

Ahlimali's days were those of the so-called golden generation in Tanzania's job market and education system, but with time the dynamics of the job market have dramatically changed.

"Most employers now prefer candidates with illustrious qualifications and they hardly settle for less, with some taking into consideration on the individual's experience," he adds.

With the desire to suit in the job market most young graduates opt for post-graduate studies that most employers crave for.

This has with time forced parents and guardians to orientate their children towards attaining more degrees.

However, as it turns out the qualifications are always not a guarantee for one's innovative skills as some employers are more inclined towards looking at an individual's performance than the host of qualifications on their CVs.

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# Journalism: A struggling profession

Even with big stories that rock the country on a daily basis, questions continue to arise on how the once respectable profession that served the interest of the masses find itself in doldrums

By Erick Mchome  
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"We have few serious journalists in this country. Most of them do not even know why they are in the profession; it is all about money."

KIRAVU MEDIA RELATIONS OFFICER

It is unofficially regarded as the Fourth Estate of the government which works as a watchdog for both the society and the state, their powers rest in the might of the pen.

And as it is commonly said, the media can shape or break an agenda given the immense power that it wields, however, with recent developments in the industry, not many still believe that it is a number one career choice for most the youth.

According to them, unlike in good old days journalism has tumbled down the

drain with many journalist not being the kind of role models that many young people can emulate.

As the world celebrated World Press Freedom Day last week, journalism remains among careers that are struggling for reputation in Tanzania.

Most opt to study journalism out of desperation due to lack of a career choice with the hope that something better will turn up at the end of the day.

Mathew Mshana (23) is a student at one of the Journalism schools in Dar es Salaam, he was forced to study journalism after he failed to pursue a course in Accountancy.

"I could not afford to stay at home so I chose journalism but I will do this for a short time as I am looking for something else," says Mshana.

According to Mshana, being a scribe

isn't such a big deal as it is not as lucrative as other professions such as marketing, finance or IT; he is not an isolated case as he is just part of the bigger group.

But even as such echoes continue to tumble across the region, the pertinent question that one ought to ask is, how did a once respectable profession find itself in such doldrums?

Many blame the state of the profession to some journalists in the country whom they accuse of lack of seriousness and commitment to the profession.

Alex Kiravu is a media relations practitioner in Dar es Salaam who works closely with media houses and journalists.

According to him, journalists should be the first to blame for undermining the profession as many lack seriousness which is in turn coming back to haunt even those who are committed to the profession.

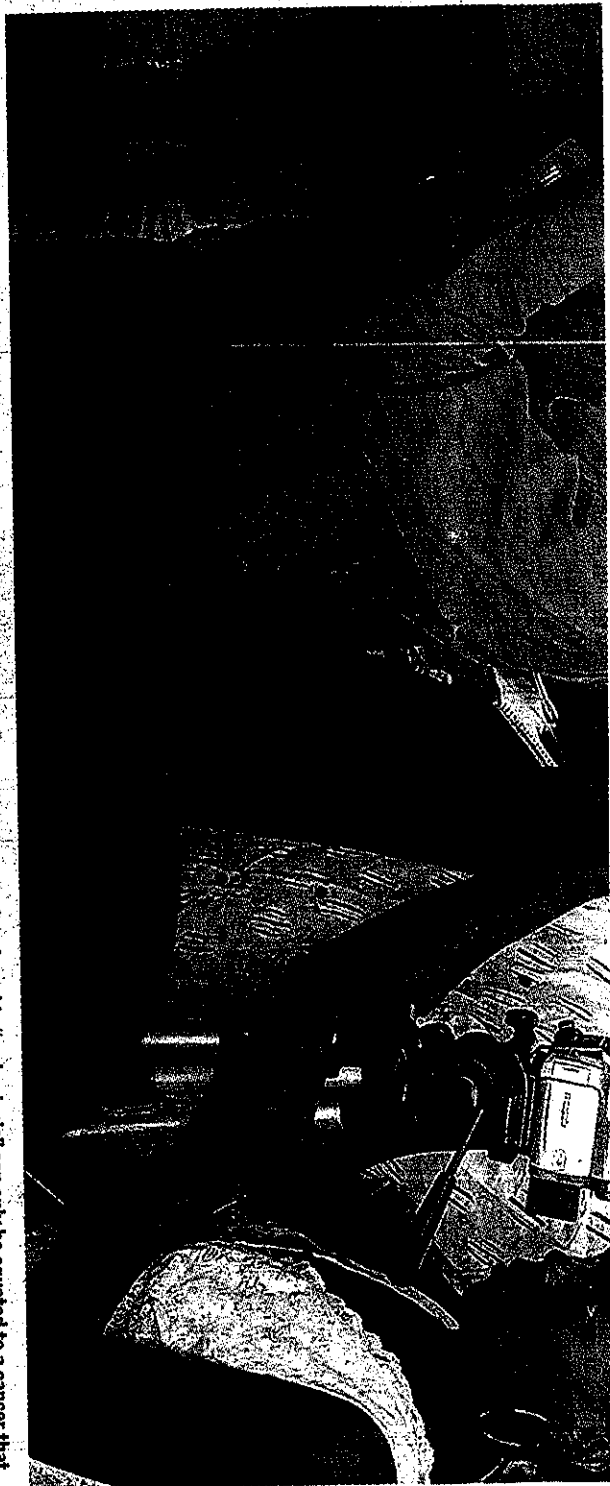
"We have few serious journalists in this country, most of them do not even know why they are in the profession; it is all about money," says Kiravu.

