

Conflict in Balochistan: Freedom of Speech, Challenges and Opportunities

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Abstract

This paper attempts to evaluate the working conditions for professional journalists in Balochistan. It explores the available opportunities for journalists who perform their duties in conflict zone under life threatening conditions. In Balochistan, religious and ethno-political factors have intensified manifolds in the last ten years and reporting on these issues has claimed lives of many journalists. Since this issue has been raised by a sizeable segment of civil society, in general, and by journalist community, in particular, therefore, learning the root causes of underlying threats to journalist has acquired a particular salience. This paper, on the basis of collected data, seeks to discover the level of professionalism among the journalists as one of the potential causes of problem and develops a number of recommendations to help journalists reduce the element of risk in reporting issues of conflict.

Introduction

Media in Pakistan started a new phase of liberalization with the emergence of private sector electronic media in the country. The promulgation of Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) Ordinance, paved the way for independent electronic media with its enforcement in 2002 all over Pakistan. The licensing process started gaining momentum with the establishment of the authority in March 2002.¹ The new era of print media freedom in the country, however, began in the year 1988 with the promulgation of Registration of Printing Presses and Publications Ordinance 1988 that replaced the old draconian law, the Press and Publication Ordinance 1963.² Commercial media in Pakistan is still in a learning phase although it has

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¹ *Electronic Media Review*, 2004, Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority, Islamabad, pp.17, 38.

² Seemi Naghmana Tahir, 'Two Decades of Hits and Misses: Twenty Years of Press Freedom in Pakistan', *Defense Journal*, Karachi, June, 2009, p.48.

played a vital role in highlighting issues confronting the people or affecting state sovereignty. Every news and entertainment channel has developed code of conduct for programmes, beside provision of guidelines with licensing conditions by PEMRA but media practitioners often violate these rules or only partially adopt ethical codes just to survive in the stiff business competition in an already saturated electronic media market in the country. This became more evident during the recent attempt on the life of TV journalist, Hamid Mir, in August 2014. During this conflict Pakistani readers and viewers witnessed gross violations of internationally recognized codes of media ethics.³ Moreover, in Pakistan all possible efforts are being made by different television channels to capture both more audience and sponsors through high ratings to generate more advertising revenue. An often raised question from consumer in this regard is that who is watching the watchdog? Mostly concentrated in three big cities Karachi, Islamabad and Lahore the main stream electronic media in Pakistan, often fails to address the issues confronting the provinces of Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, which over the last one decade have turned into conflict zones. The general view of the masses about mainstream Urdu and English language media is that commercial media though highlights issues related to Balochistan but normally it fails to propose solutions for them.

Print media in Pakistan inherited its identity from the anti-colonial struggle before the creation of the country in 1947. For many decades the press was not in a position to develop a newer identity of being an active participant in the process of emancipation of masses from the controls of non-democratic power structures ruling the country including military and civil bureaucracy. Despite all weaknesses, a part of the press kept producing high standard journalism based on professional values through genius individual efforts.⁴ This paper aims to give an overview of Pakistani media, especially its role in Balochistan, so that the reader may understand the dynamics of mass media in the highly conflict ridden province of the country.

Balochistan is the southwest province of Pakistan bordering Afghanistan and Iran comprising approximately 43 per cent of the

³ Zafar Abbas, 'Glimmers of hope, but ethical journalism requires more legal backbone', *The Trust Factor: An ENJ Review of Journalism and Self-regulation*, 2015, p.45.

⁴ Altafullah Khan (ed.), *News Media and Journalism in Pakistan and Germany* (Peshawar: The Printman, 2003), p.79.

country's total land area.⁵ The job of journalists in this part of the world is full of dangers and risks. It has seen dozens of journalists killed in the past few years and hundred others have received threats due to reporting on issues of conflict or sometimes even not reporting on such issues. Balochistan has become a very dangerous zone due to the conflicting issues like military operations, Baloch insurgency, enforced disappearance, target killing and the sectarian clashes in the province. Even before, when these issues had not come in to focus so evidently, a report compiled on working conditions of journalists in rural areas of Pakistan in 1996, cited four sources of pressures on rural journalists, namely local administration along with police, feudal lords and above all the extremist elements of political, religious, sectarian and linguistic groups that resort to physical violence.⁶ Fifteen years later almost similar observations are made in Human Rights' Commissions' Report, published in 2011, that says,

