CHAPTER IV

THE NEWS MAKERS
The newsman is a demon of curiosity. He peeps over forbidden walls and offends the government; operating behind curtains, he outrages privacy, he enrages the bungling bureaucrat; he sends shivers down the spine of the corrupt brotherhood, he highlights criminal neglect of people in hospital wards, at bus stops, at milk booths and in offices under the government and municipal corporations. He probes scandals and the shady deals of men who corner an indecent share of the national cake.¹

The information which the newsman or journalist produces is a perishable product, produced for immediate consumption. There is such a fierce competition with regard to news that it has to be delivered as fast as others trying to deliver the same (product) or if possible, before. This speed of delivery and execution is one of the hallmarks of daily newspapers, and, is bound to dominate the workplace of the journalist. The sub-culture, the ethics, the general structure or hierarchy of the organisation are bound to have a bearing on the person presenting information, or, the newspaper.

The expression journalist is often used in a very wide sense and includes those who contribute to newspapers only occasionally or rarely. It would not obviously be applied to novelists, university professors or politicians who might contribute articles from time to time, with or without a fee.²

When we come to the specifics of employment and working conditions, the type of activity is defined differently by the statutes of the different countries. However, there are certain common points to be defined as a journalist.

Journalism must be a regular occupation of the person.

So, those who earn their main living from another profession, do not come within this category. Most definitions do not confine the title of journalist to those who write for newspapers, radio and T.V. Those who prepare and present information bulletins and radio and T.V. news programmes, have been generally included. It may also be noted that all the definitions, contain nothing to exclude stringers as such. So, "A journalist is one who collects, reports and comments on news and current affairs for publication in newspapers and periodicals or broadcasting by radio and television." 3

Although there are a variety of functions which are common to all newspapers, some universally important ones need some elaboration.

According to the International Standard4 the editor selects, revises and arranges material for publication in newspapers and periodicals." He also "allots assignments to reporter, correspondents and photographers; appraises reports, commentaries and photographs submitted and selects them for publication; assigns writing of editorials and leading articles to specialist writers; examines material for conformity with established policy and literary standards of publisher and revises it as necessary; decides spacing and positioning of items to be included, writes headlines and instructs printer concerning kinds of types to be used.

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4 Ibid.
He may even be asked to write articles or columns. The precarious positioning of the editor in his dual obligations to his work team which he organises on the one hand, and the management function towards the employer, or the other, makes his functioning an ambiguous one. Sometimes, the editor is aided by a deputy editor and some of the functions of the job are delegated to specialists, at least in the major newspapers.

To ensure objectivity, P. Padhye\(^5\) feels that the editor of a newspaper can learn from the scientist.

Realising how difficult it is to maintain strict objectivity in its research and experimentation, the scientific community resorts to interpersonal criticism before arriving at final results. No scientist flaunts his discovery unless it is checked and rechecked against the result obtained by fellow-scientists. A newspaper editor can be a little modest and grant that there could be some wisdom outside the walls of its offices. The editor, for once, can take leave of the compelling belief that his pen is always dipped in the fountain of wisdom and that the editorial chair possesses some mystical power that automatically derives shining rays of knowledge from the brain of whoever officially sits in it, and throw open the columns of his journal to those who hold different or even contrary views.\(^6\) This, the author feels can be done by strengthening the readers' column which would allow for critical view of the newspaper, and also give a glimpse of prevailing views of the society.

Sunny Thomas has some interesting views of the editor in a newspaper organisation.


\(^6\) Ibid, p.25.
A true editor is an eternal crusader. An editor with no cause to serve remains in obscurity, unknown, unread and unheard of by millions of his countrymen.

An editor must be the torch-bearer of his civilization. A beacon of learning, he is a source of inspiration to the world of letters and to those pursuing the higher aims of life. He is to society what Socrates was to the academies of Plato, Aristotle and other Great Greek thinkers. The power of an editor lies in the influence of his thought on the minds of his contemporaries, whose actions or inactions constitute history. Evidently, this power to influence the destiny of a nation belongs only to editors equal to their tasks. (If an editor cannot command the respect of even his own staff, and rules them only by the rod of disciplinary action, it is hardly surprising that his futility is widely manifest the world outside!)

