

Seventh Wage Board Award: A Triangular Conflict between Government, Media Owners and Journalists in Pakistan

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Abstract

A great majority of the Pakistani Journalists are living in a miserable condition receiving low salaries and no facilities. The Seventh Wage Board Award was a ray of hope for them, when it was announced. This is a hot issue of today's Pakistani Journalism. It was announced in 2001 by a Wage Board constituted by the Government of Pakistan under Newspapers' Employees' Act 1973. Even after a period of ten years, it has not been implemented by the media organization till the end of 2011. The journalists welcomed this award because a reasonable increase in their salaries was recommended in this award. On the other side, the newspaper owners totally rejected this award labeling it as an unaffordable burden on the economy of media organizations. They filed a petition to the Supreme Court of Pakistan against this award in June 2002 which was rejected by the Supreme Court in April 2004. The government is favoring the journalist community regarding implementation of this award. In reaction to this, the newspaper owners launched a huge advertising campaign against Seventh Wage Board Award and strongly criticized the government including President, Prime Minister and Information Minister. Now the government has become a sandwich between Media owners and working journalists. This paper attempts to investigate the viewpoints and arguments of journalists, media owners and the role of government in this regard and also suggests some solution to resolve the issue. The Seventh Wage Board Award is an issue which has great

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concern for the whole society, in general and for the government and the journalism community, in particular. The implementation of the wage board award is still hanging in the air even after passing a decade after its announcement.

Key Words: Wage Board, Journalism, Salary structure, working conditions, implementation.

Media Organizations in Pakistan

In recent years Pakistan has got tremendous development in the field of media and a big boost can be seen in the number of media organizations during the first decade of the twenty first century. We can see almost half century newspapers of international standard being published both in Urdu and English from different cities of the country. The largest media group of Pakistan is Jang Group having cross-media ownership. This is the biggest media Giant of the country which publishes the largest widely circulate Urdu newspaper daily Jang and the largest widely circulate English newspaper “The News” from almost all of the big cities of the country. The Jang group publishes two most popular weekly magazines of the country. These are weekly Akhbar-e-Jehan in Urdu and weekly Mag in English. In addition to these print media organizations, the Jang group is ruling over the country through its television channels. These channels are Geo News, Geo Super and Geo entertainment channel known as Aag. One of the most important media group of the country is Naw-i-Waqt group which owns the Urdu newspaper daily Nawa-i-waqt, English newspaper The Nation, weekly Family magazine and children magazine Phool. This group is having its TV channel Waqt TV. Dawn media group is also one of the most prominent media groups having its historic English newspaper daily Dawn and TV channel Dawn News. These organizations are considered as elite media organizations of the country. Another rapidly flourishing media group is Express group which owns its Urdu newspaper daily Express, English newspaper Express Tribune and television channel Express News. The organizations of this media group are getting immense popularity throughout the country. Yet, there is another media group known as Liberty Papers which owns daily Khabrain in Urdu and The Post in English. This group is running its television channel namely “Channel 5”. Several other small and medium size organizations are also

running their operations in the country. Cross media ownership is also boosting with a big speed in Pakistan (PEMRA, 2005).

Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) was established in 2002 during General Pervaiz Musharaf regime and it has the mandate to regulate the electronic media organizations in the country. Till the end of 2011, there are 88 private television channels licensed by PEMRA although some of them are still non-operational. Ten international media companies have landing rights permission by PEMRA to operate their broadcast in Pakistan. PEMRA has also issued FM Radio licenses to 115 commercial companies and 28 non-commercial institutions (PEMRA (2011)). Most of the non-commercial FM radio licenses have been issued to different Universities of the country.

Although there are some newspapers having an international standard and quality which are very popular among the educated people of Pakistan. Yet here are thousands of dummy newspapers being published from nooks and corners of the country having very low circulation. The purpose of these newspapers is only to earn money through advertisements, mainly through government advertisements (Riaz, 2010:50).

Media Associations

Different media people have different organizations and associations. All Pakistan Newspapers Society (APNS) is the organization of newspaper owners and proprietors and it aims to protect the interests of the newspapers' owners. The editors are represented in the Council of Pakistan Newspaper Editors (CPNE). The working journalists have their association named as Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ). The All Pakistan Newspaper Employees' Confederation (APNEC) represents employees, journalists as well as non journalists in newspapers' offices. Local Press Clubs are also strong platforms for the journalists of a number of big and small cities. However, in some media organizations journalists are not allowed to take part in activities of the trade unions. These media associations protect the interests of their members and work for their welfare and upbringing.

