Chapter VI

SUMMARY AND FINDINGS
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The social background and professional role performance of journalists in Assam now may be summarized as follows:

SOCIAL BACKGROUND OF THE JOURNALISTS IN ASSAM

1. More than half (51.4 percent) of the journalist respondents of Assam belonged to the age group of 36-50 years and the representation of middle aged category of age is high in the study.

2. Among the 399 respondents, majority (96.70 percent) are overwhelmingly male while 13 are female journalists (3.30 percent).

3. The representation of Hindu journalists was high in the journalism profession of Assam (83.2 percent). The Muslims who constitute more than one-third of the population of Assam have a moderate representation with 16.3 percent.

4. Majority (58.9 percent) of the respondents belong to General Category. Thus, the representation of general caste category is the highest.

5. Most of the respondents are married (79.2 percent). The distribution of respondents in relation to age and marital status clearly indicates late marriage among the journalists in Assam.

6. About three-fourth (73.9 percent) of the respondent’s mother tongue is Assamese, followed by a little less than one-sixth (15.3 percent) having Bengali as their mother tongue.

7. A little more than one-third (36.8 percent) know all the languages i.e., Assamese, Bengali, Hindi and English. Among the remaining near about one-fourth of the respondents (27.6 percent) know Assamese and English languages.
8. As far as the educational qualification of the respondents is concerned the data show that most of the respondents (68.9 percent) are graduates while 9 percent of respondents have studied up to higher secondary level.

9. As many as 336 (84.2 percent) have received education in vernacular medium schools while the remaining 63 (15.8 percent) completed their schooling in English medium schools. It is in agreement with the fact that after independence the number of Assamese schools at secondary level has increased tremendously, and most of the journalists are currently engaged by vernacular newspapers.

10. The educational attainment of more than two-fifth (46.90 percent) of the respondents fathers is upto higher secondary followed by those who are graduates (21.3 percent), while one-fifth (20.6 percent) of respondents father have an education up to high school level and only few cases (6.5 percent) of education are up to primary level and 1.3 per cent of fathers have attained post graduation. A low 3.3 percentage of respondents reported that their father have no formal education.

11. The data indicate that more than one-third (37.6 percent) level of mothers’ education is up to high school, followed by those (30.8 percent) who have an education up to higher secondary. A little less than one-fifth (19.0 percent) have education up to primary level, while only few (5.3 percent) mothers are graduates. Only one mother of a respondent has post graduation and under the technical or professional category, there was none.

12. Most of the respondents’ grandfathers have never gone to school (37.3 percent), while a little less than one-fourth (22.1 percent) of the respondents’ grandfathers have primary level of education.

13. As far as occupation of the respondents is concerned more than three-fourth (75.9 percent) has journalism as their main occupation. However, a considerable section of respondents' main occupation is teaching (9 percent); about 7 percent of the respondents are into business; while 6 percent of the respondents are employed in governmental service and do practice journalism as a subsidiary occupation.
14. The subsidiary occupation data reveal that more than one-third of the respondents (39.8 percent) have no subsidiary occupation while amongst the remaining, a majority (16.0 percent) has their own business; and a little less than one-tenth (9.3 percent) are into the profession of teaching. Some (4.3 percent) of the respondents have private service as their subsidiary occupation.

15. The occupation of respondents' fathers show that more than one-fourth of them are businessmen (29.6 percent) followed by government service holders (27.8 percent) respectively.

16. Most of the respondents' fathers, (99.5 percent) have no subsidiary occupation. Of fathers of the remaining two respondents', one of them pursue journalism while the other has business as a subsidiary mode of occupation.

17. Only 0.5 percent of the respondent is intergenerationally immobile. The horizontal intergenerational mobility from other professional groups is also very low (0.5 percent). The rate of vertical intergenerational mobility into journalism profession was extremely high (98 percent). Thus the data suggest that the occupational prestige of journalism profession in Assam is very low in comparison to the occupational prestige of other professions.

18. Out of the 399 respondents, 89 (22.3 percent) experienced intragenerational mobility which means that journalism was their first profession for more than four-fifths i.e., 310 (77.7 percent) respondents. Of the 89 (22.3 percent) respondents who had some other occupation other than journalism, three did not specify the nature of the occupation and their responses were considered invalid. Thus total number of intragenerationally mobile journalists for purpose of analysis is 85 (21.3 percent).