An editor worth the name is dedicated to truth and learning, and is a man of prophetic wisdom. The voice of the editor is the conscience of his nation. His is the voice of reason, of sanity, in a mad world of politicians, businessmen, bureaucrats, traders, merchants and hoodlums all trying to tilt the scale of justice in their own favour. 7

It should suffice to say that the editor is at the heart of the journalistic part of newspaper enterprise and the keeper of its conscience. This was voiced by Prem Bhatia, M.V.Desai and S.Saheyy 8 who even found it hard to imagine that the editor has no interests in the fortunes of the paper. He is not just a well paid scribe... he cannot divest himself of interest and responsibility. The editor is no editor who in today's circumstances chooses to remain uninformed and unconcerned about the technological, financial and manpower problems not just of his paper but also of the newspaper industry.

7 Sunny Thomas, Truth, Images and Distortions, 1984.
8 Sahay, Desai and Bhatia, 1987, Silence is not Consent, Editors Guild of India, New Delhi, p.6.
The sub-editor "assists with editing of newspapers, magazines, trade journals and other publication edits copy for selling, punctuation grammar and continuity; verifies factual context of articles using standard reference sources; recruits articles for greater consistency, clarity and adherence to space limitations; prepares layout of pages showing posture and sizes of illustrations; reads unsolicited manuscripts and selects those for review by editor, drafts headlines and captions; replies to correspondence concerning publication matters.

In large newspapers, a deputy editor, aided by the chief sub-editor, directs and co-ordinates the work described above. This person is ultimately responsible for the production of the newspaper, under the direction of the editor, and is responsible for make-up and scheduling in particular.

In a daily newspaper the editor-in-chief lays down the policy and general guidelines but it is the chief sub-editor who, working within that framework produces the edition. He makes the world come alive in the stories, in the headlines and in the make-up of the newspaper. This means that the chief sub-editor must have imagination understanding, sympathy, a knowledge of political affairs and insight.... In short, he must have a nose for news.9

The newsroom is in many ways a demanding place. The journalists who work there must be all round performers, with a sharp news sense, a sound journalistic style, a mastery of language, a solid general culture and a good

9 Ninan and Desai, Beyond Those Headlines, 1996, p.88.
understanding of the laws governing the press. "Journalists must also be able
to work at all hours of the day and night, no matter how inconvenient."\(^{10}\)

According to the ISCO, the **Reporter** "seeks and reports information of
interest to the public for publication in newspapers; travels to scenes of
assignment, such as a reported crime, a trial, a fine, an accident, an important
public function, a sports meeting or a fashion show collects all available
information by observation, interview and investigation (field workers
role/sociologist) seeking especially information on aspects of subject likely to
interest newspaper readers; writes reports based on information collected and
submits them to editorial department for approval and preparation for
publication. For them, more than any journalist, the idea of fixed working
hours, is least applicable. According to Sunny Thomas a reporter ‘is a man on
the beat’, and he ‘bears witness to events’ which makes his task a very
formidable one.

**Chief reporters** cut themselves off from writing, from being in the
minds of news now and then, cannot retain the sense of excitement, the sense
of being able to react, of feeling the enthusiasm which they have to transmit to
their colleagues. The most important thing for chief reporter is to maintain

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\(^{10}\) Bohere, *Profession: Journalist - A Study on the Working Condition of Journalists*, p.16.
rapport with the local population for that essentially forms the bulk of your readership.\textsuperscript{11}

The "aura of contacts" is like a halo which is supposed to surround every senior journalist or chief reporter. It is a sad reflection on journalists that even today the ability of a journalist is many a time gauged in terms of how many contacts he or she has in officialdom. To the extent his or her professional life is concerned,

I think a journalist, given the choice between presenting the truth and 'killing' a contact, has to choose the latter. We must learn not to be afraid of VIPs. That is something a chief reporter must make clear to his team.\textsuperscript{12}

According to the recommendations of the Tribunal for Working Journalists, 1980 the functional definitions of various categories of journalists are:

**Group 1**

"Editor" is a person who directs and supervises the editorial side of a newspaper.

**Group IA**

"Resident Editor" is a person who performs the functions of an Editor of a newspaper at a centre other than the one from which the newspaper was originally published.

\textsuperscript{11} Prabha Dutt in Ninan and Desai, op.cit., p.103.

