# INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM IN PAKISTAN: ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

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## ABSTRACT

As the investigative journalism sector in Pakistan continues to grow, journalists will need to become increasingly adept at navigating the opportunities and obstacles that lie ahead. By examining certain incidents and patterns within the context of the country, one may gain more insight into the intricate factors that impact investigative journalism in Pakistan. The primary aim of this study was to methodically examine the diverse obstacles that face investigative journalists in Pakistan. The cross-sectional survey technique was used to gather data as part of a quantitative research approach for the goal of empirical analysis. Using a multi-phase sampling strategy, the unit of analysis consisted of reporters connected to press clubs in important Pakistani cities, including Peshawar, Karachi, Quetta, Lahore, Islamabad, Muzaffarabad, and Gilgit. The process of gathering data involved using a Likert-scaled, structured questionnaire. There were 48 questions in the questionnaire, covering topics such as the demographics of the participants and the nature of investigative journalism. The questionnaire was designed to provide a detailed knowledge of the many factors impacting the difficulties experienced by investigative journalists in Pakistan. The results revealed that a variety of internal issues that affect journalists profoundly affect their work methods. Sustaining elevated moral principles is an ongoing challenge, especially in the context of covering delicate subjects, as any departure from these norms can damage reputation and public confidence. Another issue that might undermine journalistic reporting's neutrality is corporate pressure to match content with organisational goals. In some areas, government rules and regulations may also restrict journalistic independence, encouraging biassed or self-censoring reporting in order to avoid legal ramifications. It is difficult to strike a balance between journalistic objectivity and cultural and religious sensitivity, particularly in areas with a wide range of religious views. The internal challenges encountered by journalists are further highlighted by the fact that scarce resources frequently make it difficult for them to conduct in-depth investigations and report on stories. There are many external obstacles that journalists face, such as fear for their families, attempts by powerful organisations to control or sway reporting, harassment from government agencies both legally and illegally, and the risks to their personal safety that come with covering sensitive stories. To make matters worse, problems such as gifts and bribes directly jeopardise the objectivity of journalism and risk producing biassed stories. Journalists' struggles are made more difficult by the general problem of scarce resources, which includes both financial limitations and inadequate security precautions. Apart from this, organisational leadership in news organisations has a distinct set of challenges, such as worries about job security in times of financial recession or fallout, and concerns about personal safety arising from the material their organisation produces.

## INTRODUCTION

Investigative journalism has historically faced a variety of difficulties as well as several chances for brave reporters in Pakistan. The field is plagued by a number of major problems, including the pervasive censorship and media control mentality. When covering controversial subjects, journalists frequently come under harassment, threats, and even violence. As a result, they tend to self-censor and avoid undertaking in-depth investigative reporting. Additionally, Pakistan's legal system does not adequately safeguard journalists, making it challenging for them to uncover political malfeasance, human rights violations, and corruption without fear of retaliation. Furthermore, the inability of journalists to conduct in-depth investigations is further hampered by the lack of financial resources and institutional backing for investigative reporting.

Investigative journalism has been gradually gaining massive momentum, support and the audiences in the last decades; as suggested by many top guns of muckraking during Investigative Journalism Asia Conference 2016. Investigative journalism is about unearthing details, scandals and other information that the source hides or intends to hide from the general public. Investigative journalism is about bringing out the secret news, scams and information; through unconventional tactics and brilliant, immersive storytelling. It is a fact-driven storytelling, supported by unbiased perspectives and crucial evidences. It plays a crucial role in maintaining the true spirit of journalism, advocacy and democracy. In order to bring investigative news reports to life; muckrakers have to go through numerous files and work rigorously. Due to the technological leverage, advanced global networking and collaboration, today's investigative journalism has been able to maintain its spirit, while dispensing the mandated duties and responsibilities. It has truly performed the assigned roles and responsibilities of watchdog, surveillance, and check-and-balance mechanism. Media is often regarded as the 'Fourth Estate' after Legislative, Executive, and Judiciary system.

Investigative journalism has been indispensable in ensuring that the media remains as the 'Fourth Estate" and perform accordingly. Investigative journalism is often considered as the strongest form of journalistic practice as it is backed rigorous research and extensive analysis, supported by wide array of evidences and skillful compilation of news stories. As it goes beyond the conventional structure of 5W and1H and ability to cause uproar; and impactful changes; it is crucial form of journalism. More time, resources, dedication and efforts are needed to dispense role of investigative journalist.