19. The data also show a high amount of intragenerational mobility takes place from the teaching occupation (38.8 percent). This is in agreement with the fact that journalism requires special writing skills and those in the teaching profession have a flair for writing and opt for journalism jobs to enhance their social status and a desire for self-expression. Thus it is in conformity
with the fact that majority of the journalists profess journalism even after keeping other sources of occupation intact.

20. The occupational status of more than four-fifths (89.2 percent) of the respondents' mother were housewives, while only 3.3 percent are in teaching.

21. The data also shows that nearly two-thirds (64.9 percent) of the respondents' wives are housewives. About 7.3 percent are in teaching; while 2.8 percent in government service.

22. Out of the total 399 respondents, only 13 are female journalists of which eight are married. Of the eight married respondents, four have their husbands in business, one engaged in governmental service and the remaining three did not respond.

23. The representation of rural journalists (those born in a village) was high with 70.9 percent followed by those born in a town (27.6 percent), and the remaining 6 percent were born in a city.

24. About fourth-fifths (80.7 percent) of the respondents are residing in the present place of posting since birth, followed by (6 percent) residing for last 6-10 years and more than 20 years respectively.

25. A little more than two-fifths (40.6 percent) of the respondents reside in the house owned by their parents. Thus it can be construed that the respondents' dependence on rented accommodation is comparatively less and can heave a sigh of relief as house rents are sky-rocketing.

26. There has been almost equal distribution of respondents residing in nuclear (42.4 percent) and joint families (45.1 percent). The data show that a little less than two-third (62.2 percent) of respondents have small families, while a little more than one-third (35.3 percent) have medium sized families and only 2.5 percent of the respondents have large families.

27. Only 11 percent of the journalists in Assam are lone earning members. More than half (57.4 percent) of respondents have two earning members in the
family followed by more than one-fifth (21.8 percent) having three earning members.

28. More than one-third (36.1 percent) of the respondents have two dependents and 23.8 percent of the respondents have three dependant family members depending solely on their income. Notably a little less than one-fifth (19 percent) of respondents have more than four dependent.

29. The family income of the respondents indicates that more than one-fifth (22.6 percent) of the respondents family fall under the Rs 15,001 – Rs 20,000 income category; followed by the family income groups of Rs 11,001 - Rs 15,000 with 18.5 percent. More than one-tenth (16.5 percent) respondents are in Rs 8,001- Rs 11,000 income group while another 15.5 respondents are in income group of Rs 20,001 – Rs 25,000.

30. The ownership of land by the respondents reveals that 44.4 percent of them does not own land and reside at the land owned either by parents or other family members.

31. The data also show that more than one-tenth (14.8 percent) of the respondents have taken loan from money lenders or financial institutions.

32. Almost cent percent possess a savings bank account; while 52.1 percent of the respondents have savings in schemes like NSC, LIC, etc. Another 9.3 percent have invested in stocks and shares while 8 percent have investments in Public Provident Fund. Thus the data suggests that possession of saving accounts among the majority of respondents is an indicator that the respondent must possess a bank account for receiving their salaries and payments from the media organization.

33. The possession of consumer durables by the respondents reveals that more than two-thirds of them own a two-wheeler (78.69 percent) and another 15.53 percent intend to buy the same in the near future. The possession of a two-wheeler by majority of respondents is an indicator that they use their vehicle for routine coverage. The data also indicate that a little less than one-tenth (9 percent) of the respondents possess credit cards and the remaining 91 percent do not possess the same.
PROFESSIONAL ROLE PERFORMANCE OF THE JOURNALISTS IN ASSAM

The professional role performance is analyzed in terms of profile of the respondent, designation, duration of service, area of operations, beats/ specialized work area.

1. Out of the 399 respondents, 347 (86.96 percent) are from regional print media representing the broadsheet daily newspapers in Assamese, Bengali, English, Hindi and Karbi; while 35 (8.77 percent) are representatives from regional electronic media such as satellite television news channels. The remaining 17 respondents (4.26 percent) work for both print and electronic media.

