

Truth Under Pressure: Strategic Measures by Indian Media Houses to Sustain Investigative Journalism

Shweta Sharma¹, Dr. Parul Mishra²

¹Research Scholar, GD Goenka University, India
²Associate Professor, GD Goenka University, India

Cite this paper as: Shweta Sharma, Dr. Parul Mishra, (2025) Truth Under Pressure: Strategic Measures by Indian Media Houses to Sustain Investigative Journalism. *Advances in Consumer Research*, 2 (4), 1198-1208

Received: 21 Dec 2024 Revised: 15 Jan 2024 Accepted: 13 Feb 2025 Published: 28 Feb 2025

KEYWORDS <i>Investigative Journalism, Media Strategies, Press Freedom, Journalist Safety, Media Policies, Crisis Management, Newsroom Practices, Indian Media Landscape, Organisational Accountability, Threats to Journalists</i>	ABSTRACT Investigative reporting plays a central role in democratic communities because it brings into the limelight instances of malpractices, makes those in authority answer to their citizens, and enlightens the citizens. In India, however, actual danger, legal coercion and financial insecurity become regular business of investigative reporters. In this paper, the researcher will look at the strategies the Indian media houses have adopted to rise to such pressures and keep investigative journalism alive. The quantitative research design was used, whereby a standard survey form was served to 100 media professionals working in print, television, and digital media. These results demonstrate that even though most media organisations have recognised the risks involved in undertaking investigative reporting, institutional reactions are both inconsistent and weak. Although most of the responses appreciated the physical and legal threats to could occur, few responses acknowledged the availability of crisis management plans or the protective policies. The other major aspect highlighted by the study is the dire necessity of better inter-journalist planning, formatting safety protocols, and collaboration agreements with legal and protection organisations. Moreover, expediency in taking the necessary wholesome reforms to ensure improved protection of journalists and freedom of the press is explained by the apparent ineffectiveness of current institutional arrangements. These testimonies add to the realm of media robustness within hotspots and give strategic advice to strengthen the role of investigative journalism in India.
--	---

1. INTRODUCTION

As it is known, investigative journalism plays the role of the watchdog of democracy. Investigative journalists play a critical role in serving the population by revealing corruption, cases of power abuse, and the hidden truth they unpack. Investigative reporting, however, is becoming an ever more dangerous undertaking in the Indian context. Legal and financial harassment, physical intimidation, and direct violence are regular occurrences for journalists. Nevertheless, we are in an era when deeply accountability-based journalism is more important than ever before, especially in an increasingly culturally- and politically-authoritarian society where the freedom of information is under attack.

As institutional pillars of journalism, media houses are determinant in encouraging or limit- ing the investigative activity. Strategic ways such as crisis management protocols, legal aid infrastructures, editorial support, and safety provisions are the key to the continuity and effec- tiveness of investigative journalism. However, this reaction in India differs greatly across media homes, and the extent of formalisation, effective application, and reliability is ques- tionable to journalists.

This paper attempts to assess the strategic initiatives taken by Indian media houses to over- come the multi-dimensional risks faced by investigative journalists. Based on a systematic study of 100 media professionals in the print, television and digital networks, the study ex- plores the level of support institutions offer to investigative journalism, the policies in place to safeguard investigative journalism and any other loopholes which jeopardise the future of investigative journalism.

When even the truth seems to be under attack, it is not only timely but down right necessary to learn how media institutions can defend, support and promote investigative journalism.



2. LITERATURE REVIEW

It is often considered that investigation journalism is one of the most effective yet controversial branches of journalism, with its main aim being the disclosure of truth and accountability of power. This is because across the years, the threats and systemic issues facing this field have expanded and they have been highlighted by various scholars and institutions, especially in multi-faced media environments, such as in the case of India.

Recent international and national research shows the decline in the space of investigative journalism and the growing dangers. According to Reporters Without Borders (2023) and the Press Council of India (2021) this is evident through decreasing freedom of press and increasing threats to journalists who publish exposures against government and corporate wrongdoing. Poynter Institute (2021) highlights the importance of professional media companies that have organized support in hostile environments: cross-functional investigation teams, professional, legal advice, and safety training. Yet in the Indian case, such mechanisms of the institution are irregular and undeveloped.

Geeta Seshu (2020) criticizes the absence of the freedom of edit when a political influence and the structure of ownership changes the Indian media. This control together with the economic vulnerabilities curtail the space and room of investigation reporting. She observes that there is hardly any institutional support to such journalism, as the risks keep on rising.