According to media scholars, John Ullman and J. Colbert (1995); investigative journalism is about revealing the issues of public interest hidden or being hidden by the sources, under one's own actions. There are various instances, wherein the exposes of investigative journalists have been crucial instrument in bringing about positive changes, holding authority accountable, changing existing laws, bills and regulations; and more importantly making the general public aware of wrongdoings and ill practices. There are various examples from national and international circuits; wherein the end results of investigative journalism brought forth various changes in the various sectors. The famous expose of Panama Papers not only rattled the global media sphere and societies in2015 A.D.; but also resulted in resignation of high-profile bureaucrats and global leaders, police raids and arrests in various nations and changes in laws and regulations in various countries like Taiwan, India, Russia, USA, etc. The expose of Cambridge Analytica -Facebook scandal in 2017 not only made people aware of how their personal data and privacy were breached by top social networks and manipulated them; but also brought the top brass of Facebook to face legal actions and judicial hearing. Investigative journalism exposes have brought many more transitions in other parts of the world.

There is a lack of enough research about the investigative journalism in Pakistan's context.

### Investigative Journalism in Pakistan

Journalism's investigative tactics are vital because they reveal information that has been kept secret on purpose. The purpose of this research is to find out what influences journalists in Pakistan think are hindering investigative reporting. Focusing on the precise ways in which intra-, inter-, and extra-media factors affect media coverage and output. For this study, we used a structured questionnaire and a purposive sample strategy to gather information. The findings demonstrated the existence of influential

factors both inside and outside Pakistani media organizations that shape coverage. Organizational sources, pressure groups, individual prejudices, job risks, economic restrictions, and so on all count as influences. To achieve its genuine goals, media in Pakistan must thus address or at least mitigate the obstacles hindering investigative journalism in the country, as suggested by the research (Riaz, 2021).

This article looks at the ongoing dangers that Pakistani journalists face for doing their jobs while exercising their First Amendment right to free speech in the face of government censorship and opposition party violence. The article provides an explanation of the hazards and threats experienced by journalists in Pakistan who report on violent political disputes by citing the cases of three journalists who were killed as a direct result of their coverage of the so-called "War on Terror" in the United States. The author draws on the accounts of five other journalists who have been contacted over research trips to Pakistan in 2012 and 2014 to examine what makes conflict journalism so risky in that country, in light of the social responsibility thesis (Aslam, 2015).

Studying the challenges faced by reporters conducting investigations is central to our project. Utilizing a random sample strategy, a survey research design has been implemented. The study used 150 Pakistani journalists as the sample size. Lack of facilities, job security, insurance, long working hours, and poor incomes all contribute to the dissatisfaction of journalists in their professions. Political pressure, religious prejudice, the feudal system, and military engagement all contribute to an atmosphere where journalists feel compelled to self-censor. Journalists in Pakistan have a number of challenges, which are highlighted below, and suggestions on how to address these issues and improve working conditions are provided (Ahmed, 2019).

This assessment of international investigative journalism hubs was conducted by CIMA, a division of the National Foundation for Democracies, as an update to their 2007 research, Global Investigative Journalism: Strategies for Support. It emphasizes the importance of investigative journalism in keeping governments responsibility and the necessity to fund investigative journalism centers in underdeveloped nations (Kaplan, 2013).

## Importance of Investigative Journalism

In society, the media has a significant impact. Without the media, it is difficult to imagine society. Because of this, the media's influence on society cannot be understated. Media has a significant impact on society; as a result, it is ingrained in society and has an impact on how people interact. As a result, the media is crucial to society. When the topic of media is brought up, reporting is the first thing that comes to mind. Different forms of mass media technologies are used to transmit events in various ways, and as a result, the media is renowned for having a duty to inform readers of the truth. This could be information about historical events or other parts of reality. Therefore, journalism is very important since it allows people to learn about what is happening locally and even in distant locations. The type and content of the message being transmitted determines how journalism is practiced in many different ways. The practice of investigative journalism has gained popularity. Usually, it entails analyzing and looking into a topic that the public pays special attention to. Exposing corruption and other social and administrative flaws in society has made this type of journalism popular. Investigative journalism is very significant and essential to contemporary society. However, it comes with a number of risks and difficulties, some of which pose a hazard to the employees involved. This essay aims to examine investigative journalism from an analytical perspective. (IvyPanda, 2021).

"In the past, investigative reporting was thought to involve single reporters working independently with little to no assistance from their news organisations. Recent examples prove the importance of teamwork. Producing thorough, well-researched stories requires a variety of specialties. Investigative teams should include journalists, editors, legal experts, statisticians, librarians, and news researchers. To determine what information may be made available under "freedom of information" rules and what legal issues can develop when damaging information is published, knowledge of public information access regulations is essential (Silvio, 2001).

The significance of investigative reporting becomes all the more essential when we consider the reality that the majority of people do not utilize their right to freedom of information in a direct and personal way. In order to acquire information, people rely on mass

media, including newspapers, radio, television, and increasingly, the internet. As a result, journalists have a duty to inform the public about issues of public interest while also empowering citizens to do so. This is done through investigative reporting (Zahid & Mitra, 2007).