2. Of the 86.96 percent respondents who represent the regional print media belong to 26 newspapers organizations, while 8.77 percent journalists who represent the electronic media belong to 5 regional television news channels.

3. The data show that out of 347 (86.96 percent) regional print media journalists, the highest number of 61 respondents (15.3 percent) are from Asomiya Pratidin, followed by Dainik Janasadharan with 47 respondents (11.8 percent); and Dainik Agradoot with 30 respondents (7.5 percent) as shown in Table- 35.

4. In respect to regional electronic media journalists, News live and DY 365 represent equal number of 11 respondents each (2.8 percent) followed by Ne TV with 8 respondents (2 percent), and News Time with 4 respondents (1 percent).

5. Among the 399 respondents, majority of the respondents (96.7 percent) are male journalists while the remaining are female journalists (3.3 percent).

6. Designation of the respondents shows that a little more than one-third (34.6 percent) are working as correspondents followed by a little less than one-fourth (24.8 percent) as reporters. Staff reporters constitute 19 percent of the total respondents followed by 4.8 percent in the position of senior correspondents and special correspondents (2.5 percent) respectively.
7. More than one-third (38.1 percent) of the respondents have a length of service ranging from 6-10 years, while another 30.6 percent of them have served the profession for 11-15 years.

8. The data indicate that a majority of the respondents (55.4 Percent) have a news coverage area within the limits of district, followed by 40.6 percent having coverage area within the sub-division.

9. About 59.1 percent of journalists choose to join the journalism profession in order ‘to serve the society’. About 25.1 percent reported that they joined the profession ‘to achieve high social statuses’, while a significant indicator to choice of profession for the respondents (23.8 percent) was ‘compelled by circumstances to join the profession such as problem of unemployment, problems in services, etc’.

10. In order to ascertain the person who played the role of a motivator in influencing the respondent towards journalism more than two-thirds (37.1 percent) respondents’ main source of motivation was ‘self-motivational’. For 18.5 percent of the respondent, the motivation came from their family members which include mother and other members of the family like brothers and sisters. ‘Journalist friend’ also played a crucial role in choosing journalism as a profession for 14.3 percent of respondents.

11. The data reveal that journalism was their first profession for more than four-fifths (77.7 percent) of the respondents while for more than one-fifth (22.3 percent) they had some other occupation other than journalism.

12. Training is an important variable in shaping the role performance of an individual in any profession. Majority (92 percent) of the respondents did not undergo any formal training in journalism and mass communication while the remaining (8 percent) reported that they received training in journalism.

13. Some media allow flexible working conditions for journalists. A little more than one-tenth (11 percent) of the respondents reported that they are allowed to work for outsiders and these respondents are on contractual employment.
14. On whether the respondents work for outside media house even after prohibition from their own organization, the data show that more than one-third (37.8 percent) work for outside media house, while the remaining (62.2 percent) replied in the negative.

15. Change is inevitable and media persons who changed organizations for growth have scripted success stories. Out of 399 respondents, 329 (82.45 percent) respondents reported switch from one organization to another. Out of these, more than one-fourth (30.1 percent) stated that they have changed their organization ‘only once’ as of date. Further enquiry on reasons cited by the respondents for changing the organization, most (29.8 percent) reported better pay as the reason for change of organization. About 18.8 percent cited promotion while another 9.8 percent reported working conditions followed by 8.8 percent reporting job security.

16. Jobs in journalism are seldom advertised. The shortest possible route is to take help of a journalist or someone who is known to the journalist. This type of contact takes place especially through social network composed of the ties of friendship, neighborhood, work, and other weak ties of acquaintances. The majority of the respondent agrees to the statement that the job of journalism is achieved though high contacts in media circles. Further, the investigator tried to know whether the respondents’ entry to the profession were through the help of such contacts. A little more than two-fifths (40.4 percent) of the respondents mentioned that contacts and network played a critical role in securing a job or an attractive package.

