Professionalization in journalism is a controversial issue. There exist three viewpoints in this regard. Most of the journalists consider journalism as a profession, as it serves some public cause. But sociologists in India and abroad are divided on this issue. Whereas some sociologists differ from journalists and submit that journalism cannot be a profession as neither freelancing is encouraged in it nor does its practice require any formal training or licence; others perceive some elements of professionalization in it, such as service to the public and a knowledge base. There are many other controversial issues in the sociology of profession, such as what makes an occupation a profession, and what causes deprofessionalization. These issues are very closely associated with the status of journalism as a profession. In the absence of adequate empirical data, such controversies remain unresolved.

The present chapter, therefore, assesses the nature of professionalisation in journalism and reflects on a few general controversies in the sociology of profession.

In the present endeavour professionalisation in journalism has been examined on the subcontinua of four attributes, i.e., general systematic knowledge, norm of
altruism, autonomy, and monopoly. The data on these attributes was gathered with the help of a scale which comprised of four subscales, each measuring one attribute with equal number of items. An attempt has also been made to evaluate the role of the Indian Federation of Working Journalists and the Press Council of India with regard to the attainment of professional status for journalism.

There is no unanimous opinion on the need for certified professional training in journalism. Three opinions persist on this issue. First, a favouring majority; second, an opposing insignificant minority; and third, an indifferent minority. In the medical and legal professions compulsory professional training has been unanimously accepted. But in journalism training is not essential. This is proved by the fact that in a sample of 160, only 45 journalists have had professional training; and that no journalist wanted to restrict entry into journalism by licensing.

1 Professional authority, a key attribute of profession, could not be included because in journalism there is no face to face relationship with clients. Authority that the journalists enjoy may be termed as legal authority, the legitimacy of which is drawn from the written rules of the concerned newspaper organisation.

2 Collins has very rightly pointed out that, "training in specific professions, such as medicine, engineering, scientific or scholarly research, teaching and law can plausibly be considered vocationally relevant and possibly essential" (1977 : 1006).
The most common pattern of education in journalism in India is that of one year diploma course after a bachelor degree. Part time courses and refresher courses are also offered. Unlike this, in the medical and legal professions long periods of training indicate the complexity of these professions' body of knowledge, and, therefore, the cognitive superiority of the professionals. Two other noticeable features of journalism education are: first, training through private institutions, and second, on-the-job training. This shows that knowledge in journalism is not very complex as it can also be imparted by other private institutions not affiliated to universities. Moreover, journalism education in the universities is still professionally immature and even lacks the basic infrastructure. The Press Council has no concern with journalism education; the Federation (IFWJ) has made some efforts, but in vain.

In the absence of any standard of professional knowledge to check entry, journalism remains an open occupation. The important thing is that the journalists themselves are divided on the issue of restriction on entry. As a result proprietors have a final say with regard to recruitment, promotion and termination of services. This shows complete lack of monopoly of journalists and their professional associations.

To serve public interest journalists are supposed to give objective reporting, to avoid rumours and to observe restraint while publishing communal matters. Two opposite
trends are noticeable in the journalists' response to the observance of certain norms of altruism. They have shown a low degree of altruism when the interests of the proprietors or journalists are to be adversely affected, and a high degree of altruism otherwise. They sacrifice public interest for self-interest and exploit their status and opportunities for non-journalistic purposes; sometimes they accept certain gratifications and inducements for publication or suppression of news.

The observance of the norm of altruism is related to the journalists' motivation for taking to journalism. While a majority of journalists has such motivations as monetary gains, adventure and glamour of the job, only about 10 per cent of them have the motive of serving the community. Another cause for low altruism is the absence of an exhaustive and adequately enforced code of ethic. The Press Council and the Federation have only too often shown their inability in prescribing and enforcing a code of ethics. They have failed to impose restraint in reporting on communal matters in particular, and to compel journalists to observe the norm of altruism in general. This is so because the Council lacks statutory powers and the Federation does not enjoy the unanimous support of journalists all over the country.

