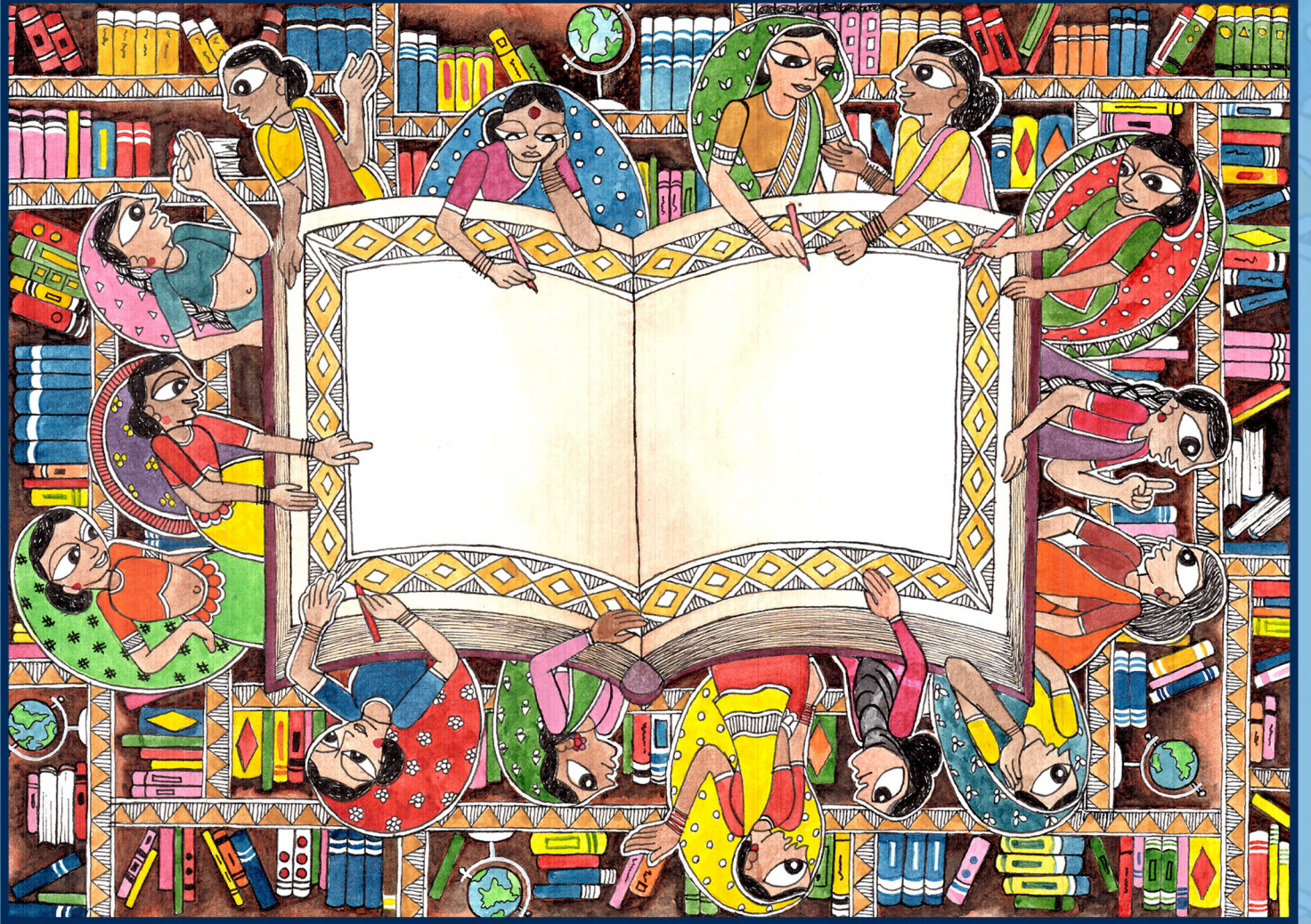


PATNA KALAM पटना कलम



NWMI

network of women in media, India

17th NATIONAL MEET

January 27 - 29, 2023

Gender, Media and Social Justice: Towards an Equitable Society

दोष चोरो रद



**ARYABHATTA
KNOWLEDGE
UNIVERSITY**
ESTD. 2010

Google
News Initiative

RSF **REPORTERS
WITHOUT BORDERS**



CHANAKYA NATIONAL LAW UNIVERSITY, PATNA



चन्द्रगुप्त प्रबंध संस्थान पटना
CHANDRAGUPT INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT PATNA



**Netaji Subhas
Medical College & Hospital**
Amhara, Bihta, Patna - 801 106, Bihar

**NWMI 17TH NATIONAL MEET
SOUVENIR**

JANUARY 2023

COVER IMAGE

MALVIKA RAJ

EDITORS

ANURADHA SHARMA

PARUL SHARMA

EDITORIAL SUPPORT

AMMU JOSEPH

LAXMI MURTHY

MANJIRA MAJUMDAR

NISHA SUSAN

SUMITA JAISWAL

SWETA SINGH

DESIGN TEAM

GARIMA KHANDELWAL

SHAILLY PUNIA

TASNEEM AKBARI-KUTUBUDDIN

WWW.NWMINDIA.ORG

NWMI.CONTACT@GMAIL.COM

PUBLISHED BY NWMI

MATERIAL FROM THIS SOUVENIR CAN BE REPRODUCED
WITH ACKNOWLEDGMENT, FOR NON-COMMERCIAL
PURPOSES ONLY.

PRINTED AT

PATSAN GRAPHICS

OPP P. N. ANGLO SANSKRIT SCHOOL,

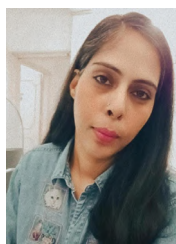
JAGAT AJANTA APARTMENT, NAYATOLA

PATNA- 4



IMAGE COURTESY
MAX PIXEL

MAGAZINE DESIGNED BY



SHAILLY PUNIA
FREELANCE
GRAPHIC DESIGNER,
NEW DELHI



TASNEEM AKBARI-KUTUBUDDIN
INDEPENDENT JOURNALIST,
CONTENT CREATOR &
SOCIAL WORKER, CHENNAI

CONTENTS

05 Editorial- Ekla Chalo Re

08 Foreword- From the Hosts

**10 Jab We Met in Patna for the first time-
By Payal Kumar**

**13 Re-defining leadership, from “Me” to “We”-
By Ammu Joseph and Laxmi Murthy**

**21 Kashmir: it’s more about what not to tell and
when to tell than what to tell- By Hana Vahab**

**24 Neetu Singh: The Maths Graduate Who Has
Won One of Journalism’s Top Prizes- By Vasanthi
Hariprakash**

**27 “I’d Always Wanted to Be A Journalist- An
Accident Changed Everything. Everything But My
Dreams” - By Ambika Raja**

**31 Messi lifted the World Cup in Qatar; Gitika was
there to capture the moment for us- By Durba
Ghosh**

**34 “What we have today in India is truly the ‘dark
age’ of journalism”- Ravish Kumar, Translated by
Raksha Kumar**

**36 Travel is to journalism, what water is to fish-
By Raksha Kumar**

37 NOSTALGIA: A trip down NWWMI memory lane

**45 #Metoo: The fight for a level playing field-
By Rina Mukherji**

**49 I said ‘NO’ to journalism that asked me not to
question those in power!- By Pragya Chandel**

**50 The journey of ‘Hindi-language’ journalism-
By Sweta Singh**

52 My Lockdown Diary with Migrants- By C Vanaja

**55 Pandemic through a Journo's Lens- Photo essay
By Akhila Easwaran**

**59 Nagaland mediascape reviving after COVID-19
fall- By Aheli Moitra**

61 Zakia Khatib, a leading light- By Jyoti Punwani

**63 The Changing Face of Women In Indian Cinema-
By Manjira Majumdar**

**65 Single in Ahmedabad? This is how you rock it!-
By Malti Mehta**

विषय सूची

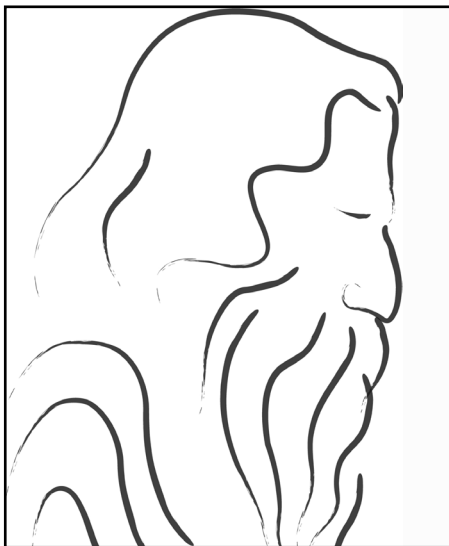
1. **पत्रकथन**
'एकला चलो रे' ... हम सब की साझा
पुकार : पारुल शर्मा
2. **अपने उसूलों से समझौतों की**
जरूरत नहीं : साक्षी जोशी
3. **बिहार में एक स्त्री का पत्रकार होना**
मानो आँखली में सर देना : किरण
शाहीन
4. **पत्रकारिता मेरे लिए स्वाभिमान है**
: विष्णु लता
5. **नए मीडिया में महिलाओं की**
चुनौतियाँ : बीना (पिया) कुमारी
6. **खाबरों की सच्चाई को दिखाते हैं**
निजी चैनल : विनीता यादव
7. **पुस्तक समीक्षा**

Ekla Chalo Re!

Editors

*If they answer not to thy call walk alone
If they are afraid and cower mutely facing the wall
O thou unlucky one
Open thy mind and speak out alone.*

These lines are from the song Ekla Chalo Re (originally, only Ekla) writ-



ten by Rabindranath Tagore, in Bengali, in 1905. Tagore later translated it into English himself. The protest song is an exhortation. It is not an exhortation to go alone, but to stay the course, even if no one responds to your call and you are then all alone in your journey. It is an exhortation that reminds us that even a single person can change the world. The song—one of the 22 protest songs popular during the Swadeshi Movement—was a key song of the anti-partition movement in Bengal presidency.

We have picked up this line from the song as the theme of our souvenir to be released at the 17th national meet of our network—the

Network of Women in Media, India, to be held in Patna from January 27-29 on the theme of Media, Gender and Social Justice: Towards an Equitable Society. Ekla Chalo Re could well be a clarion call for these times!

This year, we are celebrating 75 years of Indian independence. We have so much to be proud of in this country; yet it is also a deeply disturbing time that we are living through. The hard-earned freedom that we had begun to take for granted is under tremendous threat, and the liberal space that allows for differences of opinions, ideologies, politics and religious practices, is shrinking at an alarming rate. Hyper-nationalism is making people cower in silence, and most of the country's mainstream media is playing second fiddle to the all-powerful state, instead of challenging the onslaught.

Tagore's lines from Ekla Chalo Re are for times like these:

If nobody speaks up, O you unlucky one,

If everyone stays silent, their heads turned away,

If everyone stays in fear

Then, with all your heart,

And full-throated cheer,

you sing out your feelings, alone.

Even these grim times—marked by a sense of hopeless resignation—come with their moments of beauty and hope in the form of acts of resistance, often from unexpected quarters. Where there is suppression, there is resistance

too. And it is a truth universally acknowledged that resistance is beautiful, and powerful—it can even move mountains. It may take time, but as long as there is one person resisting in the face of ruthless power, there is hope. We need this hope to go on.

Take the case of Iran. The authorities were forced to decide on reviewing the mandatory headscarf law after two months of bloody protests. In spite of the brutal attempts to suppress the movement, including executions, men and women are still protesting against the compulsory headscarf rule for women. Football, called the beautiful game, became even more beautiful when the Iranian players refused to sing their national anthem at the recently-concluded World Cup as a mark of solidarity to the protestors.

We chose to make “ekla chalo re”, the theme of our souvenir Patna Kalam to celebrate the spirit of resistance. This is our way to extend our solidarity to all those who have refused to cower, who choose to speak truth to power, who refuse to sit and watch injustice being served, and who condemn the majoritarian hate politics of the day, against all odds. This, when the much easier option would have been to just remain silent. Their small acts of resistance, in spite of all the odds, keep the idea of democracy alive.

Call us by our name.

Did you notice that our souvenir has a name, for the first time? We decided to call it Patna Kalam, as a

nod to the Patna Kalam, or Patna Qalaam, style of painting that existed in Bihar in the 18th and 19th centuries. Being kalam wali bais (women with pens, as a journalist was called in a Hindi film), we simply loved the name that resonated so closely with Patna, where our

what powerful people and institutions ask to. Thanks to technology, which has made news distribution cheap and finding an audience easy, journalists are making use of tools such as Youtube, Medium, Wordpress, Spotify or Substack, etc (the list is endless) to take their

respectively. Payal Kumar goes down the proverbial memory lane to tell the story of the first NWMI meet in Patna over 20 years ago, while Ammu Joseph and Laxmi Murthy explain to us the mantra that makes NWMI so special—a collective leadership style that stresses on “we”, not “me”.



~Nineteen-year old Muskaan Khan became the face of resistance for young Indian Muslim women when she stood up to a mob of men harassing girls for wearing headscarves to school~

17th National meet is being held from Jan 27 to Jan 29, 2023.

Patna Kalam is also a shout-out to journalists questioning truth to power at great risks, when the other really tempting option is to become a government cheerleader and live a secure, maybe also lavish, life while enjoying the popularity of the masses. There are so many instances of individual journalists and tiny newsrooms going “Ekla Chalo”. While big media businesses are exploiting the situation by aligning with power, an increasing number of journalists and media persons are shunning the legacy media and big corporations to tell stories they want to, not

stories to the masses.

The rapid spread of online and digital media is not without its disadvantages or setbacks—disinformation and misinformation have sky-rocketed—but the democratisation of news flow is certainly a thing of beauty. Hence, the decision to celebrate the spirit of Ekla Cholo Re in our NWMI souvenir, Patna Kalam.

Overview

We made a call for pitches among our members and a lot of you responded. Thank you.

In this issue you will find articles in Hindi and English, curated by Parul Sharma and Anuradha Sharma,

Kerala-based Hana Vahab has written about her experience on reporting on Kashmir. Durba Ghosh from Guwahati has a delightful piece on Gitika Talukdar, a photo-journalist from Assam, who covered the World Cup Football in Qatar. She is the only Indian journalist to get approval to cover all matches from pitch positions. Don't miss checking out the pictures of Messi taken by her that she has been kind enough to contribute to us.

Jyoti Punwami's profile of Zakia Khatib is the story of how a Muslim girl who had to leave home at 10 to pursue education in a different city— a very hard move, but still a privilege at a time when educating the girl child was not a priority— went on to devote herself to the upliftment of women, especially Muslim women in Maharashtra.

Aheli has given an account of the revival of the media in Nagaland after the pandemic. Our special highlight is Akhila Easwaran's photo essay chronicling the grim times of Covid lockdown. The very talented Akhila, the recipient of the fifth NWMI Fellowship in 2021, has brilliantly captured in her black-and-white images the horrors of the pandemic as we experienced them in our country.

Patna Kalam contains all this and a lot more, including some top stories from our website www.nwmin-dia.org.

Did you notice our cover image? It is a painting-untitled, watercolour on paper- by the famous Madhubani artist Malvika Raj. She has very generously gifted an image of her artwork to adorn the cover of our souvenir. Malvika's own artistic journey is characterised by resistance, as much as innovation.

a statement after the verdict. Ressa, the legendary Nobel-winning journalist, founded Rappler in 2012 to fight misinformation and document human rights abuses carried out by the then Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte, infamous for his deadly war on drugs.

when the night is troubled with storm,

O thou unlucky one,

with the thunder flame of pain
ignite thy own heart

and let it burn alone.

Ekla Chalo Re!

* * *



Anuradha Sharma is an independent journalist based in Siliguri. Parul Sharma is an Senior journalist based in New Delhi.



Parul Sharma is an Senior journalist based in New Delhi.



~Maria Ressa~

As a Dalit artist, she has consistently challenged Hindu traditions and caste through her deeply political works of art.

We also have a brilliant section of Hindi articles. Read the editors' note in Hindi for an overview.

Facts win. Truth wins. Justice wins

Even as we were headed to the printer, we got the absolutely thrilling news of a court in Philippines acquitting journalist Maria Ressa and her news portal Rappler of four tax-evasion charges.

"Today, facts win. Truth wins. Justice wins," an ecstatic Ressa said in

Her courageous journalism has made her the target of government harassment in the form of lawsuits and arrests, and also shutting down of her media company. She was arrested and released on bail in December 2018, and again in February 2019. In June 2022, the government forced Rappler to shut down. In response to that extreme measure, Ressa had said: "We will hold the line."