17. The monthly income of the respondents from journalistic profession indicates that a little less than two-fifths (38.3 percent) of the respondents income from journalistic profession is as low as Rs 2,001- Rs 5,000. Another little less than one-fourth (24.1 percent) respondents’ salary is very low which is below Rs 2,000/-. Some 97 respondents (24.3 percent) of the total sample have an income from journalism ranging between Rs 5001 to Rs 8,000.
18. As far as the terms and conditions of service are concerned the data reveal that out of 399 respondents, a close to half (47.6 percent) of respondents are serving the profession on purely temporary basis. A little less than one-third (31.1 percent) however reported that they are the ‘permanent employees’ in the organization. More than one-tenth (13.3 percent) reported that they work on contract basis while a few (2.5 percent) reported their job status as stringers.

19. Journalists’ associations allege that a majority of journalists in Assam work without receiving any appointment letters from their employers. The data portray a bleak scenario on the existence of journalists in the media organization in Assam. As many as 87 percent reported they have been serving the organization without appointment letters and the remaining 13 percent replied in the affirmative.

20. In sharp contrast to the receipt of ‘appointment letters’ cent percent (100 percent) of the respondents reported that they received identity cards from their organizations.

21. The distribution of respondents on the basis of possessing governmental accreditation reveals that most (95.7 percent) journalists in Assam work without governmental accreditation. Only a few (4.3 percent) are ‘Recognized Press Correspondents’.

22. The study attempted to reveal whether journalists till date have received any such loan, grant, privilege from the government. A great majority (97.5 percent) replied in the negative, while only a few (2.5 percent) reported that received loans or assistance from the government of Assam.

23. The survey results once again portray the dismal job status of journalism profession in Assam. As many as 18.8 percent respondents are deprived of any benefits. On the various service benefits that are being offered to the respondents, more than one-third (36.6 percent) stated that they receive the benefits of ‘bonus’ followed by a little less than one-third (31.6 percent) stating that they get the ‘conveyance’ allowance; and another 21.8 percent reported that they receive the ‘DA’ from their respective organization. All
other service benefits like 'house rent allowance', 'employees provident fund', 'gratuity', 'holiday pay', 'ESI/medi-claim', 'accidental insurance', 'medical facilities', 'special allowances' and even the basic 'earned leave', 'sick leave' and 'casual leave' accounts to less than ten percent of the benefits as reported by the respondents. The data reveal that the majority (81.5 percent) respondents reported that they are deprived of any perks and privileges from the media organization they work for. One-tenth (10 percent) of the respondents stated that they get the mobile phone bills reimbursed by the company. Another 8.8 percent receive free newspapers at the homes, while a few (3.8 percent) reported that they get the benefit of shuttle services for pick-up and dropping from residence to office and vice-versa.

24. Regarding the mode of transport used by the respondents for news coverage data reveal that more than half (54.1 percent) have to go out for news coverage on their own expenses; while for a little more than one-fifth (22.8 percent) the respondents go out for coverage on their own vehicle where the fuel cost is reimbursed by the company.

25. The Working Journalists & other Newspaper Employees (Conditions of Service) and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1955 Sec 6 (i) stipulates that no working journalist shall be required or allowed to work in any newspaper establishment for more than 144 hours during any periods of 4 consecutive weeks, exclusive of time for meals. The number of hours which shall constitute a normal working day for working journalists exclusive of time for meals shall not exceed six hours per day. The data reveal that more than one-fifth (21.1 percent) of the respondents have no fixed working hours. There are another one-fifth (20.8 percent) of the respondents who work for less than six hours. This is primarily due to the presence of large number of correspondents (contributors/ stringers) in the district and sub-divisional headquarters of Assam who has some other occupations other than journalism. The researcher thus tried to know from the respondents if they are entitled for compensation for working overtime. The data reveals that most (96.7 percent) of the respondents’ organization do not pay for overtime
work they do. Only a hand few 13 (3.3 percent) reported they their organizations pay them for any overtime work.

26. The data also shows that most (92.5 percent) of the respondents do not receive ‘holiday pay’ or ‘compensatory off’ in lieu of the work they do on national holidays.

27. The Working Journalist Act also states that every working journalist shall be allowed during any period of 7 consecutive days rest for a period of not less than 24 consecutive hours, the period between 10 pm and 6 pm being included therein. The data reveal that around half (47.1 percent) of the subjects are allowed a day’s rest in a week, while the remaining half (48.9 percent) replied in the negative. Some 4 percent of the respondents reported that they have been occasionally allowed to take weekly off. Thus the survey clearly depicts a picture in which Assam based media organizations rarely adheres to the provision of Working Journalist Act and the employment status of journalists in Assam is extremely bad.