\textsuperscript{12} ibid, p.104.
"Associate Editor" or "Joint Editor" or "Deputy Editor" is a person who generally assists the Editor in the performance of the work of the Editor.

Group IB

"Assistant Editor" is a person who regularly assists the Editor in the discharge of his duties generally in relation to comments and opinions and writes leaders and may also write other copy involving review, comment or criticism.

"Letter Writer" is a person who regularly writes letter and may also write other copy involving review, comment or criticism.

"News Editor" is a person who co-ordinates and supervises the work of the news department and is responsible for the news content of all the editions of a newspaper.

"Chief of News Bureau" is a person who supervises the work of the news bureau and assigns work to other Bureau members.

"Special Correspondent" is a person whose duties regularly include reporting and interpreting all news of Parliamentary, political and general importance as an accredited correspondent or otherwise at the head quarters of the Central Government or at a foreign centre or who regularly performs similar functions in more than one State or at any other place where he is assigned as such.

Group 2

"Deputy or Assistant News Editor" is a person who assists the news-editor in the discharge of his duties generally and/or is in-charge of bringing out the city edition.

"Chief Reporter" is a person who is in-charge of all reporters at a centre of publication, supervises their work and also regularly reports and interprets all news of legislative, political or general importance.

"Chief Sub-Editor" is a person who takes charge of a shift at the news desk, allocates and supervises the work of one or more sub-
editors and is generally responsible for the determination of news space and the general display of news in the paper or in a particular edition or part of it.

"Sports Editor" is a person in-charge of the sports section of a newspaper, deals with news and views on sports and allied activities, allocates and supervises the work of one or more reporters and of one or more sub-editors and is generally responsible for the determination of news space and the general display of sports news.

"Commercial Editor" is a person who deals with news and views bearing on commerce, finance, trade and industry, and comments on them and allocates and supervises the work of one or more working journalists.

"Film Editor" is a person who deals with news and views bearing on films and stage and is in-charge of specified column or page on stage and screen and supervises the work of one or more working journalists.

"Magazine Editor" is a person who deals with news and views bearing on literary or entertainment items of news value and is in-charge of specified columns or page in respect of literary or such other allied matters and supervises the work of two or more working journalists.

"Cartoonist" is a person who comments upon news and events through cartoons and caricatures.

"Chief of Statistical or Research Division" is a person in-charge of statistical or research division which deals with matters bearing on commerce, finance, trade and industry in a financial paper and supervises the work of one or more working journalists.

"Chief News Photographer" is a person who allocates and supervises the work of one or more news photographers.

"Chief Librarian" or "Chief Index Assistant" or "Chief Calligraphist" or "Chief Artist" is a person who supervises the work of one or more librarians, Index Assistants, Calligraphists and Artists respectively.
Group 2A

"Deputy Chief Sub-Editor" or "Senior Sub-Editor" is a person who regularly assists the Chief Sub-Editor in the discharge of his duties and acts in his place in his absence.

"Deputy Chief Reporter" or "Senior Reporter" is a person who assists the Chief Reporter and acts in his place in his absence.

"Senior Correspondent" is a person other than special and principal correspondent and his duties include reporting on important news at any important centre other than the centre of publication and has put in service of not less than five years.

"Senior Calligraphist", "Senior Artist", "Senior Librarian" and "Senior Index Assistant" are persons who assist the Chief Calligraphist, Chief Artist, Chief Librarian and Chief Index Assistant respectively and have put in service of not less than five years.

Group 3

"Sub-Editor" is a person who receives, selects, shortens, summarises, elaborates, translates, edits, and headlines news items of all descriptions and may do some or all of these functions.

"Reporters" is a person who gathers and presents news at a particular centre.

"Correspondent" is a person who gathers and dispatches by wire, post or any other means, news from any centre other than the centre of publication.

"News Photographer" is a person who covers news events of public interest through photographs.

"Artist" is a person who prepares for publication drawing, layouts, maps, graphs or other similar embellishments, illustrations or any kind or of creative art. He may do some or all of these functions.

"Calligraphist" is an artist who performs journalistic work and also calligraphs matters.
"Librarian" or "Index Assistant" is a person who prepares and maintains records relating to news and views which are used as background or fill out for current stories. Persons not performing any of these functions shall not be covered.