Incredible Ressa makes us believe in the power of resistance. She makes us hope. In her fight against oppression, Tagore's beautiful lines come alive:

If they do not hold up the light

FROM THE HOSTS

-By Sumita Jaiswal

“Kites rise against the wind, and not with it.” This is what makes kites and girls similar. They may seem delicate, but they rise against all the odds, and fly high. We need to tell the stories of women who have broken patriarchal barriers to reach for their dreams—stories of their immense struggle to overcome the stumbling blocks in a patriarchal society, stories of their fight for existence in the face of oppression, their steely determination in encountering a brutal feudal society and dealing with the daily hardships; stories of standing up against social evils like child marriages, and most importantly, their zest for education.

There is no denying that the stories of this struggle are totally absent in the media but it is equally blatant that the lack of a gender lens in such stories results in an inadequate impact. The media has a bigger responsibility in telling stories from a gender perspective toward a more just and equitable society.

In an economically backward state like Bihar, the 35 percent reservation for girls and women is a commendable step to increase the contribution of women in the total workforce and thus galvanising the pace of development and economic growth of the state. We need to understand why despite the various schemes such as Mukhayamantri Kanya Suraksha Yojan, Mukhhamantri Balika

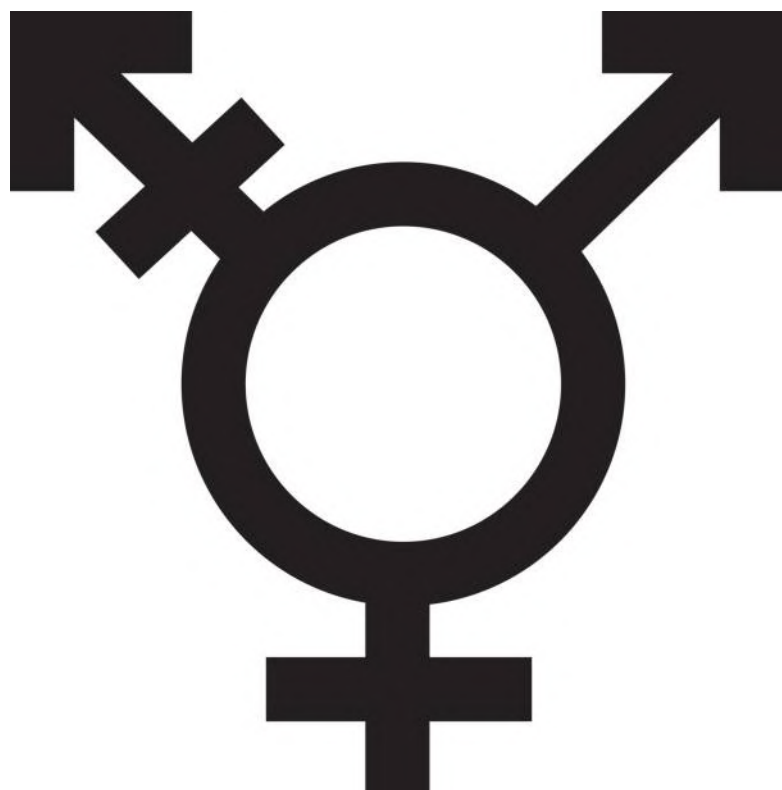
Cycle Yojna, Mukhhayamantri Kanya Vivah Yojna, girls continue to get a raw deal in equal opportunities in sectors of education, health care, political and economic participation. The fifty percent reservation in the panchayat election gave opportunities to womentoparticipateinpolitics. But rather than empowering women, the male-dominated society found a way to enjoy all the power of the mukhhiya in an incarnation of mukhhiya pati or the husband of the female mukhhiya.

Bihar is among the top five states with the highest rate of child marriages in the country. The rate of domestic and sexual violence is also high. The news of the physical assault on girls and women going

to open toilets in the countryside is quite painful even to read.

In the media too, the role of ushering in gender equity is cut out. The headlines are often insensitive. For example, “ladkiyan apni adaon se ladko ko lubhati hai” was a statement from the former DGP of Bihar.

Recently, I read what was described as a tragic story of a man, who returned to his home after twenty-three years. He had run away leaving his wife and seven children as he was burdened with gambling loans. After reading the story I understand that actually, the crux of the story is how a rural woman goes through hardship – in raising children with a minimal support system. It is not



the story of the man.

It gives me immense pleasure that Patna is hosting the 17th national meet of the Network of Women in Media, India. Over 100 women mediapersons from across the country will be converging in the city for three days from January 27, 2023, to speak, deliberate, discuss and exchange ideas on the theme of Gender, Media, and Social Justice: Towards an Equitable Society. The importance of the topic cannot be overstated.

Reading the report on the state conference held in Patna 22 years ago, I realise that nothing much has changed in the concerns of women journalists since then. The same fight continues. We must continue to meet and compare the stories of successes and failures, for changes do happen, no matter how slowly and silently. This is the first time we are holding the national meet in Patna. Earlier,

the Bihar chapter (NWMI) had organised workshops and webinars in collaboration with the Women Development Corporation, the Government of Bihar, and Unicef.

The workshop on Gender Equity and Safety at the media workplace was held in February 2021. On July 26, 2021, a webinar was organised with Unicef and UNFPA on the topic 'Role of Media in a Gender Equal World'. In an exclusive session with the media fraternity, a brief discussion took place in giving prominence to the voices and issues of women and girls while underlining the biggest change that has happened in the newsrooms over the last two decades.

The Bihar chapter welcomes our sisters from outside the state for the national meet to deliberate on the changes and pledge to continue with the unfinished work of creating enhanced gender awareness in society. We are very

grateful for the help extended by members, especially those in Bangalore, Mumbai and Delhi, and Bengal Network.

Welcome once again to the abode of ancient learning and wisdom.



Sumita Jaiswal
Senior Journalist,
NWMI, Bihar
Chapter Co-ordinator



Jab we met in Patna for the first time

By **Payal Kumar**

The bihar chapter

The Bihar Woman Journalists' Forum (BWJF) was born on May 1, 2001 (appropriately, on Labour Day). There was an informal meeting of about 15 women journalists from print as well as electronic media. Although there was no agenda as such, there was a lot of animated discussion over hot samosas. Several issues were raised- from poor work conditions for women to sexual harassment at the workplace. One woman even broke down while recounting that she had not been paid over the last three months and was not allowed to take even one day off in a week.

This meeting was followed by many more. Then we felt we needed to expand. The coming together of women journalists of Patna was a good first-step; our next move should be to include other women journalists in the state. It was then that we thought of a state-level conference.

Great expectations: the list

The Patna conference in 2001 proved to be an overwhelming success.

When preparing the database of women journalists from the state, we decided to also include journalists from Jharkhand, which was earlier part of Bihar. In spite of the bifurcation of the state in 2000, it was felt that the problems faced by women in both the states were common. Besides, Pat-



na and Ranchi were the two main epicenters of print journalism in that region.

By our rough estimates, we thought there would be about 60 women, both states put together. Names were gathered by word of mouth—simply asking colleagues if they knew of any woman journalists—and also by taking a peek into the payment registers in main newspaper offices. Soon we realised that perhaps we had bitten off more than we could chew! The list grew a lit-

tle every day until the eve of the conference, and when we were done, we saw there were about 120 names on it—all women of our tribe from various forms of mass media (print, electronic and radio). Many of them were freelancers.

Countdown running around town

While we are greatly indebted to Unicef and Action Aid for the financial support, without which the conference would have remained a pipe dream, we really missed a supporting body to give us logistical support. So our forum members had to do everything—from drafting letters, pasting envelopes, arranging hotel accommodation for our guests and delegates, to organizing snacks for the big day, preparing conference folders with the forum logo and reimbursing train fares.

NWMI members Ammu Joseph from Bangalore, Kalpna Sharma from Mumbai and Sunita Aron from Lucknow were among the guests.

There were some really funny incidents, and strange requests too. Many participants were still not sure about who were and were rather suspicious of us I think; they asked us endless questions. One young girl from Gaya insisted that she bring her father along, another wanted to know if there would be any gifts to take back home.

We went around all the media offices with press releases, personally inviting officials at Unicef and Actionaid, and called on Chief Minister Rabri Devi to invite her as the chief guest. Getting an appointment at 1 Aney Marg proved to be an uphill task. After a few attempts, we got to know that she was a little apprehensive about meeting us wondering why on earth five women journalists would like to meet her. It was only after assuring her personal assistant that we were not there to hound her as investigative reporters, but to invite her to our event, which was the first of its kind in Patna, that we were able to put our feet through the door. When she did give us an audience, she listened to us most attentively, while offering us lemon tea. She finally said yes to our proposal, but only after glancing at her spouse, the then RJD chief and former chief minister Laloo Prasad Yadav, who nodded his head in approval.

The big day

It was much beyond our expectations when 68 delegates poured into the conference hall at A.N. Sinha Institute, Patna. When Rabri Devi, Laloo Prasad Yadav and their entourage turned up, all the shutterbugs of Patna gathered there began taking pictures over-enthusiastically, giving us the feel of being hounded by the paparazzi. Laloo Prasad Yadav firmly told the cameramen to calm down and be seated.

Chief Minister Rabri Devi set the ball rolling by saying that the state government should do something concrete for women journalists of the state. She began by laboriously reading from a prepared



-Payal Kumar and other organising members of the first Patna meet in conversation with then Chief Minister Rabri Devi and her husband Laloo Prasad Yadav-

speech in Hindi, and then after some time began speaking under her own steam. She appealed to women journalists to paint a “true picture” of Bihar in both print and electronic media, which she said was often distorted by their male counterparts. She said that men often sensationalise news, instead of presenting facts.

Laloo Yadav was quick to interrupt, telling her under his breath to round up her speech. He soon took over the dais and promised land for the press club and the appointment of one woman journalist representative in the State Commission for Women. Whether this was empty rhetoric or a promise to be kept still remains to be seen. Presently he is see-sawing between bail and jail, which has put a spanner in the works.

Conference agenda

The agenda was finalized as follows:

- a.** Are women treated on par with men as far as terms and conditions of jobs go?
- b.** Are women reporters given soft beats, or relegated to the desk as sub-editors doing mundane editing work?
- c.** Are there any problems regarding night shift vehicles and toilet facilities?
- d.** Is sexual harassment a real problem?
- e.** Is the coverage of women’s issues, from rape to female foeticide, presented in an unbiased manner?
- f.** How has globalisation affected women working in print and electronic media?

The discussions were fast and furious. A senior journalist of The Times of India spoke of harassment by an editor for the past one year, and said she was restrained from writing news stories. Another female colleague

was also undergoing similar treatment, she said. A freelancer complained that women were not given important assignments, but were given soft beats related to fashion, cookery etc. She added that some of her articles had been published, but in someone else's name, and that she also did not receive any payment.

On the issue of coverage of women's issues, the participants stressed on the need to bring in sensitivity among editors and journalists regarding reporting on rape and dowry deaths.

There was consensus that journalists have to unite in opposing the contract system and employment on a casual basis. Sunita Aron called for unity among journalists to oppose the contract system.

Kalpna Sharma stressed the need for a national forum for woman journalists to oppose gender discrimination and sexual harassment, while Ammu Joseph stressed the need for independent committees in newspaper offices for looking into charges of sexual harassment.

One participant working in a Hindi daily said that in her eight years as sub-editor, she had never faced discrimination or harassment by male colleagues. Kalpana was quick to point out that this was not the same for all. Many other details were discussed, including the status of Doordarshan newsreaders.

Taking our cue from the Jaipur conference, two young journalists were delegated to rush to the nearest cybercafé and type up the details of all those who attended

the conference, including name, address, telephone numbers and e-mail address. A copy of this was then circulated to all, to make networking in the Bihar/Jharkhand area a concrete reality.

Taking our cue from the Jaipur conference, two young journalists were delegated to rush to the nearest cybercafé and type up the details of all those who attended the conference, including name, address, telephone numbers and e-mail address. A copy of this was then circulated to all, to make networking in the Bihar/Jharkhand area a concrete reality.

The jharkhand chapter

It was encouraging to meet many enthusiastic participants from outside Patna. Two delegates from Ranchi, namely Vasavi and Soumi Dad, showed an interest in setting up a similar forum in Jharkhand.

Since the conference, we have been in constant touch by email, and the preparation of a database of women journalists has begun. I hope that the four delegates that have come from Jharkhand will learn a lot from this conference, and then open up a chapter of their own soon. We will be there to encourage and offer assistance if and when required.

Good press and bad

News of the NWMI conference was covered in all the English and Hindi dailies. Some were accurate and others, not quite so. The Hindustan Times was the only newspaper which carried the piece on the front page, as anchor. The Times of India reported only on Rabri Devi's speech, and there was not a word about the raison d'être of the conference. A report pub-

lished in a Hindi daily read more like an editorial piece. Another reporter wrote that the meet raised women's issues with a "heady dose of male-bashing". We felt that it was a rather lopsided report.

It was sad to learn that some of our members faced harassment from the management on their return to work. One of them said she had been branded a "trade unionist", and couldn't shake off the label.

Nevertheless we felt a deep sense of satisfaction. The conference was the first of its kind in Patna, unprecedented in many ways. As journalists we always give voice to the others; finally, we gave voice to ourselves too.

* * *

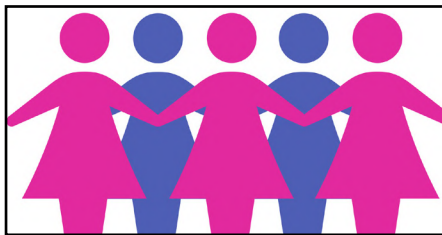


Payal Kumar is one of the founding members of the Bihar chapter of NWM India, and a co-chair of the woman journalist conference in Patna in 2001. She has worked with The Hindustan Times and written on issues concerning women and children.

Re-defining leadership, from “Me” to “We”

By **Ammu Joseph** and
Laxmi Murthy

Launched in 2002 on a cold winter day in Delhi, **the Network of Women in Media, India (NWMI)** is an inclusive community which welcomes as members women (and those who identify as women or gender fluid) working in or on the media (media professionals/practitioners, media scholars/researchers, media faculty/students).



The NWMI serves as a forum for women in media professions to share information and resources, exchange ideas, promote media awareness and ethics, and work for gender equality and justice within the media and society. It has slowly emerged as a space for solidarity and support for women journalists, particularly freelancers who often work in isolation.

Details of initiatives in this area are available [here](#).

Bottom-up organising

The incentive for creating a network came from women journalists across the country who were interviewed in the late 1990s for the book, **Making News: Women in Journalism**. Many felt the need for a nationwide forum for media women in India. At that time there were a few local groups in

various places, but nothing at the national level. The network-building process that began in November 2000 was therefore undertaken in response to a felt need. The informal association emerged gradually through a slow, participatory, bottom-up process that built upon earlier initiatives by media women in different parts of India. In the first phase (2000-2002), three regional workshops were held: for the south and west in Bangalore (November 2000), for the north and east in Jaipur (March 2001) and for the northeast in Shillong (September 2001). These meetings sought to determine whether or not women journalists across the country wished to come together and, if so, for what purpose and towards what end. The women from several different states, working in many different languages, who came together during those initial meetings immediately and enthusiastically endorsed the idea of linking up. Several local networks came into being as a result of the regional meetings.

Where we are now

Our current membership comprises over 650 media women based in almost all Indian states (and some overseas locations), working in print, digital and broadcast media in multiple languages (as employees or freelancers), in institutions of media education and research. Members are connected virtually through an email listserv as well as via social media groups, but also meet in person during periodic national meet-

ings in various venues across the country. Local networks in several cities also periodically organise events and get-togethers.

The NWMI takes strong, prompt **public positions** on journalists' rights and media ethics, while standing alongside media women in struggles for gender equality, safety and justice, at both individual and community levels.

It has launched several initiatives such as the **NWMI Fellowship**, the **Letdown in Lockdown series** (in response to the widespread loss of jobs and incomes in the wake of the Covid pandemic) and the **Gender, Media and Elections blog**, in addition to a number of **surveys and publications**.

The NWMI is driven by volunteer power, and has chosen to be an informal, decentralised, non-hierarchical collective with no institutional affiliation, secretariat, office-bearers or paid staff. It is entirely dependent on members' contributions of time, energy and money. Decision-making is as transparent and consensus-based as possible, invariably following extensive deliberation. Operating in a deeply iniquitous society – in terms of gender, class, caste, region and ethnicity – is a challenge, particularly in the arena of leadership, but being conscious of this reality and the need to actively, consistently address the problem is one way to move forward towards equality.

The NWMI responded to the

Covid-19 pandemic and resulting job losses in a proactive manner, aiming to provide support to journalists (non-members as well) who had been retrenched or were facing salary cuts. Two members opened their Twitter DMs and provided support through interaction with those who reached out, often sharing information about potential job opportunities. This effort snowballed into a more public initiative involving regular posts of job listings via the network's social media, as well as a series of webinars about media workers' rights, avenues for redressal, and options for upskilling or pivoting skills to survive in a professional world upended by the pandemic. The network also paid tribute to colleagues who lost their lives to Covid-19 by put together a list of journalists and media workers known to have passed away due to the pandemic: Lest We Forget.