28. The job satisfaction level of the respondents was measured on a five-point scale: Very much satisfied, satisfied, dissatisfied, very much dissatisfied, and can’t say. Out of 399 respondents, more than half (56.1 percent) of the total respondents have expressed satisfaction, and only 30.6 percent of the respondents are dissatisfied with the job. Six percent of the respondents were extremely dissatisfied with the job while a few (2.5 percent) reported very much satisfaction with their job. Of 399 respondents who expressed job satisfaction, more than two-fifths (45.1 percent) cited ‘challenging nature of work’, followed by a little less than one-third (23.8 percent) stating ‘social status’ and another 14.5 percent reporting ‘opportunity to be creative’ as reasons for their satisfaction with the job.

29. The reason cited by those respondents dissatisfied on taking up journalism as their employment was topped by ‘less salary’ (29.1 percent); ‘risky nature of work’ (14.8 percent); ‘odd working hours’ and ‘intensive pressure for filing stories’ (14.5 percent); ‘contractual employment’ (14.3 percent); followed by ‘polarisation of media’ (13.3 percent).
30. Further inquiry on whether the respondents could meet the basic family needs on taking up journalistic profession, about two-thirds (67.4 percent) respondents replied in the negative. A little less than one-fourth (24.6 percent) reported that they could somehow meet the family needs. There are a few (5.3 percent) respondents who said that the present job can satisfy the needs and demand of their family.

31. Appreciation of good work in the form of certificate, cash award, and gifts often has an emotive bearing on role performance of a person. Most (96 percent) of the respondents reported that they had received appreciation to their work. On what being the source of appreciation for the respondents, most (49.1 percent) of these reported that they have received appreciation from their office management first followed by readers/audiences (28.8 percent); from peers (21.3 percent); and chief reporter/superiors (16.3 percent).

32. Is the respondent's work evaluated? In more than two-fifths (45.4 percent) cases, the work of respondents is evaluated and in 28.1 percent cases; the work is evaluated 'sometimes'. About one-fourth (25.1 percent) respondents responded in the negative. The methods used for evaluation of work suggest that media organizations in Assam give much weight age to quantity which is not healthy for journalism and its practitioners.

33. On whether journalists of Assam want their children to pursue journalism as their career in life, a little more than one-tenth (14.5 percent) of them wanted their children to join the profession, while more than two-fifths (43.9 percent) did not want their children to join in the profession. However, another two-fifth (40.6 percent) have left the choice to the children themselves.

34. The occupational prestige of Assam journalists impinge on their performance, and moreover affect their journalistic expression. They enjoy less respect among the public and some of the educated people in the developing countries look upon their journalists with disdain. Nevertheless, the researcher wanted to know whether the respondents wanted to continue
in the present job. One half (54.9 percent) of the respondents want to continue in the present job till the last breath. Close to one-half (45.1 percent) however reported that they would prefer to shift out of media if they get a suitable opportunity.

35. On whether journalists received any training in journalism during their career span, only (22.3 percent) respondents gave an affirmative response while the majority (77.7 percent) replied in the negative.

36. The profession of journalism involves considerable risk factors in dealing with the sources of information as well as people involved in the news reports. The risk factor is acute in militancy infested state like Assam where journalists have to work under tremendous pressure. Different insurgent outfits send statements for publication/broadcast. So, the respondents were asked whether they were free to express their view and opinions without fear. The data reveal that 40.6 percent of respondents mention that journalists can practice freely in the state without the fear of militants, mafias, and political goons, while another 41.6 considers that it is 'somewhat free'. However, for a close to one-fifth (17.8 percent) of the respondents 'it is not'.

