

LEVEL OF AGREEMENT OF JOURNALISTS AND
STUDENTS OF JOURNALISM ON SELECTED ASPECTS
OF DEVELOPMENT JOURNALISM

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Abstract:

It is true that conventional definition of journalism is reporting of news but there is a journalism that goes beyond that and does more than just telling the news, it is known as 'development journalism'. It is practiced mostly in developing countries. Development journalism requires action oriented approach to help the nation in combating with problems like poverty, illiteracy, unemployment. In our country media is more focused on profit making content than development. A survey was administered (in Vadodara district) to know the level of agreement of journalists regarding development journalism. The opinion were categorized in different aspects viz. Problems in Development Journalism, Importance of Development Journalism in Indian Context, Content in Development Journalism, Characteristics of Development Journalists and Today's Media. This paper highlights the emerging trends about development journalism and level of agreement of the selected journalists for the same. This may enlighten media houses and development practitioners to formulate guidelines to promote development journalism among the budding journalists.

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Development Journalism

It is true that conventional definition of journalism is reporting of news but there is a journalism that goes beyond that and does more than just telling the news, it is known as 'development journalism'. It is practiced mostly in developing countries.

The term “development journalism” was first coined in the 1960s at the Press Foundation of Asia. It was observed that news organizations were covering socio-economic developments in a superficial way and wherein journalists were reporting government press releases and quotes, but provide a very little space for analysis or evaluation of development projects. This became a matter of concern in the field of journalism. A feature on development journalism may cover the following issues: economic development, agriculture and food security, health, sanitation and medicine, employment, education and literacy, informational technologies development, housing conditions, environmental sustainability, urban and rural development, gender equality, etc. Its main actors are ordinary people rather than official figures; its emphasis is on stability, partnership, harmony, and consensus. (www.east4south.eu)

Singh (2011) described types of Development Journalism. “The term “development journalism” is used to refer to two different types of journalism. The first is a new school of journalism that began to appear in the 1960s. The idea behind it is similar to investigative reporting, but it focuses on conditions in developing nations and ways to improve them. The other type of development journalism involves heavy influence from the government of the nation involved. While this sort can be a powerful tool for local education and empowerment, it can also be a means of suppressing information and restricting journalists.”

Type I journalism attempts to document the conditions within a country so that the larger world can understand them. Journalists are encouraged to travel to remote areas, interact with the citizens of the country, and report back. It looks at proposed government projects

to improve conditions in the country, and analyzes their effectiveness and provide solution. It also encourages a cooperative effort between citizens of the nation and the outside world.

Type II journalism works as a tool for social justice, by speaking for those who cannot i.e. for freedom of speech. This type of journalism may help in identifying the ways in which the nation can be helped.

These categories can also be called as Initiative related and Issue related i.e. Type I and Type II respectively. Under Initiative related development journalism, journalists report government's or non government organization's plan to introduce their scheme for social development, launching of a new development program etc whereas in Issues related development journalism they report about individuals, communities, and segments who are facing problems on different issues like education, health, sanitation, starvation, injustice, housing etc and provide solution to them. Development journalism should always report in terms of people or in public interest.

Importance of Development Journalism in India

Development journalism requires action oriented approach to help the nation in combating with problems like poverty, illiteracy, unemployment. In our country media is more focused on profit making content than development. Take example of any media whether print or electronic, the space given to advertisement is more than news coverage. The advertisements, controversial issues, entertainment news are more highlighted than the coverage of development news. A very important role of press is watchdog role to monitoring the implementation of government scheme. It is a catalyst between the government and people. It will be injustice to people if it loses its focus from development to less important issues.

Singh(2011) said “we should strive for journalism where a common problem is identified and followed by probable solutions, leading to development.”

Kumar (2002) mentioned that the problem with development reporting –at least till India became free has been that there was little development to report. It was only in recent times that development reporting has reached respectable proportions. Development reporting is primarily socioeconomic reporting giving the Why, When, Where, Which, What and How of deep structural changes in our society.” He further added planning development and development reporting should go hand in hand.

But reporting development planning and its achievement is not the only way of development journalism. As it is discussed earlier, development journalism is voice of voiceless. Putting people’s issues in front of government through media can also be called development reporting.