No leaders here

The decision that the NWMI would be a voluntary, informal, decentralised, non-hierarchical collective was made at the end of a long, animated discussion at the first national meeting of Indian women in media in 2002. The pros and cons of being structured like traditional organisations, with office-bearers, and a clear hierarchy, or unstructured, attempting to function as an informal collective owned and guided by members, with decisions made on the basis of consensus as far as possible, were thoroughly examined, and continue to come up for periodic debate.

Over the past two decades we have been continually striving to ensure collective decision-

making. There are, of course, many disadvantages to remaining informal and unstructured, with no designated leaders. At various times we have seriously discussed the possibility of officially registering the organisation, which would necessarily mean becoming more formal in structure, putting office-bearers in place, etc. However, in the end, the consensus has always been to continue as an informal collective, in part because it allows us to speak truth to power, without fear or favour. It has become clear over the years that most members value the network as it is, are apprehensive that a more formal structure would somehow change it and do not want to risk losing the spirit of the NWMI in the process of possibly becoming more defined - despite practical advantages such as eligibility to open a bank account, or having a well-defined position for the buck to stop: formal accountability, as it were.

Practicing collective leadership in a network is certainly challenging, given the diversity of views and positions among members. Executing programmes - whether organising annual meetings, local conferences or slightly longer terms research projects or workshops - has meant translating collective ownership of a vision into practice. The attempt has been to apply democratic principles and a commitment to diversity and inclusion at every step, from identifying members who would like to participate in various projects and providing guidance to newer members willing to take on the task of leading/co-ordinating ac-

tivities. Feminist mentoring, which has by necessity remained largely virtual, has come with both challenges and rewards but it has helped move the network towards decentralised functioning.

The tyranny of power

A core group of founder-members, who shared a vision and were part of the 16-month-long network-building process, emerged as an informal decision-making group, especially in the early days when the network was still relatively small, though growing slowly and steadily. Some took on responsibilities for specific ventures early on, such as the launch of an NWMI website at a time (2003) when the Internet was still a relatively new phenomenon in India and even email was not widely known or used. The core group functioned primarily as a sounding board for ideas and suggestions as and when they came up.

But soon newer members began to propose action - for example, the first email listserv (on Yahoo) was set up by a very new member who felt it would help with communication, as it did.

About a decade after the network was launched, a systematic review of internal functioning was undertaken, to discuss how various processes could be streamlined, and decision-making made more collective while not compromising on speed, which was of the essence in some cases (for example, while issuing public statements on current topics). The attempt was to ensure that decision-making was not dominated by a few, while recognising that even active members would have varying levels of involvement at



-A representation of the 'tree of life' concept in the Kachni style of Madhubani folk art-
Artist: Mahithi Pillay

different times, usually due to periodic professional and domestic commitments. Setting up a 'Working Council' was an attempt to enhance the representation and involvement of local chapters of the network, as well as individuals who had journeyed with NWMI since its inception. The Working Council remains a work in progress, while the network has grown in leaps and bounds over the past few years, particularly after the advent of social media, with instant messaging making communication much quicker and easier, both nationally and locally.

Conscious that a non-funded network automatically excludes the

involvement of those with limited financial and other resources, the NWMI has also made a conscious effort to challenge the traditional domination of city-based, English language, upper caste journalists both in the media landscape and within the network, through some practical initiatives, such as travel grants to attend national meetings, and an annual fellowship (funded through member contributions) to advance professional growth for media women from disadvantaged communities and/or facing other challenging circumstances.

As outlined by American feminist

Cathy Levine in her path breaking essay 'The Tyranny of Tyranny', the devil is in the detail. Implementing collective functioning in real life involves: delegation of specific authority to specific individuals for specific tasks through democratic procedures; requiring those with authority to remain responsible to the network; distribution of authority to prevent monopoly of power; rotation of tasks among individuals to prevent responsibilities being held too long by one person, formally or informally, thereby coming to be seen as that person's 'property' or 'turf' and therefore not easily reverted to collective control; regular sharing of information; equal access to available information and resources relevant to the group as a whole.

Slow democracy

The NWMI is primarily a virtual, voluntary association of media women whose primary work is elsewhere; most are journalists employed in media houses or independent journalists, media scholars/researchers or teachers in institutions of media education and, of late, journalists who have switched to "content" jobs (mainly for livelihood reasons). Interaction is predominantly virtual (except during the more or less annual national meetings and the occasional smaller local events/get-togethers). The e-groups have always been unmoderated, allowing members to have free and frank exchanges. Given the nature of the network, there are no real "daily functioning" processes, as there are with organisations on the ground. However, these are some examples of our efforts to function as a collective in which power is decentralised.

One of the first ways in which we helped decentralise power and resources was by sharing information. At the time the network was formed there was a tendency for all information about professional opportunities – e.g., about scholarships, fellowships, important publications, seminars, conferences, etc. – to be accessible mainly to media professionals based in the capital city and, if at all, to those based in a couple of other major metropolitan cities. The regular sharing and thereby democratisation of such information made a major difference to members based in smaller cities/towns, and especially in far-flung areas of the country. The access to opportunities enabled by this process, in turn, helped increase the confidence and widen the horizon of media women across the country. This was an indirect but effective means of empowerment – through the dismantling of information monopolies.

The NWMI has gained a reputation for prompt, strong protest statements about issues of rights and justice relating to the media and/or gender & media. The issuance of such statements is among the most frequent activities of the network and we try our best to make the process of drafting them as participatory and consensus-based as possible – within obvious time constraints. As a result, NWMI statements have the weight of collective approval and ownership. Statements often reflect the experiences of network members and many over the years have said that the amplification of such injustices helped them at a time when they were feeling low and facing professional difficulties. This is another

way in which members felt that being part of the network was empowering.

**Collective functioning:
Wot’s dat?**

One of the biggest challenges within the network involves the effort to help members understand what collective functioning is all about. Members tend to enjoy the benefits of a non-hierarchical organisation in which everyone has a say about everything. However, not everyone understands that an unstructured organisation with no appointed or elected leadership or paid staff can only be effective if many, if not most (let alone all), members contribute to the work involved, especially in terms of taking responsibility and seeing things through.

Consistent efforts at communicating this and sharing information and potential strategies have resulted in a situation where more members are joining the ranks of the “doers” and volunteering for and even co-ordinating ongoing tasks that keep the network going. However, the burden of sustaining the network and ensuring that it continues to do more than “networking” and meets its other, important goals (promoting media awareness and ethics, and working towards gender equality and justice within the media and society) still falls disproportionately on the shoulders of a few committed members.

Some takeaways

- Power is a tricky business, since it comes with responsibilities. Successful communication of this reality by walking the talk is key to sharing power.
- Consistent mentoring by sharing

- information, goals and vision, and organisational history (both informal/anecdotal and formal/documented) is an important element of building collective leadership.
- When involvement in organisational work brings joy and a sense of belonging, there are greater chances of volunteers sticking around.
- Feminist leadership means leaving oneself open to criticism and learning, without which collectivisation is incomplete.
- Diversity and inclusiveness do not happen by themselves. Concerted efforts have to be made to question existing hierarchies of gender, class, caste, religion and language, both within the organisation and outside, and systematically address these inequities.
- Personal relationships, warmth, and individual connect go a long way to create a sense of community.
- A good sense of humour is an essential ingredient of feminist leadership.



Ammu Joseph and Laxmi Murthy are two of the several founder members of the NWMI. This article has been adapted from a longer essay ‘From Me to We: The NWMI Story,’ published in the From Me to We – Feminist leadership mapping initiative and available on the NWMI website: <https://nwmindia.org/features/nwmi-writes/from-me-to-we-the-nwmi-story/#>

A Message from the Vice-Chancellor, Aryabhata Knowledge University



It is a matter of immense pride for the Aryabhata Knowledge University, Patna to collaborate with the Network of Women in Media, India (NWMI) for its 17th national meeting. We share the concerns of NWMI and identify with the theme of this meeting: "Media, Gender and Social Justice: Towards an Equitable Society."

Aryabhata Knowledge University, Patna like many other major institutions in Bihar, is the brain child of Hon'ble Shri Nitish Kumar Ji, Chief Minister of Bihar, who continues to shower his unconditional patronage and tutelage on the University. We are making all efforts to live up to the expectations and high standards of the Hon'ble Chief Minister who has taken several steps for the uplift of the women and the girl child.

Our University has a sprawling 7.60 acres of green campus with built-up areas of 3,84,132 sqft. The University provides world-class facilities for academic activities. The University has excellent and state-of-the-art infrastructure facilities conducive to a higher teaching-learning environment and research. It is equipped with modern equipment, instruments, computers, teaching aids, multimedia, and other audio-visual facilities, an upcoming e-library, a research hub, and wi-fi connectivity. We intend to develop it as a lively and throbbing center of learning

and research. The main objective of the University is to provide higher education of global standards through teaching, research, and creative endeavors so that we can help in advancing the frontiers of knowledge, human understanding, and wisdom.

This University holds a special place in Bihar. It was created to bring technical and professional education under one umbrella and at the same time give impetus to non-conventional education, research, and innovation. Ever since its inception in 2010, it has shown enormous commitment to education and to serving the needs of the state and the nation.

We are proud of our innovative ideas and positive approaches in every sphere of activity. As a Vice-Chancellor of this prestigious University, my focus has been on refining our strategic direction and identifying growth opportunities. We are constantly responding to the challenges of the changing academia by defining our strengths and building our distinctive character and identity.

Our Centres (Centre for Nanoscience and Nanotechnology, School of Journalism and Mass Communication, Centre for Geographical Studies, Patliputra School of Economics, and Centre for River Studies) are functioning and several more centers are in the pipeline. The University takes

great pride in having established strong, industry-focused teaching programmes and cutting-edge research. We offer our students a research-enriched education that is complemented by work-integrated learning opportunities.

We take pride in the world-class research undertaken by our institution which not only contributes to the creation of new knowledge but is also meant to inspire students to solve future challenges facing communities at large. Research and innovation are regarded as our pillars of success.

I feel honored and humbled to serve as Vice-Chancellor and I look forward to seeing this University prosper under dynamic, innovative, and inspirational leadership. I am highly impressed by the enthusiasm that our staff shows in their commitment to the ideals that help us to achieve our vision of being a student-centered university.

We keep our motto *satyad-harmāya drstave* (From Darkness, towards the Light/ the truth!) at the heart of everything we do.

I wish NWMI the greatest success in all its endeavours and in its cause to promote responsive, responsible, and gender-sensitive journalism.

-Dr. (Prof.) Surendra Pratap Singh



सत्यधर्माय दृष्टये (*satyadharmāya dr̥ṣṭaye*)

Aryabhatta Knowledge University, Patna was established by the Government of Bihar through AKU Act, 2008 with a vision to conduct and facilitate conventional as well as new frontiers of professional education. It is the brain child of Hon'ble Chief Minister of Bihar, Sri Nitish Kumar ji. The main purpose of establishing the university is to create knowledge, research and development in all possible subjects including so far uncommon areas of education-viz. stem cell technology, non-conventional energy, river studies etc.

Vision: To be a vibrant knowledge University, resonating with the mission of all round development, by providing value-based, creative and innovative quality education.

Functioning Centres/Schools

- Centre for Nanoscience and Nanotechnology.
- School of Journalism and Mass Communication.
- Centre for Geographical Studies.
- Pataliputra School of Economics.
- Centre for River Studies.

Upcoming Schools

- School of Astronomy
- School of Environmental Science and Climate Change
- School of Non-Conventional Energy
- School of Art and Culture
- School of Philosophy
- School of Stem Cell Technology
- School of Archaeology and Curatorial Stud-



On the path of growing to be a world-class research university



**Gyan Parisar, Near Mithapur, Patna-800001;
Website: akubihar.ac.in;
e-mail: akuniv10@gmail.com**

BIHAR MUSEUM- An Ode to the State

For each of you, somewhere
In my corridors, there will
Be a moment of awakening,
A sudden delight when you will
Experience what they call the
Aha moment.

---Extract from "I am the Bihar Museum"



Inaugurated in 2015, The Bihar Museum is one of the visionary projects of the State Government of Bihar. The new museum is dedicated to the history of Bihar in its capital, Patna. Bihar possesses India's most important Archaeological sites, including pre-historic settlements and remains of ancient republics and universities.

Through its vast collections that span over 10000 years, the new Bihar Museum traces the rich history and artistic traditions that flourished in the region through the ages and has a gallery dedicated to the Bihar Diaspora. Bihar Museum's art galleries have a rich collection of traditional, folk and contemporary art in Bihar. Bihar Museum is not only a cultural landmark of Bihar but an experience to perceive museums.

The Maki and Associates / Opolis design for the Bihar Museum, Patna is intended to create an engaging and appropriately-scaled response to a prominent site and an ambitious, multi-faceted museum program. Supplementing the old Patna Museum (built in

the late 1920's) with 24,000 square meters of new space, the Bihar Museum houses a rich variety of treasures from the region, and includes event and education spaces nurturing a newfound sense of pride and connection to Bihar's storied history. The generous 5.3 hectare plot along Patna's Bailey Road allowed for a variety of site planning approaches, while demanding sensitivity to its low-scale surroundings and prominent tree growth.

In response to these conditions, Maki and Associates has conceived the Bihar Museum as a "campus" - an interconnected landscape of buildings and exterior spaces that maintains a modest but dynamic profile, and allows for planning flexibility in harmony with the existing site conditions. This constant presence of the natural environment within the Museum "campus" creates a rich, unique experience with each visit, one that changes with the time and seasons. The Museum's exterior is characterized by extensive use of weathering steel, a durable material that complements its

context and creates a dignified contrast to the surrounding greenery. The weathering steel symbolizes India's historical achievements in metallurgy as well as its current prominence within the international steel industry (of which Bihar's rich natural resources have played a critical role). It is supplemented with stone, terracotta, and glass finishes - a modern material palette with clear connections to Bihar's past and future.

At the Orientation gallery, you will get an overview of all the Museum galleries and how historians interpret history employing various scientific methods and research. Bihar Museum's History Gallery exhibits follow a chronological order as Prehistory, Protohistory, Early Bihar, the Rise of Magadha and successive dynasties. Thematic zones explore the growth of Buddhism and Jainism, the Mauryan Empire and Ashoka.

Other major sections are the Gupta Empire, the important Mahaviharas, the Pala dynasty, the Medieval period and Mughal rule.



The Visible Storage gallery has a unique terracotta collection from Bihar and other major historical sites of the Indian sub-continent. Bihar Museum's stores have a vast coin collection, bronze and stone sculptures, paper documents, miniatures and an array of archaeological finds. Historical Art and Regional Art engage with interpretive approaches to art. Bihari Diaspora explores the contribution of Bihari people in making indelible imprints in the history and culture of lands where they settled. Battling extremely adverse conditions, the migrant populations along with Bihari greats have impacted the

destiny of history, culture and society of India.

The Museum aims to continue to develop and grow its collection through research-based activities and potential partnerships with local, regional and national museums and repositories. The Children's Section of the museum is another attraction for the children and a child in us thus the experience is not only "hands-on" but also "minds-on". The section is alienated into three parts like flora and fauna of Bihar, history, art and archaeology.

Bihar Museum presents a kaleidoscope of Bihar's contribution in its rich cultural heritage. The theory of "New Museology" is prevalent in the making of the Bihar Museum. It's an experiential museum which triggered curiosity and walked in the path of self discovery and life-long learning. This Museum is the government's ongoing efforts to promote cultural heritage and capacity building of Indian museum professionals, and offers suggestions to further development of the museum in a holistic manner. This new museum is now the center of the cultural life and identity of the city.

Kashmir: it's more about *what not to tell* and *when to tell* than *what to tell*.

By **Hana Vahab**

Two years ago, my editor and mentor at the Kerala-based news portal I worked with asked me to stop writing on Kashmir, and focus on other issues. He was anxious. The publication had received a warning from a central agency and was under surveillance for my articles on Kashmir.

As a journalist writing on human rights issues and the refugee crisis, I was always interested in the Kashmir situation. After the abrogation of Article 370 in 2019, I got even more interested. But I understood the concerns of my editor, too.

Kashmir is the “internal matter” in official documents. For a Muslim woman journalist, or anyone from a marginalised community, Kashmir is a touchstone for patriotism. “What is your take on Kashmir?” is the one question often lobbed at us. Our response determines whether we are patriotic or not.

I had worked hard to write those stories. I was only 25, freelancing while trying to complete my studies. But I had left no stone unturned to get to the bottom of the truth, digging stories through multiple layers and building trust with sources in a place shrouded in multiple conflicts and internal drifts. At first, I worked on the basics, studying the history, the conflicts, the communication blockade, and the psychosocial conflicts of journalists. As someone keen on doing

research and paper submissions on human rights and refugee issues, I was focused on doing my homework.