"Chief Proof Reader" is one who allocates and supervises the work of one or more proof readers and is in-charge of a shift.

**Group 4**

"Proof Reader" is a person who checks up printed matter of proof with Editor's copy to ensure strict conformity of the former with the latter. Factual discrepancies, slips of spelling, mistakes of grammar and syntax may also be discovered by him and he either corrects or gets them corrected.\(^{13}\)

It is evident from the above, that the number of steps in the hierarchy of the newspaper organisation, would be making the journalists' task and role quite a specialised one. It also becomes obvious that it must be quite a competitive atmosphere where to reach the top you have to scramble, trampling underfoot others as you move up the ladder of success. You have to know how to project yourself and your stories. The quiet, serious journalists who do their job without blowing their trumpets have little hope of making it big.\(^{14}\)

The second press commission report mentions a code of ethics for journalists which gives us a glimpse into the 'what ought to be' factors involved in making news.\(^{15}\)

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In pursuance of the social responsibility, the following code of ethics would be applicable:

(1) In the discharge of their duties, journalists shall attach full value to fundamental human and social rights, shall hold good faith and fairplay in news reports and comments as essential professional obligations.

(2) Journalists and newspapers shall highlight activities of the State and public, promote national unity, solidarity, integrity and economic and social progress.

(3) Journalists and newspapers shall avoid reports and comments which tend to promote tensions likely to lead or leading to civil disorder, mutiny of rebellion. Violence must be condemned unequivocally.

(4) Journalists and newspapers shall ensure that information disseminated is factual. No fact shall be distorted nor information known to be false or not believed to be true shall be published.

(5) No sensational or tendentious report of a speculative nature shall be published. Any report of comments found to be inaccurate shall be rectified by prominent publication.

(6) Confidence shall always be respected. Professional secrecy shall be preserved.

(7) Journalists shall not exploit their status for non-journalistic purposes or inquiries and shall not allow personal interest to influence professional conduct.

(8) There is nothing so unworthy as the acceptance or demand of a bribe or inducement for the exercise by a journalist of his power to give or deny publicity to news or comments.

(9) Journalists and newspapers shall not indulge in personal controversies in which no public interest is involved.
(10) Journalists and newspapers shall not give currency to public rumours or gossip or even verifiable news affecting the private life of individuals.

(11) Newspapers shall refrain from publishing matter (including advertisements) which is obscene or is likely to encourage vice, crime and unlawful activities.

(12) Journalists and newspapers shall promote and project the national objectives of democracy, socialism and secularism.

(13) Journalists and newspapers shall refrain from giving tendentious treatment to news of disturbances, involving caste, community, class, religion, region or language groupings and shall not publish details of numbers or identity of groups involved in such disturbances except as officially authorised.

(14) Journalists and newspapers shall not publish information and comments detrimental to the interest of the sovereignty and integrity of India, the security of the State and friendly relations with foreign countries. (Newspapers include journals, magazines and periodicals).

It becomes evident that the journalists profession implies respect for certain ethical and professional values. The adherence to the same values can sometimes be a problematic issue for those journalists who would not wish to compromise on their sense of integrity.

Codes of ethics exist under different names in many countries: they may be referred to as codes of honour, codes of the press, declarations of the rights and obligations of the journalist or charters of professional obligations, etc. Most of these, however varied, codes of ethics have certain common
denominators, particularly those concerning the primary function of the press to inform and to inform correctly: in this respect, the journalist has an obligation to defend the freedom and independence of information and comment, although it is understood that these two areas must remain distinct, to abide by the truth and consequently to avoid bias of the news through partisan or misleading presentation; to check the veracity of the information; to publish any necessary corrections; to preserve professional secrecy... other obligations are more on the level of elementary moral considerations: its refrain from slander, libel or the disclosure of private lives; to avoid debasing the standards of "public morals" by taking a lenient view of violence or vice; and to abstain from unfair methods (e.g., hiding one's identity as a journalist) in order to obtain information.16

The International Commission for the Study of Communication problems (a UNESCO body), known as the McBride Commission (Report, 1980) contended on the impossibility to agree on a uniform set of professional standards, due to the widely different political and social systems.