### Statement of the Problem

There have been limited debates, discourses, and discussions about investigative journalism in the national and international arena. Meetings, seminar, boot camps, symposiums and conferences are and have been being held in various parts of the world to discuss about the scenario and status quo of investigative journalism. This research study is focused mainly about the overall of investigative journalism in Pakistan; as there is lack of such research here. Much emphasis is given to the origin, nature and kind of investigative journalism being practiced in Pakistan; including existing trends, and future prospects of investigative journalism.

Investigative journalism has been a great help in holding authority accountable and own up their wrongdoings strengthen democracy, public sphere, knowledge and kept spirit of watchdog alive. It is generally assumed that private media have more well-trained investigative journalists than public media. It is also assumed that investigative journalists are heavily threatened and are at more risk than other journalists. There doesn't seem to be concrete and full-fledged research and documentation about investigative journalism in Pakistan. Most of the preliminary research focused on overall journalism; with priority given towards issues such as political dimensions, safety concerns, legal and judicial affairs, regulations, ethical standards, etc. In Pakistani context, there seems lack of intensive and extensive research about the investigative journalism.

### 1.5  Research Objectives

The chief objectives of this research study are to find out major challenges and opportunities in the practices of investigative journalism.

1. To find out about the current state of investigative journalism in Pakistan.
2. To investigate problems to investigative journalism in Pakistan.
3. To evaluate the challenges to investigative journalism in Pakistan.

### 1.6  Research Questions

**RQ1** What is the state of investigative journalism in Pakistan?
**RQ2** What are the challenges and problems to investigative journalism in Pakistan?

### Literature Review

Investigative journalism in Pakistan faces numerous problems and challenges that hinder its progress and impact. Journalists in Pakistan often face safety risks while pursuing investigative stories. They may be subjected to intimidation, harassment, physical attacks, or even assassinations. This dangerous environment creates a chilling effect, leading to self-censorship and reluctance to cover sensitive topics.

Similarly, Pakistan lacks robust legal protections for journalists, particularly those engaged in investigative reporting. The government's failure to prosecute perpetrators of violence against journalists further exacerbates the climate of fear and impunity. Furthermore, the government often exerts pressure on media outlets and journalists to control the narrative and prevent them from reporting on critical issues. This can lead to censorship, the withholding of information, or biased reporting.

Additionally, access to government records and information is limited, making it challenging for journalists to obtain crucial data and documents necessary for in-depth investigative reporting.

Lack of Resources: Investigative journalism requires time, effort, and financial resources to dig deep into complex issues. Many media organizations in Pakistan face financial constraints, which can curtail their ability to fund investigative projects. Media ownership in Pakistan is often concentrated in the hands of a few powerful individuals or corporations, which can lead to self-censorship to protect their interests.

Moreover, Journalists who investigate sensitive topics, such as corruption, religious extremism, or human rights violations, may face backlash from conservative elements in society or religious groups. Investigative journalism demands specific skills and training that may not always be available to journalists in Pakistan. Without proper support and training, reporters may struggle to conduct in-depth investigations. Pakistan's political landscape is polarized, and investigative journalists may be accused of bias or pursuing political agendas, even when they are trying to provide factual and objective reporting.

Investigative journalism often benefits from collaboration among media outlets and journalists. However, in Pakistan, there might be a lack of trust and cooperation between competing media organizations, hindering cross-border investigations. Despite these challenges, there are still dedicated investigative journalists in Pakistan who continue to work courageously to shed light on important issues. International organizations and civil society must advocate for greater protection and support for investigative journalists in the country to ensure press freedom and uphold the right to information.

Pakistani journalists face many societal challenges and are occasionally threatened by political organizations, armed forces, and religious organizations. The organizations that assist Pakistani journalists poorly, and the majority of them are paid on a commission basis. They also receive unattractive salaries and inadequate equipment. Social issues make professional endeavors like reporting, covering, and journalistic reporting challenging. The courts, press, and institutions all had issues throughout Pakistan's three periods of military government. Military dictators censor and repress the media by various ordinances, penalties, harsh laws, bans on media, and the closure of media outlets. Blasphemy laws were enacted by religious leaders, intelligence agencies used journalists to manipulate the media, and the civil bureaucracy used administration to control media (Duffy, 2016).

The obstacles facing Pakistani journalists, which have a direct impact on their lives, include ethnic groupings, religious extremists, feudalists, nationalists, political parties, and military engagement. Several journalists were abducted and killed while doing their reporting by unidentified or terrorist organizations. In addition, journalists operating in remote regions face threats, kidnappings by strong groups, vehicle damage, and torture (Abbas, 2007).