The media is enjoying much freedom as compared to previous regimes but free media exercises/ employs its own self-censorship and does not allow the open discussion on armed forces, military operations, human right violations during the operation... torture cells in all installations of armed forces, disappearances by the forces.⁷

The strategic position of the province has made its media even more vulnerable. The effectiveness of media in moulding public opinion tempts different terrorists groups to use media to gain mass support.⁸ The unrest in Balochistan has turned it into an undeclared war like zone which makes reporting a big challenge for today's reporters. The underground militant movements create situation of fear and force restricting media's freedom to report and write opinion pieces. In this situations it has become very difficult for the journalists to cover any story about the issues confronting the region as a whole. Those who dared to report, have been killed, abducted, arrested or have received threats. Many of them are even going to leave the profession. Besides

⁵ A.B. Awan, *Balochistan Historical and Political Processes* (London: New Century Publishers, 1985), p.5.

⁶ Fazal Qureshi & Owais Aslam Ali, *Working Conditions of Journalists in Rural Areas of Pakistan* (Karachi: Pakistan Press Foundation, 1996), p.4.

⁷ *The State of Human Rights in Ten Asian Countries*, Asian Human Rights Commission, Human Rights Report 2011.

⁸ Minhajul Hassan, 'The Taliban Imbroglia: Search for a Durable Peace in Pakistan', *Pakistan Perspectives*, Pakistan Study Centre, University of Karachi, 18:2 (December 2013), p.100.

threats bunch of opportunities are also available for journalists in Balochistan.

Media landscape in Balochistan

Journalism arrived here in Balochistan with the installation of a printing press in Quetta in the later part of 19th century, but most critics believe that real journalism began after 1935 earthquake. First phase of the press was initiated by the Parsee community. Interestingly the people of Balochistan were not entrusted with the right to press and platform till 1937. In the absence of any press law the permission to bring out newspaper was on the discretion of agent to governor general on the recommendation of revenue commissioner.⁹

Quetta is the nucleus of journalistic activities in Balochistan. All newspapers that are published in the province have their head offices in Quetta. Likewise all mainstream television channels have bureau offices in Quetta with correspondents all over the province. At present more than 150 publications come out from Balochistan.¹⁰

Pakistan Television came into the age of broadcasting with a small pilot TV station on 26 November 1964 established at Lahore. Television centers were established in Karachi, Rawalpindi/Islamabad in 1967 and in Peshawar and Quetta in 1974.¹¹

The platform of state broad caster, Pakistan Television (PTV) was used by different governments for propagation of policies and expanding their regimes since the very beginning. Things were very simple and everything was presented in a selective but simplified way, reflecting the views of the government of the day. Access to information was also very limited. News contents were filtered under the direction of press advices. One of the main roles played by PTV was that it tried to maintain harmony and peace through dissemination of selected and filtered news. This is how both military and elected governments tried to maintain their own concept of national integrity. The reason was that the people have no option other than to watch the PTV. Entertainment programmes strictly reflected the governments' view of Pakistani culture and current affairs programmes were based on one-sided opinion.

⁹ Seemi Naghmana Tahir, *Balochistan Mein Iblagh-e-Aama* (Islamabad: National Language Authority, 2006), p.23.

¹⁰ Khan Aurangzaib, 'Media in Balochistan: Blighted But A Brave New World Beckons', *Intermedia*, 2010, p.7.

¹¹ Seemi Naghmana Tahir, 'Television in Pakistan: An Overview' in David French and Michaels Richard (eds.), *Contemporary Television Eastern Perspectives* (London: Sage Publications, 1995), pp.113-14.

