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Prospects and Challenges of Journalism in Northern Divisions of Bangladesh: An Exploratory Study

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Abstract- *Background:* Journalists are highly respected members of our society usually known as mass media personalities who make important contributions to the promotion of economy, education, safety, security peace, love and overall prosperity of the country. They also up hold public opinions, sufferings as well as all the happenings of every nook and corner of our society through electronic and print media so that the people all over the country as well as the government can know the overall aspects and situation of the country which could help all the organs of government to take proper steps in case of necessary and emergency. However, to obey this professional duties, they have to face socio-economic, political as well as some other challenges in the society when they cannot perform their professionalism fully or can partially perform. The aim of this study was to explore a survey in the northern divisions of Bangladesh to know the prospects and challenges of journalism in the northern divisions of Bangladesh.

Keywords: *prospects, challenges, journalism, northern divisions, Bangladesh.*

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Prospects and Challenges of Journalism in Northern Divisions of Bangladesh: An Exploratory Study

Abu Hanif Mohammad Sayeduzzaman [α], Mohammad Shukur Ali [σ], Anisul Ashekeen [ρ], Mohammad Faisal Shameem [ω] & Mohammad Asaduzzaman Khan [¥]

Abstract- *Background:* Journalists are highly respected members of our society usually known as mass media personalities who make important contributions to the promotion of economy, education, safety, security peace, love and overall prosperity of the country. They also up hold public opinions, sufferings as well as all the happenings of every nook and corner of our society through electronic and print media so that the people all over the country as well as the government can know the overall aspects and situation of the country which could help all the organs of government to take proper steps in case of necessary and emergency. However, to obey this professional duties, they have to face socio-economic, political as well as some other challenges in the society when they cannot perform their professionalism fully or can partially perform. The aim of this study was to explore a survey in the northern divisions of Bangladesh to know the prospects and challenges of journalism in the northern divisions of Bangladesh.

Methods: This was a prospective observational, cross-sectional study conducted in Rajshahi and Rangpur divisions of Bangladesh during June, 2021 to June, 2022 and a total of 167 respondents were included in this study. The ethical clearance of this study was obtained from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of shikkhabarta.com. Informed written consent were taken from all the participants of this study. Data were collected through a face to face interview using a pre structured questionnaire by the researcher. Both qualitative and quantitative (Mix Method) were applied to find out best possible outcome. Purposive computerized randomization sampling method as per inclusion criteria was applied for the study. Samples were selected conveniently according to inclusion and exclusion criteria and availability of cases. The collected data were analyzed using SPSS software, Version-23.0. The results were presented in tables, graphs and pie charts in percentages.

Results: Among the respondents 94.01% were male and 5.99% were female. 25.1% were aged (18 -29) years, 37.7% were (30-39) years, and 29.3% were (40-49) years. 71.9% respondents mentioned they were the members of the local press club 31.74% got appointment letters. 20% reported drawing pay, 20% of companies pay regularly. 19.16% of companies provide children education allowance. 12.57% stated their company supplied insurance. 78.4% respondents mentioned, their organization did not provide any festival allowance to them. 38.4% get yearly performance awards. 75% need training, 60% said corporate promotions were late. 23, 3% of firms provide office space. 11.98% of workers have insurance. 32.93% claimed family supports their job; 60% worry about physical safety. 52.7 % were worried about digital security of their documents. 61.68% of participants reported work-related threats.70.7% claimed their working hours were not conducive to them. 69.5% respondents mentioned their organization did not take any initiatives for their stress concealing. 71.9% respondents claimed, their organization did not take any initiative to mitigate risks or challenges while collecting news.71.9% respondents claimed their office did not provide them transports while covering news. 85.6% respondents mentioned, they have no provident found or gratuity facility in their organization. 74.9% respondents mentioned their recruiting authority never provided them with any news covering related electronic devices.38.3% respondents claimed; they experienced the threats of data security like tapping or hacking. 41.32% respondents used security software. 40.7% respondents had data security training. 46.7% respondents were only aware of Digital Security Act.

Conclusion: This study identifies challenges affecting the Journalism Profession in northern divisions of Bangladesh, such as work instability, risk, poor facilities, and a lack of an appropriate job policy. Despite its shortcomings, the study recommends encouraging and growing journalism in Bangladesh.

Keywords: prospects, challenges, journalism, northern divisions, Bangladesh.