Investigative reporting plays a crucial role in the news industry because it brings to light issues that are purposefully kept secret from the public. Examining how journalists view the elements influencing investigative journalism in Pakistan is the goal of this study. more precisely, the ways in which factors within, outside, and within the media affect the news coverage and substance. A structured questionnaire instrument was used for the purpose of collecting data using the purposive sampling approach. The findings demonstrated the influence of certain influences both inside and outside of media organisations on Pakistani media content. Individual biases, pressure groups, job threats, organisational causes, and financial restrictions are a few examples of these factors. Thus, the study suggests that in order for journalism in Pakistan to achieve its genuine goals, these obstacles must be dealt with, or at the very least minimised.

Analysing the difficulties faced by reporters when doing investigative journalism are the goal of study. Any random selection approach was used to implement the questionnaire study strategy. The study included 150 Pakistani journalists as the study's population. Given the risks related to their safety, not having amenities, the absence of employment stability & protection, excessive hours of work, and poor pay, correspondents do not feel content with their occupations. Given political regulation, religious intolerance, feudal structures, plus paramilitary engagement, reporters are forced to practise a form of self. This investigation also identifies the difficulties faced by Pakistani journalists it suggests solutions to enhance productivity (Ahmad, 2019).

A new age of based on data reportage is emerging, during which news organizations, particularly in most industrialised nations of around the globe, are using applications, methods, coding, other data-processing technologies. This is crucial to examine what reporters might utilise statistical reporting to make the powerful responsible despite the rise of statistical writing, especially in dictatorial while competitor dictatorships when parliamentary norms are frequently violated and media flow is restricted. The paper, which is based upon the most recent institutions concept, examines Pakistani media' capacity to engage in statistical reporting also considers the difficulties they encounter when doing so. The present research employs the qualitative approaches including material evaluation with comprehensive individual interviews to meet this goal. Thematic evaluation is used during this research to provide understanding of the collected data (Jamil, 2021).

The practice of investigative journalism (IJ) has spread like wildfire across the region in recent decades. In the 1980s and 1990s, IJ made its way into

the establishment media after previously being published only in partisan and fringe journals. Integration of western democracies, mediation of politics, changes in news finance, the occurrence of articles dedicated to deriding specific abuses, and confrontations between news organisations and leaderships are just some of the factors that have contributed to the acceptance of IJ. Despite sharing certain commonalities, IJ in each nation has had a yo-yo evolution owing to different internal political events and ethical and industrial shifts in the news media. Journalists at IJ provide details about wrongdoings that affect the public but which private parties would like keep hidden. The Independent Journalist goes above and beyond the call of duty of traditional daily journalism by rejecting the acceptance of fake or fabricated news as news. Given that all reporting is (or should be) inherently investigative, defining IJ in terms of the employment of particular newsgathering techniques is superfluous. Taking this stance is not meant to belittle the significance of reporting misconduct. To the contrary, it stresses that IJ is not the only field that uses investigative techniques. Unique to IJ is the dissemination of news concerning misconduct that has an impact on the public good. But not all publicity is equal when it comes to U.S. influence since not all topics are equally important to the people and democracy. The next consideration is to determine whether the general public is affected by the revelations made public. Increasing political accountability is where IJ really shines as a benefit to democratic rule. Considerable research has shown that a lack of standards is a major issue in many Latin American nations, making this a priority (Waisbord, 2001).

This research looks on the problems encountered by reporters doing in-depth investigations in Latin America, which is among the most hazardous regions for the profession. We used the pyramid of impacts approach to examine responses from 1,543 journalists, journalism professors, and incoming students in the area. We found that investigative journalism in Latin America is hampered on both a micro and macro level. The analysis of single-level impacts requires zeroing in on only one tier of the model's hierarchical structure. These included things like personal ones (like a lack of training) as well as more systemic ones (like the ownership structure of the media) as well as institutional ones (like a lack of power) (censorship). While multilevel analysis is useful for understanding certain variables, findings also imply that multilevel analysis excels at understanding others. Crime, corruption, governmental violence against the press, and a lack of a free-speech culture all act as systemic barriers to investigative reporting in Latin America despite two decades of media liberalization (Saldaa & Mouro, 2018).

This research employed descriptive analytic methods, and the results suggest that the close ties between the media and the political system in Saudi Arabia contribute to a dearth of investigative journalism. According to this research, Saudi media are managed by editors in chief who are not free to behave as they see fit since they are constrained by the political system. Some editors in chief are wary of authorizing investigations because of the potential backlash it may get. They violate the idea of press freedom by asking authorities for approval before releasing investigative findings. The authors of this research argue that the restrictive nature of Saudi Arabia's press rules leads to a lack of investigative reporting. Fearing arrest as a result of their reporting, they are careful. As political climates have shifted in various Arab nations, stricter steps have been taken against investigative reporting. Fewer opportunities exist for investigative journalism in Saudi Arabia because of the country's absence of a comprehensive framework to regulate such coverage (Almania, 2017).