Commercial sector's privately owned television channels were introduced in 2002 by General Pervez Musharraf. According PEMRA Ordinance, 2002, the purpose of introduction of private sector television channels was to facilitate and regulate the private electronic media. It has mandated to improve the standards of information, education and entertainment and to enlarge the choice available to the people of Pakistan including news, current affairs, religious knowledge, art and culture as well as science and technology.¹² Another function was to ensure peoples participation in various programmes. Media is said to be an agent that politically socializes masses. Now in Pakistan, it is believed that radio and television are playing significant role in a politically socialized life.¹³ Media plays a vital role in creating awareness and strengthening democratic order in any society.

Free media acts as a watchdog on the government, increases audience participation in development, enhances reader's knowledge and help improving various social indicators. There are strong and significant links between a nation's 'media freedom' and measures of the country's economic performance, culture, and institutional standards. Free media role in the evolution of the institutional framework of a country is substantial. The level of press freedom in a country has a wide ranging impact on the vision of its citizens regarding state affairs, the accountability of leaders, and social cooperation.¹⁴ With the introduction of private sector electronic media the country has entered into a new era of liberalization. Now Pakistani media is said to be vibrant with specific agenda and policy. In Pakistan freedom of electronic media and war on terror came hand in hand, making the job of a reporter more challenging and difficult. For the last three years in a row, Pakistan has been declared as one of the most dangerous countries in the world for working journalists. Thirteen journalists were killed in different incidents in 2012.¹⁵ Consequently the excitement over the hard won freedom of expression very soon started diminishing. The elements that were exposed by the press succeeded in calming many journalists down by self-censorship. Pakistan was on the 159th position out of 179 countries

¹² *PEMRA Ordinance 2002*, Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority, Islamabad, pp.1-2.

¹³ Muhammad Anwar and Mirza Jan, 'Role of Media in Political Socialization: The Case of Pakistan', *The Dialogue*, Quataba University, Peshawar, Vol.3 (2010), p.212.

¹⁴ Christopher J. Coyne and Peter T. Leeson, *Media as a Mechanism of Institutional Change and Reinforcement*, Edward Elgar Publishing Limited, 2009, p.12.

¹⁵ Irfan Ashraf, *Pakistan Press Foundation*, 12 February 2013.

of the world, according to the World Freedom of Expression Index Report for 2013. It also topped the list of most journalists killed in South Asia as 11 journalists died in line of the duty during 2013 in Pakistan.¹⁶

The role of liberated electronic media has had a little impact on the resolution of conflicts confronting the people of Pakistan, in general, and Balochistan, in particular. Concentrated in big metropolis like Islamabad, Karachi and Lahore the major media outlets have only bureau offices in Quetta. It is commonly believed that the anchors of popular television talk shows do not have real insight of the issues faced by the people in Balochistan.

State of media – challenges of working in conflict zones

Law and order situation and unrest in the province makes it almost impossible for individuals to live peacefully. Balochistan has a history of independent movements and struggle against what is seen as the federal government's suppression of Baloch people and their claim to acquire ownership of the province's resources. Islamabad's unwillingness to cede political and economic autonomy to this resource rich, but most underdeveloped province of Pakistan has led to a series of uprisings by Baloch leaders and nationalists.¹⁷ The insurgency and the separatist movement has reached to a level that the granting of much demanded provincial autonomy after the 18th Amendment to the Constitution in the year 2013 has no significant impact on it. This unrest has a direct impact on the lives and workings of journalists in the province. According to Mr. Mazhar Abbas, Secretary General of Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ), the separatist leaders often blame newspapers for bias in favor of the government. They see the journalists as agents of the establishment.¹⁸

Media in Balochistan is not as vibrant as it is in other parts of the country. The bureau chief's of different news channels are working as reporters in Balochistan. They are taken online whenever any incident takes place, otherwise, their role seems very passive in the mainstream politics. Journalists in Balochistan are working under threat also from banned outfits. Many journalists from Balochistan have died in target killing or bomb blasts during the last few years. In 2010 journalists

¹⁶ Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, *State of Human Rights in Pakistan 2013*, pp.107-8.

¹⁷ International Crisis Group, *Pakistan: The Forgotten Conflict in Balochistan*, 2007, p.3.