According to the article on Global Investigative Journalism: Strategies for Support (Center for International Media Assistance, 2019), it is critical to note that institutional structure can be an effective tool in providing such journalism with support (crisis management plans, legal assistance, editorial backing, and safety mechanism). These tools are present on the global scene, but are barely visible or actively used in India, revealing a strategic gap.

On the economic and structural level, Carlson (2018) and Schiffrin (2017) explain that deteriorated budgets of newsrooms, stagnation of advertising revenues, and the disruptive nature of online technologies have given investigative journalism a low priority in most media houses. Such trends are echoed in India, where corporate forces regularly drive the editorial decision making.

According to Indian scholars (Siddharth, 2018; Sevanti, 2010), the status of Indian investigative journalism is highly unstable: it is characterized by censorship, the lack of institutional support, and a difficult socio-political environment. Such issues are in line with the broader criticisms of the Indian media sector, which is not adequately facilitating truth-seeking journalism.

Prior seminal literature by David Kaplan (2013) and Hugo de Burgh (2008) asserts that investigative journalism is instrumental in upholding the values of democracy through creation of transparency, accountability and justice. They however also point out to its aggressive and resource consuming nature, especially in such politically sensitive environments as India.

Although the current literature is deep, there are still gaps in terms of empirical studies on media institutions strategies in dealing with the problems that are confronted by investigative journalists in India. This paper strives to close that gap by analyzing the responses of institutions with safety mechanisms, editorial policies and strategic management frameworks to sustain investigative journalism in this more hostile media sector.

3. METHODOLOGY

In this study, a quantitative research design is used to investigate the strategic actions taken by the Indian media outlets to promote and protect investigative journalism in the wake of increased threats and operational restrictions. The foremost goal is to assess institutional action to facilitate or discourage investigative reporting in hostile countries.

The structured questionnaire was conducted with the help of Google Forms. The tool consisted of 15 closed-ended questions that were meticulously structured to fit the goals of the research study. These questions revolved around fundamental aspects, which included institutional mechanisms of risk management, implementation of open or protective mechanisms of journalists, internal organisational coordination and perceived effectiveness of media house policies in promoting investigative efforts.

It was administered through purposive sampling to all media professionals working in print, television, and digital media who have experience relating to investigative journalism. Targeted, practitioner-based evidence was acquired, adding up to 100 responses that are valid.

The study adopted IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 27) in data analysis. They included three fundamental statistical methods such as Frequency analysis to study the distribution of responses to chosen responses and variables; Mean score analysis to calculate the average of

perceptions of the respondents on the issues of the institution preparedness and strategic response; Cross-tabulations to discern the links between other variables and years of professional experience and even media platform affiliation.

This methodological design has a systematic, empirical foundation to evaluate the manner in which the media companies in India react to multi-level challenges of journalists who work within investigative journalism. It equally helps in coming up



with evidence-based recommendations to provide greater institutional resilience and reporting safety in high-risk reporting situations.

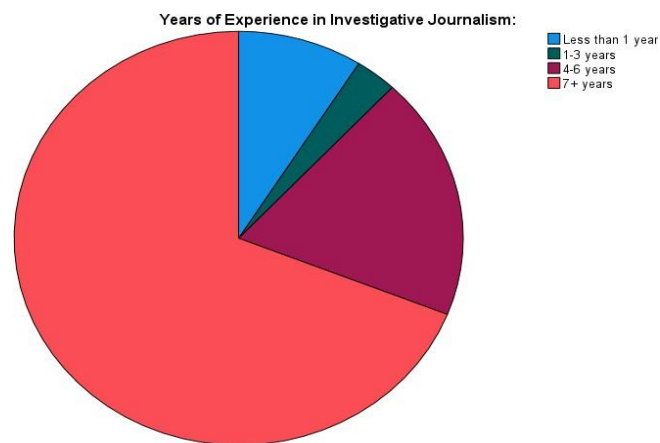
Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Years of Experience in Investigative Journalism

(Source: The data compiled by the researcher)

Years of Experience in Investigative Journalism:

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Less than 1 year	9	9.0	9.0	9.0
	1-3 years	3	3.0	3.0	12.0
	4-6 years	19	19.0	19.0	31.0
	7+ years	69	69.0	69.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	