He adds that most journalists in the country hardly know the weight of their profession which has brought about so many changes in this country and the world over.

"You cannot imagine a serious journalist coming to a news conference late without even a note book and all they ask for is the press release. Apart from that some hardly ask questions and if they do they hardly reflect any research prior to the meeting," says Kiravu.

In Tanzania, journalism courses at degree level is offered in about four university colleges while the lower levels such as certificates and diploma are offered in

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Newsman and women at work: The infiltration of the profession by a pseudo journalists rather derisively referred to "makanyanja" can only be equated to a cancer that threatens the core values of the once respected profession. PHOTO IMCL

# A new cancer that's eating the scribes

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**“ Their main objective is to extort money from their sources without caring for the quality of the material they are going to publish,” SAYS ONE JOURNALIST**

more than 20 colleges.

However, statistics show that about 80 per cent of journalists in Tanzania are not on full time employment and do not have any contract with the media houses they work for despite the challenges they get.

According to reliable sources, those who make it as correspondents in the different media houses earn very meagre wages for the published stories with some earning as little as Sh 1,500 for a published story.

“The payment doesn't take into consideration the time and the money spent in acquiring the material.

You don't expect someone to work hard or have passion with such remunerations,” says Dominic Yesaya, a correspondent in Dar es Salaam.

Yesaya has with time despaired after two years on the road with nothing to show for, he is thinking of looking for greener pastures elsewhere.

However, as issues of seriousness and low pay is debated another cancer that is eating into the profession is the presence of ‘*Kanyarjas*’ (journalists with no specific media houses) who pose an enormous challenge to the profession.

Where this crop of journalists came from is still unknown, they possess multiple identities which gives them passage to different conferences.

“Their main objective is to extort money from their sources without caring for the quality of the material they are going to publish,” says a journalist from *The Guardian* newspaper.

He adds: One afternoon I had been invited to cover a certain event in Masaki, on arrival we had to sign against our names

and leave our email addresses; I was surprised to find that an impostor had already signed on my behalf.

According to the journalist it took quite a while before the truth could be established, to save his face the reporter had to leave.

“These people are destroying our image and credibility, what they care for is money so what they present to sources becomes the face of the profession in the country,” says Fredy Azzah, from *Mwananchi* newspaper.

Habakuki Urto is another journalist with New Habari Media House in Dar es Salaam, he thinks the future of the profession is under threat.

He, however, puts the blame on media owners for not pushing hard enough to change the status-quo.

According to him the result is that journalists no longer serve the interests of the society as they have been left at the mercy of tycoons who dictate the terms.

“There is no commitment because working conditions are poor so journalists tend to be chasing money rather than chasing stories that will make an impact to the society,” says Habakuki.

However, even as young journalists continue to worry over the future of the forth estate, Salome Gregory, a multi award winning journalist says there is a bright future in the profession if every journalist sticks to the fundamental principles of journalism by producing well balanced and researched work.

“In this profession one must show personal efforts to be on top of the game but many journalists do not know that and that is where the problem starts,” says Salome.

Dar es Salaam journalists among them are

## It's all about performance and