¹⁸ 'Between Radicalization and Democratization in an Unfolding Conflict: Media in Pakistan', *REPORT*, International Media Support, July 2009, p.16.

continued to face severe threats in the areas along the border with Afghanistan, where Pakistan army was engaged in operation. Most of the time the media coverage of military operation was limited to the reports by embedded reporters who were made to accept the strict censorship guidelines if they wanted to company the troops during such operations. They also faced outburst of Taliban for giving one sided version on such operations.¹⁹

As a matter of fact, troubles for media persons in Balochistan have intensified since October 2011 when Balochistan High Court barred media coverage of banned groups. Most of the banned outfits started threatening local media persons, seeking coverage which was banned in the wake of the court orders. However, as journalists were never provided any security by the government, many local newspapers were left with no option but to violate the court orders in a bid to save their skin as well as that of their reporters.²⁰ The freedom of media under these circumstances cannot be guaranteed where journalists and their families remain under continuous threat. In this connection Abdul Khaliq Rind, general secretary of Quetta Press Club and reporter of a leading Urdu daily said: ‘You cannot look at media’s work in isolation. You cannot write about any group. It is very difficult for us all’. Rind further said that decades of discrimination was the prime reason for intellectual and economic backwardness in Balochistan.²¹ Irfan Rana, a senior reporter from private sector television channel, expressed his feelings in these words:

We follow blasts and are usually exposed to terrorist attacks whenever journalists in Balochistan reported something, pressure groups asked them to amend it and warned of dire consequences if their “orders” are not obeyed.²²

Shahid Rind, the bureau chief of a private TV channel, said that the media faced pressures from powerful institutions, political leaders, militants and criminals. He said, ‘We get dictation from all stakeholders, so we cannot follow journalistic norms, as we face threats. There are red lines and we cannot dare to be objective in reporting’.²³ Adnan Rehmat’s recent compilation, *Reporting Under Threat*, also includes the plight of

¹⁹ *Attacks on the Press in 2010*, a worldwide survey by the Committee to Protect Journalists, 2011, United Book Press, USA, p.153.

²⁰ Hamid Mir, *The News*, 2 October 2012.

²¹ Mohammad Zafar, ‘Journalists express concern over media freedom in Balochistan’, *Daily Times*, 9 July 2012.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*

some 10 ten journalists from Balochistan. Some of the points of their narratives are discussed below:

- Khuzdar is the most dangerous district for media in Balochistan. This district accounts for the highest number of journalists killed in Pakistan's in one district. In most cases where journalists are killed in line of duty some cash payment is made to the families but commitments to provide jobs to the children or judicial inquiry seldom takes place.
- Journalists associated with papers that provide coverage to the Baloch nationalists separatists groups are harassed by the personnel of intelligence agencies. This harassment, they say, has many forms and shapes from being observed and chased by plain clothed personnel to implication in various criminal activities like bomb explosion etc.
- According to another version, reporting in Balochistan is like walking on a double edged sword. If one does not provide coverage to the activities of all organizations, it will put his life in danger, if he does he has to face the wrath of the security agencies and may face the charges of supporting the militancy.
- Newspapers which emphasize on human rights in the province become a thorn in the eyes of authorities. Quetta is the epic centre of conflict brewing in the region. This is the place from where Taliban first entered from Afghanistan. To that add the Baloch nationalists movements, the counter insurgency, the sectarian war, and a reporter has to work through all this.
- Being a journalist is not easy in conflict mired Balochistan. 'Working for foreign broadcasting service is even more troublesome', opined the BBC's reporter. He has twice been threatened by one of the active group attacking the government forces. Another reporter from Balochistan narrates his plight by saying 'we live and work in uncertain times now, torn between the demands of state and anti-state elements, if I do not follow the court, I will be locked in for six months, if I follow the militants, I will live. I am in two minds every time I do story'.
- A TV reporter who along with his colleagues was abducted and severely tortured in custody by one militant group for providing coverage to the rival group says that those few hours in custody of militants is still a nightmare. Another print and TV journalist feels that last decade was hardest in his professional life. Another journalist from Kharan says that he has been dubbed as anti-state by the intelligence agencies for providing coverage to militant groups in

the province. As a result he was implicated in different cases of rocket and armed attacks on security forces. He has been harassed by plain clothed security personnel on one pretext or the other.²⁴