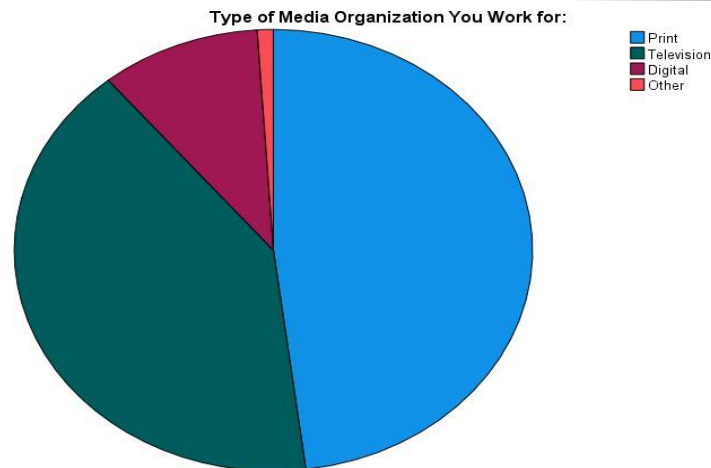
Interpretation:

The data shows that most of the respondents (69%) have experience in investigative journalism of more than 7 years, making the material group highly experienced. There are fewer who have 4-6 years of experience, with 19%, with less than 1 year, the number is 9% and 1-3 years, 3%. It implies that the knowledge obtained during the research is profound and contributes to the knowledge of the experienced professionals, which possibly makes the results of the research deep and trustworthy as to the condition of investigative journalism in India.

Table 2: Type of Media Organisation Employing the Respondents (Source: The data compiled by the researcher)

Descriptive Statistics

	N Statistic	Minimum Statistic	Maximum Statistic	Mean Statistic	Std. Error	Std. Deviation Statistic
A crisis management plan should be in place for every investigative team.	100	2	5	4.28	.062	.621
Valid N (listwise)	100					



Interpretation:

The statistics indicate that 48 percent of the surveyed periodically work in print media companies, which is followed very closely by 41 percent in television media. The proportion of respondents who are identified with the digital media platforms is low at 10 percent, with a devious 1 percent falling under the Other category. This allocation denotes the over-reliance on traditional media practitioners in the sample and hence the views in the research may be grounded on traditional media conditions rather than the emerging media spaces of digital beds.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics on Perceived Effectiveness of Media Organisations' Protective Strategies for Investigative Journalists (Source: The data compiled by the researcher)

	Descriptive Statistics					
	N Statistic	Minimum Statistic	Maximum Statistic	Mean Statistic	Std. Error	Std. Deviation Statistic
Media organizations strategize effectively to protect investigative journalists from physical, legal, and economic threats.	100	1	5	3.57	.099	.987
Valid N (listwise)	100					

Interpretation:

The question should be, but the question that showed the most moderate degree of a positive perception of the protective efforts was the statement above, in which the mean of one hundred respondents was 3.57. Nonetheless, the mean falls short of the maximum sum of 5, implying that these tactics can still be advanced. The standard deviation of 0.987 confirms that there is a moderate variation in the responses, which means that whilst the majority leans towards the agreement, a significant part of the responders still have different ideas, possibly criticising the sufficiency or uniformity of the actions undertaken by the media organisations.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics on the Importance of Crisis Management Plans for Investigative Teams (Source: The data compiled by the researcher)

	Descriptive Statistics					
	N Statistic	Minimum Statistic	Maximum Statistic	Mean Statistic	Std. Error	Std. Deviation Statistic
A crisis management plan should be in place for every investigative team.	100	2	5	4.28	.062	.621
Valid N (listwise)	100					

**Interpretation:**

The 100 respondents who answered the question, which has the statement: A crisis management plan must exist on every investigative team, gave it a score of either 2 (disagree) or 5 (strongly agree). The result of the mean score of 4.28 depicts a high degree of agreement amongst the respondents, as the majority responded strongly to the necessity of a crisis management plan among the investigative teams. The fact that the standard deviation is also low, which equals 0.621, indicates that the answers were relatively constant, and that the need for such a plan is undoubtedly present.