I. Introduction

Journalism is a prominent career in Bangladesh, and those who work in this noble field contribute significantly to the development of the country's various industries. Despite the fact that journalism is a very significant career, there are no specific requirements for becoming a journalist or a politician in the United States. However, recently, there has been a little improvement in this scenario. A graduate can pursue a career in the media. However, in some circumstances, a bachelor's degree in journalism from an accredited university is a requirement for employment. Recruitment is an important part of every business [1]. In Bangladesh two thousand registered in daily newspapers published around the country, with more than four hundred of them being dailies. It is vital to note that more than two hundred newspapers are printed in the capital every day. Dhaka is the capital of

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Bangladesh [2]. Justice Sultan Hossain Khan, a former head of the Bangladesh Press Council, expressed his opinion that in compared to the country's economic situation, the number of daily newspapers issued is enormous. In addition the statement emphasized that the publication of a newspaper should be seen as a commercial endeavor. The People who are financially well-off should step forward and take the initiative to build a newspaper publication system industry. Furthermore, in order to protect press freedom, the minimal financial soundness of the publication must be maintained. Journalists should be given first priority [3]. However, it is a source of regret that journalists are frequently subjected to this. In Bangladesh, not receiving a salary for months on end is not uncommon [4]. The working conditions of journalists in rural and remote places are not suitable. A significant percentage of the local journalists who work for the newspapers are not properly compensated. In Bangladesh context Journalism, a prestigious job and those who are involved in this noble profession play vital role in different sectors like political, economic, social, science and technology, sports, entertainment and other sectors of this country. As a profession journalism is a very important one but no qualification is specified for becoming journalist likely politician. However, this situation has been slightly changed in last few years. A graduate can join the media organization, but in some cases university degree in journalism is prerequisite condition of the recruitment. The condition of journalists working at local areas is not satisfactory. A good number of the dailies do not provide salary properly to their local journalists. Most of the pressmen of the different dailies published from divisional and district level are drawing less than Taka one thousand per month that is even less than a day labor [1]. According to a study in 1995 on Dhaka city newspapers, about 69% journalists are getting salary as per 4th wage board but they are not enjoying other facilities or incentives stated in 4thwageboard. Journalists are blaming the owners' commercial attitude for this sort of deprivation. For this reason most of the journalists are not satisfied with their present jobs. In a study regarding journalism found that 50 percent journalists are not satisfied to their salary and other facilities. That study was based on the interview of Journalists of 67 dailies published from six divisions including Dhaka. That study showed 68% pressmen felt disappointed being connected with journalism profession [5]. Consequently, the researcher has designed this present study. The aim of this study was to explore a survey in the northern divisions of Bangladesh to know the prospects and challenges of Journalism in northern Bangladesh.

Research Questions: What are the prospects and challenges of journalism in the northern divisions in Bangladesh?

Objective

- To determine the prospects and challenges of the journalists in the northern divisions of Bangladesh.

II. Methodology

This prospective cross-sectional study was conducted in the northern divisions of Bangladesh during June 2021 to June 2022. The ethical clearance of this study was obtained from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Shikkabarta.com. The purpose and benefits of the study was disclosed to the respondents in local language and written informed consent was taken from the respondents of the study. Purposive sampling method as per inclusion criteria was applied for the study. Samples were selected conveniently according to inclusion and exclusion criteria and availability of cases and a total of 167 male and female journalists aged above 18 years from Rajshahi and Rangpur divisions were enrolled in this study. Both qualitative and quantitative data were applied to find out best possible outcome. A pre structured questionnaire was used to collect data from the respondents through face-to-face interview. The collected data were edited, cleaned, entered and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 23.0. Descriptive analysis such as frequencies and mean were used for this study. The result of this study was presented by using tables graphs and pie charts. The inclusion and exclusion criteria of this study were as follows:

Inclusion criteria

a. Age >18 years
b. Male and Female Journalist
c. Physically or mentally able to participate in this study

Exclusion criteria

a. Age <18 years
b. Unwilling to participate in this study
c. Physically or mentally unable to participate in this study

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III. Results

Table 1: Socio Demographic Profile of the Respondents (n=167).