The retreat

After that conversation with my editor, for two years I deliberately avoided tracking news from Kashmir. I took a step back and maintained a distance from my sources and fellow journalists. Some unexpected and uninvited challenges came along in my personal life too with the arrival of marriage and my post graduate studies. So the retreat perhaps was inevitable. I did continue freelance writing and working as a content creator and saved enough to set foot in Kashmir one day. After

orthodox family, I was expected to be obedient and capable of leading a ‘family life’. I knew my decision to go to Kashmir would only make things more complicated. But, there can never be a right time in my life or in a woman’s life. If not now, there can never be a ‘some day’ and especially in Kashmir, there is always an air of uncertainty.

Kashmiris breathe the air of fear and uncertainty every moment of their lives. And bearing the uncertainty of my own life, I decided to breathe it along with them.

The retreat

My first week in Kashmir, I searched



completing my post-graduation, my friends set forth on other expeditions, in pursuit of teaching careers and preparation for UPSC exams. I booked a flight to Kashmir.

At that point my marriage was crumbling. As a woman from an

for a description, a word that could describe this land. The beauty, the air of fear and uncertainty, the sounds, the stares, the foggy mornings. I failed to find an honest one. I waited for a week and then there it was.

“An open-prison”. No matter the vast Shalimar and Mughal gardens or the endless ripples of life in the lakes, they exist in clogged-up emotions frozen underneath, hibernating for long years. I am not the first one to define it as such and won't be the last. But every time someone experiences the meaning of that, it is still not possible to think that one may speak about it. The real struggle is to stay alive and see your dear



ones of this land alive. The hardest truth I learned was that for every word you write, there is a price to pay somewhere, sometime. And my only prayer was that this fate would never befall the people here, who helped and trusted me. For every individual who steps out of a private cab, enters a public bus or a local cab or walks into the galis across the street from halted army vehicles, the fear of being picked up anytime is your constant companion. Especially when you are doing a story.

The media hub is encircled by surveillance 24/7 even though the doors of media houses are still closed. With the threats against those who write narratives

supporting the government and raids in the houses of senior journalists who challenge those narratives, the media in Kashmir is in deadlock. A final one.

I felt a true stab of pain when I realised that for every favour my fellow journalists and friends gave me in Kashmir, I was indebted to them through a strange process. I owed it to them to not pursue anything that could potentially put every one of us in trouble. It hurts deeply that you cannot even meet or hug those who you have been friends with from afar and had hoped to see for the first time. And still. Still, some of them were right there with me. Some came out of their neighbourhoods for the first time in two years and while we walked along the lanes, they met people whom they haven't met for one or two years.

Whenever I used to travel in a Somu (local cab) past the willow trees wrapped in fog, I looked into the eyes of the people there, I saw the conflicts, the division, the separation, the aversion, the apathy, the fear, the suppression. You realise that you are watched for nothing in particular, but just because you are there or born



into a particular identity. In tourist spots, you see a different life, a life that only blooms on a few days in an alchemy of necessity, desire and materialism.

In the villages and galis, a different pair of eyes watch you in suspicion, curiosity and confusion. When military men pass through the road or stop someone to check their belongings, others move ahead, with their heads held high. Apathy and aversion have replaced resentment.

Unemployment and depression blanket the lives of the youth here. Every young person you meet has a story of graduation and unemployment. College-going students tell you stories of unrevised syllabi, repetition of subjects, and a lack of proper classes.

The conflict stagnates in every second that passes, in the air that we breathe in and out. Trust is a larger psychosocial conflict in Kashmir. In a conflict zone, where survival for oneself is the priority, trust comes with a price for love, kindness, courage or simply existence.

On a chilly night, when I was lost, an old man who was on his way home after work took me to my room amidst the sirens, and the army vehicles. We talked on the way and wished each other. And every time when my journo friends dropped me off, I could only worry about getting home safely somehow. Anything could happen any time - that is the only thing to trust.

Whoever I meet in Kashmir is a cause of worry for me and for my friends. Because they can be picked up for helping me with the sources or anything else. The biggest dilemma that fell over me, every time I opened my mobile camera to shoot or click was also the same. I remember their faces, their families that fed and clothed me. The same dilemma is one of the reasons why journalism is dead in Kashmir. And as one of the editors of a media house in Kashmir said, the real challenge is to stay afloat and not to get closed down.

As a journalist in Kashmir, it's more about what not to tell and when to tell than what to tell.

For us, the Indian media, the people here are the sources but for them, they are the victims of the media. As one of them told me, "it's a pleasure to know that you understand us but don't put anything out in the media".

The first jolt I had was when I was first told "no one will speak to anyone, especially to a non-local about the conflicts". I could be under the cover of a tourist or student or a content creator but if a friend took to me a victim's home, it could be the last time I

saw that friend.

Perhaps that is not always true. Perhaps there are people who are ready to talk. But it's impossible when their houses are under surveillance and they are supposed to report if anyone approaches them asking about their troubles, about being a victim, about the atrocities. In Kashmir, for a journalist who reports the truth, always comes the price when there is this forced spying among the locals. And that was not a price I was ready to pay.

Winters are never easy anywhere, but in Kashmir, it comes with a lot of pain and struggle. As I write this, the season has just begun but it has hit -3 degree Celsius in two weeks. And the perils of seasonal depression are already taking its toll, in addition to the everyday struggles the people here undergo. The sight of the queues outside psychiatric departments and clinics shook me. Queues like the ones outside OP of general hospitals. It is a need that everyone here knows without the need to substantiate it.

Now when the days are shorter and the sounds of sirens pierce the darkness, the real challenge as a journalist in a conflict zone is to get back to your room with all the information from your sources and get its digital avatar somewhere you won't be pulled up for documenting what is going on.

Staying the path

My conviction keeps me going. As one of the photojournalists in Kashmir told me: I am still a student whose journey has just started in the real world. He has

not taken his camera out since he was detained at a police station and questioned for the stories he did. There are hundreds of reasons not to resume a journey that you know would end in a situation like that.

However, there are times when you just have to keep floating, times when you have to stand up, and times when you have to put out something that can change the coming times when people see things for what they are. A journey alone as a journalist moulds you. It shapes you with pain and hard work that helps you become what you need to be during such times. It keeps that flame of hope alive and your commitment true to your heart. The pain can become words that address the pain of someone else whose existence is under watch.

* * *



Photos by Hana Vahab. Hana Vahab is an independent investigative journalist and researcher, documenting the space, the people and the human rights violations. Passionate about editing, reporting, researching and connecting with people.

Neetu Singh: The Maths Graduate Who Has Won One of Journalism's Top Prizes

- By Vasanthi Hariprakash



This article was first published on nwmindia.org on March 16, 2021

The first time I saw Neetu Singh, I almost didn't see her. It must have been 2016; she was sitting in a corner at the office of Gaon Connection, the rural media platform that is based in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh. I had been invited to come from Bangalore to talk to the young video and print journalists and spend a few days, ideating helping them with newer ways of telling stories via the camera. Neetu was one of them, busy filming stories for the newspaper edition; a shy smile playing on her lips whenever she looked up or spoke. And that's how she came across, almost every time I met her either there, at the meetings in Barabanki, 30 km from Lucknow or at the annual meeting of NWMI, of media women from across the country.

That turned out to be such a deceptive perception of this powerhouse patrkaar! Over the years as I spoke more to her, or we met in the national capital for programmes of community radio with the warmth of women who knew each other from their village, one learnt slowly of the accolades that had come to her with regularity, whether it be the Laadli Media and Advertising Award 2014-15 for her writing on gender and sanitation awareness, the Laadli in 2017 for consistent writing on gender sensitivity issues, the Laadli again in 2020 for her series Ankahi Kahaniyan (Untold Stories), the Malala award given by the Hindustan group of newspapers for outstanding women from the districts of Uttar Pradesh, and the Breakthrough award for her work

in uncovering stories of women of spunk in a remote Adivasi village in Jharkhand.

And now comes the prestigious 2020 Chameli Devi Jain Award. Neetu herself comes from a remote village of Kanpur, in Kanpur Dehat as it is called (dehat, a Hindi word for rural), where one had to walk to the nearest school that was at least 5 km away. She is the eldest among three daughters to her parents and in her own words "the only woman above 25 years of age who is still single". Early marriage for girls is a norm back in her village, education – especially higher – the exception. "Main kisi tarah bach gayi hun," (I have escaped every time) she laughs when you ask her how.

especially with people like Neetu who wear their laurels lightly or do not bear the air of achievement. When you prod, she lets you in on what it meant to be allowed to go to – to sometimes struggle to be at – school, then inter, then high school, BSc in Mathematics and later a Masters’ degree in journalism in a college in Kanpur.

The challenge did not come from the family; father Ramsevak Singh was in fact teacher at a private school, mother Meera who had had to stop school after fifth grade due to poverty, was absolutely keen that her daughters should ‘do padhai’ and have a good education. Neetu recalls how once she topped a mathematics inter-class contest in her school where she was the only girl among 300 students, for which she was given a small alarm clock. She came back from school the next day to see that her mother had gone around their mohalla (locality) showing it to everyone exclaiming “meri bitiya ne jeeti hai” (my daughter has won this prize).

emotional; Neetu lost her mother in 2001 when she was 13; her mom was 30. Thereon she was sent away to her aunts’ place, sometimes to her father’s at a town, but somehow she kept at her studies. The 24,000 rupees per annum that she had to shore up for her journalism and mass communication course seemed huge, but her daadi Ram Devi, father’s mother, pawned her own jewelry to ensure that Neetu entered the world of journalism. Her father’s sister and her husband (Bua and Fufaji as she calls them) were a huge support as she finished her degree while living in their house in Kanpur city. Even after she finished her masters in mass com, no job came by, only offers of internship where she would be given a pittance every month. Neetu then went back to her village along with her two sisters where they had a small patch of land and worked on the fields for a year, while taking tuitions at a nearby school to support their household expenses.

the community radio station Waqt ki Awaaz as a programme producer. For five years thereon from May 2011, she did fieldwork, research, scriptwriting, editing, mixing as well as anchoring programmes such as ‘Aaj ka aaj kya hai khaas’, ‘Socho aur khelo’ and ‘Mehmaan Manch’ that had a reach of 3 lakh listeners in that region.

The turning point came when she entered Gaon Connection as a reporter and joined a team of vibrant rural journalists who were trying to hold up the mirror of rural India to the rest of India. Neetu says this was a place that ‘sculpted’ her into the journalist she became, with consistent reportage on issues that women faced in the region. She has special praise for the founder-editor of Gaon Connection, Neelesh Misra, a popular radio personality and renowned poet-lyricist of Hindi cinema. “Neelesh Sir would not just praise my work in full hearing in the news room, he would often come discuss what I am doing, and

Neetu Singh with her grandmother



put out my work on his own social media. The most important thing I got was the freedom to pursue the kind of stories I wanted to do, without ever any pressure to do it a certain way or not do it at all.”
Neetu Singh at work

As part of the ‘Swayam Project’ campaign of the Gaon Connection newspaper, Neetu travelled through the state of Jharkhand where she stayed for a year and a half, doing stories that most of India never gets to hear. For instance, did we know of the incredible Adivasi women under the banner of Sakhi Mandal in Hesalbaar village of Lothhar district who built a 2-km road and a checkdam that now has not only helped harvest rains for irrigation of barren fields but has also stopped its men from migrating to Maharashtra every year in search of work? Neetu got this story out, got the Breakthrough award in the process.

Her other groundbreaking work has been ground reports on survi-

vors of rape in a series called ‘Balaatkar ke baad’ (after the rape) for Gaon Connection where she followed up on the cases from a social and legal perspective, and examined the horrific impact on the lives of the women, some of them still children.

This young woman who has told untold stories this far through audio, text and video media, while facing untold hardships in her own life, has a dream. In Neetu’s own words, “In the future, I wish to go and go to every state in India to do my journalism. I want to bring out the stories of those who get oppressed and their voices suppressed.”

Chameli Devi Jain, the Gandhian and freedom-fighter in whose name outstanding women journalists of India are honoured year after year, would be proud of the girl from Dehat who is destined to go places.

Neetu Singh at work



Vasanthi Hariprakash is an award-winning journalist and former radio anchor. She is the host of The Dosa King podcast on Spotify.



I'd Always Wanted to Be A Journalist- An Accident Changed Everything. Everything But My Dreams

- By Ambika Raja

This article was first published on nwmindia.org on Dec 2, 2021



I was brought up in a suburban area called Chathamangalam, in Kozhikode. My mother was an English teacher, my father a marketing consultant and I have an older sister who is a chemical engineer. It would be wrong of me to say that I did not have a fairly smooth upbringing, as I had access to quality education and great opportunities, a loving family, and a supportive set of friends and teachers.

Right from when I was in school, I had an inclination towards reading and writing. While I mostly indulged myself with novels and short-story collections I borrowed

from the school library, I also enjoyed reading human-interest stories in newspapers. At that time, I had no clue those articles were called human-interest ones. They clearly sparked my interest though. I was awed by how beautifully yet informatively the articles were written. More than that, I was moved by the stories themselves; moved by the tales of people, places, and emotions they contained. I used to imagine travelling around the globe, interacting with new people and understanding the issues they face, learning diverse cultures, and being able to write about all of it.

Just like the best reporting I had read in the papers.

Those days, most students around me were opting for engineering or medicine after school. So, when I informed everyone that my plan was to do my Bachelor's in English, then study journalism, and eventually work in the media field, I was met with rather mixed responses. While my parents were supportive of my decision, several others said that the "wise" choice was to pursue a career in science. I was not swayed by these remarks. After class XII, I went to Madras Christian College in Chennai to

pursue a BA in English Language and Literature. Alongside, I registered for a long-distance course on Journalism and Mass Communication under Madurai Kamaraj University.

The Accident and its Aftermath

In November 2014, when I was 19 and in the second year of my undergraduate studies, I met with an accident that completely changed the course of my life. It resulted in a spinal cord injury and a condition known as paraplegia, which, in simple terms, is a form of paralysis wherein the affected loses the ability to walk. I have been a wheelchair user since then. I underwent surgery immediately after the accident and then rehabilitation at Christian Medical College, Vellore for two months after that.

Since my exams were in December, I had to drop my long-distance course in journalism.

I returned to Madras Christian College in February. My parents and my friends' help was

invaluable during this time. My parents shifted to Chennai to help me. My friends would help me move around the campus and would even drop me home after class. We set up a portable ramp at the entrance of the classroom. During this period, I also began reconsidering my career choices. I wondered if it would ever be possible to work as a journalist the way I had envisioned.

Working as a news reporter implied being constantly mobile and active. It also meant being able to travel to any place at any hour of the day. While I already was an active person and the wheelchair did aid my mobility, what bothered me was that travel was a crucial part of a journalistic career. Within three to four months of the accident, I had realized that a majority of the buildings and public spaces in Chennai and elsewhere were not designed for PWDs (person with disabilities). They lacked basic facilities such as ramps and lifts. Moreover, almost all public transport vehicles were inaccessible for wheelchair users. How was I supposed to work as a news reporter, if I could not access most

buildings or modes of transport? Nevertheless, I did not want to give up on my dream and embark on some whole new and alien career. I kept reminding myself of one of the first lessons that I was taught during my rehabilitation period — being in a wheelchair will not stop me from doing anything that I want to.

I met and spoke to a few journalists who suggested that while it would be difficult (but not impossible) to work as a news reporter with my condition, I still had the option of working at an editorial desk and occasionally pitching stories. That sounded like a feasible option.

So after finishing my BA, I received admission at the Asian College of Journalism (ACJ) in Chennai for a 10-month long postgraduate diploma course with a specialization in Print Journalism. My professors at the institute were extremely considerate and ensured that I was treated as an equal to my peers.

Ambika Raja working at The New Indian Express.



Life as a Journalist with a Disability

In May 2017, I joined the Deccan Chronicle newspaper as a trainee sub-editor, in their Chennai office, where I worked for three months. Since it was a desk job and did not require much mobility, I was able to handle the job and the night shift without any major difficulties.

Around then, due to certain personal issues and financial constraints, I had to return to my home in Kerala and find a job in my hometown. A position for a reporter opened up at the New Indian Express office in Kozhikode. When I was hired, I was extremely worried and doubtful if I would be able to do justice to the work. As a journalism student, I had mostly travelled along with my peers for my reporting assignments and they had helped me if I faced any difficulty. At work, I'd be completely on my own while reporting. I would have to find my own means of travel. My family was also concerned about my safety.

Nevertheless, in August 2017 I joined the New Indian Express office as a reporter on the education beat. My bureau chief and co-workers were quite understanding and helpful throughout my tenure at the office. And thankfully within the first week of joining, I was able to arrange a taxi for the commutes required for reporting. Occasionally, I also travelled by an auto run by a trustworthy acquaintance. Though the issue regarding travel had been resolved, in the initial few months, I struggled to build contacts and sources required for my articles.

Once I settled in with my routine at my office and had built



Ambika on her way to the work. Screengrab courtesy Mathrubhumi TV

my network of contacts for my articles, I was able to actually enjoy my work and complete it within the prescribed deadlines. I was also assigned to pitch in human interest stories for the weekly supplements of the newspaper, an opportunity I had been eagerly looking forward to since I first started reading newspapers!