As far as the attribute of autonomy or freedom of expression is concerned, the Constitution of India provides no greater freedom to journalists than to the ordinary citizens. A few general laws, as noted in the fifth chapter, restrict
the journalists' freedom of expression in favour of public interest, stability of the government, honour of the judicial system and sovereignty of the country. It may be noted that journalists have claimed their right to have access to official documents of public interest, and to keep the source of their information secret as a professional obligation. Both these claims are yet to be considered by the state.

Within a newspaper organisation the main interference is of the proprietor. Journalists have to function in accordance with the editorial policy which is dictated by the proprietors, primarily serving their commercial interests. The journalists' autonomy is curtailed when the proprietor's interest comes in the way. Sanctions to check negligence of the editorial policy are exercised by both senior editors and proprietors, but the proprietors being the paymasters, hold the upper hand. To ensure autonomy the journalists want that the editorial policy should be framed with their consultation and that this policy should not go beyond the editorial columns. They also want a clear demarcation between the areas under the control of the editor and the proprietor, and an assurance for job security. Journalists have yet to attain these privileges.

What is evident from the foregoing is that despite journalists' claim of being professionals, journalism is short of the professional status on the subcontinuum of the four key attributes. It has neither cognitive exclusiveness nor cognitive superiority. So far as the observance of the norm of altruism is concerned, personal interests are preferred to
public interests. Being predominantly an occupation of the employed, it does not enjoy either autonomy or monopoly. It must be noticed that journalists have failed to convince any significant number about their concern for altruism and, therefore, they are unable to justify their claim for autonomy and monopoly. But it is interesting to note that nevertheless some journalists and professional associations are still trying to gain the attributes of altruism, autonomy and monopoly.

The evaluation of the nature of professionalism in journalism leads to a few interrelated issues: Will journalism ever attain the status of a profession? Does every occupation have a potential for professionalisation? Why does a particular occupation achieve the status of a profession earlier than others? When does a profession deprofessionalise? What happens once the process of deprofessionalisation begins? Resolution of these issues may be sought in the attributional processual and power perspectives of sociology of professions.

The advocates of attributional approach perceive a dichotomy between professions and non-professions. A profession has certain intrinsic attributes which are absent in an occupation, or are found only to a negligible extent. Professional status is a gift of society for an important service rendered to it. Therefore, every occupation cannot achieve professional status. By implication professionalisation is not a universal process.

Processualists on the other hand strongly criticise the attributionalists’ view of dichotomy, and perceive a continuum of professionalisation. Some occupations are more
professionalised than others. Occupations which are less professional today will be more professional in due course of time. The degree of professionalisation in an occupation is determined by the number and extent of professional attributes acquired by it. Pioneer processualists delineated schematised stages of professionalisation and claimed their universal applicability. Modern processualists criticise the notion of the schematised stages of professionalisation in every occupation, since every occupation has its own historical process of professionalisation.

Contrary to the processualists' view, power theorists do not observe any qualitative difference between professions and non-professions, except that the former have greater power than the latter. Professionalisation is the process through which an occupation convinces the significant others to have acquired the attributes of general systematic knowledge and norm of altruism, while actually it may not have acquired these⁴. In order to attain the privileges of the professional status an occupation monopolises its practice by restricting by means of licensing.

In view of these theoretical frames, the factors influencing professionalisation may be classified into three categories: (a) historicity of an occupation, (b) inherent

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⁴ Freidson holds that the general systematic knowledge and the norm of altruism, "are more usefully treated as elements of an ideology than as empirical characteristics of individual and collective professional behaviour. Taken as an ideology, they have empirical status as claims about their members made by occupations to gain and maintain professional monopoly" (1977 : 32-33).
basic structure, and (e) organisational structure. The most obvious question that emerges is: Which of the three factors plays the most crucial role in the professionalisation of an occupation?

Firstly, keeping in view of the historicity of an occupation, it may be submitted that the occupations which emerged earlier in the society got professionalised earlier, e.g., the legal and medical professions. Since journalism has a very short history of only two hundred years, professionalisation in it started very late; and the professional status is yet to be achieved.