Variables		Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	157	94.01
	Female	10	5.99
Age	18 >29	42	25.1
	30>39	63	37.7
	40>49	49	29.3
	50>59	10	6.0
	60>69	3	1.8
Religion	Islam	154	92.2
	Hindu	13	7.8
Education	S.S.C	8	4.8
	H.S.C	40	24.0
	Under Graduate	84	50.3
	Post Graduate	35	21.0
Marital Status	Married	139	83.2
	Unmarried	28	16.8
Number of children	0	60	35.9
	1	28	16.8
	2	61	36.5
	3	17	10.2
	5	1	.6
Designation	Sub-district Correspondent	125	74.9
	Staff Reporter	34	20.4
	Sub-district Reporter	4	2.4
	Editor& Publisher	2	1.2
	Advertising Manager	1	.6
	Publicity Editor	1	.6

(Table 1): Shows the socio-demographic profile of the respondents. Among 167 participants 94.01% were male and 5.99% were female. 25.1% were reported 18 >29 age group, 37.7% were aged 30>39, 29.3% were reported for the age group of 40>49, 6.0% were reported for 50>59 age group and 1.8% were reported 60>69 aged group. According to the religion 92.2% were reported Islam while Hindu were reported 7.8%.According to the education level of the participants S.S.C. was reported 4.8%, H.S.C. was reported 24.0%, Under graduate was reported 50.3% while Post graduate was reported 21.0%.83.2% were reported married while 16.8% were reported unmarried.35.9% had no children, while 16.8% had only one child, 36.5%

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were reported having 2 children, 10.2% were reported having 3 children and 0.6% were reported that they have 5 children. According to the designation 74.9% were reported sub-district correspondent, 20.4% were staff reporter, 2.4% were sub-district reporter, 1.2% were editor & publisher, 0.6% were advertising manager while 0.6% was publicity editor.

Table 2: Service Length of the Respondents (n=167).

Service Length	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
1>5	25	15.0
6>10	55	32.9
11>15	23	13.8
16>20	17	10.2
21>25	30	18.0
26>30	8	4.8
31>35	9	5.4
Total	167	100.0

(Table 2): Shows the service length of the respondents. According to the service length 1 to 5 years was reported 15.0%, 6 to 10 years was reported 32.9%, 11 to 15 years was reported 13.8%, 16 to 20 years was reported 10.2%, 21 to 25 years was reported 18.0%, 26 to 30 years was reported 4.8% and 31 to 35 years was reported 5.4%.

Table 3: Division Wise Respondents Distribution (n=167).

Variables		Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Division	Rajshahi	49	29.3
	Rangpur	118	70.7
District	Naogaon	10	6.0
	Pabna	12	7.2
	Rangpur	12	7.2
	Kurigram	19	11.4
	Lalmonirhat	9	5.4
	Natore	28	16.8
	Nilphamari	21	12.6
	Thkurgaon	12	7.2
	Gaibandha	20	12.0
	Dinajpur	11	6.6
	Rajshahi	13	7.8
Upazila	Mahadevpur	10	6.0
	Iswardi	12	7.2
	RangpurSadar	9	5.4
	Chilmari	14	8.4
	KurigramSadar	4	2.4
	Ulipur	1	.6
	Hatibandha	7	4.2
	Patgram	1	.6

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	Kaligong	1	.6
	Natore	14	8.4
	Pirgachha	3	1.8
	Saidpur	10	6.0
	Naldanga	14	8.4
	Thkurgaon	10	6.0
	Baliadangi	2	1.2
	Sadullahpur	18	10.8
	Gaibandha	2	1.2
	Fhulbari	11	6.6
	Godagari	13	7.8
	Nliphamari	11	6.6
	Total	167	100.0

(Table 3): Shows division wise respondents distribution. 29.3% were reported from Rajshahi division, 70.7% were from Rangpur division. According to the district report Naogaon (6.0%), Pabna (7.2%), Rangpur (7.2%), Kurigram (11.4%), Lalmonirhat (5.4%), Natore (16.8%), Nilphamari (12.6%), Thakurgaon (7.2%), Gaibandha (12.0%), Dinajpur (6.6%), Rajshahi (7.8%).According to the upazila report Mahadevpur (6.0%), Iswardi (7.2%), Rangpur Sadar (2.4%), Chilmari (8.4%), Kurigram Sadar (2.4%), Ulipur (0.6%), Hatibandha (4.2%), Patgram (0.6%), Kaligong (0.6%), Natore (8.4%), Pirgacha (1.8%), Saidpur (6.0%), Naldanga (8.4%), Thakurgaon (6.0%), Baliadangi (1.2%), Sadullahpur (10.8%), Gaibandha (1.2%), Fulbari (6.6%), Godagari and (7.8%) respondents were from Nilphamari district.