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics on Perceived Risk Management of Investigative Journalism by Media Houses
(Source: The data compiled by the researcher)

Descriptive Statistics						
	N Statistic	Minimum Statistic	Maximum Statistic	Mean Statistic	Std. Error	Std. Deviation Statistic
There are always risks involved in investigative journalism, but they are managed effectively by media houses.	100	1	5	3.24	.109	1.093
Valid N (listwise)	100					

Interpretation:

Statement one, in which the respondents rated the statement (There are always risks in investigative journalism which are well taken care of by media houses) on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The average of 3.24 demonstrates that perception is average to slightly positive, and the respondents are ambiguous or not in one piece on whether media houses are good at running risks. Its standard deviation at 1.093 is very high, indicating a wide variation of views and no consensus on whether risk management was effective in investigative journalism.

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics on Perceptions Regarding Reporters Encouraging Sources to Take Risks for Information Gathering (Source: The data compiled by the researcher)

Descriptive Statistics						
	N Statistic	Minimum Statistic	Maximum Statistic	Mean Statistic	Std. Error	Std. Deviation Statistic
Reporters should convince sources to take risks on their behalf for collecting information.	100	1	5	3.28	.116	1.164
Valid N (listwise)	100					

Interpretation:

The respondents (100) gave the following rating of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) on the statement Reporters should persuade their sources to risk on their part in getting information. The average rating of 3.28 implies a neutral to slightly positive attitude, which means that respondents are divided in their views on this ethical matter. The fact that the standard deviation is 1.164 indicates a high variability, which means that how reporters can guide sources to make risky decisions is a subject of very divided opinion, which is not even unanimous.

Table 7: Descriptive Statistics on the Necessity of Coordination Among Journalists in Investigative Reporting (Source: The data compiled by the researcher)

Descriptive Statistics						
	N Statistic	Minimum Statistic	Maximum Statistic	Mean Statistic	Std. Error	Std. Deviation Statistic
Coordination among journalists is necessary when more than one journalist is working on an investigation.	100	1	5	4.34	.073	.728
Valid N (listwise)	100					



Interpretation:

In the survey carried out on 100 respondents with a scoring pattern of 1 strongly disagree, and 5 strongly agree, the statement: coordination among journalists when two or more jour- nalists undertake the investigation was considered to be true. The value of 4.34 average points corresponds to the strong agreement, which shows a wide range of answers in support of the usefulness of collaboration in investigative journalism. The standard deviation of 0.728 is an indication of a relatively low variation, implying that most respondents are unanimous in their support of the importance of the coordination of journalists.

Table 8: Descriptive Statistics on Media Houses' Responsiveness to Attacks on Inves- tigative Journalists (Source: The data compiled by the researcher)

Descriptive Statistics						
	N Statistic	Minimum Statistic	Maximum Statistic	Mean Statistic	Std. Error	Std. Deviation Statistic
Media houses adequately respond when investigative journalists are attacked.	100	1	5	3.19	.118	1.178
Valid N (listwise)	100					

Interpretation:

The statement, Media houses sufficiently react to the attack of investigative journalists was evaluated by 100 respondents on the basis of a scale with 5 points where one is strongly dis- agree and five is strongly agree.

The mean of 3.19 implies an indifferent to slightly positive perception and could be used to show that the respondents stand divided or were not sure regarding how effective media houses could react to such attacks. The high variability (1.178 standard deviation) indicates that there was a high degree of opinions and no set agreement over whether the media houses had responded adequately or not.

Table 9: Descriptive Statistics on the Adequacy of Existing Media House Policies Sup- porting Investigative Journalism (Source: The data compiled by the researcher)

Descriptive Statistics						
	N Statistic	Minimum Statistic	Maximum Statistic	Mean Statistic	Std. Error	Std. Deviation Statistic
The existing policies of media houses support investigative journalism adequately.	100	1	5	2.93	.119	1.191
Valid N (listwise)	100					

Interpretation:

The extent to which the current media house policies facilitate investigative journalism was measured on a scale of 1-5 where 1 denotes strongly disagree and 5 strongly agree by the 100 respondents. The average of 2.93 is slightly negative or in neutral moods implying that the respondents feel uncertain or slightly dissatisfied with the extent of policy support against investigative journalism. The high variation as described by a standard deviation of 1.191 in- dicates divergent opinions with no unanimity among the respondents.

