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Only a proper wage structure for part-time journalist would attract proper kind of talent in this profession. The time has come when not only National and State capital levels journalism requires well trained human resources but mufasil correspondents also needed to be brilliant ones.

Part time Journalists need justice

The so-called part-time journalists - the most vital grass-roots level link of every newspaper in the entire chain of news collection process has ironically remained the most neglected class to date. The saddest chapter of the newspaper industry consists of the fact that there are thousands of part-time journalists all over the country whose wages remain wholly unregulated and their bargaining strength remains a big zero and non-existent.

And to cap the chaos the changing dynamics of the newspaper industry in the 21st century have changed the role of a part-time journalist completely and have made his job "more challenging, more demanding and more crucial" for no extra gain. He continues to exist professionally and socially in the later 20th century conditions.

With the fast changing scenario in the newspaper industry while the regional newspapers are pushing into the national big league, the national newspapers are coming down into local markets. Small and medium towns and cities are emerging as new growth areas for manufacturing and service sector industries; so is the case with the newspaper industry also.

Prashant Pandey, CEO of Entertainment Network (India) Ltd., says: "In absolute terms, you cannot beat the metros. In growth terms, quite obviously the larger growth is coming from the smaller towns."

With the advent of electronic media, the part-time correspondents have to very often compete

with news channels getting instructions from their offices to follow leads from a Breaking News of a news channel. His dispatches are used not only in local editions but also in all others including the Web-newspaper thus putting the contribution of a mufasil correspondent within international reach. He is no more an insignificant part-time journalist of yore but a full time 24x7 journalist of today. In fact there is no such thing as part-time journalists today.

With the spread and opening of local offices of multi-edition newspapers the so-called part-time journalists also like the regular staff journalists are required to come to local offices for filing news stories everyday. Otherwise they use their personal infrastructure like house, telephone, computer and internet and electricity besides entertaining the visitors to file news. They do not get any payment for that. And to add to their misery the newspaper organisations demand that they arrange commercial advertisements for the newspaper - it is the latent part of their duty. One may not believe but the fact is that in most parts of U.P., Bihar, West Bengal, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Punjab, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh, part-time correspondents do not get remuneration even of an unskilled worker fixed by the government.

The previous two Wage Boards headed by Justice Bachawat and Justice Manisana had recommended that part-time journalists would get 50 per cent