The article considers the condition of investigative journalism across seven islands of the Pacific and concludes that the trend is not promising. These countries include the Cook Islands, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Tonga. Harsher regulations, like those in armed services Fiji, physical abuse, and harassing of journalists in Vila, and bogus accusations and suits against journalists and the main newspaper firm in the Cook Islands have all hampered media and investigative journalism in those countries. All the significant political changes in the area since freedom, including fraud, are examined. Some examples of successful investigative journalism are shown, and potential dangers to the field are discussed (Singh, 2012).

There are a number of obstacles hampering investigative journalism in Nigeria, and threatens to undermine the gains made by the field as a whole. This article uses a survey research approach to investigate the challenges and opportunities facing investigative journalism in Rivers State, Nigeria. A total of 56 professionals were surveyed, including 43 from The Tide and 13 from The Hard Truth. Based on the data, it seems that there is some kind of investigative journalism conducted in Nigeria, although at a very basic level. In 2011, however, the Freedom of Information Act was passed and signed into law, increasing the likelihood that it will be put into reality. Therefore, the publication suggests taking the initiative in investigative journalism while taking use of the possibilities presented by the Freedom of Information Act (Anyadike, 2013).

## Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework in journalism and mass communication is a set of organised concepts, precepts, and notions that direct journalistic practise, examination, and comprehension. It offers a lens through which scholars and journalists may study and analyse the news, media, and communication processes. Journalists' approaches to their job, editorial choices, and navigating the complexity of the media ecosystem are all influenced by theoretical frameworks.

These theoretical frameworks support journalists and scholars in their analyses, critiques, and understandings of the intricacies of journalism in a larger social context. In an environment of information that is continually changing, they offer resources for analysing the function, influence, and obligations of the media.

Trying to choose who has access to what opportunities, power, or resources and who doesn't (Dictionary, 2022). The practice of filtering information before it is published, transmitted, posted online, or used in another form of communication is known as gate keeping (Zvelo, 2022). Gatekeeping is the process of screening information before it is printed, broadcast, uploaded online, or utilised in any other form of communication. The gatekeeping theory is used in several academic fields, such as communication studies, journalism, political science, and sociology (Definition.net, 2022).

## Gatekeeping and Investigative Journalism in Pakistan

The goal of this research project is to better understand how traumatic events are reported in Pakistani media as well as the personal aspects that affect a journalist's coverage of a traumatic event and decision-making over whether material to include or delete from news reports. To examine the research topic, this study used a qualitative research approach. The researcher conducted extensive interviews with journalists in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Tribal Districts and Peshawar. Thirty journalists (news reporters, editors, and photographers) were sought out from media outlets (print, broadcast, and internet) whose major beat is "violent events" or "crime," in addition to other beats. The study's subjects were chosen using the purposive and snowball sampling procedures. The data, which consisted of interviews with journalists, was analysed using a process called thematic analysis. The Hierarchy of Influences Model (HOI), a development of the Gatekeeping Theory, was used to analyse the data. The results demonstrate that while reporting a traumatic episode in Pakistani media, a journalist's judgement is influenced by their education, training, experience, concentration on crime and war, newsworthiness of the subject, self-promotion, and job security (Ullah & Jan, 2021).

In order to further their professions, journalists encounter challenging circumstances all around the globe. Journalists in Pakistan are in a similar scenario. Their main issues are a lack of safety and other incentives provided by their employers. The purpose of the current research was to examine the issues Pakistani journalists have with carrying out their professional responsibilities. The researchers provided a thorough analysis of working circumstances and their impacts on journalists' performance using Herzberg's Motivation Hygiene theory and Maslow's hierarchal model. To emphasise the issues encountered by journalists, the researchers used a survey technique as part of their quantitative methodology. The findings indicated that most journalists are not happy with their existing employment situations. There are too many challenges they must deal with, such as job security concerns, threats, the need for professional development, pressed deadlines, and long work hours. Additionally, the respondents disclosed that

these concerns are impairing their ability to function at work by leading to specific physical and mental health problems (Qamar, Manzoor & Shahzadi, 2020).

### Methodology and Materials

An essential component of the research process is research design. It is the methodical arrangement of different techniques, approaches, and styles for the research process. It alludes to the methodical, strategic, and algorithmic integration of the study process. (Adhikary, 2016). This study employs a quantitative method to gather and analyses data, with a primary focus on the current state of investigative journalism. It also summarizes significant difficulties and possibilities facing the sector. The choice of methodology, main goals, data gathering techniques, and particular study topics are covered in this section. The present investigation employed survey technique, which is frequently employed to investigate the viewpoints of the target population on a certain topic, to address the objectives and questions of the phenomena. Data was obtained using a questionnaire by multi-stage sampling technique from the journalists from around Pakistan including Peshawar, Karachi, Quetta, Lahore, Islamabad, Muzaffarabad, and Gilgit press club members." In this instance, the investigators are concentrating on certain reporters who belong to press clubs in several Pakistani towns, including Peshawar, Karachi, Quetta, Lahore, Islamabad, Muzaffarabad, and Gilgit.