Lack of infrastructure and lack of awareness

Every time I visited a place, covered an event, or took an interview, I had to call the concerned people beforehand and ask them if the place was wheelchair-friendly. Mostly they were not. They lacked ramps and lift facilities. A flight of stairs or rough terrain would make a whole interview near impossible. I found that while many of the newer buildings did make an effort to follow the accessibility rules, the existing ones (including government offices) lacked these basic amenities. Neither did they seem to have any intention to make any infrastructural modifications to accommodate PWDs. I somehow managed to get my work done either by asking someone to assist me up a flight

of stairs if there were any or by finding other solutions. For reporting assignments where I did not have the option of making a call beforehand, I just went with my fingers crossed, hoping I'd be able to find some solution upon reaching the place. Luckily, in almost all the cases, the odds were in my favour.

Along with accessibility and travel, another issue I had to deal with was the approach of people. While some people I had to interact with encouraged me to continue in the field, others suggested it would be better if I didn't work at all as I seemed to hail from a "well-off family" and could depend on my parents for financial needs. Additionally, even in situations where I did not require any help, people assumed I required assistance and used to push my wheelchair without even asking for consent. Let me just say here, people must ask for permission before attempting to help a PwD in any way. Ask first, always.

Though our country has improved significantly in terms of the opportunities and facilities provided for PwDs, I believe that we still have a long way to go. There are

rules and laws, undoubtedly, to protect and empower Persons with Disabilities; yet their implementation does not seem to be taking place in several parts of the country, including major cities. For a holistic empowerment of PwDs, I believe that infrastructural accessibility should be first ensured in all public buildings, education institutions and transport vehicles without which it would be extremely difficult.

Accessibility also entails wash-rooms/bathrooms specifically designed for PwDs. Along with this, proper training and support should be given to both PwDs and their close ones/caretakers to help them navigate their issues and enable to have a better living.

During my work as an Education reporter, I learned that there are several students with disabilities in Kerala who are enrolled in schools, yet unable to physically attend the classes either due to their physical disabilities, or due to lack of transportation from the remote areas they come from. There are projects such as Vamozhi for children with learning disabilities, and Changathikoottam, an initiative of the Samagra Shiksha Kerala (SSA), which is helping children with special needs in the State attend regular schools at least once a week. Projects like these attempt to help students interact with their peers as well as make virtual classes possible for them to attend (these initiatives had commenced prior to Covid-19), but it would be extremely beneficial for these students with disabilities if a accessible means of transport are arranged for them to physically attend schools. It will also help the other students learn about inclusivity and its necessity.

I was extremely lucky that through my childhood, my parents ensured that both my sister and I learnt to be independent, which in turn helped me a lot in my profession as journalist as well in my daily life as a PWD. I acknowledge that since I had easy access to good education and opportunities right from my childhood, I was able to have a career as a journalist with a disability. However, there are many PwDs out there who are keenly interested in the field of journalism, but lack access to education and face severe discrimination at every stage of their life. I sincerely hope that in the upcoming years, more PwDs are encouraged to take up this field through opportunities including special recruitment drives, training, and internship programmes.

The Future

I quit The New Indian Express to do my masters. I am currently pursuing my Master's in English Literature via distance education. I am also freelancing as much as possible.

NWMI Fellowship

Sometime in January 2018, when one of my former colleagues at the New Indian Express introduced me to the Network of Women in Media, India (NWMI) website and encouraged me to apply for the organization's yearly fellowship for women journalists, I had my reservations. I wasn't sure if I was qualified or experienced enough to apply, let alone win a prestigious fellowship that aimed at uplifting women journalists working under adverse conditions. Evidently, you could imagine the surprise I had when Vasanthi Hariprakash, one of the members of the NWMI com-



munity rang me up two months down the line to inform me that I had been selected for the award. I was excited and thrilled beyond measure to realize that my work hitherto as a disabled journalist was being recognized on a bigger platform.

The NWMI Fellowship opened several doors for me. More than the financial assistance I was given, I got the chance to interact with several leading women journalists hailing from different parts of the country. I was able to follow their work and learn how I could improve my own news articles. I was also able to take part in a couple of international events, after being awarded the fellowship. I also got a chance to witness how the NWMI community was actively empowering women journalists who worked in challenging situations.

Messi lifted the World Cup in Qatar; Gitika was there to capture the moment for us

By **Durba Ghosh**

Lionel Messi created history by lifting the football World Cup in Qatar last December.

For Gitika Talukdar, a photojournalist from Assam, the event was an “achievement of a lifetime”, too. She was there to shoot the world’s biggest sporting event. She was India’s only photojournalist to get an approval to cover all the matches—from the opening to the final -- from pitch positions. She has captured in her camera, Messi’s brilliant and nuanced footwork, as well as his joy in holding the trophy aloft.

Thirty-seven-year-old Gitika currently freelances for AFP, News in Asia and a host of national and



Gitika Talukdar

and the Daily Financial Times in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

regional newspapers. Her photos can be found in Purvanchal Prahari, Amar Asom, India Today

Her foray into sports journalism at the national and international levels has been a journey of grit, hard work and determination.



“I am big fan of Messi and this world cup was his last world cup therefore i have set my mind that i cannot miss any of his movements and actions. Therefore i was little nervous but at the same time i was very excited” ---Gitika Talukdar

Assam’s pride

Sporting Assam’s pride—the white-and-red gamosa, or the traditional scarf—around her neck and lugging her heavy and high-end camera and lenses, Gitika is a familiar figure in most international sporting events.

The FIFA World Cup at Qatar is the latest feather on this photo journalist’s cap, but she also has the experience of covering many more international sporting events in her kitty, including the Tokyo Olympics 2020, the FIFA Cup at Russia in 2018, FIFA Women’s World Cup France 2019, ICC Women’s Cricket World Cup, all IPL series,



**“Mbappe is like a magician who always change the game. I didnot miss any of his match...while taking pictures i really enjoyed his goals. I was too happy to watch that wonderful guy with his super kicks nad shots”
---Gitika Talukdar**

all ISL Series, SAF Games, Delhi Commonwealth Games, World Taekwondo Championships, Asian Games Jakarta 2018, India versus Pakistan Cricket leagues, among others.

The experience in Doha will remain a memorable one also for two more reasons: she witnessed world-famed South Korea’s pop group BTS member Jong Kook perform the FIFA theme song ‘Dreamers’ at the opening ceremony and also Bollywood actress Deepika Padukone unveil

the World Cup Trophy.

Like many in the North-east, Gitika’s favourite band too is BTS, and to see one of its members perform live was a “dream come true” for her. She recently completed her Master’s in Sports Management from Seoul National University, but she missed catching any live performances in Seoul while she was there due to the Covid 19 restrictions.

“Deepika Padukone unveiling the trophy was a proud moment

for me both as an Indian and a woman as it proved that that there is no discrimination in terms of matches, media and celebrities,” she told **Patna Kalam**.

The journey to Doha

In 2017, she had covered the FIFA World Cup-under 17 and it was “from here that my FIFA journey began and I was officially selected and accredited for the 2018 World Cup in Russia which brought me to the arena of the international sports media industry”.

The Tokyo Olympics will also remain an emotional experience for her as Assam’s Lovlina Borgohain grabbed the boxing bronze for the country. “I cannot describe my feeling in words as somebody from my state created history,” she said. The Tokyo Olympics was a tough challenge due to the strict COVID protocols. “But I was excited to get the opportunity from the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to cover all the matches where our Indian teams and players participated,” she said. The highlight of the Olympics was Niraj Chopra’s gold medal in javelin and P V Sindhu’s bronze in badminton and “each time we heard the national anthem, it made the hearts of all Indians present there swell with pride”.

The Tokyo Olympics was a “high point in my career and I have received a lot of appreciation from across the globe for my photography and news reporting”.

She said: “I had a fascination for media professionals, especially for those wielding the camera. My father may have wanted me to be an engineer or a lawyer but he



“It was a historical match I was so happy that Argentina won the cup.. and wanted to take the best shots of Messi with the trophy. It was a magical moment for me taking pictures of Messi with the World Cup trophy. I didn’t miss any shots of his emotions and expression. It was a life time achievement”---Gitika Talukdar

never stopped me from choosing my own career. He supported me as I studied journalism and mass communication in Guwahati and went on to pursue a career in sports journalism.”

The National Games at Guwahati in 2007 was the first event that she covered as a sports journalist. “The positive attitude of players and the environment prevailing in the sports arena is very inspiring along with the discipline of maintaining the time schedule with each sporting event beginning and finishing on time,” she said.

Her work is physically draining task, always having to carry the heavy camera equipment on around in mega international

tournaments like FIFA World Cups and Olympics, where “we have to go through many security checks and also need to walk a lot to reach the main stadium, besides having to run in several directions to take the perfect shot,” she says.

Sports and gender

Asserting her due place in the male dominated field, too, was a difficult task as “male counterparts hardly extend any support to female journalists and at every step try to underestimate our capabilities”.

Whenever the word ‘sports’ is mentioned in India, there is a stereotypical mindset that labels it as a man’s domain. That mindset is a major barrier for women

trying to get into sports journalism in India, she said.

“During my Master’s thesis, I did my research on examining equity of gender stratification in Indian newspapers. Whenever we compare the participation of women in sports or sports media, it is found that the percentage is always lower than male due to varied reasons, including social, physical, religious norms among others. Besides, most women do not get the requisite support from family and society which is reflected in the low representation of women in this field,” she told Patna Kalam..

Gitika is not the one to be deterred by such barriers. Even as she marches on in her career passionately, she urges other young women and girls to “dream big and work hard to achieve their dreams by believing in themselves and their passion”.



Durba Ghosh is a senior journalist based in Guwahati. She writes on politics, economy, conflict issues, gender, environment, climate change, art and culture and sports too. She is currently PTI’s Bureau Chief at Guwahati.

“What we have today in India is truly the ‘dark age’ of journalism”

Translated by Raksha Kumar

Ravish Kumar resigning from NDTV was one of the big headlines of 2022 in India’s media sector.

Kumar, without doubt, is one of the most respected journalists in India, and his exiting NDTV marks an end of an era in many ways. He had been with NDTV for over 25 years, since his joining in 1996. He has anchored several successful shows, such as Des Ki Baat, Ravish ki Report and Prime

Time with Ravish. While he is hugely popular (almost a cult figure in some ways) because of his award-winning journalism— he won the Magsaysay Award in 2019— that has consistently focussed on the less powerful, he is also the target of vicious verbal attacks from pro-government actors. He is routinely trolled by internet hooligans, which are known to be in cahoots with the ruling party.

Ruling party leaders have made their dislike for him apparent by

not engaging with him and persistently boycotting his shows, and by not condemning the actions of trolls, even when they have issued him death threats.

Kumar announced his resignation following the takeover of NDTV by billionaire Gautam Adani, Asia’s richest man who is known to be close to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Immediately afterwards, he launched his YouTube channel called Ravish Kumar Official. An unstoppable Kumar is equally vocal on his channel, coming down





now are either suffocated or have exited the profession. Many have told me they look at journalism as just another profession, so they can earn a living. There is no other motivation.

A scared journalist is responsible for a dead citizenry. So speak up fearlessly. You are citizens of a country where people walked barefoot to bring the mighty British to their knees. There is no reason to not trust you. You will break away from the shackles of unethical media messaging. You have to fight this. You can't walk with your head held high if you do not fight. If you do not fight, you will be citizens of an independent country, but will remain slaves of a sold-out media. Beware of such a situation. Under the garb of laws, the rights of people are being undermined, so that all that is illegal appears to be legal.

At this point, my future is uncertain. The only certainty is hope.



Raksha Kumar is an independent human rights journalist.

sharply on the government and its cheerleaders. His usual punching bag, the Godi Media, a term he coined to denote crony journalists, has another addition—the Godi Seth, or crony capitalists. It's no surprise that his channel has already amassed over 3.74 million subscribers.

Here are some extracts from his speech that he made on his YouTube channel soon after his resignation. NWMI member Raksha Kumar translated the speech into English, which was published by Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism on their website. Here are extracts from Raksha's English translation, published with permission—

“There was never a golden age in Indian journalism. But it was never as bad as it is today. Every good aspect of journalism is being destroyed rapidly. This was expected. But what we have today is truly the ‘dark age’ of journalism.

There are numerous news channels in India but all of them have compromised on their ethics. Our media ecosystem has been gutted and destroyed.

Everyone claims to be a journalist today. Especially those who are close to and even aligned with the powerful. These faces and establishments ironically are the very reason journalism is being trampled upon in this country. They claim to do good journalism. I implore you to be sceptical of them. These unquestioning journalists and even the government want to shove their definition of journalism down your throat.

India's media space has changed. My heart goes out to those young Indians who are paying millions of rupees to train to be a journalist because they have to work as agents of the state. There is no institution left for ethical journalists.

Even those who are journalists

Travel is to journalism, what water is to fish

By Raksha Kumar

It was an unusually warm November evening and I had waited for half an hour in an open-air cafe in Delhi. Exasperated and sweaty, I dialled her number again. No answer.

A few days earlier, I had received an email from a 24-year-old journalist seeking advice on starting her freelance career. Let's call her Raveena. She was eager to meet and had many questions about the confusing world of journalism she had set foot in.

Why was I waiting for someone I had never met? I had nothing to gain from Raveena.

Sipping my coffee I thought, I was waiting perhaps because I believe in youthful passion, determination and ambition. I had been in that position. Perhaps because senior journalists guided me when I was starting out and I wanted to pass on the favour. After all, that's how the world rolls. Perhaps because I understand how unpredictable traffic in Delhi can be. Well, things on that front had only gotten worse in the past few years, despite expanding metro connectivity.

It was 40 minutes past 5PM, our scheduled meeting time. Still no communication from Raveena. At this stage, I was tense. Was she okay? I had no way of knowing. I didn't know her friends or family. Fifty two minutes after I had arrived, Raveena strode into the cafe with a smile on her face. "Thank

you so much for meeting with me," she said as she slid into the seat across from me.

I sat back, flabbergasted. Reasons for her delay would be good to know, an apology was just courtesy. Would I get either?

She smiled and asked me to tell her how she can get published in The New York Times. For starters, you'd get to a meeting on time, I said. Sources are important, and even more so in today's times when most people won't talk on record for fear of retribution from powerful people. "You never keep a source waiting, you always get there before time," I said.

She chuckled and said she knew that. She went on to ask, "what kind of stories do you think get maximum engagement on Instagram?"

I did not know, I admitted. And asked her to share that information with me when she found out. She was disappointed. "I want to report on climate change," she said and went on to explain how she cannot travel outside Delhi. "My parents think it is too dangerous to travel by myself," she said.

For the next 10 minutes, Raveena explained how she was fascinated by India's countryside but had never seen it. She spoke at length about wanting to write about India's villages but had not visited even those close to Delhi. Raveena is an exception. I meet younger journalists often who are very good at what they do. They are


true to the profession, question the ethics of their actions and are acutely aware of the consequences of their work. Many live true to former United Kingdom Prime Minister, David Lloyd George's words: A young man (sic person) who isn't a socialist hasn't got a heart.

But, I meet journalists like Raveena often who increasingly are the only ones able to afford to do journalism on critical issues.

One of the major problems for younger journalists is their inability to travel. Some cannot afford to travel, given how little freelance journalism pays. Some cannot travel for health reasons. And others do not consider travel an important part of their reporting experience. Many admit that they rely on information they get from afar - phone interviews, other news reports or Twitter.

Excessive reliance on secondary sources or phone interviews widens the gap between India and Bharat. This is true for anyone who is not writing for local publications, especially true for journalists working for English language publications. Having reported from over a hundred districts in India, I realise there is no substitute for travel. Finance models are broken, but some journalists still travel far and wide to bring stories to light.

In such situations, younger journalists with their hearts in the right place have no option but to ekla chalo re.



NOSTALGIA

A trip down NWMI memory lane



HYDERABAD, 2005



Memories





Happy Moments



B
A
N
G
A
L
O
R
E
2
0
0
7

P
U
N
E
2
0
0
8



Solidarity



IMPHAL, 2009



*Celebrating
Comraderie*





BANGALORE, 2011

#teamspirit



MUMBAI, 2013



#throwback



DELHI
2019
Lifelong
Friendships



BANGALORE, 2020



Sisterhood



#Metoo

The fight for a level playing field

By **Rina Mukherji**

Ekla Chalo re—the theme of the present NWMI Meet, just about sums up the gist of my fight against Sexual Harassment at the Workplace (SHW).

