and reports the story and then serves the story to the Citizens of the country. (Romana Izhar khan)

The Channel Zee News has started another program “Zee Helpline” It is the platform where people can post their issues and problems facing by them in their area. Then The Channel picks the stories, talks to citizen journalists, visits the concern areas and verifies the facts then writes the stories and broadcast the storied. This way Professional media adds on the work done by citizen journalists (Rohit Sardana) Citizen Journalism is showing the way to professional media since professional journalists cant be present everywhere. So citizen journalism is helping the professional media to raise the public interest stories.(Amit Prakash) If professional media takes the citizen journalism with the sense of responsibility and maturity then media functioning will be definitely more strong. It can be called individual Journalism. (Abhishek).

Filling the gaps that the Professional media has left.

Through Citizen journalism people can highlight the issues around their selves . Professional Media doesn't give importance to the local issues. (Kumar Vikas).

Power of the Press

Professional Journalism has more access to the sources in comparison of the citizen Journalists. Professional Journalists have their organization tag so they are known and people identify them with the name of the organization. So without the information people might not be got the full information. So due to the lack of sources sometimes citizen journalists are not able to cover the full Story. (Rohit Sardana, Zee News Anchor)

No Financial Crisis in Citizen Journalism

There is no financial crisis in citizen journalism. Since there is not required any publishing house . Citizens can just shoot the video and upload on the website . So people can easily cover the issues of their surroundings. (Pramila Dixit , Aaj tak) Citizen Journalism doesn't need any crew for shooting the incident. For the same purpose handy camera or mobile camera is enough. (Ms Matrayi, Anchor, Zee News)

Credibility and Authenticity

Journalism is the story covered by journalist Who is professionally trained and they do journalism for people. Citizen Journalism is done by the citizens who are not professionally trained. They don't know the professional standards of the media. That's why sometimes there is lacking of authenticity in the citizen journalism. (Romana, Anchor Zee News). Some journalists argue that when citizen journalism is not authentic and credible then it cant be called journalism. Professional journalists have reach to the sources as they have the organization tag with them This way they can make the story more authentic and credible. On the other hand Citizen Journalists are not able to make story that authentic due to lack of authentic sources. Moreover citizen journalists have peer pressure in producing the story so it could be biased sometimes. (Rohit Sardana , Anchor,Zee News)

Future of Citizen Journalism

Internet is grooming day by day. Internet has changed the style of Journalism. It has a bright future. It will flourish in the future. Since People have become more aware and now they are not passive audience. They have become active audience. Although there is not a large no of citizens in the society but it is spreading gradually in the society.

Conclusion

Citizen Journalism is a new term in media industry in India. If we talk about the scenario of citizen journalism in the world, then it is already known But for India it is a new term. People send their view through SMS or add on their views to the news story online but there are less people who produce their own story and upload on the website or send it to any channel. Though Professional Journalists think that it has a great future but not successful without professional media. Moreover they don't consider it threat. Because professional journalists consider it a combined effort of professional journalists and the citizens. Gradually Citizen journalism will be very known to people in the India.

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