Changing dynamics

Pakistan has renowned excellent and professional journalists who are recognized worldwide due to their journalistic abilities, who were able to produce high quality news contents and articles. But overall standard of journalism varies widely from best trained, qualified and most professional journalists to uneducated, untrained and unprofessional. According to Pintak and Nazir, Pakistan is the home to one of the most vibrant emerging media sectors in the Muslim world. In order to provide an understanding into how Pakistani journalists, both print and electronic, perceive their own identity, their mission and role during critical times, Pintak and Nazir conducted a survey of 395 Pakistani journalists from the five major centers of press in Pakistan. The journalists responding to the survey represented a cross-section of the industry, with more than 40% from the vernacular language newspapers, 8% from English language newspapers and about 30% from television. According to the results, there is a growing sense of professionalism within the Pakistani journalism, evident in the fact that more than a quarter of the respondent identified themselves first as a journalist, but their self-perceived mission and their application of western style journalism norms are influenced by religion, nationalism and the economic realities of Pakistan today. Western style journalism culture is just one element in a collective identity in which Islam is embedded in a decidedly nationalistic worldview.²⁵ In fact, press in Pakistan is undergoing some fundamental changes; from totally controlled media of military regimes to a free move press than most of its neighbors. It provides new opportunities and pose new challenges for the journalists working in both print and electronic media in the country.

Today journalists are reveling in freedoms that seemed improbable a decade ago. Where the print sector is contracting in the West, it continues to expand in Pakistan, bolstered by digital technologies and new media platforms. Media empires are expanding, providing financial stability –

²⁴ Adnan Rehmat, *Reporters Under Threat* (Islamabad: Civic Action Resources and Open Society Foundations, 2014), pp.21,31,44,47 & 57.

²⁵ Lawrence Pintak and Syed Javed Nazir, 'Media Culture Society' Pakistani journalism: at the crossroads of Muslim identity, national priorities and journalistic culture DOI: 10.1177/0163443713483654, pp.643, 661.

and a modicum of political protection – for journalists, though many of these companies are beholden to various political and military factions. After long periods of military rule, the press has evolved into a national debating forum, carving out a position at the core of public life.²⁶

The boom in electronic media has led to a surge in the number of journalists working in Pakistan in recent years. Some experienced TV-journalists have left the state broadcaster PTV to work at the new TV channels, but the bulk of the new TV-reporters have come from the print media. TV channels offer better salaries, attractive work places and the prospect of gaining celebrity status for a young journalist. One of the factors of not having quality journalism is lack of training for professional journalists or lesser opportunities for journalism education. Department of Media & Journalism of Balochistan University, Quetta was the only academic body to provide education and training to the prospective journalists and media persons in Balochistan for more than two decades. It was established in 1987 with the zeal to produce professionals in the field of journalism. Many prominent journalists at national and provincial level have graduated from that department. Balochistan University of Engineering, Information Technology and Management has also established its Mass Communication department but still it is in early stages. The third University of the province, Sardar Bahadur Khan University for Women, has also started its Mass Communication programme recently. This shows the steady growth in the media sector but simultaneously the threat to the lives of working journalists are there as a limitation for many to enter into the profession. Following Table is just a reflection of this situation.

Table 1: Journalists / media workers who lost their lives in the line of duty

No	Name	Worked for	Date of killing	Place
01	Khadam Hussain Sheikh	Daily <i>Khabrain</i> / Sindh TV	14 April 2008	Hub
02	Chishti Mujahid	Daily <i>Jang</i> Quetta	09 February 2006	Quetta
03	Haji Wasi Ahmed	Daily <i>Balochistan Express</i>	2009	Khuzdar
05	Malik Arif	<i>Samaa TV</i>	16 April 2010	Quetta
06	Ejaz Raisani	<i>Samaa TV</i>	06 September 2010	Quetta
07	Javid Naseer	Daily <i>Tawar</i>	05 November 2011	Hub

²⁶ Sherry Ricchiardi, *Challenges for Independent News Media in Pakistan* (Washington, DC: Center for International Media Assistance, 2012), p.9.