Table 10: Descriptive Statistics on the Perceived Need for New Policies to Protect Inves- tigative Journalists in India (Source: The data compiled by the researcher)

Descriptive Statistics						
	N Statistic	Minimum Statistic	Maximum Statistic	Mean Statistic	Std. Error	Std. Deviation Statistic
There is a need for new policies that better protect investigative journalists in India.	100	2	5	4.34	.064	.639
Valid N (listwise)	100					



Interpretation:

The result of 100 participants who analysed the statement: There is a need of new policies that can protect investigative journalists more in India was rated between 2 (disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) responses. A score of 4.34 implies a good agreement where most of the respondents profess deep faith in the necessity of improved protective policies. The low variability indicated by the standard deviation of 0.639 indicates a definite opinion that policy reform is required to protect investigative journalists in India.

Table 11: Descriptive Statistics on the Perceived Benefits of Formal Partnerships with Legal Experts and Protection Agencies for Investigative Journalists (Source: The data compiled by the researcher)

Descriptive Statistics						
	N Statistic	Minimum Statistic	Maximum Statistic	Mean Statistic Std. Error		Std. Deviation Statistic
Developing formal partnerships with legal experts and protection agencies would benefit investigative journalists.	100	1	5	4.15	.080	.796
Valid N (listwise)	100					

Interpretation:

The statement Developing formal networks with people in the legal circles and agencies protecting them would help investigative journalists was rated by 100 respondents with possibly the scoring ranging between 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). A mean score of 4.15 is considered strong positive perception and this implies that majority of the respondents tend to agree on the usefulness of such partnerships. The standard deviation of 0.796 reveals a moderate distribution of the variability, which means that although most of them are positive about the idea, there are some respondents who disagree.

Table 12: Descriptive Statistics on Accountability of Media Houses for the Safety of Investigative Journalists (Source: The data compiled by the researcher)

Descriptive Statistics						
	N Statistic	Minimum Statistic	Maximum Statistic	Mean Statistic Std. Error		Std. Deviation Statistic
Media houses should be held accountable for the safety of their investigative journalists.	100	1	5	4.41	.079	.793
Valid N (listwise)	100					

Interpretation:

By 100 respondents who were asked to provide their answers through the numbers 1-5 on the left-right scale (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree), the statement: Media houses must take responsibility of the safety of their investigative journalists was valued. The overall result of 4.41 positively suggests that there is strong agreement that the media houses need to stop pushing the blame on the safety of journalists. The standard deviation of 0.793 gives a medium level of consistency, indicating a single opinion that is quite consistent but differing with slight disparity of opinion.

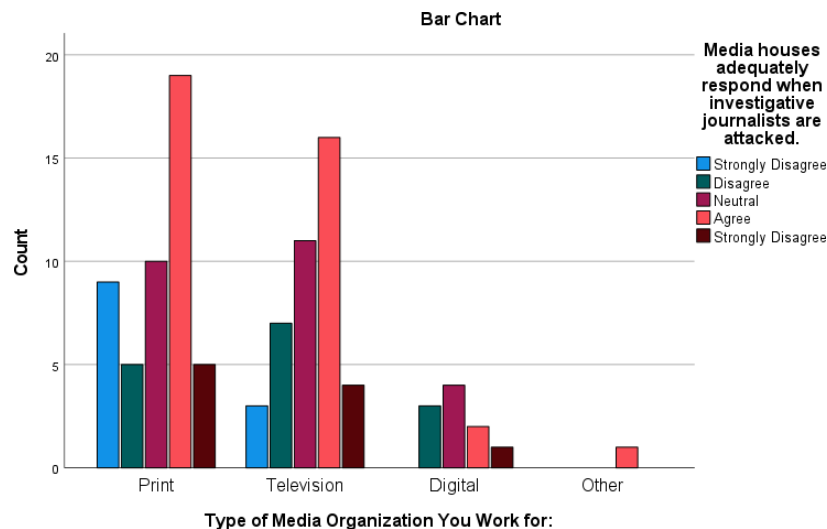
**Table 13: Chi-Square Test between Type of Media Organisation and Media Houses' Re- sponse to Attacks on Investigative Journalists** (Source: The data compiled by the re- searcher)**Case Processing Summary**

	Valid		Cases Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Type of Media Organization You Work for: * Media houses adequately respond when investigative journalists are attacked.	100	100.0%	0	0.0%	100	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	9.888 ^a	12	.626
Likelihood Ratio	11.038	12	.526
Linear-by-Linear Association	.217	1	.642
N of Valid Cases	100		

a. 13 cells (65.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .10.