The contrary view is that journalism will never acquire the status of a profession because its clientele is not clearly identifiable and the norm of altruism cannot be precisely defined. These problems relate to the inherent structure of journalism. For example, the patients and litigants are the clearly identified clients of the medical and legal professions respectively. A direct face to face relationship exists between doctors and patients and between lawyers and litigants. Unlike this, in journalism the client is not very clear; the society at large is the client which consists of various groups with diverse interests. These groups are not in face to face interaction with journalists. Their relations get manifestations only through the printed word. Due to this indirect interaction with clients, journalists lack professional authority.
The nature of the client is closely related with the possibility of evolving a norm of altruism. In medical profession doctors have a single aim of improving the health of the patient. In the legal profession a lawyer's single aim is to serve the litigant's interest. But the journalist's service to the client - the public - is not explicit. There is a reason for it. The interest of the medical profession's client - the patient - does not clash with that of the society. The interest of the legal profession's client - the litigant - may, in some cases, clash with that of the society. The interests of journalists' clients - a group, government and the public at large - clash very often. Therefore, there is higher consensus on the norm of altruism (patient's health) in medical profession than in the legal profession. So far as journalism is concerned there is no clear-cut definition of the public interest due to the multiple and conflicting interests of different sections of society; interest of one group clashes with that of the other, e.g., industrialists versus workers, upper class versus lower class, and, sometimes, state versus the public.

In journalism, the multiplicity in clients' interests and disagreement on what the public interest is, are the major constraints in developing a consensual code of ethics in particular and a norm of altruism in general. It may be contended that the greater the consensus and clarity on the interest of the client the higher the degree of observance of the norm of altruism.
There are also other organisational factors which influence the professionalisation of an occupation. Of such factors, employment in an organisation is the most debated one. It has been argued that the employment in an organisation leads to the loss of professional autonomy. Journalism, being an almost completely employed occupation, cannot attain professional status. Both the medical and legal professions, being predominantly freelance, enjoy high degree of professional autonomy and altruism.

The controversy whether the employed or the freelance professionals are more altruistic is based on two counter arguments: First, the employed professionals' service orientation to the client is restricted by various types of regulations imposed by the employer, private or public. Second, the employed professionals may be more altruistic than the free professionals, since the former get fixed salary and the latter are profit oriented due to direct payment by the client, and since the former are subjected to more severe sanction for violation of ethical code than the latter. This argument may also imply that altruism will be greater in a socialist than in a capitalist system. In fact, validity of these arguments needs empirical investigation.

Pandey holds the view that, "The capitalist system survives on the creation of the professional class for profit. It is probable that conditions within professional occupations will further deteriorate and the deprofessionalisation process will proceed" (1985: 27).
In this context the process of deprofessionalisation among the doctors and lawyers - employed or unemployed - is of great interest. As shown by many studies these professionals are losing service orientation. In fact the pursuance of the norm of altruism depends, to a great extent, on the consciousness of the individual professional. An interprofession and intraprofession comparison of the observance of norm of altruism by employed and unemployed professionals may provide deeper insights in this context.

Deprofessionalisation (i.e. the erosion of professional attributes) among doctors and lawyers raises, as noted earlier, an important issue: What leads to deprofessionalisation? We would like to examine this issue in the context of journalism and extend the arguments to other professions.

Before independence journalism was generally practised both as an occupation and a mission to serve the community. Most of the journalists joined it with a missionary zeal. There was one common goal for most of the journalists, i.e. independence of the country. After independence a remarkable change came in the nature of journalism. It became a source of income, as the press developed as an industry due to huge capital investments. With this, monetary considerations became primary for both the owner of the paper and the journalists. Corrupt practices emerged in the form of sensationalism, and yellow journalism. Multiple interests clashed, and this led to the problem of defining public interest. Hence low degree of altruism and subsequently low autonomy and monopoly. A general
decline in the autonomy of editors and other journalists was
gained after independence. Initially newspapers were owned by
proprietor-editors and, therefore, journalists enjoyed greater
freedom. Later on, as the press slipped into the hands of
industrialists due to heavy capital investments, editors and
journalists became employees of the newspaper-owner. Thus,
a basic change in the ownership structure of the newspapers,
particularly of large papers, reduced the journalists' autonomy. Another factor which restricted the autonomy of
journalists was the state regulation as and when their role
was considered against public interest. This happened during
the British rule and during the Emergency after independence.