08	Faiz Muhammed Sasoli	<i>Ajj Kal</i>	28 June 2010	Khuzdar
09	Hameed Hayatan Baloch	Dailies, <i>Tawar/ Mahshar/ Karachi/ Gateway & Royal TV</i>	11 November 2010	Gwadar
10	Hameed Marwat	Local journalist	17 February 2010	Quetta
11	Ilyas Nazar	Monthly <i>Darwanth</i>	03 January 2011	Turbat
12	Ali Sher Kurd	<i>Nawa-e-Bolan</i>	24 September 2010	Quetta
13	Siddiq Eido	Local Journalist	28 April 2011	Ormara
14	Muneer Shakir	<i>Sabzbath TV/ online</i>	14 August 2011	Khuzhar
15	Abdost Rind	<i>Daily Eagle</i>	18 February 2011	Turbat
16	Rehmatullah Shaheen	<i>Daily Tawar</i>	05 March 2011.	Mach
17	Zareef Faraz	<i>Shabjoo</i>	April, 25,2011	Turbat
18	Abdul Qadir Hajizai	<i>Sabzbath TV</i>	27 May 2012	Basima
19	Razzaq Gul	<i>Express News</i>	20 May 2012	Turbat
20	Abdul Haq Bloch	<i>ARY News television</i>	29 September 2012	Khuzdar
21	Saifur Rehman	<i>Samaa TV</i>	9 January 2013	Quetta
22	Muhammad Imran	<i>Samaa TV</i>	9 January 2013	Quetta
23	Irshad Mastoi	Online News Agency	28th August 2014	Quetta
24	Abdul Rasool	Online News Agency	28th August 2014	Quetta
25	Muhammad Yunus	Online News Agency	28th August 2014	Quetta

Research methodology

The following method was used to collect data for this research study. Primary data was collected through survey method. Closed ended questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data.

The population for data collection is Quetta city. Since Quetta is the capital city of Balochistan, education ratio, number of academic institutions and media exposure is higher in that city than any other part of the province. Moreover the highest concentration of media outlets in Quetta makes this capital a more appropriate population to collect specific data required for this research.

Sample size of the population was kept 180 and sample was divided into three categories. Each category was distributed 60 questionnaires. The respondent categories comprised professional journalists, university level teachers and university level students.

Data collected through survey was tabulated and interpreted in the later part of research article. On the basis of data collected through survey, findings and recommendations have been developed.

Hypothesis:

- i. Work environment for pressmen is not satisfactory and journalists are not in position to perform duties with professionalism.
- ii. Freedom of speech does not exist in Balochistan due to religious fanaticism and ethnicity.
- iii. Media only reports the incidents related to Balochistan and are least interested in resolving the issues confronting the province of Balochistan.
- iv. Lack of security to journalists and media houses has restricted the free flow of information.
- v. State machinery is inactive in providing security to journalists in Balochistan.
- vi. Role of Journalists Unions and professional bodies is insignificant in fighting for the provision of compensation to deceased journalists' families and protection to under threat journalists in Balochistan.

Survey results and interpretation

This opinion based survey was conducted to seek opinion from a cross section of society including professional journalists, university teachers and university students. The questionnaire was constructed on the basis of above listed hypothesis to evaluate the challenges of working journalists of conflict ridden province of Balochistan.

<i>1. Are you satisfied with the overall state of journalistic activities in Balochistan?</i>								
Professional Journalists			University Teachers			University Students		
Yes	No	Don't Know	Yes	No	Don't Know	Yes	No	Don't Know
14	46	—	18	34	08	30	24	06
Yes = 62= 34.44% No = 104= 57.77% Don't Know = 14=7.77%								

The respondents were asked about the state of media in Balochistan, most of the respondents believe that overall situation in Balochistan for press activities are not satisfactory. While 34% respondents still believe that situation for journalism is not unsatisfactory.