Miserable Condition of Journalists

A vast majority of working journalists in the developing countries are living in a miserable condition. For example an Indian author Jagdish Vachani elaborates the condition of Indian journalists in these words:

“The salaries of journalists are low, often paid irregularly, recruitments and promotions are made in a haphazard manner; working hours and leave rules, where such rules at all exist, are unsatisfactory; the amenities provided are inadequate; retirement benefits are almost non-existent and above all there is a feeling of insecurity of service. There are innumerable complaints about the manner in which services of journalists have been dispensed with, sometimes at sweet will of the manager or the proprietors (Vachani, 1999:280). Being a neighbored country the situation is almost same in Pakistan. Most of the journalists are living in a miserable condition.

Starting Career in the field of Journalism

The field of media and journalism has always been easy to enter in because there is no professional requirement to enter in the field. Even in most of the situations a professional degree is not required to be a journalist. This phenomenon exists all over the world. As a result a lot of people try journalism as their first career and afterwards they leave this profession and join some other field. According to a study low salary is the most cited reason for leaving this profession (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1986). Another researcher Mann found on the basis of his survey research that journalism students prefer the field of Advertising and Public Relations instead of working in newspapers because of low salaries and lack of creativity (Mann, 1988:43,60-62). Having an analysis of the journalists working in media organizations in Pakistan it can be said that Working conditions including salary structure of the journalists affect the media content produced by the organizations. Media organizations like Dawn, Express and Jang group who pay more salaries to their journalists, the standard of their content is much better than those newspapers where journalists are less paid.

Wage Board Award

In the words of Marshal McLuhan, money is the poor man's credit card (McLuhan, 1996:131). Obviously, no body can survive without money.

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It might be possible to live without money in the old ages but now, this is not possible. Like other employees and workers, journalists also have right to get reasonable salaries in reward of their work. A Wage Board was set up by the Government of Pakistan in 1960 who fixed the pay scales for different categories of newspaper workers. This ordinance is called as Working Journalists' (Conditions of Service) ordinance 1960.

The ordinance says:

“The Central Government may constitute a Wage Board for fixing rates of wages in respect of working journalists in accordance with the provision of this ordinance. The Board shall consist of an equal number of persons nominated by the Central Government to represent employers in relation to newspaper establishments and working journalists, and an independent person shall be appointed by the Central Government as the chairman, therefore. In fixing rates of wages in respect of working journalists, the Board shall have regard to the cost of living, the prevalent rates of wages for comparable employments and to any other circumstances which to the Board seem relevant. The decisions of the Board fixing rates of wages shall be communicated as soon as practicable to the Central Government (Jabbar & Isa,1997:269).

The first Wage Board recommended the abolition of distinction between English and Urdu language newspapers in matters of wages of working journalists; provision of fringe benefits to journalists such as dearness allowance, conveyance allowance, charge allowance night shift allowance etc; payment of apprentices, gratuity in the event of dismissal after three years of continuous service or retirement after 25 years of service, or death, and entitlement to medical expenses. An amendment to the ordinance makes the dependents of journalists also eligible for medical treatment by the employers (Shamsuddin, 1996:34-25).

The Government of Pakistan assented Newspaper Employees (Conditions of Service) Act 1973 on August 11, 1973. Six different wage boards were constituted by the government in different times and these boards announced six wage board awards till 2001. Only a few media groups including Jang group, Nawa-i-waqt group, Dawn group and the government owned and controlled news agency, Associated

Press of Pakistan (APP) implemented these awards partially and fixed the salaries of a few senior journalists according to the wage board awards and neglected a lot of other employees. The governments of all the times did not take any step to implement these awards strictly because they did not want to unhappily the media owners. On the other hand, trade unions and associations of journalists were continuously struggling for the implementation of these wage board awards. Hence a continuous battle was going on the way between media owners and journalists and the government was not interfering in this battle. Its role was only to announce wage board award.

On October 11th, 2001 the government-constituted Seventh Wage Board announced an award of Two Billion rupees to be paid in the next five years. This was named as the Seventh Wage Board Award (Dawn, 2001). The newspapers owners and publishers totally rejected this award and started a huge campaign against it.

Journalists Viewpoint on Seventh Wage Board Award:

Pakistan's fourth estate which exposes injustices and atrocities is itself a victim of the worst kind of human rights' violations at the hands of newspaper owners and the government.