Table 4: Opinions of the Respondents Regarding their Knowledge, Skills, Practice and Challenges in their Professionalism. (N=167).

Opinion		Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Are you a member of local press club	Yes	120	71.9
	No	47	28.1
Have you received appointment letter from your organization	Yes	102	61.1
	No	65	38.9
Have you drowned salary from your organization?	Yes	34	20.4
	No	133	79.6
Does your organization pay you salary regularly?	Yes	28	16.8
	No	139	83.2
Does organization give you any allowance for the education of your offspring?	Yes	32	19.2
	No	135	80.8
Does your organization provide insurance?	Yes	21	12.6
	No	146	87.4
Does your organization provide festival allowance?	Yes	36	21.6
	No	131	78.4
Does your organization provide with you a conducive working hour?	Yes	49	29.3
	No	118	70.7
Does your organization arrange yearly performance awarded?	Yes	64	38.3
	No	103	61.7
Do you need to have more professional training and workshop?	Yes	126	75.4
	No	41	24.6
Have you received any performance award?	Yes	63	37.7
	No	104	62.3
Does your organization provide relevant training?	Yes	64	38.3
	No	103	61.7
Does your organization provide promotion opportunity in time?	Yes	67	40.1

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	No	100	59.9
Does your organization provide you stress counseling?	Yes	51	30.5
	No	116	69.5
Does your higher authority recognized risks and undertake specific mitigation strategies?	Yes	47	28.1
	No	120	71.9
Does your office provide you transport at the time of news covering?	Yes	47	28.1
	No	120	71.9
Does your organization provide electronic devices?	Yes	42	25.1
	No	125	74.9
Does your organization provide office?	Yes	39	23.4
	No	128	76.6
Does your organization provide insurance support?	Yes	20	12.0
	No	147	88.0
Does your organization provide provident fund facilities?	Yes	24	14.4
	No	143	85.6
Does your organization provide gratuity facility?	Yes	34	20.4
	No	133	79.6
Does your organization provide leave facility?	Yes	53	31.7
	No	114	68.3
Do your family members are in your support regarding your job?	Yes	112	67.1
	No	55	32.9
Do you fear for your physical security?	Yes	101	60.5
	No	66	39.5
Do you fear for your digital security?	Yes	88	52.7
	No	79	47.3
Have you experienced threats in relation to your work?	Yes	103	61.7
	No	64	38.3
Have you ever experienced tapping/hacking and /or digital security threats?	Yes	64	38.3
	No	103	61.7
Do you use protection in digital communication including appropriate software and other precautionary measures?	Yes	69	41.3
	No	98	58.7
Have you taken any digital safety training to keep your data safe?	Yes	68	40.7
	No	99	59.3
Are you aware of the protection against ICT act?	Yes	89	53.3
	No	78	46.7
	Total	167	100.0

(Table 4): Shows the Opinions of the Respondents Regarding their Knowledge, Skills, Practice and Challenges in their Professionalism.82.04% participants served for print media while 17.96% for electronic media. 71.86% were local club members while 28.14% were not.31.74% participants reported that their organization provides leave facility while 68.26% reported their organization doesn't. 30.54% participants reported that their organization provides stress counseling facility while 69.46% reported their organization doesn't.31.74% participants reported that they got appointment letter from the organization while 68.26% reported they didn't get. 20.36% participants reported that they drowned salary from their organization while 68.26% reported they didn't do that. 20.36% participants reported that their organization pays their salary regularly while 83.23% reported their organization doesn't. 19.16% participants reported that their organization gives allowance for their offspring while 80.84% reported their organization doesn't. 12.57% participants reported that their organization provides insurance while 87.43% reported their organization doesn't. 21.56% participants reported that their organization provides festival allowance while 78.44% reported their organization doesn't. 29.34% participants reported that their organization provides conducive working hours while 70.66% reported their organization doesn't. 38.32% participants reported that their organization arranges yearly performance award while 61.68% reported their organization doesn't.75.45% participants reported that they need further professional training and workshop while 24.55% reported they doesn't need.37.72% participants reported that they got performance award while 62.28% reported they didn't get yet.38.32% participants reported that their organization provides relevant training while 61.68% reported their organization doesn't. 40.12% participants reported that their organization provides promotion