2. Do you think that freedom of speech is exercised in journalism of Balochistan?

Professional Journalists			University Teachers			University Students		
Yes	No	Don't Know	Yes	No	Don't Know	Yes	No	Don't Know
28	32	—	36	22	02	20	24	16
Yes =84 = 46.66% No =78= 43.33% Don't Know = 18= 10%								

The crucial point regarding journalism was asked from respondents about freedom of speech in Balochistan. A fair majority (46.66%) of the respondents said that freedom of speech does exist, while 43% respondents said that it is not the case.

3. Is media highlighting the issues of Balochistan at national level?

Professional Journalists			University Teachers			University Students		
Yes	No	Don't Know	Yes	No	Don't Know	Yes	No	Don't Know
24	26	10	18	40	02	12	34	14
Yes = 54= 30% No = 100= 55.55% Don't Know = 26= 14.44%								

The respondents were asked about the role of media in highlighting issues of Balochistan at national level. A total of 55% respondents believe that mainstream media circulating nationwide is not playing its role in highlighting issues related to Balochistan.

4. Are you satisfied with the amount of coverage given to Balochistan in mainstream media?

Professional Journalists			University Teachers			University Students		
Yes	No	Don't Know	Yes	No	Don't Know	Yes	No	Don't Know
14	42	04	12	44	04	12	36	12
Yes = 38= 21.11% No = 122= 67.77% Don't Know = 20= 11.11%								

A total of 67% respondents were of the view that coverage given to Balochistan is not satisfactory, while 21% believes that coverage time and space is enough for Balochistan in media.

5. What are the factors that restrict freedom of media?								
Professional Journalists			University Teachers			University Students		
Lack of Security	Limited sources for Journalism	Strict Media laws	Lack of Security	Limited sources for Journalism	Strict Media laws	Lack of Security	Limited sources for Journalism	Strict Media laws
36	10	14	28	14	18	24	20	16
Lack of Security = 88= 48.88% Limited Sources for Journalism = 44 = 24.44% Strict Media Laws = 48= 26.66								

Respondents were asked about the factors that restrict press freedom. Maximum number of respondents believed that lack of security is the main reason which hinders media freedom.

6. Do you see role of Journalists Unions/ Professional Bodies in protecting right to freedom of expression in Balochistan?								
Professional Journalists			University Teachers			University Students		
Yes	No	Don't Know	Yes	No	Don't Know	Yes	No	Don't Know
28	22	10	14	36	10	26	12	22
Yes = 68=37.77% No = 70=38.88% Don't know = 42=23.33%								

Professional bodies in Balochistan do play role in protecting journalist's rights and ensures freedom of speech to some extent. But the data generated from respondents reflects that media unions are not playing the role, which they are suppose to in ensuring freedom of speech.

7. Do you agree that media professionals sometimes violate the ethical code formulated for them?								
Professional Journalists			University Teachers			University Students		
Yes	No	Don't Know	Yes	No	Don't Know	Yes	No	Don't Know
22	32	06	36	24	—	32	24	04
Yes = 90= 50% No = 80= 44.44% Don't know = 10= 5.55%								

Rules for conducting a programme on electronic media and rules for writing/ reporting in newspapers are formulated by PEMRA and Press Council of Pakistan for professional journalists. In presence of these rules and regulations, respondents believe that professional journalists sometimes violate those rules.

8. Do you think that media should be held accountable to the masses and professional bodies for reporting, news or programme content?								
Professional Journalists			University Teachers			University Students		
Yes	No	Don't Know	Yes	No	Don't Know	Yes	No	Don't Know
52	06	02	48	06	06	36	16	08
Yes = 130= 75.55% No = 28= 15.55% Don't Know = 16= 8.88%								

75% respondents believe that media should be held accountable for reporting, news and programmes content, while 15% believe that media is exempted from process of accountability.