Newspaper proprietors exploit their employees while simultaneously getting favor from the government in different shapes. The salary structure of journalists in Pakistan is very low. They are not even issued appointment letters and can be dismissed by owners at any time without reason.

Though Pakistan's Constitution protects the rights of journalists under the Newspaper Employees (Services Condition) Act, 1973, non-implementation of the Act by the government has left journalists in the lurch.

Under the 1973 Act, employment on contract in newspapers is illegal, but neither the government nor the country's courts have acted against this violation. The low wages, job insecurity and absence of other facilities have forced journalists to make compromises, often playing into the hands of vested interests.

"Some newspapers encourage their staff members to resort to

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corruption and blackmail. Bureau offices are sold to the highest bidders," claims Abdullah Jan who represented journalists in the Seventh wage board. "The owners try to get close to the President and Prime Minister and angle for foreign tours with dignitaries," observes Jan, who is also a former assistant secretary of the PFUJ (Khan, 2003).

Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ) has been struggling for the rights of the working journalists. The union's point of view can be seen in its following statement published in national newspapers on June 19th 2004. In this statement PFUJ protested the government for the delay of the implementation of the 7th Wage board award by the media organizations. The Journalists' Union demanded the government that the advertisements of the governmental organizations should be linked with the implementation of the wage board and only those newspapers should be given these benefits that are willing to implement the wage board award in their organizations. The office bearers of the PFUJ appreciated the role of all four provincial assemblies of the country who passed resolutions for the implementation of the seventh wage board award. They condemned the misleading advertisements of the media owners who argue that the increase in salaries would be unbearable for the media organizations (Dawn, 2004).

APNS Struggle against Implementation of the Wage Board Award

The All Pakistan Newspapers Society (APNS) strongly demanded the reverse of the Wage Board Award in its emergent meeting held on October 25th, 2001 in Karachi. Their viewpoint was published in the next day newspapers in these words:

KARACHI, Oct 25: An urgent meeting of the All Pakistan Newspapers Society has appealed to the President of Pakistan to reverse a "disastrous pay award" announced by the chairman of the 7th Newspapers' Employees Wage Board and to repeal the Newspapers' Employees Conditions of Service Act, 1973, which provide the legal basis for such an award, says a press release. It said the estimated Two billion Rupees pay increase spread over a five-year period has been described by the APNS as "the single largest pay award in terms of volume" in the history of Pakistan, at a

time when the industry is "already reeling from the financial impact of the war in neighboring Afghanistan" (News, 2001).

The APNS has strongly cautioned the president with respect to "a new war brewing on the home front", due to the creation of a "theatre of triangular conflict and confrontation" that is expected to ensue between government, publishers and the employees as a consequence of this award".

The APNS has also committed itself to paying "far higher an amount ... (than) a decent living wage" for newspaper journalists, but has declared itself to be irrevocably opposed to the creation of a super class of several thousand non-journalist employees who are all "guaranteed three times the wages of their private sector counterparts" (Dawn, 2001).

On June 20th 2002, the All Pakistan Newspapers society (APNS) filed a case in the Supreme Court of Pakistan against the implementation of the seventh wage board award. The APNS argued in its appeal that the Newspapers Employees' act 1973 was a violation of the basic rights of the media owners. The APNS further requested in its appeal that this act was a violation of the articles 8, 9, 14, 18,19, 23 and 25 of the act of Pakistan that ensure freedom of expression and safety and protection of the media organizations in the country. The petition was signed by 24 members of the All Pakistan Newspapers Society and it was submitted to the apex court of Pakistan through advocate Abdul Hafeez Pirzada. The petitioners stated that there was no justification at all for giving big salaries to the non-media workers of the media organizations. They requested the apex court that the seventh wage board award may be declared as illegal. The media owners further stated in their application that the article 19 of the Ac of Pakistan assures freedom of press in the country while the Newspaper Employees act was against the spirit of the freedom of press. It was also stated by the petitioners that the Chairman of the Wage Board has been given excessive powers and giving such excessive powers to an individual I highly unjustified and against the spirit of the act of press freedom given by the act of Pakistan.

The members of the APNS further stated in their petition that the suggested wage board award was an unbearable financial burden on the media industry of Pakistan and there is a danger of the closure of

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several media industries of the country if they would be forced to implement the wage award (Dawn, 2002). The news of the petition in the Supreme Court of Pakistan was greatly highlighted in the next day's newspapers.