Due to consumerism and liberalization, journalism is losing ethics. Media is not focusing on what should be shown to public but focusing on profit making content. It can be understood by looking to the number of advertisements and promotion media do through their Newspapers, News channels etc. Here, the space given to local news, business news, crime reporting and entertainment is higher than development reporting. In the country like India which is a developing nation, everyday a step is taken towards development. It is responsibility of media to report these kinds of issues. But somehow it fails to do so. Keeping this in mind, it was decided to carry out a survey on “Extent of agreement of journalists and students of journalism on selected aspects of development journalism”.

The main objectives of this study were –

1. To study the overall aspect wise extent of agreement of the respondents regarding development journalism.
2. To study the item wise extent of agreement of the respondents regarding development journalism.

Population and Sample of the study

The population of the study comprised of Print Media journalists from Indian Express, Times of India, Gujarat Samachar, and Divya Bhaskar from Vadodara city and students who were pursuing degree of Masters in Journalism and practicing journalism (as part of their study) from Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication, The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Vadodara. The population was very small, i.e. 30 Students and 32 Journalists. Therefore, the whole population were considered as sample of the study. Sample for this survey was selected through purposive sampling method. Total of 60 respondents comprised of 30 students and 30 journalists.

Research Tool:

An opinionaire was prepared to collect the data including the following selected aspects.

- Problems in Development Journalism
- Importance of Development Journalism in Indian Context
- Content in Development Journalism
- Characteristics of Development Journalists
- Media Today

The opinionnaire was given to the selected sample in order to collect their responses regarding development journalism. Four point scale was used to seek the opinions of the respondents. Item wise intensity indices, overall as well as aspect wise mean scores were calculated to find out the opinions of the respondents.

Formula used for calculating Item wise Intensity indices was-

$$\text{Item wise Intensity Indices} = \frac{\text{Total Score of an Item}}{\text{Total Number of the respondents}}$$

The scores were categorized for Item wise Intensity Indices as-

Table 1 Extent of Agreement on Items

Range of Intensity Indices	Extent of Agreement
2.1-3.0	High
1.1 – 2.0	Medium
0.0 – 1.0	Low

Results and Findings

The present survey aimed at studying the extent of agreement of the students studying journalism and journalists regarding development journalism in today's context. It was analyzed through calculating item wise intensity indices.

Table 2 Item wise Extent of Agreement for of the Respondents regarding Problems in Development Journalism.

Sr. No.	Problems in Development Journalism	Overall I.I.	Journalist's I.I.	Students' I.I.
1.	There is absence of non-profit media organizations.	2.0	2.0	2.0
2.	Development journalism lacks dedicated and devoted journalists.	2.0	2.0	2.2
3.	It is difficult to find sponsors for presentation of development based programmes or write up.	2.0	1.9	1.9
4.	Extensive travel and expenditure discourage journalist to work on development issues.	1.8	1.8	1.9
5.	Ethics based journalism is difficult to practice.	1.7	1.6	1.9
6.	Focusing on development oriented journalism is difficult	1.6	1.8	1.8

The table no. 2 shows the intensity indices of the extent of agreement of the selected journalists and journalism students regarding problems in development journalism. It reveals that overall, the respondents agreed to a some extent for the problems related to development journalism. It was found that the students and journalists had almost similar

level of agreement. The overall responses for the same ranged between 2.0-1.6 whereas in case of students and journalists it ranged between 2.2 – 1.8 and 2.0 – 1.6 respectively.

Overall as well as students and journalists both, agreed to a some extent that it is difficult to find sponsors for presentation of development based programmes or write up. The respondents also agreed to a some extent that

- ✓ There is an absence of non-profit media organizations
- ✓ Development journalism lacks dedicated and devoted journalists.
- ✓ Extensive travel and expenditure discourage journalists to work on development issues.

This shows that the selected respondents were aware of the existence of profit making media houses which is a big threat for practicing development journalism. The same also agreed that Students agreed to great extent that development journalism lacks dedicated and devoted journalists whereas Journalists agreed to it at some extent. Further the table revealed that selected journalists were unable to see these problems as problems. The possible reason could be that they are not practicing development journalism to the level where they can find these problems.