9. Do you see partiality in media?								
Professional Journalists			University Teachers			University Students		
Yes	No	Don't Know	Yes	No	Don't Know	Yes	No	Don't Know
34	20	06	24	28	08	36	22	02
Yes = 94= 52.22% No = 70= 38.88% Don't Know = 16= 8.88%								

A clear majority of 52.22% respondents opined that our media is not impartial, while 38% respondents believed that media is playing its role impartially.

10. Do you think lack of media professionalism is one of the main cause for journalists for inciting threat?								
Professional Journalists			University Teachers			University Students		
Yes	No	Don't Know	Yes	No	Don't Know	Yes	No	Don't Know
38	22	—	42	14	04	16	40	04
Yes = 96= 53.33% No = 76= 42.22% Don't Know = 08= 4.44%								

Respondents were inquired about level of professionalism in journalistic approach which seems to puts journalists under threat. 53.33% respondents believe lack of media professionalism poses threats to journalists.

11. Do you agree that state is playing its role for protecting journalists from threats?								
Professional Journalists			University Teachers			University Students		
Yes	No	Don't Know	Yes	No	Don't Know	Yes	No	Don't Know
12	48	—	14	40	06	24	26	10
Yes = 50=27.77% No = 114=63.33% Don't Know = 16=8.88%								

Majority of professional journalists, university teachers and university students consider that state is not playing its role for protecting journalists.

12. Are you satisfied with number of institutions providing education to journalists in Balochistan?								
Professional Journalists			University Teachers			University Students		
Yes	No	Don't Know	Yes	No	Don't Know	Yes	No	Don't Know
28	30	02	24	36	—	14	42	04
Yes = 66= 36.66% No = 108= 60% Don't Know = 06= 3.33%								

60 % of respondents opined that academic institutions providing education to pressmen in Balochistan are insufficient. 36% respondents believe that number of academic institutions is sufficient.

Findings

The working condition for media persons in Balochistan is unsatisfactory. The hypothesis constituted stated that working conditions for journalists in Balochistan are not satisfactory. According to the 52% respondents the job of journalists is risky and it's hard for working journalists to fulfil their duties.

Respondents believe that freedom of speech does exist in Balochistan but at the same time the element of risk also increases with freedom of speech. The hypothesis was not endorsed by the respondents.

Another outcome shows that people are concerned over the national media's role on Balochistan, which is not playing it in highlighting issues related to Balochistan. The respondents also raised an important question regarding security measures taken for journalists, which is directly related to the extent of freedom of expression. The respective professional bodies have failed in this regard despite repeated reminders by professionals about the gravity of the situation.

On the other hand 75% of the respondents believe that media outlets should be held accountable for their own reporting and that media does play the role of a partial body. The conclusion of the research states that there are too few media academics in Balochistan to keep a gauge on the journalistic practices and the extent to which freedom of expression is professed. Regarding the role of state machinery respondents believe that it is not playing its role in protecting the journalists from threats. The respondents endorsed the hypothesis statement.

Media academia in Balochistan are too less to establish news coverage trainings, and teach ethical practices to the future journalists.

Recommendations

- Training facilities should be provided to those journalists who work in conflict zones to improve their reporting mechanism and enhance the safety of media workers through risk awareness. They should be made to follow international security protocols in this connection.
- The local journalists of Balochistan need to maintain regular liaison with prominent journalists and journalists unions both at the national and international level.
- The journalists unions in Balochistan such as BUJ and QUJ should come forward and be proactive for the protection of working journalists.
- The culture of investigative journalism need to be promoted among the journalists of Balochistan to avoid emergence of conflict due to insufficient coverage on sensitive issues.
- The main stream media of Pakistan should also enhance coverage of the issues of Balochistan with perspective, so that these may become part of national debate and reporting on local media may not incite threats.

Keeping in view the strategic location of the province and its increasing capacity to produce news, the media industry in Balochistan needs more professionals. Until now most of the journalists working in Balochistan are neither qualified nor professionally trained. For this purpose there is a fair scope for media training academies in private sector. All three public sector universities in Quetta are offering Journalism and Mass Communication programmes, but they all lack skill training facilities, by overcoming this deficiency better opportunities for the prospective journalists may be ensured to meet the challenges in the face of threats that this profession brings.