On April, 8th 2004, The Supreme Court dismissed the petition filed by APNS with the remarks that it did not satisfy the requirements specified in article 184(3) for the maintainability of a petition there under (The News, 2004).

Government's Viewpoint:

For the first time in the history of Pakistan, the Government of Pakistan took keen interest in the issue and supported journalists regarding implementation of the Seventh Wage Board Award. The reason might be to threaten media owners and to pressurize them to give better coverage to the government and stop criticism on the government. However, the government fully supported the journalists on this dispute.

On June 11th, 2004, The National Assembly of Pakistan unanimously adopted a resolution linking the government advertisements with the implementation of Wage Board Award by the newspapers. A leader of MQM Dr. Farooq Sattar presented the resolution which was admitted by the house. The then minister for information and broadcasting Sheikh Rashid Ahmed stated that government would not oppose the resolution as this matter was pertaining to journalist community (The Nation, 2004).

On July 12th 2004, the federal cabinet discussed the issue of the implementation of the Seventh Wage Board Award in detail and the cabinet set up a five member committee, headed by the then information minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed, and comprising the then Minister for Finance and afterwards Prime Minister of Pakistan Mr. Shaukat Aziz, Minister for religious affairs Mr. Ijaz ul Haq, Minister for Petroleum Mr. Nauraz Shakoore, and Minister for Housing and Works Safwanullah to discuss the issue of implementation of 7th Wage Board Award with all the stakeholders. The minister for information said in a news conference that this was the last attempt on the part of the government to settle the controversy on the subject and if the APNS and journalists did not come up with mutually acceptable solution, the

matter would again be taken up at cabinet level, which would make the final decision. The minister said that the Cabinet Committee had been entrusted with the task to narrow down the differences among the stakeholders and ensure that the justice would be done to all. He said that the cabinet had expressed its firm commitment to the freedom of press (The Nation, 2004).

Advertising Campaign against 7th Wage Board Award Launched by APNS

All Pakistan Newspapers Society (APNS) launched a huge advertising campaign against government to withdraw the Seventh Wage Board Award and cancel the Newspapers Employees Act 1973. All the member organizations of the APNS published these advertisements on the front page of their publications. This advertising campaign was started on June 18th and ended on 27th June 2004, after one day of the governmental change in Pakistan. All of these advertisements were addressed to the President of Pakistan. These advertisements contained the demand of the APNS in bold capital letters at the end of each and every advertisement in these words:

THE GOVERNMENT MUST STOP SUPPORTING THE WAGE BOARD. IT SHOULD SUPPORT A FREE PRESS INSTEAD REPEAL THE NEWSPAPERS EMPLOYEES ACT, 1973 (APNS, 2004:1).

The first advertisement appeared on front page of all the member publications of APNS on June 18th 2004. It was titled as:

“Seriously, Mr. President...Can any believer in a free press actually believe your Information Minister?”

The main thrust of this advertisement was to criticize the then Information Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed who was very active in implementation of the Wage Board Award. The attractive part of the ad was the cartoon of Sheikh Rashid Ahmed. The minister was criticized in these words: “Why the Federal Information Minister taking such an unholy interest in this matter?---- Why is Sheikh Rashid Ahmed so bothered about the Wage Board’s implementation?” (Dawn, 2004).

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On June 19th 2004, the second advertisement of this campaign appeared on the front pages of the member publications of APNS under this title:

Isn't it odd, Mr. President---- at precisely the time when the free world sees us as part of the International Coalition against Terrorism, your Government has decided to terrorize the free press? (APNS (2004:1).

The ad was containing a cartoon in which APNS was sinking in water putting its hand towards an army man to bring it out of water. The army man was a symbol of the President General Pervaiz Musharraf. The gist of this ad was showing the condition of newspaper industry as very miserable saying that 63 newspapers have been closed down in past eight years due to the financial burden imposed on the press. It was argued that the 7th Wage Board Award would prove to be the death knell for the remaining newspapers that were struggling to survive. The ad was ended with a question and its self-replied answer in these words:

“The question is will there any newspaper to read? Not if the 7th Wage Board is implemented. Not if the free press is simply not allowed to survive.” (Dawn, 2004).