Table 3 Item wise Extent of Agreement for of the Respondents regarding Importance of Development Journalism in Indian Context.

Sr. No.	Importance of Development Journalism in Indian Context	Overall I.I.	Journalists' I.I.	Students' I.I.
1.	Promoting Development journalism can strengthen democracy.	2.4	2.3	2.3
2.	Development journalism provides scope for people's participation in communication.	2.4	2.4	2.4

3.	Development journalism gives voice to the affected people.	2.4	2.2	2.2
4.	Development journalism is a tool for media to play a role of watchdog effectively.	2.3	2.3	2.3
5.	There is growing significance for development journalism.	2.3	2.0	2.1
6.	Development journalism is practiced with a purpose to improve the society.	2.2	2.1	2.1
7.	It can provide new direction to society.	2.2	2.1	2.2
8.	In India, it is desirable that journalists promote development journalism.	2.1	2.2	2.2
9.	Development journalism has opened up the gates for people's participation in journalism.	2.1	2.1	2.1
10.	It is responsibility of the government to promote development journalism.	2.0	2.0	2.1
11.	Media have to join hands with elite (upper class) interest groups for their sustainability.	1.7	1.6	1.6

The overall intensity indices regarding the importance of development journalism in today's context varied between 2.4 - 1.7 whereas in case of students and journalists, it ranged between 2.4 – 1.6. Both students and journalists had same extent of agreement for each items.

The indices showed that respondents agreed to a great extent about the importance of practicing development journalism for betterment of society and strengthening democracy. They also agreed to a great extent that it provides scope for people's participation in communication and it gives voice to the affected people. Therefore it can be tool for media to play a role of watchdog effectively. They also agreed to a great extent that journalists should promote development journalism and promoting

development journalism can strengthen the democracy. The respondents also agreed to a great extent that there is growing significance for development journalism. This showed that the journalists are aware of its need and significance in today's context. They had the same level of agreement that development journalism can provide new direction to society.

The respondents agreed to some extent that it is responsibility of the government to promote development journalism. They also agreed to some extent that media should collaborate with elite interest groups for their sustainability.

Table 4 Item wise Extent of Agreement for of the Respondents regarding Characteristics of Development Journalists.

Sr. No.	Characteristics of Development Journalists	Overall I.I.	Journalist's I.I.	Student's I.I.
1.	Development journalism demands great responsibility as one is working on delicate and critical issues.	2.4	2.5	2.4
2.	Development journalism serves as vigilant (attentive) eye of society.	2.3	2.2	2.2
3.	To be development journalist, one needs excellent interpersonal (soft) skills.	2.2	2.2	2.2
4.	Development journalism generates interest among media professionals towards peoples' issues.	2.1	2.1	2.1
5.	Only diligent (hard working) human being can fit into the role of development journalism.	1.9	2.0	2.0
6.	Development journalist gets immense satisfaction out of their work	1.9	1.9	1.9
7.	Development journalism allows grass root level people to express their concerns to the policy makers.	1.9	1.8	1.8
8.	Development journalism allows free flow of information between people, the system and the media.	1.9	1.7	1.7
9.	Development journalists feel proud of being involved in the development of the society.	1.9	2.1	1.8

Table no. 4 reveals the opinions of journalists regarding characteristics of development journalists. Overall their opinions ranged between 2.4 – 1.9 whereas opinions of journalists and students ranged between 2.5-1.7 and 2.4- 1.7 respectively.

Overall respondents agreed to a great extent that development journalism demands great responsibility as one is working on delicate and critical issues. For this item Journalists had higher level of agreement in comparison students but they both agreed to a great extent for the same. Overall and journalists and journalism students both agreed to a great extent that to be development journalist, one needs excellent interpersonal skills and development journalism generates interest among media professionals towards people's issues.

Whereas, Overall and journalists and journalism students both agreed to some extent that only diligent human being can fit into the role of development journalism. This may be interpreted as they agree that anyone can be a development journalist if they have dedication and good interpersonal skills. This shows their perception about development journalists. Moreover they also agreed to some extent that development journalist gets immense satisfaction out of their work and feel proud of being involved in the development of the society. The monetary output in return from their work could be considered as the possible reason for this finding. The respondents had the same opinions that development journalism allows free flow of information between people, the system and the media.