### Results and Findings

This part of a research study is devoted to presenting the research's findings and outcomes. This section, which is an essential part of the whole study, is critical because it provides factual support for the goals and research questions.

*Table. 1. Gender and Marital Status of the Respondents*

| Items | F | % | Items | F | % |
|-------|-----|------|---------|-----|-------|
| Male | 535 | 81.6 | Single | 159 | 24.2 |
| Female | 121 | 18.4 | Married | 497 | 75.8 |
| Total | 656 | 100.0 | Total | 656 | 100.0 |

Table1 shows the gender of the respondents. Which shows that 81.6% of the respondents are male and the number of female respondents are 18.4%? The table also explores the marital status of the respondents. In which 24.2% of the respondents are single while 75.8% of the respondents are married.

**Table 2. Level of Education of the Respondents**

| Items | F | % |
|-------|-----|-------|
| BA | 135 | 20.6 |
| BS | 64 | 9.8 |
| FA | 11 | 1.7 |
| FSc | 6 | .9 |
| M.Phil | 70 | 10.7 |
| MA | 293 | 44.7 |
| Matric | 22 | 3.4 |
| MSC | 27 | 4.1 |
| Ph.D | 28 | 4.3 |
| Total | 656 | 100.0 |

Table 2 illustrates the level of education of the respondents. It shows that 20.6% of the respondents are having BA degree while respondents having BS degree is 9.8%. The education level of the respondents whose qualification is FA and FSc are 1.7% and 0.6% respectively. The respondents who have MPhil qualification are 10.7%. 44.7% of the respondents have MA degree. The respondents

whose qualification is matric are 3.4%. The respondents who have degree of MSC are 4.1% while 4.3% of the respondents are PhD qualified.

**Table 3. Press Club and Province of the Journalists**

| Item | F | % | Item | F | % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gilgit-sakrdu | 19 | 2.9 | AJK | 23 | 3.5 |
| Islamabad | 161 | 24.5 | Balochistan | 53 | 8.1 |
| Karachi | 130 | 19.8 | Fedral | 161 | 24.5 |
| Lahore | 177 | 27.0 | GB | 19 | 2.9 |
| MuzafarAbad | 23 | 3.5 | KPK | 93 | 14.2 |
| Peshawar | 93 | 14.2 | Punjab | 177 | 27.0 |
| Quetta | 53 | 8.1 | Sindh | 130 | 19.8 |
| Total | 656 | 100.0 | Total | 656 | 100.0 |

Table 3 shows the press club from which the journalists are associated. It shows that 2.9% of the respondents were associated with Gilgit-Skardu press club. The journalists who are associated with Islamabad press club are 24.5%. 19.8% and 27% of the respondents are members of Karachi and Lahore press club respectively. The respondents who are members of Muzafar Abad press club are 3.5%. 14.2% of the respondents of the study were the members of Peshawar press club. 8.1% of the respondents of the study are the members of Quetta press club.

The table 3 also illustrates the province of the respondents. Is shows that 3.5% of the respondents belongs from AJK. 8.1% of the respondents of the study belongs from Balochistan. The respondents who are from federal are 24.5%. 2.9% of the respondents of the study are from Gilgit Baltistan. The number of respondents who are from KPK are 14.2%. 27% of the respondents belongs from Punjab while the respondents who are from Sindh are 19.8%.

**Table 4. Nature of Job of the Journalists**

| Item | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Anchor | 9 | 1.4 |
| Columnist | 9 | 1.4 |
| Correspondent | 184 | 28.0 |
| Editor | 103 | 15.7 |
| Freelancer | 65 | 9.9 |
| Photographer | 16 | 2.4 |
| Producer | 9 | 1.4 |
| Reporter | 252 | 38.4 |
| Senior P | 9 | 1.4 |
| Total | 656 | 100.0 |

Table 4 explores the nature of the job of the respondents. 1.4% of the respondents were anchor and columnist. 28% of the respondents of the study are correspondents. The respondents who are editor is 15.7% while 9.9% of the sample of the study are freelancer. 2.4% of the respondents are photographers and 1.4% are producer. The respondents who are reporters are 38.4%. The nature of the job of the respondents which was senior producer is 1.4%.