The third advertisement appeared on June 20th 2004 on the front pages of all of the newspapers members of APNS under the title, “Excuse me Mr. President! Does your Government want to murder the Journalists with sweet knife?” (APNS, 2004:1)

Again an interesting cartoon was there, showing the newspaper industry as a patient admitted in hospital and an army man was going away taking his oxygen cylinder with him. The theme of this ad was that apparently the 7th Wage Board Award was looking beautiful to the journalist community but actually this was an attempt to murder them with sweet knife. The APNS argued that when no newspaper will remain, then who will pay the handsome salaries to journalists? (News Karachi, 2004).

On 22nd June 2004, two ads were simultaneously appeared on the newspapers, one on the front page and the other on the inner pages of the newspapers. The front page ad was titled as under.

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Frankly Mr. President! Hasn't even one of the government's spin doctors confessed to you that there is something seriously wrong with the Newspapers Employees Act, 1973? (APNS, 2004:1)

The ad was containing the following table of salaries and a question followed by the table.

Employee Status	Salary in Private Sector	Take home package under the Wage Board.
Sweeper	RS.2500	Rs.16995
Peon	Rs.2500	Rs.16995
Driver	Rs.3500	Rs.17765
Clerk	Rs.4000	Rs.18540

Why are sweepers, drivers, peons and clerks, covered by an act aimed at protecting the interests of journalists, when they can easily work for an organization in the private sector?

The inner page advertisement was having an attractive cartoon in which the President Musharraf was shown as taking oath from the then Prime Minister Mr. Jamali, the then Finance Minister Mr. Shoukat Aziz and the Information Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed. The ad was titled as:

“Off the record, Mr. President--- Will there be a state farewell when the Government finally hammers the last nail in the coffin of a free press?”

The advertisement's content was summarized at its end in these words:

The 7th Wage Board Award is designed to permanently destroy the newspaper industry. Who would have thought, Mr. President, that it would be a government under your leadership that administers the last rites to the free press of Pakistan? (The News Islamabad, 2004).

On 23rd June 2004, The APNS advertisement appeared under the following title:

But Why, Mr. President ---- do you refer to repeat the tactics of our former rulers, when it comes to a free press? (APNS, 2004:1).

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The ad mentioned that all of the former rulers used The Wage Board as a means of controlling the press by using the formula of crippling the press financially. The APNS argued in this ad that the present government was repeating the practice of the former rulers regarding press.

The member newspapers of APNS were having the next advertisement of the campaign on the front pages of their publications on 24th June, 2004 under the following title:

“Do you really think, Mr. President--- that your government will be getting a medal for forcing newspapers to close down?” (APNS, 2004:1).

The ad was containing a cartoon in which some army man was fixing a medal on the chest of the President General Pervaiz Musharraf. The ad's content can be summarized in these words.

This award will almost certainly kill the newspaper industry. Within days of its implementation, newspapers will begin to close down; hundreds of journalists will lose their jobs. Is this what your government intends? Can press freedom survive without a press?

On 25th June 2004, the newspapers published a full page advertisement with comprehensive arguments against Seventh Wage Board Award. In the end of the ad, the APNS appealed to the president in a humble way to preside over a meeting at which the ministers concerned and the APNS should be present. The ad was ended with the words addressing to the president, “You can help us by virtue of your office. The time to act is now.” (APNS, 2004:1).

On 26th June 2004, the member newspapers of APNS published two advertisements in their publications, one on the front page and the other on the inner pages. The front page ad was against the parliament of the country that passed a resolution for the implementation of the Wage Board Award and for linking government advertisements with the implementation of the Wage Board Award, on June 11, 2004. The ad was titled in these words:

“Isn’t it sad, Mr. President----- when your parliamentarians end up giving parliament a bad name?” (APNS, 2004:1)

The parliamentarians of the ruling party as well as the opposition were strongly criticized in this advertisement. The ad was ended with the remarks: “Are our parliamentarians more interested in playing to the gallery and appeasing journalists, rather than in protecting the rights of a free press?” (The News, 2004).

The inner page ad was about the salaries of non-journalist employees of newspapers. The APNS demanded the deletion of 87 categories of non journalist employees of newspapers from the 7th Wage Board Award. The ad was ended with the following punch line:

“Mr. President, if you were an employer in the private sector, would you accept such gross injustices?”

On the same day, (June 26th 2004) the then Prime Minister of Pakistan Mir Zafar Ullah Khan Jamali dismissed his cabinet and he himself resigned from the office of the Prime Minister. This was a big event in the history of the country.