Considering the fact that the journalist would very often be finding himself or herself at the crossroads of professional commitment and attractive 'copy', the final decision taken would be quite a test of uprightness, though many are able to do so, easily, or, what is the level of bias or personal

16 Bohere, op.cit., p.64.
perception intruding into the reportage or presentation of information is an indication of how objective the news is.

To establish they are not first making up information, reporters find authorities or written reports and documents to which they can attribute facts. Attribution, as it is called, is the reporters' security blanket. The beauty of attribution is that it allows the reporter to introduce opinions into a story without losing the appearance of neutrality.\textsuperscript{17}

There would be at least some who would not like to be very pretentious about objectivity in news-making. A journalist may openly 'favour' bias with the plea that,

'A journalist' is not supposed to be biased. But when reporting on the problem, I say that you need some bias. To be a good reporter you must be biased in favour of truth. You must be biased in favour of life. You must be biased in favour of the future of the young. You must be biased in favour of peace and order. And, to be a good reporter you must be biased with passion. When you have the passion, like in investigative drug reporting, you don't count the hours of sleep that you loose, instead you count the lives that you help to save. When you have the passion, you don't count the days you may have to work beyond the usual hours. Instead, you count the years that you help add to many young lives. When you have the passion, you don't long for the glamour and the glory, instead you long for health and peace and happiness for yourself as well as for many others like you, through life without drugs. When you have the passion, you will have the courage.\textsuperscript{18}

We now come to our responses to the questionnaire we had administered, to gauge what journalists aspire for within the organisation.

\textsuperscript{17} Hamilton and Krimsky, 1996, \textit{Hold the Press.}
\textsuperscript{18} Lorie C.Camins, Investigative Drug Reporting - Tailing the Truth, paper presented at Regional Workshop on Reporting on Drug Related Crime, 2-3 May 1993, Manila.
To take an overall view of journalists career aspirations, 93 percent of the sample selected, chose journalism, on their own, that is, they were not influenced by their parents as much as their own motivation to take up this career. Only 3 percent said that their parents were crucial in their making this choice of profession. There were 2 male respondents, who said that they opted for this profession because they had no other opening. Both came from joint families. Overall, the data indicates, perhaps, the level of independence and high motivation to take up the writing profession, amongst journalists. This we feel ought to have a positive influence on their values and perceptions.

The main motivation for journalists to pursue this profession lies in their 'ability to highlight issues of general/social concern'. This was indicated by about 87 of the respondents, 48 of whom were earning less than Rs 8000/- per month and the rest 39 fell above the Rs 8000/- per month income bracket. 29 of these respondents were aged below 30, 38 fell within the 30-45 age bracket, while 20 out of 40, above 45 year old responded positively to this factor of main motivation. Most of these respondents [51 out of 87] come from nuclear family households.

The next popular motivation in this profession seems to have been the ability to exercise freedom of expression. 65 respondents were motivated by this reason. Wide social network seems to have motivated only 15 (9.1 percent) of the total numbers of respondents.
Graph-IVA: AGE-WISE MOTIVATION FOR THIS PROFESSION

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<th>&lt;30</th>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>21</td>
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<tr>
<td>WIDE SOCIAL NETWORK</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANY OTHER</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Graph-VIB: RESPONSES FOR POSSIBILITY OF JOURNALISTS RECOMMENDING THEIR PROFESSION TO A CLOSE FRIEND OR A RELATIVE

<table>
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<th>CAN'T SAY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FRIEND</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELATIVE</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Only 4 out of the 164 respondents felt that they were motivated by good money as a reason to join this profession. 3 out of these 4, were below 30 years of age.

There were other reasons cited by some journalists which they felt were great motivational reasons to join this profession. Out of the 16 respondents who gave these other reasons, some felt it was a very respectable profession so they had joined it, though some out of these also felt that the profession had lost its old glory and respect because a lot of people had entered the profession in order to make money or contacts in life, by hook or by crook. The profession has not retained the old commitment to ‘serve the nation and society’ as one respondent remarked but has become a short cut to avail other opportunities. Needless to add, this feeling was expressed by those who have been in this profession for the last 15-20 years, at least. Ironically, ‘good money’ and ‘wide social network’ as main motivations have not found too many takers in our sample.