| Table 5. Placement of Job of the Journalists | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Permanent | Contractual | Daily wages | Story based | Freelancer |
| working with newspaper as | 34.1% | 17.5% | 0.0% | 0.8% | 4.4% |
| working with magazine as | 5.2% | 3.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| working with radio as | 1.4% | 2.0% | 4.3% | 0.0% | 1.4% |
| working with TV as | 24.4% | 11.6% | 0.9% | 2.3% | 4.1% |
| working with news agancy as | 5.0% | 0.8% | 0.6% | 1.7% | 0.0% |
| working with online media as | 5.6% | 1.4% | 1.7% | 1.2% | 18.4% |
| Others | 0.6% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 1.7% | 0.0% |

Table 5 shows the status of the respondents and the nature of their job. In which 34.1% of the respondents who are working with newspaper on permanent basis is 34.1% and 17.5% are on contractual basis. 0.8% of the respondents of the study are story based and 4.4% are freelancers. The table also reveals that 5.2% of the sample of the study are working on permanent basis with magazines, while 3% of the respondents are working on contract basis. 1.4% of the sample of the study working on permanent basis with radio and 2% on contractual basis. The respondents who are associated with radio on daily wages are 4.3% and 1.4% on freelancer. The sample of the study who are working with TV on permanent basis are 24.4%. While 11.6% of the respondents are on contractual basis. 0.9% of the respondents are daily wagers, 2.3% on story based and 4.1% are freelancers. The respondents who are linked news agency on permanent basis are 5% and 0.8% on contractual basis. The number of respondents who are daily wagers are 0.6% and 1.7% on story based. The sample of the study who are associated with online media on permanent basis is 5.6% and 1.4% on contractual basis. 1.7% are daily wagers and 1.2% on story basis. While 18.4% of the sample of the study are working as freelancer with online media. The respondents who are linked with other media organizations are 0.6% on permanent basis while 1.7% on story based.

**Table 6. Internal and External Challenges to Journalists**

| | strongly agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Investigative journalists and our organization high ups are facing problems due to poor ethical journalistic standards. | 35.4% | 39.0% | 13.4% | 11.0% | 1.2% |
| Investigative journalists and our organization high ups are facing problems due to organizational policies | 25.6% | 51.2% | 13.4% | 8.5% | 1.2% |
| Investigative journalists and our organization high ups are facing problems due to government laws. | 28.0% | 52.0% | 18.3% | 1.7% | 0.0% |
| Investigative journalists and our organization high ups are facing problems due to cultural & religious values. | 35.4% | 47.6% | 11.0% | 3.7% | 2.4% |
| Investigative journalists and our organization high ups are facing problems due to access to information | 24.4% | 48.8% | 15.9% | 9.8% | 1.2% |
| Investigative journalists and our organization are facing harassment from sources and officials | 29.3% | 45.1% | 12.2% | 7.3% | 6.1% |
| Investigative journalists and our organization are facing attacked from sources and officials | 36.6% | 36.6% | 19.5% | 3.7% | 3.7% |
| Investigative journalists and our organization high ups families are facing harassment and attacks from sources and officials | 32.9% | 47.6% | 11.0% | 7.3% | 1.2% |
| Investigative journalists and our organization are facing legal challenges from sources and officials | 40.0% | 41.3% | 12.5% | 5.0% | 1.3% |
| Investigative journalists and our organization are facing bribe envelopes & gifts from sources and officials | 6.1% | 8.5% | 22.0% | 43.9% | 19.5% |
| Investigative journalists and our organization high ups families are facing hidden hand harassment and attacks from sources and officials | 30.5% | 47.6% | 12.2% | 7.3% | 2.4% |

The survey results from investigative journalists and organizational leaders on the different problems they face are displayed in the table. A particular problem is represented by each row, while the columns show the various degrees of agreement, from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree."

Investigative journalists and organizational leaders are experiencing challenges as a result of low ethical standards in journalism, as demonstrated by the first row, where 35.4% of respondents strongly agree and 39.0% agree. However, just 1.2% of respondents strongly disagree with this assertion.

The table offers valuable insights into several obstacles that organizations face, including those pertaining to government regulations, cultural and religious beliefs, information access, harassment and assaults from sources and officials, legal challenges, and accepting bribes or gifts. The percentages pertaining to every degree of agreement provide a detailed insight of the respondents' viewpoints on the topics brought up in the poll.

### Discussion

These findings give rise to serious questions regarding how your organization's ethical standards are actually viewed. Any media organization's integrity, trust, and reputation must be preserved via ethical journalism. The significant number of respondents who expressed worry about lax ethical standards suggests that there may be a problem that needs to be addressed.

The results give rise to serious worries regarding the safety and security of both investigative journalists and the families of senior members of your organization. Families who are harassed or attacked may suffer serious health effects, and it may even stop journalists from doing their jobs bravely.