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opportunity in time while 59.88% reported their organization doesn't.28.14% participants reported that the higher authority of their organization recognizes risks and undertake specific mitigation strategies hours while 71.86% reported their organization doesn't.28.14% participants reported that their organization provides transport at news covering time while 71.86% reported their organization doesn't.25.15% participants reported that their organization provides electronic devices while 74.85% reported their organization doesn't. 23.35% participants reported that their organization provides office while 76.65% reported their organization doesn't. 11.98% participants reported that their organization provides insurance support while 88.02% reported their organization doesn't.14.37% participants reported that their organization provides provident fund facility while 85.63% reported their organization doesn't.20.36% participants reported that their organization provides gratuity facility while 79.64% reported their organization doesn't.32.93% participants reported that their family supports regarding their job while 67.07% reported their family doesn't support.60.48% participants feel fear for their physical security while 39.52% reported they doesn't fear.52.69% participants fear for their digital security while 47.31% reported they doesn't fear at all.61.68% participants reported that they had experienced work-related threats while 61.68% reported they didn't.38.32% participants reported that they had experienced digital security threats while 61.68% reported they didn't.41.32% participants reported that they use proper software for the protection of digital communication system while 58.68% reported they doesn't.40.72% participants reported that they took digital security training to keep data safe while 59.26% reported they didn't take any training.53.29% participants were aware of the protection against ICT act while 46.71% were unaware regarding digital security Act.

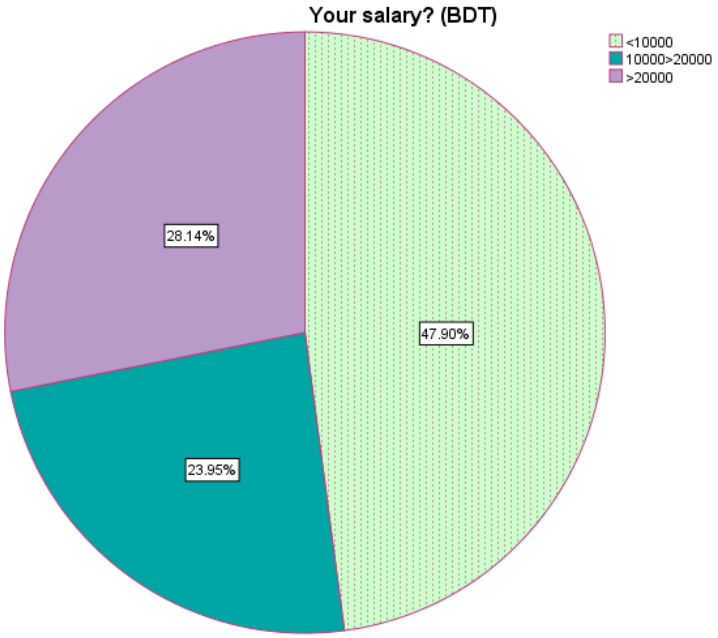


Figure 1: Salary range of the respondents

Figure 1: Shows the monthly salary range of the respondents. According to the satisfaction level with the salary 2.40% were very satisfied, 43.11% were satisfied, 8.96% were neutral, 33.53% were dissatisfied and 11.96% were very dissatisfied. 47.90% participants' salary were reported below 10 thousand, while 23.95% get a salary between 10 to 20 thousand, 28.14% get more than 20 thousand BDT monthly.

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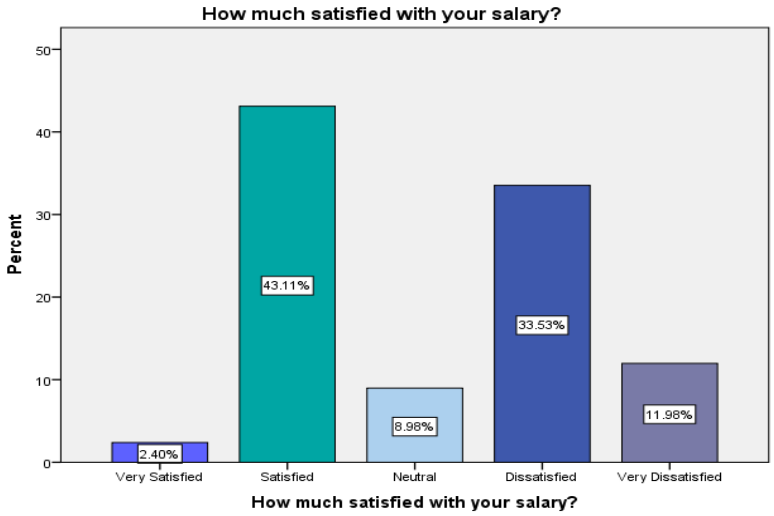


Figure 2: Satisfaction level of the respondents towards salary range (n=167).