Table no 4 further reveals that overall respondents and journalism students agreed to some extent that development journalists feel proud of being involved in the development of the society but for the same item journalists agreed to great extent.

Item wise Extent of Agreement for of the Respondents regarding Content in Development Journalism.

The intensity indices for content of development journalism, overall and category wise varied from 2.9 – 1.7. Both the categories i.e. students and journalists had similar opinions for this.

The findings revealed that respondents agreed to great extent that

- ✓ Development journalism is a kind of advocacy (support) for the interest of the deprived people.
- ✓ Issues like Sanitation, Health, Environment, Infrastructure, Gender issues, Education, Human rights, Corruption, Government negligence to be taken up under development journalism should be covered under development journalism.
- ✓ Development journalist should evaluate and interpret, development projects, development policies of government, problems related to people and development, development issues, achievements in development sector and development linked campaigns for the common man.
- ✓ Media has a social responsibility to project people centric issues and should create awareness regarding social issues among people.

They were agreed to less extent that Unemployment and Agriculture related issues should be covered under development journalism.

Whereas, all of them agreed to some extent that media need to focus on national objectives considering that main stream media is not sufficiently focusing on grass root people and their problems. The respondents agreed to some extent that media concentrates only on profit making content and diverted their attention to promoting the market for upper class. They also agreed to some extent that development journalism investigate non-pleasant issues of the society.

Table 5 Item wise Extent of Agreement of the Respondents regarding Media in Today's Context.

Sr. No.	Media Today	Overall I.I.	Journalist's I.I.	Student's I.I.
1.	'Everybody is a reporter' slogan is justified in today's context of development journalism.	2.2	2.2	2.2
2.	Journalism by people is an emerging trend.	2.1	2.1	2.1
3.	Media is controlled by market forces.	2.0	2.2	1.9
4.	Evils in the society can be easily eradicated through development journalism.	1.6	1.5	1.5

Table no. 5 revealed the extent of agreement of respondents about Media in today's context. Overall and category wise, respondents agreed to a great extent that journalism by people is an emerging trend and 'everybody is a reporter' slogan is justified in today's context of development journalism.

Moreover, Overall the respondents agreed to some extent that media is controlled by market forces whereas journalists agreed to it at great extent in comparison to students who agreed to some extent. The reason could be that journalists are into their profession and have more exposure to media. The respondents further agreed to some extent that evils in the society can be easily eradicated through development journalism.

Conclusion

The present survey aimed at studying the extent of agreement of journalists and journalism students regarding development journalism. Through the results, it was found that the respondents (journalists and journalism students both) know the importance of development journalism in today's context and are also aware of problems related to it.

The findings showed that all the respondents agreed to a great extent that practicing development journalism may strengthen democracy and it gives voice to the affected people. All the respondents agreed to some extent that media should collaborate with

elite interest groups for their sustainability. This finding revealed their sensitivity towards journalism. This shows that selected journalists and journalism students think that the sustainability of media does not depend upon elite group of society.

The findings further revealed that, respondents agreed to a great extent that to be development journalist, one needs excellent interpersonal skills and development journalism generates interest among media professionals towards people's issues. They agreed to great extent that issues like Sanitation, Health, Environment, Infrastructure, Gender issues, Education, Human rights, Corruption, Government negligence to be taken up under development journalism should be covered under development journalism. Their responses reflected that they agree that development journalist should evaluate and interpret development projects, development policies of government, problems related to people and development, development issues, achievements in development sector and development linked campaigns for the common man in order to maintain transparency between government and public.

The respondents considered development journalism as a support for common people. The selected journalists did not agree that media is biased towards profit making and not focusing on developmental issues. Therefore, the present findings suggest the scope of development journalism in today's context.

Recommendations

- A workshop can be organized on sensitization of journalists and journalism students on Development Journalism.
- A refresher course can be outlined especially focusing on development journalism for journalists.
- A content analysis of development news published in news paper can be done to find out the quality of news content with reference to development journalism

- A study can be carried out to compare the space given and content covered for developmental news in English and Local language newspapers.

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