It is two decades since I stepped out and complained of sexual harassment at my workplace. The year was 2002, around five years since the Supreme Court of India

a week prior to the enactment of the Sexual Harassment at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act/POSH Act, after a decade-long fight in the Courts. I also won against an appeal filed questioning the judgement in the Calcutta High Court. This was followed in 2018 by winning a defamation suit filed by my molester in the Patiala House Courts in Delhi.

ever since women stepped out into the professional sphere. I remember an '80s film- "9 to 5" which young women like me, completely identified with. SHW, the film told us, was not just about lecherous men propositioning or groping you, bestowing unwanted attention, or physically touching you in the wrong places; it could include setting afloat rumours to damage your reputation in the office. This, as many women



had issued the Vishaka Guidelines to be followed by workplaces in the country. Sexual harassment had been clearly defined, and yet, ignorance reigned, and continues to reign, supreme. I won at the Industrial Tribunal in 2013, exactly

But as a survivor of SHW, I can vouch that the journey has been anything but easy.

Harassment of working women has always been a contentious problem, all over the world,

will tell you, is something that is difficult to fight.

Awareness on SHW was in the process of building up in the '90s, and the Vishaka Guidelines were issued amidst the heat generated

in the US following the Anita Hill case. Sadly, while the West has progressed since then, we continue to lag behind.

#MeToo in India

Of course, sexual harassment is no longer dubbed as “eve teasing” today. The authorities have learnt to recognize it for the real danger that it is. Yet, socially, there is little empathy for a complainant. Social attitudes continue “victim-shaming” women who dare to complain, and harassers often garner sympathy, rather than disapproval from the vast majority.

The #MeToo movement is a manifestation of the same. Close on the heels of the accusations against Hollywood heavyweight Harvey Weinstein, which ultimately resulted in his arrest, we saw an Indian #MeToo movement kicked off in India. Many of the celebrities named were repeat offenders. And yet, journalist Priya Ramani had to fight and win a defamation suit slapped on her by M J Akbar in the Patiala House Courts to prove herself.

Honestly, I have always looked upon SHW as an extended form of discrimination faced by women, in agreement with Ex-Additional Solicitor General Indira Jaisingh’s opinion, who once said, “The problem is that of discrimination, and Sexual Harassment is part of that.” Sexual Harassment, is indeed, a ploy to show a woman her place, which ‘the younger generation is not willing to tolerate any more’ (to quote Ms Jaisingh)

Five Years On: where do we stand?

The #MeToo campaign managed to focus enough attention on the all-pervasive problem of sexual harassment at the workplace

and beyond. Today, many women refuse to shy away from complaining about their ordeals in public. Yet, the campaign fizzled out. The primary reasons were (as I see it):

1. The complainants used social media to air women’s grievances; rather than use the law -enforcement machinery. Many of the complaints lack an understanding of what SHW is. For instance, several women aired

the complaint made was found frivolous and malicious, with false evidence being furnished in connection with the complaint. This resulted in quashing the petition/s. In one of the cases a hefty fine was imposed, which however, was ultimately overruled by a Division Bench of the Delhi High Court. (<https://elearnposh.com/false-complaints/>)(<https://www.legalserviceindia.com/legal/article-4126-frivolous-complaints-under-the-sexual-harassment-act.html>)



-Priya Ramani (left) and lawyer Rebecca John.
Photo courtesy: NWMI Website-

grievances about consensual relationships with men (outside their professional lives) that had gone sour. These problems fall in the realm of domestic violence, and cannot be termed SHW.

2. Another deterrent to complaining is, punishment for a false complaint has been provided for in Section 14 read with Rules 9 and 10 of the POSH Act. Thus, whoever makes any false, frivolous, or vexatious complaint or provides false evidence under this Act, can be punished. There have been a few cases wherein

<https://www.ungender.in/false-sexual-harassment-complaint-what-does-posh-act-say/>)

Normally, when a complaint made is found to be frivolous or malicious, the Internal Committee in an organization or the Local Committee can recommend to the employer that the complainant be punished in keeping with the service rules, which may mean withholding of promotions, termination, and the like. Herein, it should be noted that the Act makes a distinction between an unsubstantiated

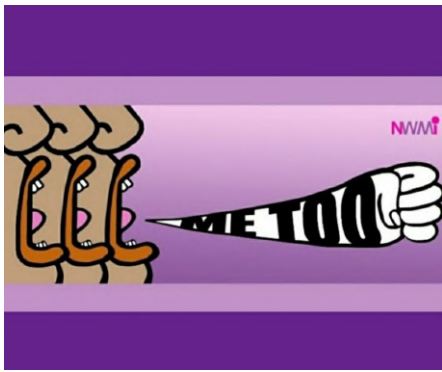


Illustration by Manjula Padmanabhan for NWMI

complaint, and a malicious one. An unsubstantiated complaint, the Act notes, cannot be necessarily considered a false one. To be termed false, a complaint needs to be proved “malafide”, and done with a “malicious intent” to settle scores.

However, as of now, this clause makes women extremely wary of taking on harassers. 3. In India, there are no class action suits and “settlements” ever. Notwithstanding the law, which makes it implicit upon the employer to help women make formal complaints, or lodge FIRs, organizations rarely do so. In such a scenario, women need to go it alone. Worse, it is next to impossible getting eyewitnesses from the workplace to testify to the harassment faced. Since an employer can easily coerce other employees in a department from testifying against the complainant, it is always a double whammy for complainants.

3. Even if a complaint is made, organizations back the accused. Defamation suits are slapped on the complainant to harass her. In my case, there were two defamation suits filed-civil and criminal, in two different cities-Delhi and Kolkata (that are thousands of kilometres apart). This can subject the complainant

to tremendous pressure-monetarily and otherwise, forcing her to withdraw.

4. Victim-shaming is common to our social set-up. Hence, families would rather never have a complaint investigated by the police.

5. Predators always pick on the vulnerable. Women who are monetarily weak, professionally not too well-placed, single mothers, youngsters new to the profession, are often singled out for harassment. For such women, fighting back is an uphill struggle best not embroiled in.

6. The mechanism for making complaints is complicated. Internal Committees in the organized sector generally function as an extended arm of the employer, and are rarely unbiased. This prevents complainants getting justice. In the case of the unorganized sector, the mechanism for making complaints to district-level Local Committees is just too tough.

7. In spite of court rulings, compensation rarely comes by. With courts delivering justice at a snail’s pace, a complainant has to wait 10-15 years for justice. It means the draining of time, money and resources which could be better utilized elsewhere. (An amendment made in 2019 to the POSH Act, has brought in a strict timeline as regards handling of complaints. But it is yet to be tested as regards its efficacy). Lawyers do not come cheap; and running between courts takes away the most productive years off one’s life. When the professional set-up is diffuse, or not too well-organized, as in a film studio, demanding justice is even more complicated, as was proved in the Tanushree Datta-Nana Patekar case. Most significantly,

a complainant is often viewed as a trouble-maker in the patriarchal set-up prevalent in India, and is looked upon askance in our society. This, more often than not, compels women to give up before embarking on the fight.

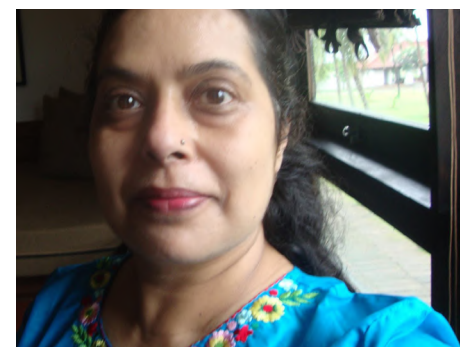
8. In spite of the existence of the Act, publicizing an incident of SHW can trigger a backlash, even if it be done for what could be interpreted as the public good, and have complainants slapped with a defamation suit.

Addressing SHW

The only way to deter harassers and compel organizations to clean up their act is by generating awareness among women regarding their rights as professionals. While the law definitely needs tweaking and implementation needs to be strengthened, solidarity among women can be a powerful tool to combat sexual harassment.

Details about my fight against SHW can be referred to on the NWMI website

* * *



Rina Mukherji has spent over three decades in journalism, and is the recipient of India’s first-ever Laadli Extraordinaire Award for fighting gender injustice.

UNFPA- The United Nations sexual and reproductive health agency

UNFPA is the United Nations sexual and reproductive health agency. Our mission is to deliver a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe and every young person's potential is fulfilled.

UNFPA Supports:

1. Reproductive health care for women and youth in more than 150 countries – which are home to more than 80 per cent of the world's population
 2. The health of pregnant women, especially the 1 million who face life-threatening complications each month
 3. Reliable access to modern contraceptives sufficient to benefit 20 million women a year
 4. Training of thousands of health workers to help ensure at least 90 per cent of all childbirths are supervised by skilled attendants
 5. Prevention of gender-based violence, which affects 1 in 3 women
 6. Abandonment of female genital mutilation, which harms 3 million girls annually
 7. Prevention of teen pregnancies, complications of which are the leading cause of death for girls 15-19 years old
 8. Efforts to end child marriage, which could affect an estimated 70 million girls over the next 5 years
 9. Delivery of safe birth supplies, dignity kits and other life-saving materials to survivors of conflict and natural disaster
 10. Censuses, data collection and analyses, which are essential for development planning
- UNFPA is formally named the United Nations Population Fund. The organization was created in 1969, the same year the United Nations General Assembly declared "parents have the exclusive right to determine freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children."

UNFPA calls for the realization of reproductive rights for all and supports access to a wide range of sexual and reproductive health services – includ-

ing voluntary family planning, maternal health care and comprehensive sexuality education.

Since UNFPA started its work, the world has seen progress: The number and rate of women dying from complications of pregnancy or childbirth has been halved. Families are healthier. Young people are more connected and empowered than ever before. But too many are still left behind. More than 760 million people are mired in extreme poverty. Sexual and reproductive health problems are a leading cause of death and disability for women in the developing world. Young people bear the highest risks of HIV infection and unintended pregnancy. Many millions of girls face the prospect of child marriage and other harmful practices, such as female genital mutilation (FGM).

Much more needs to be done to ensure a world in which all individuals can exercise their basic human rights, including those that relate to the most intimate and fundamental aspects of life.

In 2018, UNFPA launched efforts to achieve three transformative results, ambitions that promise to change the world for every man, woman and young person:

Ending unmet need for family planning

Family planning is central to women's empowerment and sustainable development. Today, more than 300 million women in developing countries are using contraception, but more than 214 million women who want to plan their births do not have

access to modern family planning. UNFPA works with governments and partners to promote universal access to quality, integrated sexual and reproductive health services. UNFPA also promotes comprehensive sexuality education and youth leadership, which empower young people to exercise autonomy, choice and participation with regard to their sexual and reproductive health and rights. Ending preventable maternal death Everyone has the right to health, including women and mothers. Since 1990, maternal mortality has declined by 44 per cent. Still, some 830 women and adolescent girls die each day from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth, and 99 per cent of these deaths occur in developing countries – more than half in fragile and humanitarian settings. UNFPA partners with governments and others to strengthen health systems, train health workers, educate midwives and improve access to the full range of reproductive health. Ending gender-based violence and harmful practices

As the struggle for gender equality continues, violence against women and girls remains a global pandemic. One in three women will experience physical or sexual violence in her lifetime. And approximately one in four girls in the developing world is married before age 18.

UNFPA works to prevent and respond to gender-based violence through its work with policymakers, justice systems, health systems and humanitarian partners. UNFPA also focuses on eliminating harmful practices, including FGM and child marriage, and helps to engage men and boys to advance gender equality.



Ensuring rights and choices for all since 1969



I said 'NO' to journalism that asked me not to question those in power!

By **Pragyaa Chandel**

It was a regular working day at my Lower Parel office in Mumbai. I had just stepped out of my studio after anchoring a regular news bulletin at noon, and as I entered the newsroom, I saw a few faces, including that of my producer giving me a baffling and exasperated look. I could immediately make sense of why that was the case.

I had just had a live discussion with one of the members from the then-incumbent Maharashtra Navnirman Sena party (MNS) on the precarious condition of Mumbai roads during monsoon rains. Even today, severe waterlogging is a common sight in several parts of the city during a heavy downpour in the monsoon season each year. Moreover, dug-up roads and potholes are one of the biggest pain points, especially for two-wheelers. Many ill-fated citizens have even lost their lives owing to the accidents caused by potholes in the city.

Since the spokesperson's response in the party's defense was not too convincing, I continued questioning her for some time as she blamed it on the previous government in power. The live feed had suddenly got disrupted and I was convinced it was not due to any technical reasons, but her refusal to take my questions. The same was conspicuous to my technical team present there, as well! I said as much in the programme, making no bones about the fact that the

disruption could be because she disconnected her telephone line in order to avoid giving the answers to my live questions. I quipped (to myself) – Ah! a business that thrives on schadenfreude, has politics merely become that business?

Later, my producer categorically warned me saying: "Pragyaa, you must never question anybody from Maharashtra Navnirman Sena. You don't know! They could even storm the studio and attack us all."

As journalists, we were taught to be fearless, stand against the corrupt, and hold those in power accountable. The incident was followed by a bitter altercation with my producer and kept me anxious for days. Some of my colleagues, too, experienced similar incidents in the organization. Finally, after a few months, I decided to quit the company, and stepped out pursuing my quest for deeper and more purposeful content creation.

Higher purpose

Inspired by my former Executive Editor (boss) at the same organization—who was forced to quit the corporate group for a not-too-distinct reason, I went on to cross international boundaries. Lo and behold—I am now a Ph.D. student researching "Online harassment of women journalists in India", a project funded by an international university in Ireland. I hereby begin my journey as a research scholar, with the aim to discover a new

epistemological interpretation of the psycho-emotional toll that online harassment takes on women journalists. While fearless journalists continue to surmount challenges seeking accountability from politicians, thereby giving an amplified voice to the citizens at large - the path is treacherous for many! I find solace and greater meaning in the work I am doing now.

* * *



Pragyaa Chandel is a former broadcast journalist from India, presently pursuing her full-time Ph.D. from Dublin City University (Ireland). She is researching 'Online harassment of women journalists in India'. She continues to write for EAWorldview.com and RTE Brainstorm as a researcher.

The journey of 'Hindi-language' journalism

Title: The Journey of Hindi Language Journalism in India: From Raj to Swaraj and Beyond

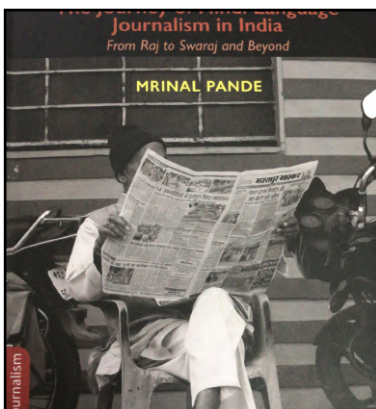
Author: Mrinal Pande

Publisher: Orient BlackSwan Pvt Ltd

Publication of the book: 2022

By **Sweta Singh**

I entered the book contemplating on the title and asking myself about the need for adding the word 'language' in the title of the book as 'Hindi journalism' would have sufficed. So I quickly turn the pages to find out how the author situated the idea of Hindi language and its contributions and connects with Journalism in India. But a more important reason to go through the book was to fill the void that I as a media academician have due to disconnect with the world of Hindi Journalism even as I grew up in Hindi heartlands of Bihar but was a product of English education that also added to the disconnect.



The book has three broad time-lines: the Raj—with a chapter that discusses the story of Hindi in the times of British Colonial Oppression and beings by emphasizing that 'In India-variously described as the cradle of civilisation and of many ancient re-

ligions and languages-print media history cannot be described only in terms of ownership, editorial teams or sales and marketing practices a many authors have attempted to talk about.

It is interesting to see how a work on Hindi language journalism begins by underscoring the importance of multi-linguality and contributions of polyglots (as discussed by A K Ramanujan, 1993) to Journalism in India and here she cites how the princely clans who patronised private printing in the Hindi belt were not only familiar with classical languages like Persian, Arabic, and Sanskrit but were also fed by the northern bolis (dialects) such as the Khadi Boli, Braj, Awadhi, Bhojpuri, Maithili, Punjabi and Rajasthani. There were 1,652 such languages in India (RGCI,1961) and at least 29 of these are spoken by over a million people (RGCI 2001) of which Hindi has the largest coverage including 11 northern states.

The story of Hindi in the Dev Nagri script being born as a formal language, the beginnings of Hindi print technology in India and how it stirred the change among Indian elite who had earlier shunned print highlight the difficulties that vernacular press faced in the initial years. The book is rich with historical references, one such

being on how the languages took the hierarchical course at different phases during British colonial rule and determined by the rulers of the times. Fort William College, where Hindi was formally born under Gilchrist (1759-1841), is a case in point. The author writes, "And the two languages, once considered inseparable, became increasingly distanced from each other as markers of two separate races in the north: The Hindus and Muslims—a fact that was heavily exploited by politically ambitious parties'. While this growth in Hindi language publications and learners thrust on separate Hindi texts fed latent regional hostilities and at the same time expanded the public sphere

The way languages traverse secular and aggressive nationalist sentiments of private printing in the first four decades of the twentieth century is described as a 'qualitative leap' in bold experimentation, new genres and host of politically conscious independent writers. And one's caste and social status together determined their use of Sanskritised or hybridized versions of Hindi, sustaining and maintaining various editorial hierarchies within the early twentieth century and the very first chapter touches on caste-specific hindi papers.