**Interpretation:**

The Pearson Chi-Square is 9.888, with 12 df, and with its p-value = .626. The p-value is more than 0.05, which means that there was no statistical significance. This implies that the kind of media organisation and the perception of the measure in which media houses react when in- vestigative journalists are attacked have no meaningful relationship. Also 65% of cell fre- quencies are less than five, indicating that the test can be less dependable as the small num- bers in a few categories.

Findings

1. **Moderate Institutional Protections of Journalist Safety:** The declaration, the af- firmation that Media organizations plan carefully to shield investigative media practi- tioners against bodily, criminal and economic danger got a mean rating of 3.57 proposing that though there is some kind of methodical activity; it is seen as



lacking or not pertinent in all media entities. Respondents were moderately agreed, and they remain that protective strategies can be improved.

2. **High Agreement in the Need to Have an Emergency Plan in Place:** There is a high degree of agreement on the necessity of having a crisis management plan in place with the average rating of respondents who support the presence of such a plan standing at (Mean = 4.28) supporting the use of well-organized emergency plans to deal with investigative teams. This implies the existence of an acknowledged requirement of pre-emptive planning to handle threats.
3. **Skepticism concerning proper risk management by media houses:** The statement through which media houses would balance risks has a mean of 3.24 showing ambivalence overall. The respondents were undecided or unsatisfied with the situation, implying that risk management systems are either inefficient or not used persistently.
4. **Divided Opinions Concerning Ethical Boundaries at Source Engagement:** The statement that asked about the opinion that reporters should persuade sources to take risks had a mean of 3.28, which shows that there are two camps of ethics on this sensitive issue. This calculation of standard deviation is also very large indicating that the perceptions within the media community are markedly different.
5. **Decent Consensus on the Significance of the Team Coordination:** There was a high agreement (Mean = 4.34) in the importance of coordination of journalists during investigations which serves as evidence of the acknowledged importance of collaboration in regards to complicated reporting work.
6. **Poor Response to Assault against Journalists:** When respondents were probed to give the level of response that media houses show when investigative journalists are assaulted, the average score of 3.19 indicated a miss or indifference, and an indication that non-confidence exists in institutional responsive measures within the media houses.
7. **Perceived Weakness of Current Institutional Policies:** The average rating of adequacy of current media house policies is reflective of a negative attitude of 2.93 implying an unsatisfaction of the current systems under which investigative journalism rests.
8. **Strong Desire to Develop New Policies as a Way to Further Protect Investigative Journalists:** There was a high concurrence rate (Mean = 4.34) that new policies should be developed to provide better security to investigative journalists to indicate that substantial change has to come through structural change at both the organizational and national levels.
9. **Common Constituency in Believing Legal and Safety Partnerships:** There was a wide agreement among the respondents in believing legal and safety partnership (Mean = 4.15) as there was a felt need that is being catered by these collaborations.
10. **Firm Confidence in Organisational Responsibility:** A high mean value of 4.41 with the statement that media houses are bound to be held responsible for the safety of their investigative journalism, is convincing of the wide agreement and a demand for organisational accountability.
11. **No Significant Association Depending on the Type of Media:** The chi-square analysis indicated that there is no significant relationship depending on the type of media organisation and perception to how well media houses address the attack on investigative journalism ($p = .626$). This indicates that the lack of protective measures is not specific to a media sector, as perceived deficiencies are widespread.

4. DISCUSSION

The results of the investigations presented by this research provide invaluable information on the strategic environment of investigative journalism in India and the role of media companies in backing or letting down the investigative teams. There is a broad awareness among respondents about the risks of investigative journalism, both the form the physical attack, legal harassment and financial insecurity take, but there is a wide disparity in the responses given to these threats by institutions that provide related support.

Among the most emphasizing determinations is the large equalisation of the requirement of crisis management plans, with a mean of 4.28, which implies that there is a solid consensus among journalists on the necessity of a structure, anticipatory plan. On the same note, there was a high response level also to the relevance of inter-journalist coordination and responsibilities of the media houses on protection of journalists. Such findings show that the professionals sound very aware of the vulnerabilities of the systems within their institutions, and the recognition of how the ideal support the mechanisms should be designed is common.

Nevertheless, this has not been put into institutional practice. The average ratings of items like, Media houses respond adequately when investigative journalists are attacked (mean = 3.19) and there are adequate policies of the media houses that



support investigative journalism (mean = 2.93) show a very big gap between perceptions and reality. The moderate and low mean values with high standard deviations indicate that this support is not only uneven across organizations, but also probably within the same institutions and probably depending on editorial leadership, models of ownership and financial priorities.