37. The pattern of ownership of media in India is changing from individuals to corporate. The danger becomes apparent when a sizeable section of the influential press is owned by industrial and business houses or affluent individuals and families. With the cost of establishing a media business escalating every day and with the fierce competition, the ownership of media is gradually getting concentrated in a few hands like politicians, mafias, and contractors who control the media under pseudo names. The researcher tried to know from the respondents their views on whether the ownership of newspaper business in Assam is changing hands to political leaders, mafias, and contractors. The data indicate that a close to half (46.9 percent) reported that the business of media is changing hands to politicians, mafias and contractors; however, more than one-third (35.3 percent) do not thinks so. A little less than two-fifths (17.8 percent) however expressed ignorance of the development.
38. Of late there are reports of a disturbing trend where managements assign journalists to work in tandem with advertising and circulation departments, and report on issues that generate revenues for the organization. The respondents were asked whether any such trend existed in their organization. About one-fourth (25.6 percent) agreed that they had been pressurised to do a story because it is related to an advertiser, owner or sponsor. Two-fifths (40.1 percent) replied in the negative and around one-third (34.3 percent) reported that they are sometimes directed to work with the advertising and circulation teams.

39. The researcher attempted to seek journalists’ opinion on whether RNI failed to act tough on those newspapers which print for name sake just to derive the advertisement benefits from the government. More than two-fifth (42.1 percent) expressed their view in favor of the statement, while less than one-third (30.6 percent) were against this view.

40. The researcher made an attempt to know from the respondents as to whether they are members of any political party. Only 9.8 percent respondents said that they are members of a political party, while 85.5 percent said that they are not. As low as 4.8 percent, however, did not respond.

41. An attempt was also made to find out from the respondents whether they possess the membership of any journalist union. About 86 percent have the membership of journalist unions. A follow-up to the question on respondents’ membership status of journalists’ union, opinion was sought on whether these unions have been successful in achieving the rights of journalists. About one-half (50.4 percent) of the respondents gave an affirmative response while more than one-fourth (30.8 percent) replied in the negative.

42. The researcher attempted to know from the respondent the practice of ‘paid news’ in Assam media. A little close to one-half (46.6 percent) of the respondents reported that paid news is practiced in Assam while close to one-fifths (18.8 percent) replied in the negative. Some 17.8 percent expressed ignorance to the issue while another 16.8 percent of the
respondents reported that the paid news culture is occasionally found practiced in Assam.

43. There is an unflattering term 'statement journalism' used to denote the practice of publishing opposing statements and rake controversies without attempting to investigate and bring out the truth. The respondents' view was sought on whether they think that such is in the rise in Assam media. About two fifths (41.9 percent) of the respondents gave an affirmative response while about one-third (34.3 percent) replied in the negative.

44. The respondents were further asked on the practice of envelope journalism (offering cash inside envelopes) in Assam. More than one-fourth (30.3 percent) reported that the practice was visible; while for little more than two-fifths (42.1 percent) said it was not.

45. The prime function of any corporate PR strategy is to ensure coverage for a particular viewpoint or otherwise. The researcher attempted to know from the respondents on whether they accept such gifts and allurements. In response to this question more than one-third (35.8 percent) responded that they accepted gifts, while a little less than one-fourth (24.3 percent) reported that they accepted gifts depending on the nature and intention of offering such gifts by the organiser of events. Some 14.3 percent stated that they accepted gifts occasionally. However, about one fourth (25.4 percent) mentioned that they did not accept gifts.

46. Professional ethics are guidelines set by different media organizations from time to time. These ethics relate to some guidelines that the media must adhere to for ensuring objectivity and fairness in journalism. The researcher therefore tried to focus on the perceptions of Assam journalists on ethical practice in the profession. More than three-fifth (63.7 percent) of journalist respondents' reported that they believe in ethics in the profession while more than one-fourth (27.6 percent) mentioned that they don't believe in such ethics. However, a little less than one-tenth (8.8 percent) of them informed that they 'can't say' about ethics in the profession. The researcher wanted to know from the respondents whether ethics in journalism hold any
special meaning for them when journalists struggle for survival. The data show that more than half (54.1 percent) reported that adherence to ethical values were important to uphold the fourth pillar of democracy. For a little over one-third (34.8 percent) of the respondents, a journalist could not survive in present journalism scenario simply just by professing ethical values. About one-tenth (11 percent), however were unaware of the situation.

47. The Press Council of India functions under the Press Council Act 1978 as a statutory, quasi judicial body which acts as a watchdog of the press. Keeping in mind the slow process of complaints redressal, opinions of the respondents were sought on whether the Press Council of India was successful in implementing ethics effectively. More than three-fifth (62.2 percent) of the respondents believe that the press council has failed in implementing ethics effectively, while a little less one-fifth (19.3 percent) reported that the Council is implementing ethics effectively. Another 18.5 percent expressed that they “can’t say” anything about implementation of ethics by the press council.