References to censorship to curb Gandhi's newspapers like Nav Jivan and other nationalist publications and his efforts together with Nehru to start a trust that brought out Hindi Nav Jivan, the English National Herald and the Urdu Qaumi Awaaz gives a glimpse into the importance vernacular languages for public and political realities of the times against the colonial rule—summed up in her citation of Urdu poet Akbar Allahabadi 'jab tope muquabil ho, akbhar nikalo' (When faced with a canon, launch a newspaper).

The Swaraj or post-Independence period has been termed as a period of the expansion of the public sphere in India which, unlike Europe, was neither uniform, nor equal. The politicization of Hindi as a marker of Hindu identity by the right wing, increasing fault-lines between Hindi and other vernacular languages, English remaining a link language are some of the characteristic developments discussed by the author. At this point, it appears that the author would also dwell upon the first two decades of independence as this period is also seen as an era of development Journalism where the press played an active role in connecting the public with the policies and governance issues. The documentation would have given a quick glimpse of how language press played an important role in consolidating or questioning the Nehruvian idea of India. As the detailing of the content impacting journalistic discourses of the different decades is not the focus of the book, the other major developments affecting or getting affected by the Hindi

language get discussed. Some of them included the newsprint policy of 1972 that mandated the number of pages in newspapers, preceded by rising cost of newsprint, which have been discussed as ways of controlling the press. The more disruptive decades of liberalisation, globalisation and privatisation, up until post-covid times fetches maximum attention in the book. Not many books have attempted to unpack how Hindi press was changing in these times so to that extent this book succeeds in highlighting the markers of change due to digital interventions and new market dynamics such as new ownership structures and the rise of media monopolies, the blurring of managerial and editorial departments, growth of political advertising and the rags to riches stories such as the one about Vijay Singh, the 'Hawker Se Haakim' (2018) man who took to innovative 'jugaad' marketing strategies for increasing the circulation of Hindi newspapers.

The book dedicates substantial space to how the Hindi newspaper business changed post 1990s and the role of readership surveys, the market as a huge influence in the tussle between Hindi and English, rise of satellite television, digitisation and lack of in-depth reporting and how Hindi wins the battle over English, to the extent that it is used as a piggy bank for lending circulation support to English newspapers. The author discusses the cause and effects of by the rise of mangages and denting of editorial wales, the growth of political advertising, changing business of Hindi newspapers and their success stories, the eruption of paid news, the un-

reported world of stringers and reporters. Of particular interest is how the 2014 elections became game changers with political advertising, embedded journalists and censorships as retaliation to critical coverage became usual. The brief section on Gender and women in the Hindi media left me wanting to read more as it touched upon the absence of women in critical designations in the newsrooms, as writers of 'serious' stories, on TV as experts and panelists, even in those related to women. Also the absence of Dalit and OBC writers in Hindi Media is a concern flagged in the book.

The later chapters 'What moved my newspaper, the new media ecology and post-covid media will be of particular interest to readers, especially students following Mrinal Pande's journalistic and literary writings. Also the style of writing is simple and anecdotal references of the author's own experiences about navigating the otherwise male corridors of Hindi newsrooms, lend layers of gender intersectionalities and at once give a very different perspective. A valuable addition to the documentation of Hindi language press in India, especially for English readers who often skip engaging on the subject as most of the writings are in Hindi.

* * *



Professor at the University School of Mass Communication, Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University, New Delhi, and former television journalist.

My Lockdown Diary with Migrants

- By C Vanaja

This article was first published on nwmindia.org on Jan24, 2021



On the second day of the lockdown imposed nationwide by the central government in March 2020 to contain the spread of Covid-19, a friend tagged me on Facebook seeking help for a group of migrant workers on agricultural farms near my hometown, Kothagudem, in Telangana state.

I started making calls to anyone I thought could help and by night, I was part of a civil society group created that day to help stranded migrant workers in any possible way.

As helping them to get to their homes in towns and villages in different parts of the country was very difficult due to the ban on movement, we started support-

ing them with food in the form of dry rations. These workers, paid on a weekly basis, were left high and dry as there was no work and hence no pay. With no savings or security, they were in dire straits. As there was no other transportation, many began walking, desperate to get home. The first few days were chaotic as requests for help came in from everywhere and we were just about a dozen people starting out with zero resources. Each one of us in the group started raising funds from family and friends. By the end of the first week we had set up a helpline to receive requests and the number of volunteers increased to a hundred, channelising the requests to service providers and helping in any way they could.

Behind The Blue Sheets

Having a media accreditation card and a car with a Press sticker allowed me to drive to places further away to reach provisions to stranded people. My car soon smelt like a grocery store! Every day a friend and I would load the car with two weeks ration for 25 families and deliver it to needy people across the city. If the groups were bigger, the rations were sent in trucks.

The experience was an eye-opener for many of us, even for me, a journalist who has seen more than most about the inequalities in our country. We realised who is really building this nation and how the nation has dumped these, its true builders. The central govern-

ment clearly didn't care about the consequences of its actions in hastily imposing a lockdown without providing relief for the loss of jobs, and the states were engaged in guest vs host state politics and shifting the responsibility onto each other instead of helping out. We learned how and why workers from tribal states were employed in farming and construction work and were exploited. We learned for the first time how each sector engages people from a particular state: those from Chhattisgarh are engaged in construction, from Uttar Pradesh in wall paints, from Rajasthan in carpentry, Orissa in brick kilns, West Bengal in maggam (embroidery) work, and so on. Every sector had a story. It is the people behind the blue plastic sheets of their makeshift shelters who suffered the most.

The construction workers were mainly from tribal states such as Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand. As construction work had stopped even before the lockdown was imposed, they were due two or three weeks' salary by the time of the lockdown. But no one asked for help. It is we who would go behind

every blue plastic curtain on the road and ask if they were in need. They wouldn't actively seek help because these communities have no experience of outside help including from the State. They wait without complaining and leave home at the first opportunity they get. The journalist in me was interested in these stories but writing wasn't a priority then.

Let's Go Home

The major twist came when the lockdown was partially lifted. Most of the workers were desperate to go home. They had seen how people who died in the pandemic were treated, how even families couldn't see them one last time. They just wanted to go home and die peacefully if they had to. But there was no transportation yet. Only goods trucks were allowed to ply on the highways. So they must either walk or get a place on a truck.

One of the groups of temporary migrant workers I was supporting from the beginning wanted to go home too. They faced immense difficulties because their docu-

ments such as Aadhar card and ration card were from their home states. There was a new-born baby among them, whose birth during the pandemic showed me how difficult it is for temporary migrant workers' families to access pre-natal, birthing and neo-natal care and nutrition for children under various government schemes. Since I was unable to provide them safe transportation with proper police permissions, I took the seven-day-old baby and some other children in my car and accompanied them while they were walking 30 km to a highway junction on the outskirts of Hyderabad to get into empty goods trucks returning after their delivery.

I couldn't believe what I was seeing on the way. There were hundreds of migrant workers walking to their homes in the scorching heat of May without access to water or food. Good Samaritan water points were not installed due to pandemic restrictions. I realised we were needed more here on the highway, and I posted this in the civil society group I was part of and announced that I would be in Medchal from the next day onwards.



A migrant family

Food Festival On The Highway

The next day half-a-dozen volunteers were on the highway with car loads of bread, bananas, water, etc. But the supplies vanished within minutes as thousands of people were converging here either to get into a truck or walk the hundreds of kilometres to reach their homes.

On the second day we contacted friends in the administration to

provide tents and organise water and food for the retuning workers. Many good Samaritans working alone on the highway joined us and the tents soon came to be known as the Medchal Food Camps. When requests were put up on social media for food, the food started flooding in. By the third day we were feeding some 20,000 people a day and also handing them dry foods such as bread, fruits and water sufficient to last till they reached home. It was like a food festival with at least 15-20 varieties of food and drink coming from all corners. The Ramzan season had started and the non-profit Zakath Foundation in Hyderabad, hearing of our initiative, flooded our camp with fruits and drinks. A community kitchen was set up to augment the food coming to the camp. Two tents became ten tents, a medical camp was set up and the state Women and Child Development department set up a station at the camp to attend to the needs of children and pregnant women.

One very heartening thing I noticed at the camp was that the people who brought food or volunteered did not do it as if it was

charity, but as if it was their duty to share what they had. Everyone used to think what is best for the workers, not what they could give. One person used to soak 100 kilos of Kabuli chana overnight and bring it along with top class jaggery as he was convinced it was necessary nourishment for travellers. That was his zakath (charitable) contribution. People would bring in hundreds of boiled eggs, some would stand for 10-15 hours serving food. One woman, a retired bank employee, would come by nine in the morning and leave at nine at night after continuously serving food. Some cooked tasty dishes every day, others brought chappals, or chocolates for the children. It was like an ongoing family function. The camp served food 24/7 for three weeks.

Send Them With Safety And Dignity

Once there was sufficient help at the camp, we started organising travel for the workers. We negotiated directly with truck companies in the beginning but later hired buses for the workers with women and children. We met

many families and youths who had walked or hitch-hiked from Chennai and Bangalore and were headed for Chhattisgarh, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh. It was heartbreaking to meet workers and families who had walked for hundreds of kilometres yet would not sit and rest because they were afraid their muscles would seize up. We made sure they did not walk further.

To cut a long story short, the Food Camp fed or provided food for around 2.5 lakh workers for three weeks and organised 150 buses and many more trucks to transport them. All this was done without involving a single organisation or flaunting any banners advertising our work. The only two small banners we put up at the camp said: 'Food and water is everybody's right', and 'Send them home with safety and dignity'.

After we had set up the camp at Medchal, not a single worker went past it suffering from thirst and hunger in those three weeks.

We wound up the camp when the flow of workers had reduced from 20,000 a day to 200.



C. Vanaja is an NWMI member and an independent journalist and filmmaker

Pandemic through a Journo's Lens



As the government announced a nationwide lock down for 21 days, working people from other districts were seen rushing to their native places at Chennai central railway station on March 20, 2020.



Hundreds of people who couldn't return to their native places took shelter alongside of the Poonamalle Highway. An elderly person was seen laying on the tar road in the summer of June 21, 2020, at Pachaiyappa College stop, Chennai.



People sitting in the divider maintaining social distance at a road in Chennai.





People praying in front of a church on Good Friday as all the religious places were closed due to a partial lock down on April 2020, Chennai.



Migrant workers pose with the food package received from an NGO on March 30, 2020. As they couldn't return to their native places, many camps were set in the city.



People who broke the lock down protocol being punished by police during the lock down in Chennai on March 2020.

Irony! Children from the slum of Thousand Lights were seen covering their nasal area with their clothes as they were not provided enough masks and sanitizers in the COVID awareness program.



During the initial stage of covid, people who attended Tablighi Jamaat meet were tested for infection. A family from Royapettah waits to take the COVID test in the Government hospital, Chennai on April 9, 2020.



Since the lockdown was announced suddenly and railways were shut people from other states couldn't return to their native or to their respective workplaces and were made to wait at a railway station. After a night and a day, a camp was set up for migrant workers.





A mother covers her infant baby with her saree as she waits for the train to return to her native place at Egmore railway station on May 2020. All the migrant workers were stuck in Chennai as transportation was shut down for 21 days.

Akhila Easwaran was awarded the fifth NWMI Fellowship (2021). She is a nautical engineer who hails from Theni, Tamil Nadu. She switched gears to pursue journalism. Following a formal education in photojournalism, she worked with some of the major newspapers. Despite the pandemic-era job crunch as media houses opted for rampant downsizing, she has persisted with her dream of becoming a documentary photojournalist.



Akhila Easwaran, Photojournalist

Nagaland mediascape reviving after COVID19-fall

By **Aheli Moitra**

In mid-2019, I left the newspaper called The Morung Express in Nagaland to work on a research project focusing on the news media in Nagaland. The COVID-19 pandemic began soon after.

Small newspapers in Nagaland like the Nagaland Page and The Morung Express (English) or Tir Yimyim (Ao) and Capi (Angami) faced tremendous losses as government advertisements fell short, as did circulation. It became

shut down their printing presses; there were no physical copies from March 27 till May 5, 2020. Distributors and hawkers completely lost employment; when they were able to come back to work, the lockdowns and fallen circulation kept them in a continuing crisis. Similarly, employees from the neighbouring state of Assam had to move into makeshift houses or with their relatives in Nagaland if they were to continue working.

Keeping up the fight

In spite of the hardships, a part of the team of The Morung Express continued to work to bring out reliable news to the readers in the form of PDF copies of a much shortened newspaper, which looked more like a local newsletter. The newspaper cut down the number of pages from 12 to four at the peak of the crisis, which was later increased to eight. This policy has continued as the newspaper continues to operate with a lean staff that it had just before the pandemic. Although no one was let go of, no new staff member was hired either.



The global outbreak of coronavirus disease hit the news industry in Nagaland by March 2020. The Indian Union implemented total lockdowns; local restrictions and general fear made it difficult for journalists and newspaper institutions to continue work as usual. Newsprint could not be transported, leading to massive shortages. Newspaper distribution became just as difficult for some of the same reasons.

tough to keep up the machinery, pay bills and retain staff, among other difficulties. The Government of Nagaland kept up with its habit of delaying payments for the advertisements published in newspapers, if the advertisements were not entirely restricted to big newspapers, that is. This made the revenue crisis for the small newspapers worse with nothing much to depend on. Newspapers like The Morung Express had to

The newspaper also provided a new online mode of subscription through which it sent out PDF copies of the entire newspaper to subscribers either through email or WhatsApp. To get the content published, some workers worked from home while those with no computers at home walked to the office to put together news and pages. The news industry

in Nagaland, unlike many other places in India, is well acquainted with curfews, militarisation of civil spaces, lack of advertising revenue, electricity deficits, lack of transport and newsprint subsidies. Therefore, it adapted itself quickly to the harsh measures at workplaces and outside that were put in force due to the pandemic. The crisis carried on throughout the past couple of years, and the Nagaland mediascape is slowly reviving now, even as a new development has emerged. Broadcast news channels that were starting up right before the pandemic, became highly popular during the pandemic when newspaper circulations dropped as people feared that the papers could be carriers of the virus.

Green shoots of revival

They hired several anchors and reporters, trained them in the broadcast medium, set up studios, and began to release their news through local cable networks as well as YouTube. Some news channels to appear on these mediums include Nagaland TV (NLTV), Hornbill TV, North East 8 (NE8), and several other small ones on the digital medium, like YouTube, which has also seen a proliferation of reaction to news and views-related talk shows. A lot of the programming on these channels are in mixed languages with prime time shows in both English and Nagamese that serve as common languages in Nagaland. Their programs also include interviews, ground reports, daily news roundups, breaking news, etc. With free access to such shows at any time of the day or night on digital media platforms, many people prefer to listen in on, and watch, these shows at their

convenience and based on their interests.

Social media platforms have also spread their wings, carrying and curating news. In Nagaland, as everywhere else, there's now a vast array of such portals. Disinformation and misinformation are often a staple feature of these sites. A positive outcome of this has been a renewed interest, and trust, on the printed newspapers. Inadvertently, newspaper editors in Nagaland said, the COVID-19 pandemic, contrary to predictions of a failing newspaper industry, has led to increased newspaper credibility as readers waited for newspapers to find confirmed information that helped people make decisions during times of crises. This has helped the newspaper industry claw back to stability after the crises created by the pandemic. However, newspapers continue to be under pressure and have had to jump onto the digital bandwagon. The largest selling newspaper in Nagaland, called the Nagaland Post, has started the channel called NE8. The Morung Express has started a YouTube channel which presents features on events it deems important or public events it conducts on its own, like the Morung Lectures. It has also created competitive programs like 'Sing for Unity' whose results are carried on its channel. Before the digital media boom, participation in such public events was far larger than its current state - with digital access made easier. Also with Zoom and the like, fewer people prefer to make the effort to attend a public event.

Whichever way it goes, the mediascape in Nagaland is changing, adapting, proliferating. It

continues to grow as it has over the past half century, and continues to be 'homegrown', as expressed by Dr. Aküm Longchari, Editor of The Morung Express, to a group of students visiting the newspaper's office recently. They were students of the Bachelor's degree in Mass Communication at the Patkai Christian College in Nagaland, alongside their peers in similar courses in Mass Communication from various institutions of higher education in the state.

This is a new development too—in the years preceding this, journalists who entered the newsroom in Nagaland were trained in institutions far away, like the Asian College of Journalism in Chennai. They had to be retrained at the local newsrooms in Nagaland. Today, young people can study media, journalism and communication in a way that enables them to be locally grounded in their practice, but with a global outlook.

Exciting new experiments await Nagaland's newsrooms as well as the new crop of communication professionals set to enter them.

* * *



Aheli Moitra is a PhD research fellow at UiT, The Arctic University of Norway.