There was one journalist who cited a very interesting motivation to join this profession which he chose after a lot of deliberation. He felt he needed to be a ‘witness to history’, which would have been possible in this profession only.

One of the journalists, who is the bureau chief of a Hindi daily, joined the profession after having served in the Army and fought the World War II. He said he wanted to lead an active life after retirement, and journalism
provided him with ample opportunities for the same. A sprightly figure at the age 68, he was extremely cynical of the new breed of journalists who he felt did not have the commitment the vocation demanded.

Another senior journalist (45 years), bureau chief of a paper being published from Nagpur, was mainly motivated by his commitment for social change. One journalist who chose this profession for wide social network it offers, besides his "love for 'by lines'" has, now switched over to teaching and taken up the directorship of a new media centre in a central University. Possibly, the 'wide social network' gets to be too stifling, after a point of time; Far from the madding crowd, we wonder? "Self-actualization" or to "know myself better" were other major motivations, for a few.

There was one respondent whose main motivation was the lively job that journalism is, whereas for another it was a "fait accompli".

A young lady journalist expressed 'creativity' as the main motivation for her joining the profession. Another female journalist felt that her main motivation for joining this profession was the opportunity it provided, to read and write, extensively. A chief reporter with an English daily was motivated by the sense of responsibility that journalism entails.

C. On the question of whether the respondent would recommend this profession to a close friend (who would have similar qualifications), almost 67 percent i.e. 13.4 percent said no whereas a good 35 (21.3 percent) were unsure.
Interestingly, when it came to the query on whether they would recommend this profession to a family member, lesser number of people said yes. Only 51.8 percent (85) were positively inclined over this, 30 respondents said they would not recommend it as a profession to pursue, as against the 22 in the earlier query. The increase in the number of unsure responses also is perhaps an indication of the lack of a sense of belonging, for journalists. The first question gives us the impression that journalists are quite a motivated lot - the fact that 65 percent of them would find it good enough to be recommended to a close friend.

But they do not seem to be motivated enough; the fact that only about half the numbers of respondents would recommend it to a family member, is perhaps an indication of a generally average motivational level. Of the 22 who responded negatively to the query on recommending it to a close friend, only 1 (one) was a female.

19 out of the 47, below 30 years, 38 out of 77, 35-45 years and 28 out of the 40, 45 plus respondents replied in the positive to the query on recommending it to a family member. From this data, it seems that the percentage of journalists who would recommend their profession to family members, is influenced proportionate to their age i.e. the senior journalists are more likely to recommend it to their family members.

Next, we come to the query regarding the possibility of a change of professional set-up. Interestingly, only 8 out of 164 were not sure of an
answer or, chose not to respond. The rest threw some light on the possible latent aspirations of journalists.

86, i.e. 52.4 percent respondents were willing to join another set up within the print medium. To the question, 'In case you are offered an opportunity for a change of professional set-up, you would opt for': these 86 expressed the desire to move over to better professional environs, which they felt that their respective newspaper organisations did not provide. This may be an indication of the grass-is-greener-on-the-other-side-syndrome but also certainly an indication of the possibility of high rate of horizontal mobility where joining another paper or magazine may not be such a difficult proposition. This may also be taken as a variable influencing the sense of rootedness or loyalty to the particular newspaper organisation that each journalist would have. Positively, this scope for fluidity of job (hops) would also allow for an openness of mind, sans the rigid attitude that may otherwise have accompanied diehard loyalists. An atmosphere which provides scope for an exchange of professional settings within similar job expectations - would also be allowing for a great scope for freedom of expression and a healthy competitive spirit.

29.3 percent (48) of the respondents were keen on the electronic media which may be an indication of changing times, where a lot of electronic influences are invading the erstwhile traditional structures of the print medium. We do get to know of a number of journalists having taken to the electronic
medium, to disseminate their views or independent, news based programmes to an increasingly knowledgeable populace. There is no denying the fact the TV's impact would be much wider than the newspapers. However, this may be a transitory trend only because with better literacy levels to growing awareness of the masses with regard to national and transnational realities, there may at least be a consistent number of people interested in in-depth knowledge of the same; if not more.

14 respondents, mostly men, had other options in mind, too. For instance, 2 were interested in writing books, 2 in research, 1 wanted to try out the option of teaching while another would like to try the legal profession. Social work was also on the minds of two of the respondents.