48. Since the Press Council of India has no punitive powers to punish violations of the professional ethics by the press or the encroachment of the freedom of the press by the authorities, the Council has come to be looked upon as a toothless tiger. Hence, the researcher planned to know from the respondents their views on whether the Press Council of India should be given 'penal powers' or 'power to punish' in case a journalist or media house violates ethics. For example, the withdrawal of accreditation given to the offending journalists. Around half (49.6 percent) of the respondents gave an affirmative response to this question while a little less than one-third (30.1 percent) replied in the negative.

49. The respondents were further asked as to whether low pay and poor working conditions compelled journalists to take recourse to unprofessional and unethical practices. More than half (54.4 percent) answered in the affirmative. The remaining (14.5 percent) respondents negatived the
statement. There were however, more than one-fourth (28.6 percent) of respondents who strongly agreed with the statement.

50. Union of “working journalists”, both employers and employees are divided over the implementation of wage board’s recommendations. Opinion of the respondents was further sought on whether they agreed that the implementations of wage board would improve the life and standards of journalists and journalism in Assam. A whopping three-fifths (61.20 percent) strongly agreed that it would improve the life and standards of journalists and journalism in Assam.

51. Finally, the respondents were asked to express their opinion on the overall state of Journalism in Assam, and cite the most important problems facing Journalism in Assam. The data clearly depict the actual state of journalism in Assam. By roughly two-to-one (69.2% - 30.8%), majority of respondents say that journalism in Assam was going in the wrong direction rather than the right direction. Reflecting the impact of poor salary and job insecurity facing journalism in Assam today, the major concern raised by the respondents endorsed the fact. About three-fourth (74.9 percent) of the respondents declared ‘business and financial’ to be the most important problem facing journalism in Assam today. As viewed by the respondents, the first three problems related to: Business and Financial issues (74.9 percent); Quality of Coverage (65.4 percent); and Loss of Credibility (59.1 percent).

SOCIAL BACKGROUND AND PROFESSIONAL ROLE PERFORMANCE

The present chapter is an attempt to quantitatively relate the relationship between social background of a journalist and its connection to professional role performance. Some important variables of social background like age, caste, family income, journalism income, respondent’s occupation, father’s occupation were put into a cross tabulation analysis to assess their relationships with the professional role performance. Based on the third objective of the study, cross-tabulations would analyze the relationships between independent and dependent variables, i.e., between defined problems of social background and factors contributing to the
professional role performance. Due to its exploratory nature, the present chapter used cross-tabulations that aimed at describing the problem under study by presenting a combination of variables.

1. The distribution of respondents in relation to age group and designation status shows that more than half (51.4 percent) of the journalists in Assam are in the age group of 36-50 years (middle aged) of which majority of them are designated as 'correspondents'. The data obtained also reveal that out of the 138 correspondents, majority of them are in the middle aged category.

2. The distribution of respondents in terms of their age and journalism experience indicates a visible decline in the number of elderly journalists (above 50 years) with experience of more than 25 years in the profession. It can be assumed that the most of the senior journalists had switched over to a different job due to some reasons or the other.

3. The distribution of respondents in terms of their age and monthly income of the respondent from journalism indicates that majority of the journalists in Assam has an income from journalism ranging from Rs 2001- Rs 5000 per month. A closer look to the table will further reveal that the income slabs haven't increased with the increasing age.

4. The distribution of respondents in terms of their age and training in journalism courses suggests the need of journalism training in vernacular medium so that more aspiring journalists can get reap the benefit of training prior to their entry to the profession.

5. The distribution of respondents in terms of their age and on-the-job training received in journalism career shows that lack of training facilities is a major impediment towards the professional development goals and role performance.