Figure 2: Shows the satisfaction level of the respondents towards salary. Among the respondents, only 2.40% were very satisfied, 43.11% were satisfied, dissatisfied were 33.53%, and very dissatisfied were 11, 90% and only 9.06% respondents remained neutral in giving answer regarding this issue.

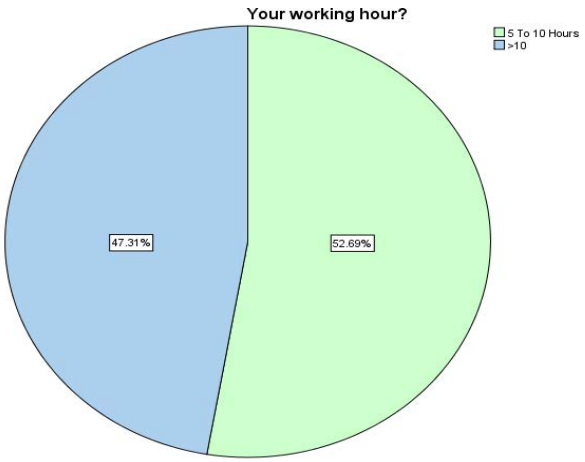


Figure 3: Total working hours/day of the respondents (n=167).

Figure 3: Shows the total working hours/day of the respondents.52.69% have to work for 5 to 10 hours while 47.31% have to work for more than 10 hours.

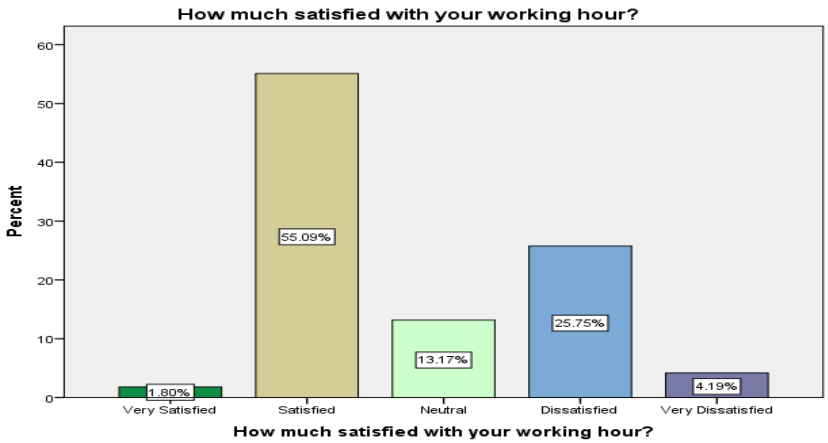


Figure 4: Satisfaction level of the respondents regarding working hours (n=167).

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Figure 4: Shows the satisfaction level of the respondents regarding working hours. According to the satisfaction level with working hour 1.80% were very satisfied, 55.09% were satisfied, 13.17% were neutral, 25.75% were dissatisfied and 4.19% were very dissatisfied.

Among the respondents 49.10% respondents are satisfied followed b 24.55% are neutral dissatisfied, 3.59% are very dissatisfied and 3.59% are very satisfied.