Historicity does not bring about deprofessionalisation.
Had it been so, the old professions like medicine and law, would
have deprofessionalised much earlier. In fact deprofessional-
isation is related to ambiguity in the norm of altruism and
low degree of altruism on the part of professionals which lead
to loss of autonomy, authority and monopoly due to public or
state interventions. This happened in journalism and it must
have been so in medical and legal professions too.

Scholars, like Madan (1972), Prasad (1979) and Gandhi
(1982) have rightly indicated deprofessionalisation among
doctors and lawyers due to their weak altruistic orientation.5

5Madan submits that doctors observe their profession, "in terms
of making a living rather than in terms of some notion of
social responsibility. The practice of medicine emerges as a
kind of business, though most respondents denied this, and the
first concern of doctor is to enhance his earnings" (1972 ;
93-94). Similarly, Prasad contends that, "the profession of
medicine, as may be observed, has become a profession to serve
the doctors and not the patients or the society at large"
(1979:3). In case of the legal profession, Gandhi (1982)
discovered that lawyers show no regard to their professional
role expectations. The regard is shown only to the clients'
potentiality as a source of profit.
But their analysis is incomplete since they have not indicated the effect of weak altruism on other attributes, like autonomy, authority and monopoly. Deprofessionalisation is a process; low strength of one attribute will weaken other attributes. They also did not examine the situation in which deprofessionalisation began in medical and legal professions, the extent it has reached and the factors that contributed to it.

The attributional and processual theorists observe a positive relationship among various professional attributes, whereas the power theorists do not. Each position has different implications for the process of professionalisation and deprofessionalisation. A positive relationship will mean simultaneous deprofessionalisation in all attributes. Absence of relationship among them may mean deprofessionalisation in one attribute (altruism) and professionalisation in other attributes. A third possibility is that deprofessionalisation of one attribute may deprofessionalise other attributes not immediately but in a longer span of time and this span may vary from one profession to another.

To be precise about deprofessionalisation in journalism we examined the relationship among three attributes - general systematic knowledge, norm of altruism, and autonomy. For this purpose Yule's 'Q' test has been applied on the fourfold contingent tables of these variables. The data indicate no significant positive relationship between general systematic knowledge and altruism ($Q = .15$), systematic knowledge and autonomy ($Q = .13$), autonomy and altruism ($Q = .18$) (See Tables...
Professionalisation or deprofessionalisation of an occupation may not necessarily move equally on the subcontinent of all the key attributes. These relationships mean that deprofessionalisation in altruism may cause deprofessionalisation in other attributes in the long run, if not immediately. As pointed out earlier, it happened in journalism and may happen in medical and legal professions also.

The last general question that we address here is:

What does happen once the process of deprofessionalisation begins? The present study shows that deprofessionalisation is followed by the process of reprofessionalisation. When the service orientation of a profession is doubted or questioned, the various social forces may curtail its monopoly and autonomy, which a profession does not want to lose. The profession, therefore, tries to regain its decreasing dignity, and the process of how reprofessionalisation begins. Some evidence of this process may be observed in journalism. As noted earlier, the observance of high degree of norm of altruism in journalism has been doubted by the public and the government which has adversely affected journalists' autonomy and monopoly. To regain public confidence, the journalists are laying strong stress in various forums on the observance of a high degree of norm of altruism. The declarations of the National Union of Journalists in February 1981, and of the Indian Federation of Working Journalists in September 1986 are examples of deliberate efforts for reprofessionalisation in journalism.
Similarly, in other professions such as medicine, where deprofessionalisation has been observed, a process of reprofessionalisation in terms of renewed stress on observance of altruism may begin, if their practitioners apprehend a social threat to their autonomy, authority and monopoly. It has been found that the medical profession has abused its autonomy for personal profits. The status of medical profession may be at a stake in the future which may initiate the process of reprofessionalisation in terms of greater altruism. These are, however, only inferential observations, and any conclusion in this direction will require continuous study of various professions.