The safety of journalists and their families must be prioritized by the organization, which must take these worries seriously. Putting safety measures in place, offering assistance and resources, and spreading knowledge about how important it is to safeguard journalists and their families may all be crucial first steps.

Working together with appropriate government agencies and media organizations to solve security issues and promote press freedom may also be advantageous. Establishing successful techniques for safeguarding the safety of journalists can be aided by having an open discussion with them and their families to learn about their needs and concerns.

Your organization can support brave and significant journalism by tackling the problem of harassment and assaults against journalists and their families. Keep in mind that maintaining press freedom and the public's ability to obtain dependable and impartial information depend on protecting journalists and their families.

The findings show that your organization and investigative journalists are very concerned about legal issues. Reporters' access to information and freedom of the press may be seriously hampered by legal action or threats from sources and authorities.

It is crucial for an organization to handle these issues and help investigative journalists who are facing legal difficulties. This could entail providing legal aid, fighting for press freedom and the preservation of journalists' rights, and creating an atmosphere where reporters feel supported and can report without worrying about repercussions.

In order to navigate legal issues and look for solutions to respect the values of ethical journalism within the confines of the law, it might be helpful to work with media associations and legal professionals.

Organizations can improve the climate for investigative reporting and support the critical function of journalism in educating the public and holding those in positions of authority responsible by identifying and addressing the issue of legal challenges. Maintaining press freedom and the public's ability to obtain accurate and unbiased information depend on the safety and protection of investigative journalists.

These findings imply that respondents' perceptions of investigative journalists and your organization's exposure to bribe packages and gifts are rather low. It's important to understand, though, that any instances of bribery can have negative effects on journalistic ethics and damage public confidence in the media.

Strong ethical policies and procedures must be in place inside an organization to stop bribes and gifts from affecting journalism. Any possible attempts to undermine journalistic integrity may be thwarted by encouraging openness, accountability, and ethical reporting practices.

To keep their credibility and the audience's confidence, journalists and staff must be informed about the dangers and moral ramifications of taking bribes or gifts from sources or officials. Organization can safeguard the values of impartial and trustworthy journalism, thereby benefiting both journalists and the public, by establishing ethical standards and

taking the necessary steps to handle any possible cases of bribery.

According to these findings, the respondents' view of covert harassment and attacks against investigative journalists and high-ups' families is comparatively high. The term "hidden hand harassment" describes covert or deceptive tactics intended to injure, threaten, or intimidate somebody without mentioning it directly.

The safety and security of journalists and their families must be prioritized by the organization, which must take these worries seriously. Raising awareness of the need of protecting journalists and their families, offering assistance and resources, working with the appropriate authorities to solve the issue, and engaging in these actions may all be crucial first steps.

Effectively addressing hidden hand harassment and attacks may also be accomplished through the development of a secure and encouraging work environment, the promotion of open communication, and the assurance of protection for journalists.

Working with media associations, human rights groups, and other stakeholders can help create a more supportive climate for meaningful investigative reporting by promoting the preservation of journalists' rights and press freedom.

The organization may help sustain the standards of ethical journalism and protect the safety of people engaged in investigative work by recognizing and addressing the problem of hidden hand harassment and assaults. Maintaining press freedom and the public's right to trustworthy, unbiased information requires protecting journalists and their families.

## Conclusion

Due to the aforementioned issues, journalists believe they are dealing with both internal and external issues. For example, they believe that their families are dealing with the same issues due to lax ethical standards, organizational policies, government laws, ethics & control, cultural & religious values, and limited resources, while their organization's high ups are dealing with fears of losing their jobs, fears of death and killing, harassment and attacks, bribe envelopes & gifts from sources, and limited resources.

These challenges encompass a range of issues including ethical considerations, organizational policies, legal frameworks, cultural and religious influences, and resource constraints. Additionally, journalists also perceive challenges among their families and higher-ups within their organizations. These challenges can include lax ethical standards, the impact of government laws and regulations, control over their work, cultural and religious values affecting their reporting, and limited resources.

Within their families, journalists might be concerned that the ethical dilemmas they face in their work also affect their personal lives. For instance, their reporting might expose them to risks, including threats and harassment, which could extend to their loved ones. Ethical decisions they make professionally could also impact their families' well-being and safety.

On an organizational level, journalists might perceive that higher-ups in their organizations are dealing with pressures of their own. This could include fears of job loss due to the evolving landscape of media, concerns about safety and potential harm associated with certain investigative or sensitive stories, as well as challenges related to receiving questionable gifts or bribes from sources, which could compromise the integrity of their reporting.

Journalists are facing a range of challenges, both internally within their profession and externally from various sources. These challenges can have far-reaching effects on journalists, their families, and their organizations. Let's break down the issues you've mentioned:

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