If we look at the overall picture of responses to this question, it seems to us that at least 50 percent of the journalists would not mind a different option, whatever it may be, in terms of change of medium or merely another professional set-up. This gives us the impression of a highly mobile professional group with achievement oriented work-values which journalists find themselves working within.

This could also mean that the individual in this profession sees for himself/herself a lot of scope for self-enhancement coupled with immense creative potentials, not only within his/her particular news paper organization, but also outside. And that is significant for us, sociologists who want to understand the inner subjectivities, of people who construct or interpret social
reality. A person who does not feel too bound by the shackles of his/her professional organization, is not only likelier to be unconstrained in his or her mode of thinking but, one who also understands the power dimension being able to wield the pen, whichever way she/he wills.

The large number of probables for other options may also be an indication of the disenchantment that the journalist faces at the hands of a bureaucratic and possibly politically - ridden work atmosphere, wherein the scope of individual creativity does not get materialised on a very significant scale. This is likely to influence the individual motivation to stay on, which in turn would influence the number of people who would recommend it to the friends and family. Especially, the gap in terms of those who would recommend it to their friends as against their family is an indicator of ambiguity of motivational standards, journalists set for themselves.

It would help to delve into some other details of background of respondents who have responded positively to alternate professional settings. 48 out of 86 who would be willing to join another newspaper or magazine, earn less than Rs 8000/- per month. 38, earn more. 55 of these 86 respondents live either in nuclear set ups i.e. husband, wife, children, or are living on their own as singles or twosomes (other category) i.e, a large number of those who wish to, or could, if given the choice, join another newspaper organization/magazine, do not come from joint family/households so are not
constrained by traditional/denominators like security, loyalty to the same organization etc. which may be a pressurising influence in joint families.

- 47 percent of the female respondents, and 55 percent of the male respondents would opt for the print medium if given the choice. 60 percent of those below 30 years, 53 percent of those below 30-45 years and 42 percent of those above 45 years showed their inclination for changing over to another print medium. The inverse relationship between inclination to change and age may be a revealer of declining aspirations for change of set-up with increasing age or, it may be an indication of a sense of belonging or rootedness to the particular news paper organisation one is working with.

- 48 of the respondents i.e., 29.3 percent would like to switch to the electronic media. Out of these, 32 in our sample were earning less than Rs 8000/-, and 16 more than Rs 8000/- per month, at the time of conducting this field work. This may be an indication of increased aspirations for change of set up when one is earning below a certain standard of incomes.

- Of the 48 who had like to join the electronic media, only 10 belong to joint families, 38 come from other type of nuclear or single-member set-ups.

- 14 under-30-respondents, as against 28 in the first choice (print medium), would be interested in the electronic media, 21 as against 41
fall in the 30-45 years age bracket and have shown their inclination for the electronic media. 13 (as compared to 17 in the first case) over 45 years old would be interested in the same, if offered choice.

The fact that the number of positive responses vis-a-vis the print medium (a different newspaper/magazine) is almost double that of those for the electronic media is a noteworthy feature, considering the fact that we are fast moving towards an electronic invasion of sorts which is a much more 'convenient' mode of information rather than newspaper/magazines. But, despite the many 'attractions' of the electronic media, there do not seem to be too many takers. The power or the aura of the written word as a mode of communication seems to be a major force to reckon with, even within the community of (prone to mobility) journalists. They seem to be interested in another job, but not far beyond he parameters of what they are already pursuing; the need for change is not without conditions, it is need for change of newspaper organisation not necessarily job itself.

About 30 percent (50) journalists in our sample had done some professional course related to their job and 10 i.e., 6.1 percent had studied beyond the post graduation level i.e., they had completed an M.Phil or Ph.D.

Most of the journalists we administered our questionnaire to, have had an urban upbringing. Only 6 i.e., 3.7 percent have lived in a village during most of their educational years. 25 percent admitted to have spent the same
time period in a small town whereas 71.3 percent i.e., 117 have had their educational upbringing in a large city.

The next question pertaining to close family relations did not reveal a very different response. About 63 percent journalists have most of their close family relatives living in cities and only 12 i.e., 7.3 percent have the same in villages.