The last advertisement of the APNS campaign appeared in the newspapers of 27th June 2004. It was having a cartoon in which the then President General Pervaiz Musharraf was shown as surrounded by journalists with microphones and video cameras, asking him some questions. The heading was, “Mr. President, We want to ask a few very easy questions.” The ad was containing a question answer format in a pinching style. The ad was ended in these words:

Q. Do you want to say that newspaper industry is the only industry on which the Wage Board Award is going to be implemented?

A. Yes

Q. Why?

A. Next question, please. (APNS, 2004:1).

This was the last advertisement of this campaign. On the day of its publication, the President called an un-scheduled and un-announced meeting with a four-member delegation of APNS and threatened them to stop their advertising campaign at once. The campaign was stopped and a clarification was appeared in all of the national newspapers,

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issued by the President office mentioning that the President has nothing to do with the 7th Wage Board Award and the dispute was only between the journalists and the newspapers' owners. The presidential spokesman stated that the President had a strong belief on the freedom of Press and his policies are evident in this regard.

Counter Balance of the APNS Advertising Campaign by Pakistan Television (PTV)

The Government launched a counter-balance campaign against the newspaper owners and in favor of the journalists on its self-owned and controlled Television, Pakistan Television (PTV). During the ten days of the APNS advertising campaign, PTV telecasted a number of news stories in favor of the Pakistani journalists in its news bulletins. It portrayed journalists as miserable community of society and newspaper owners as billionaires. PTV gave full coverage to the rallies and demonstrations of the journalists demanding implementation of the Seventh Wage Board Award. The Information Minister's interview was a compulsory part of all of the news bulletins in favor of the Wage Board Award. Hence these ten days were showing a picture of battle between PTV and newspapers. When the ads were stopped by the APNS, the PTV campaign was at once stopped.

Recommendations and Suggestions:

The triangular conflict between media owners, journalists and the government is still prevailing even after passing a decade. The dust has been temporarily settled but it can explode again any time. No one of the conflict parties is willing to sacrifice. The most surprising part of the story is that the Government is fully committed to implement the Seventh Wage Board Award, supporting the journalist community for the first time. No such commitment was seen in the implementation of the earlier six Wage Board Awards. Why it is so? Some people say that the Government is just using the name of journalists to pressurize media owners to favor the government; otherwise it has no sympathy with journalists. The journalists are fighting the battle for a reasonable rise in their salaries, which is justified. On the other hand, media owners' plea about a drastic increase in the salaries of the non-journalist staff is also quite genuine. The recommended salaries for sweepers, peons, drivers and clerks in the Wage Board Award are even more than the salaries of the government officers having Masters Degree with a lot of experience. Following are a few recommendations that can be helpful in resolving the issue in a better way.

- The joint meetings of the media owners, journalists' representatives and the relevant government officials should be arranged to discuss the issue in detail and find out some way to resolve the issue.
- The APNS plea regarding drastic increase in the salaries of non-journalist staff is quite genuine. The Wage Board Chairman may be appealed to revise the recommended pay structure for the non-Journalist staff and these may be fixed as equal to those of employees of other private sector organizations. Non-journalist staff can do job any where while the journalists can do job only in the field of Journalism. If the 87 categories of the non-journalist staff are deleted from the Wage Board Award, as demanded by the APNS, the issue would be resolved. Newspaper owners will be ready to increase the salaries of the journalist staff according to the recommendations of the Wage Board Award.
- A nominal increase in salaries may be given to the non-journalist staff.
- After the settlement of the issue, the release of governmental advertisements should be linked with the implementation of the Wage Board Award. If some organization does not give salaries to its journalists according to the recommendations of the Seventh Wage Board Award, the release of governmental advertisements may be stopped to it.
- Newspaper industry should be facilitated in some other way by the government. Relaxation in the custom and excise duty in the import of paper, inks, machinery etc. may be given to media owners.
- The qualification may be given weightage for appointment of journalists so that educated people can be appointed. The Masters Degree in Mass Communication should be a prerequisite for employment as a journalist.

No doubt, the Government-Press relationship is an adversarial relationship, and it should be, but it should be for the betterment of the society and not for personal benefits. This is the duty of journalists, newspaper owners and the Government to settle the triangular conflict for the betterment of the society. If the dispute is not settled, uneasiness will remain there bringing a bad name for the holy profession. Providing better working atmosphere and better salaries to journalists will hopefully produce better results in production of quality media content which will strengthen democracy in society.

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