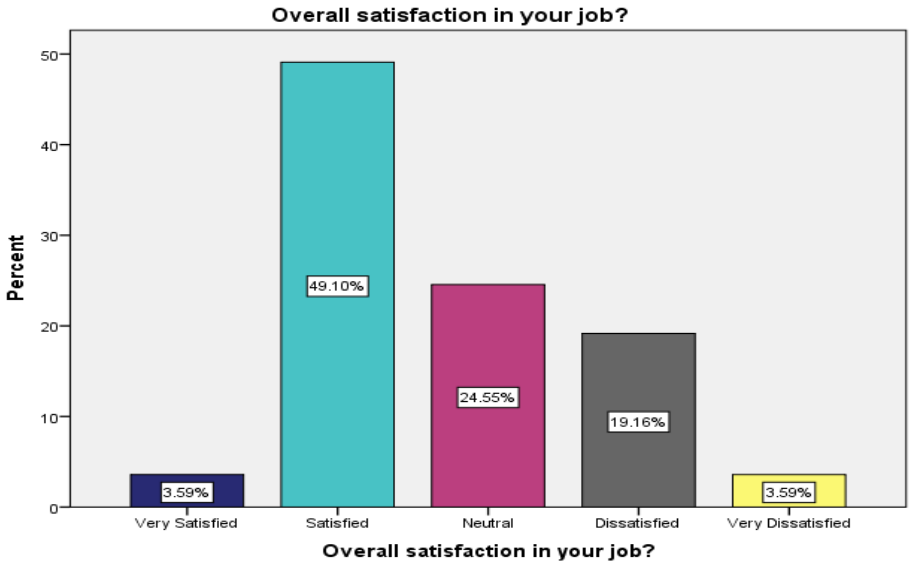


Figure 5: Overall satisfaction level of the respondents (n=167).

Figure 5: Shows the overall satisfaction level of the respondents. Among the respondents 49.10% respondents are satisfied followed by 24.55% are neutral dissatisfied, 3.59% are very dissatisfied and 3.59% are very satisfied.

IV. Discussion

Once upon a time, journalism was seen as a calling. The media upholds democracy and rights of mass people in the contemporary globe, and it is regarded as the fourth estate of a state to all [6]. Its significance to the Bangladeshi revolution is immense. On the other hand, things have turned around. This is now the standard practice in the commercial world. The journalists in the northern part of Bangladesh confront a lot of difficulties. Due to a lack of Pressures from owners for marketing and profit-making, coupled with government assistance, financial difficulties, low salaries, feudal rule, and historical precedents for these structures, journalists face nowadays. Journalists often raised the issues of low salaries, financial difficulties, and the absence of government assistance. Journalists aren't compensated fairly, and they don't get overtime pay. According to Riaz's (2015) research on the vernacular press, these are the primary economic concerns of local journalists.[7] The present study found that 31.74% participants reported that they got appointment letter from the organization while 68.26% reported they didn't get. 20.36% participants reported that they drowned salary from their organization while 68.26% reported they didn't do that. 20.36% participants reported that their organization pays their salary regularly while 83.23% reported their organization doesn't. 19.16% participants reported that their organization gives allowance for their offspring while 80.84% reported their organization doesn't. 12.57% participants reported that their organization provides insurance while 87.43% reported their organization doesn't. 21.56% participants reported that their organization provides festival allowance while 78.44% reported their organization doesn't. 29.34% participants reported that their organization provides conducive working hours while 70.66% reported their organization doesn't.38.32% participants reported that their organization arranges yearly performance award while 61.68% reported their organization doesn't.75.45% participants reported that they need further professional training and workshop while 24.55% reported they doesn't need.37.72% participants reported that they got performance award while 62.28% reported they didn't get yet.38.32% participants reported that their organization provides relevant training while 61.68% reported their organization doesn't. 40.12% participants reported that their organization provides promotion opportunity in time while 59.88% reported their organization doesn't.28.14% participants reported that the higher authority of their organization recognizes risks and undertake specific mitigation strategies hours while 71.86% reported their organization doesn't. [8-12] The major focus of the study was to explore the relationships of journalists' economic issues and ethical journalism. Concept of political economy suggests that media has

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become industry and political, economic elites used media for their interests (Baran & Davis, 2010[13]; Boyd-Barrett, 1995; McQuail, 2010). [14]

V. Limitations of the Study

This study was conducted within a short period of time with limited sample size. So, total scenario of prospects and challenges of journalism in the northern divisions of Bangladesh may not depict. Consequently, further study is recommended on a large scale

VI. Conclusion

This study identifies challenges affecting the Journalism Profession in northern divisions of Bangladesh, such as work instability, risk, poor facilities, and a lack of an appropriate job policy. Despite its shortcomings, the study recommends encouraging and growing journalism in Bangladesh.

Disclosure Statement

None of the authors has any conflicts of interest regarding the content of this article.

Acknowledgement

All the Presidents and the Secretaries of Local Press Clubs of Rajshahi and Rangpur divisions of Bangladesh.

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