In our sample 55 percent of the journalists said that their income was less than Rs.8,000/- per month while 74 i.e., 45 percent admitted to earning more than Rs.8,000/- per month.

We wonder if this was an attempt to hide the true picture/reality or it was related to the age factor. Considering that about 76 percent of the sample is below 45 years of age with about 29 percent below 30, this may be one of the reasons for the lower income bracket having more number of journalists. However, we still have our reservations about the truth of the matter. During a few of my umpteen visits to the newspaper offices, to collect my questionnaire, I was confronted with a number of queries about the purpose of the questionnaire. ‘How do I know you will not pass this on to the income-tax wallahs’ one senior journalist had quipped. Another one had very pointedly said, ‘why, should I give you details of my real income.’ Another one had expressed similar reservations about ‘writing on paper’ about his income which could always be ‘misused’. The fact that almost 30-40 journalists had expressed skepticism on this front, gave one the impression that there was a
discrepancy between what they were admitting to (in our questionnaire) as against what may actually be the case, in reality. Besides, there were some who admitted to having certain privileges courtesy their stature of belonging to the ‘Press’ cadre which would not necessarily mean of a monetary monthly income kind only. Some admitted to ‘working for’ foreign news agencies which offered them lucrative writing assignments - all on the sly of course.

Only 27.4 percent i.e., 45 out of 164 journalists admitted to living in joint family households. About 60 percent have nuclear family set-ups whereas 21 i.e., 12.8 percent have ‘other’ types of set up i.e., they were either living alone or with some partner.

47 of our respondents were below 36 years, 77 between 30 and 45 years of age, whereas 40 happened to be above 45 years of age.

This part of the questionnaire was a very helpful tool in understanding the perspectives of journalists and how they could possibly be influenced by the same mental make-up in their writings. It may not provide adequate understanding of the interpretation of events that all news makers give but it does in many ways corroborate our hypotheses regarding their social background/work culture and personality determining their ideas or ideology so their journalistic skills too. Candidly highlighting the pressures of time and space under which journalists work Broder feels that, "we would acknowledge the inherent limitations and imperfections in our work - instead of reacting defensively when they are pointed out, we could say plainly what we all know
to be the case, that the process of selecting what the reader reads involves not just objective facts but subjective judgements. \(^{19}\)

It would be interesting to read what aspiring journalists have to say to the question of what a journalist is:

At the Columbia Graduate School of Journalism, students are challenged to think about the role of the journalist in society. To that end, in their required ‘Critical Issues in Journalism’ class, professors James W. Carey and Stephen D. Isaacs posed the question: What is a journalist? How do you define the profession you are planning to enter?

A nonfiction writer with a job.

A journalist is a trained writer and observer, one who perceives an event and reports it accurately, concisely, completely, and, hopefully, elegantly, "Journalism" is that portion of writing which meets these requirements. All else is hackery, opinion, novelization, rubbish, and nonsense.

If you write something factual, you are a journalist - though not necessarily a good one. If you write something factual and relevant to a given readership, you are an employable journalist. If you write something factual, relevant, concise, and insightful, you might be a good journalist.

I don't know yet. That's why I'm here. So all I can share is my vision of what I hope I will be when I'm through here: the eyes, the ears, the voice, the heart, the soul and the conscience of those who trust me to tell their stories, and those whose lives may be changed by them.

A (good) journalist imposes order, or a sense of order, on the chaotic world we all inhabit. He does this by telling his reader

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what happened, why it happened, who someone is, why they are the way they are. Most importantly, the journalist explain why these seemingly random facts are important enough to warrant precious moments of the reader's attention.

Journalists are the people entrusted with defining reality.

Journalists would be insufferable in any other profession. They are people temperamentally inclined to the job: they are curious, or restless, they hate desk jobs, hate doing the same thing every day, and have no compelling interest in something more specific.

A journalist is entrusted with the power to keep an eye on government, private industry, social trends, and the like. He or she is an essential part of a democracy, offering a check against the abuses of power.

Recording history is not the goal of the journalist, but this is ultimately what he or she accomplishes in the attempt to present information that is believed to be of importance to the public.

To me, journalism is a call to search for the truth, regardless of where the effort may lead, and fairly and accurately report the results. I came here to become a journalist, not a writer. There is a difference.

20 Columbia Journalism Review, November/December 1996.