6. The distribution of respondents in terms of their age and hours of journalistic work in a day shows that there does not exist much of a relationship between different age groups and working hours. But what appeared to be noteworthy from the available data is the absence of any fixed hours of work among the journalists of different age groups.
7. The distribution of respondents in terms of their age and job satisfaction shows that among all age groups, job satisfaction level to that of dissatisfaction is approximately in the ratio of 3:2. Out of 399 respondents, more than half (56.1 percent) of the total respondents have expressed satisfaction, and only 30.6 percent of the respondents are dissatisfied with the job. Other reason for job satisfaction seen among all age groups could be the nature of engagement by the respondents. Journalism is a subsidiary occupation for about one-fourth (24.1 percent) of the respondents which implies that journalism is not a profession but a hobby to satisfy the self-expression desire.

8. The distribution of respondents in terms of their age and number of promotions obtained in journalism career suggests that that majority of the respondents received promotions 'once' in their career, the highest being from the young group of journalists (21-35 years). So, one reason for offering more promotions to young journalists might be to retain the experienced pool of human resources from shifting media organizations. On the other hand the available data clearly indicate the frequency of promotions in journalism profession slows down drastically with the advancing age.

9. The distribution of respondents in terms of their age and political party membership suggests that young journalists possess a moderate representation of political party membership than the elderly journalists. With crass commercialization more and more young people are attracted towards the profession of journalism just to use the power of media and remain close to the corridors of power wielders.

10. Educational qualification does not seem to be deterrent in journalism profession as there exist about 10 percent of journalists who have not attained graduation and has completed education till higher secondary. The distribution of respondents in terms of their educational qualification and designation reflect the presence of a large proportion of graduates designated as 'Correspondents'- popularly called as 'column-centimeter' journalists.
11. The distribution of respondents in terms of income from journalism and their professional work experience shows no relationship between income from journalistic profession and work experience. The data also indicates that journalists with high experience (21-25 years) in the profession appears to be visible in almost all income ranges, the majority are being paid a partly sum of Rs 2001-5000. Indeed there is a lone journalist working in the profession for 26-30 years and earns somewhat between Rs 2001- Rs 5000. Thus from data it can be construed that unlike other professions, journalism is passing through a phase devoid of reward even for the experienced professionals.

12. The distribution of respondents in terms of job satisfaction and income from journalism shows that there is no linkage between income from journalism and job satisfaction as the respondents are uniformly dispersed across all levels of satisfaction and dissatisfaction. In any profession, income has an intimate relationship with job satisfaction. The data show journalists with low income groups have some other sources of income- ethical or unethical that contributes to job satisfaction.

13. The distribution of respondents in terms of family income and job satisfaction can be concluded that job satisfaction of journalists serving in Assam has a direct relationship with higher family income.

14. The distribution of respondents in terms of subsidiary sources of income and job satisfaction indicates that the about 60 percent of journalists in Assam possess a subsidiary occupation of which 96 (24.10 percent) of them practice journalism as subsidiary means of occupation. Most of the respondents who have journalism as their secondary sources of occupation are very much satisfied with the profession. An inference can be drawn from the fact that journalism is a profession attached to high social status and thus people from various occupational structures takes up journalism as means of subsidiary occupation or a hobby. In the present study it is also found that the teaching community represents a sizeable population in the subsidiary occupation list of Assam journalists.
15. The distribution of respondents in terms of their income from journalism and income of the family members (family income) clarifies the financial position of working journalist. The data is a clear indication that only 5 journalists who earn a paltry sum of less than Rs 2000 from journalism have a family income between 2001-5000. The majority (153) of journalists (38.3 percent) who have an income from journalism of Rs 2001-5000 belong to the category of a family income of Rs 8001 and above - the mean income being in range of Rs 11001-15000.

16. The distribution of respondents in terms of their income from journalism and meeting the needs and demands of family members shows close associations of monthly income from journalism and meeting the needs and ends of family. The higher the income, the lesser has been the burden of meeting the needs and desires of family members.

17. The distribution of respondents in relation to respondents' income from journalism and their choice of continuance with the present job in near future indicate that there exists a balanced level of linkage between income and desire to continue with the present job among respondents of various income groups.

18. The distribution of respondents in terms of their income from journalism and desire of child taking up the journalism as career shows that majority of journalists leave the decision onto their child's desire on whether to continue with the job or not. However, the huge proportion of journalists in the Rs 2001-8000 income groups not having the desire to their sons and daughter to take up journalism rightly sums up the precarious state of journalism as a profession.