Further, there is a high agreement (mean = 4.34) in the data, indicating that there was a necessity in new and reformed policies that can ensure greater security to investigative journalists. The discovery echoes the results of the current research (e.g., Schiffirin, 2017; RSF, 2023) about the decline of institutional protection and freedom of editorial decision-making in India. Increased requests to collaborate with legal professionals and protection organizations (mean = 4.15) also proves that journalists do not expect a media house to be entirely able to deal with threats on its own and are willing to use multi-stakeholder solutions.

The insignificance in the relationship between the kind of media organization and views on institutional response (as supported by Pearson Chi-Square test) shows that these concerns are systemic and shared, but not limited to particular media type, such as print or digital. Even in more recent digital outfits, investigative reporters appear to enjoy dubious prospects of uncertainty and institutional support.

And lastly, the question of whether reporters ought to manipulate their sources to assuming risk on their behalf moved people to a relatively grey answer (mean = 3.28). This places a more serious issue of journalistic ethics vs. survival and the mounting loss of control that journalists face as they must become more and more an actor in making decisions that institutional support cannot offer.

Overall, this paper presents an ironic dilemma: even though Indian journalists highly regard investigative journalism and know what they should do to make it a sustainable practice, the institutional framework to back up its activities is a weak one. This mismatch warrants immediate soul searching and reorganization within the media houses, academia and policy corridors. Media houses should stop imposing insignificant strategies and implement solid and clear systems that would enable investigative journalists instead of leaving them lonesome.

5. CONCLUSION

This article makes a point of emphasising the vulnerable position of investigative journalism in India, in which the identified value that power must be held to account by the force of law remains unsupported by adequate institutional efforts. Although media practitioners in general agree on the escalating risks of lawsuits, violence and financial hit-backs, the who, what, where, when and how of detection and defence are still rudimentary or uneven or lacking in organisation-to-organisation consistency.

The results appear to show a remarkable agreement regarding the necessity to involve formal crisis management procedures, enhance collaboration of the team, and cooperation with protection and legal agencies. There is, however, a popular perception that the present-day institutional responses are substandard and that there exists a gap between policy objectives and implementation on the ground. The fact that there is not much variation with the media types also highlights the fact that such challenges were not isolated.

In a bid to protect the future of investigative journalism, the Indian media needs to move beyond defensive and piecemeal approaches to offensive and all-inclusive paradigms. This involves establishing sound protection measures as well as ensuring legal and psychological assistance, and the independence of the editorial. These undertakings are not only relevant to the safety of journalists; this is fundamental to both the freedom of the press, accountability of governments, and democracy.

Finally, this study provides a diagnostic analysis as well as strategic plan. It calls on media organizations, policymakers, and other civil society members to be swift and to strengthen the infrastructure required to sustain truth-telling journalism in a hostile and fast-changing media environment.

REFERENCES

- [1] Burgh, H. de. (2008). *Investigative Journalism*. Routledge.
- [2] Carlson, M. (2018). "Automating Truth: Emerging Forms of Algorithmic Fact-Checking." *New Media & Society*, 20(5), 1735–1752.
- [3] Centre for International Media Assistance. (2019). *Global Investigative Journalism: Strategies for Support*. National Endowment for Democracy.
- [4] Geeta Seshu. (2020). *Free Voices Under Threat: State of Journalistic Freedom in India*. The Hoot.
- [5] Kaplan, D. E. (2013). *Global Investigative Journalism: Strategies for Support*. Center for International Media Assistance.
- [6] Ninan, S. (2010). *Headlines from the Heartland: Reinventing the Hindi Public Sphere*. SAGE Publications.



- [7] Poynter Institute. (2021). *Organisational Resilience in Investigative Journalism: Global Best Practices*.
- [8] Press Council of India. (2021). *Report on the State of Press Freedom in India*. Government of India.
- [9] Reporters Without Borders (RSF). (2023). *World Press Freedom Index 2023 – India Country Report*. <https://rsf.org>
- [10] Schiffrin, A. (2017). *In the Service of Power: Media Capture and the Threat to Democracy*. Center for International Media Assistance.
- [11] Varadarajan, S. (2018). “India’s Press Freedom Is Under Attack.” *The Wire*. [https:// thewire.in](https://thewire.in)