Zakia Khatib, a leading light

By **Jyoti Punwani**

Zakia Khatib was sent off to a boarding school when she was only 10. The year was 1940.

The key to Zakia's independence of spirit perhaps lies in this one event of her life even though for a ten-year-old, it was a sad development. When I interviewed her, Zakia was 83. She still remembered sitting at Pune station and crying with a few other girls from Bhiwandi, the powerloom township on the outskirts of Mumbai, the day she left home. All of them were headed to Pune's Anglo-Urdu High School.

Ten was a tender age, but Zakia's father was determined not to let her follow her elder sister, who had to drop out of school after class IV because there were no secondary schools for girls in Bhiwandi at that time.

Zakia aced her school. She went on to become a topper, earning a freeship to Mumbai's prestigious Elphinstone College. But her father, who had cared two hoots for society when sending his 10-year-old daughter to a different city, now turned cautious. Heeding the advice of a family friend, a professor, he sent her instead to Sophia College for Women, Mumbai.

Even at 83, Zakia felt a twinge of regret at having missed out on being an Elphinstonian. But she says, the four years spent in the

Sophia College hostel changed her life. "The English lifestyle there, the tablecloth that was changed every day, the waiters replacing our plates without a word, the four course meals," she recalled her child-like wonder at her new surroundings. "In those four years, I don't think I exchanged a word with the waiter Purshottam."

This "stamp of class" she wanted to impart to her community too. After her MA from Bombay University (during which she stayed at the Government Hostel), she was invited to head the girls' section of a Bhiwandi school, and also to teach the boys. She remembered the culture shock.

"The Sophia experience fresh in my mind, I was all set to pass it on to these children. But in the very first class, one boy raised his finger to ask permission to use the toilet. Soon after, another boy asked permission to spit the paan in his mouth. I just sat there, dumbstruck."

Zakia loved teaching young minds, but only classroom teaching wasn't enough for her. She wanted to get Muslim women out of their homes, equipped with the ability to stand on their own feet. In 1955, at the age of 25, she started Bazm-e-Niswan, an organisation for women and children, so that mothers didn't have to leave their kids behind when they came there. Women were imparted with various skills at the same time that their children were given basic

education. "I knew Muslim women would not be able to step out without their husband's permission. So I appointed female teachers in Bazm (so that men did not raise objections to their wives going to the training centre)."

Her zeal for educating her community made her open nursery schools in the villages of Bhiwandi and Konkan, where the concept of such schools was unheard of. "We had to walk through tall grass to reach those villages," recalled Zakia. She also wrote a trilingual nursery primer for them, 'Pahla Kadam', in Urdu, English and Marathi.

Zakia co-founded the Women's India Trust (WIT) along with Kamila Tyabji in 1968. Kamila came up with the idea of getting poor women to stitch sari petticoats, an item of dress which would never go out of demand. Zakia recalled going to Thane, then a small town near Mumbai, where women would be washing clothes near the lake. She and Kamila would call the women and give them materials to stitch petticoats with. Experienced tailors cut the cloth according to patterns and size; the women sewed the parts together and got paid for this.

When Zakia got married, her husband, Dr Zameeruddin, laid down two conditions for his "MA-pass" bride. One, she would not take up a job, because that would mean neglect of their children. "He wanted me to be home when the children came from school."

Second, she would not cook, because that would take her away from the things she loved to do.

Zakia's four children recall their childhood as a mixture of strictness and adventure. As she gave one a bath, the others would stand outside the bathroom reciting their math tables.

Unlike their classmates, they never had to take tuitions - their mother helped with their homework.

When they came home, their pencils were sharpened, their snacks ready, and they were in bed by 9.30pm.

Zakia had grown up in a middle-class family - her father, a transporter, had to sell off his vehicles after State Transport buses started running. Her children too were brought up in the same way - new clothes were rationed out. At the same time, they found their mother's social activities becoming part of their growing up.

Bazm-e-Niswan ran from their father's clinic for 20 years, and their mother took them along to all Bazm functions. They remember a cupboard full of WIT petticoats, and guests being coaxed to buy one every time they came.

Relatives and family friends were asked to give their zakat (annual donation that is compulsory for Muslims) for Bazm activities. Even school vacations spent in their Konkan village became part of Zakia's educational activities. She would gather the village children and conduct quizzes and elocution competitions for them, and give out prizes.

Luckily for Zakia, her husband

had similar interests. "Neither of us were fond of movies. We only wanted to do social work."

For Zakia, whatever good she encountered, had to be passed on to her community. Impressed by the quality of teaching in her children's convent school, she persuaded the nuns there to take two Muslim girls in their nursery teacher training college every year. At first the nuns accepted, but after a few years they refused, saying the girls didn't match the standard of the others. So Zakia, by then on the board of the Anjuman-e-Islam institution that runs schools and colleges across Mumbai, convinced the Anjuman to set up a nursery teachers' training college.

"We took in everyone, especially those Muslim girls who didn't get admission in any other D. Ed college. Some of them didn't even have money to buy uniforms. We managed to get donors for them. I would go to my children's school to observe their teaching methods, and then teach these in our college." Today, Anjuman's D. Ed college is a sought-after institute.

What does she feel about the new generation of Muslim women? "We don't have to convince parents to get daughters educated today," said Zakia, "but they lack the spirit of working without expecting anything in return. That's the spirit with which we ran Bazm." Her motto to all Bazm volunteers was: "Do not take even a safety pin for yourself."

When she received a Rs 25,000 award from Bhiwandi College, she raised another Rs 75,000 from her family, added that to the award money and donated Rs 1 lakh to

the same college, asking them to use the amount to fund the education of a needy Muslim girl. She also returned the Dukhtarane-Thana award to the donors, keeping only the plaque with her name on it.

No wonder, when she fell seriously ill in 2012, the community prayed for her.

But Zakia's story isn't only about her own community. Two of her closest friends, from her Sophia days, were non-Muslims - Shashi Pandey and Pervez Bikaji. The first would call her up every day till she passed away. Bikaji was a photographer, and thanks to her, Zakia's family has what many Muslims do not - old photographs of her youth and her marriage.

Zakia was one of three to be honoured by Sophia College on the institution's 60th anniversary in 2000.

Zakia passed away in 2016. She was proud of her children, three of whom are doctors, while one is a social worker from Tata Institute of Social Sciences. On their part, the children have far too many reasons to be proud of their mother, Zakia, as does the community she relentlessly served, and everyone whose lives she touched.

* * *

Jyoti Punwani is a senior freelance journalist from Mumbai who writes on minority and human rights issues.

The Changing Face of Women In Indian Cinema

By **Manjira Majumdar**

Let us start with a man who was born 101 years ago. His name is Satyajit Ray who put Indian Art Cinema on the world map. His stories looked at gender, middle-class values and the changing times he lived in. Parallel to this, we have had the more popular cinema from all corners of the country, especially Bombay, which stuck to a stereotypical representation of the hero, heroine and villain.

Cut to the present though we need also to go back by a decade or so to make some sort of an assessment, because technology is not only changing the way we consume mass media, but also that technology is changing very quickly today. Luckily content still matters, so well-told women's stories are needed more than ever.

If we view the macro picture, the rush of blockbuster films, whether from the south or north of India, have been rather on-your-face angry masculine image. So where do we fit in the stories of empowerment of women in Indian cinema? For this, we have to categorize once again. Regional cinema has long since looked into this issue, even if the numbers do not add up. But to generalize, there has been a slight shift in the way women in Indian films is depicted; she no longer vacillates between the mother

image and the sati Savitri image, with the vamp, with loose morals - drinking, smoking, sporting bobbed hair (never mind that Indira Gandhi too had short hair) squeezed in-between.

There are shades of grey, at last.

To talk of the empowered woman, we have to talk of economic independence. If Ray was one of the first who captured the economic compulsion of a lower middle class woman to venture outside the comfort zone of her home to earn a living in Mahanagar, the mainstreaming of prostitution in Seemabadha, Pratiwandi, Ashani Shanket and Jana Aranya are a spin-off from the role of earning and in staving

prostitution of power but to the woman it can be anything ranging from her health, security, lack of respect. These have hardly been touched upon in films except to depict them as characters in the films. In mainstream films, this has been even rarer. In Chameli by Sudhir Mishra and Kalpana's Lajmi's Rudaali, based on the short story of Mahesweta Devi, we do catch a glimpse of a woman in her own right.

Otherwise the working woman and thereby independent and empowered is an exotic species in Indian films.

The art-house films in Hindi tend to depict women as someone in need of empowerment but

not exactly empowered. In the mainstream, a shift started slowly. Kangana Ranaut's Queen was about the character who set herself free from marriage all by herself, but it was not until Swara Bhaskar's Anarkali of Ara that a woman of substance was really noticed. We started catching a glimpse of a small-town Hindi-speaking woman who takes the bull by its horns and the world by its chin.

So we had a Tanu in Tanu weds Manu - two parts - or a film like Mardaani, Khaani, Mary Kom down to Thappad, whereby the slap is symbolic of the oppression and humiliation.



In Mahanagar, the husband discovers a lipstick inside the purse of his wife and is rattled within. It is a symbol of liberation in a home and the world scenario. The outside world is a kind of liberation for the woman just the way Alankrita's Srivastava's Lipstick under the Burkha portrays.

In Anarkali of Ara, we are suddenly taken on a different narrative. This is the story of a marginalized gender in a marginalized art form; the dancing and singing girls of the countryside who are part of larger troupes which entertain with their bawdy songs and bold dances. Often abused by men in power (read with entitlements), these women were mere objects of their lust. In the film, a robust performer, commonly known as Anarkali, has the guts and gumption to say a bold no to the advances of a police chief. She has to go into hiding and her subsequent revenge; a bit melodramatic - nonetheless it does convey a very powerful message that not only does an urban working woman have the right to say NO, even a woman who may offer her services for money, has that right.

The arthouse Malayalam films too project the toxic and subtle masculinity in several of the films emerging from Kerala to provide a statement against these. The Great Indian Kitchen takes on slavery of the kitchen head-on.

~ a still from the film Chameli.

But the Catch-22 scenario that women still face needs to be discussed and detailed in mass media, of which films is an

important genre. It starts with a report, a news item and then a story gets unfolded on celluloid. If the women go out to work they are looked upon suspiciously and yet life is a grind with abusive men



~a still from the film Chameli a still from the film Chameli~

out of jobs.

Sometimes there is not enough money to put the basic food on the table, leave alone luxuries. The women in jobs have to navigate their lives through insolent male subordinates, male sexual predators at work and irregular work hours for which there are few facilities in places.

The good news is that with films like Pink, the wheel is turning. Perhaps slowly, but intelligent audiences are now ready for the gritty and not just pretty tales.

The bad news is what chances do women empowerment films have against mass appeal and box office collections as compared to RRR, Bahubali etc?

This is not a detailed analysis but

Mahanagar still has a high recall value among middle class film lovers, when it comes to women empowerment, just as Queen resonated with the middle and upper classes, women of all age groups.

With more women directors (and men, too) we anticipate more gender sensitive portrayals of women in cinema because even if the subject is not gender specific, the women at least need to be depicted realistically. We need more ekla chalo disruptors in cinema as well.

* * *



After practising literature in a hurry, which is journalism, Manjira Majumdar, is keen to write more fiction. A writer of children's fiction, she has recently edited an anthology of short stories, NO RETURN ADDRESS (Vitasta), which looks at displacement, alienation and belonging. She teaches print journalism when not engaging in media advocacy.

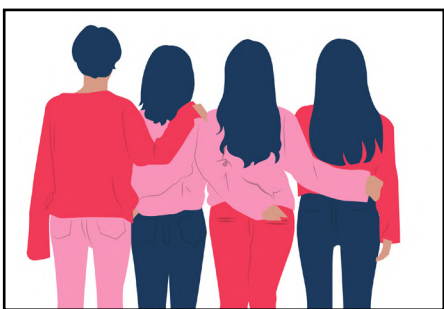
Single in Ahmedabad? This is how you rock it!

By **Malti Mehta**

At times, it is good to be in company and sometimes, it is better to be alone.

I believe in both maxims. And believe me, there are a number of reasons to remain single and yet be happy in a city like Ahmedabad. Yes, it has a large number of women who are single - following the legacy of such women in the past, who not only survived well but left footprints for others as inspiration to follow willingly.

Women remain single by choice, or by compulsion. Societal pressures exist but they do live happily, with their head held high in this city with a traditional 'heart' and modern "look".



list here some proven ways of surviving well for a single woman in Ahmedabad.

1. Being alone is not the same as being lonely. Being alone can be a lot of fun. Explore the soul and in solitude, express your love for yourself, your anger at the world outside, and your wishes and disappointments, too.

2. If you don't like cooking, help is always around the corner in the form of takeaways and multi-cuisine restaurants within modest budgets. You need not waste time cooking, cleaning or shopping for groceries: keep your alone time for more productive, or fun things.

3. Don't be a couch potato. Go out. Explore! Gujarat is considered a safe state in the country for girls- perhaps due to prohibition- so go ahead and enjoy your tea, coffee, gola, ganne-ke-juice and the all-time favourite, ice cream.

4. However, since it is better to be safe than sorry, be a bit tactful in places. Use your multiple personas to protect you. For example, if you stay alone in an orthodox neighbourhood, there's no harm in behaving like a 'desi' in the initial days to "build a good image" of yourself. But mind you, in your chosen professional field, in your workplace, just be who you are- the mona. Sometimes, we need to do this balancing act for our own safety, in a traditional Gujarati environment.

5. They say that 21st century will belong to women. There's a lot for us to do in this century. Be economically secure, emotionally independent and build capacity with required skills to be successful. That will result in dignified social existence.

6. Ahmedabad has lots to offer and you can access various facilities within the budget by planning your time and money well.

Go out and explore. Enjoy a meal by yourself in one of those fancy restaurants. Visit bookshops. Watch a movie. Shop!

7. You need to drive at least a two-wheeler to reach anywhere, even to the fun spots like the malls, where you can check out the latest fashion trends.

8. Engage in community work - the city has several NGOs.

9. Stay in touch with relatives and friends. It is always nice to have a support system to fall back on in times of need.

Enjoy your singlehood in Aapnu Amdavad



Malti Mehta is a documentary filmmaker, and educationist. She is the head, Centre for Development Communication, Gujarat University (2000-2010). She teaches Media, Film Production at various institutes.

प्राक्कथन

'एकला चलो रे' हम सब की साझा पुकार



पारुल शर्मा,
वरिष्ठ पत्रकार

साथ साथ आप के भीतर राजनीतिक दबाव में बने की ऊर्जा, अपने विश्वासों रहने की कोशिश कर रहे के लिए खड़े होने और सही हैं। मौजूदा माहौल में सत्ता कारण के लिए लड़ने के बारे के प्रभाव का असर हर में है यह पंक्तियाँ ऊर्जा व क्षेत्र पर दिखाई देता है। प्रेरणा का काम करती हैं, लेकिन पत्रकारों और अन्य मले ही आप अकेले हों। मीडियाकर्मियों की बढ़ती संख्या मीडिया घरानों के

व्यक्तिगत पत्रकारों और छोटे छोटे न्यूज रूम में – 'एकला चलो रे' के कई उदाहरण हैं। स्वतंत्र पत्रकार प्रतिरोध के स्वरों को बुलंद करके सभी बाधाओं के बावजूद, लोकतंत्र के विचार के अक्षुण्ण बनाए रखने का प्रयास कर रहे हैं।

यदि वे आपकी पुकार का जवाब नहीं देते हैं तो अकेले चलें / यदि वे डरे हुए हैं और चुचाप दीवार की ओर मुँह करके खड़े हैं तो वे बदकिस्मत हैं अपना दिमाग खोलें और अकेले ही चलें / बोलें। रविन्द्रनाथ टैगोर ने इसे 1905 में बंगाली और अंग्रेजी दोनों भाषाओं में लिखा था।

इस साल हम भारतीय स्वतंत्रता के 75 वर्ष मना रहे हैं। 'एकला चलो रे' एक विरोध गीत था – स्वदेशी आन्दोलन के दौरान लिखे गये 22 गीतों में से एक। वह बंगाल प्रेसीडेसी विभाजन विरोधी आन्दोलन के प्रमुख गीतों में भी एक था। प्रतिरोध की भावना के

जबकि बड़े मीडिया व्यवसाय दबाव में अब नहीं आना



चाहती। पत्रकार बिरादरी ने अपनी जमीन तलाशी है। ऐसा करने के लिए अपनी खबर को स्वतंत्र रूप से दर्शकों और पाठकों तक पहुँचाने के लिए नई तकनीक का सहारा भी ले रही है। एनडब्ल्यूएमआई की हमारी महिला सदस्य भी एकला चलो की नीति पर चल रही हैं। खबरों को अपनी तरह से निडर होकर सब तक पहुँचा रही हैं। पत्रकारों की बढ़ती संख्या अकेले इसे यूट्यूब चैनल, दूर दराज के इलाकों में छोटे छोटे

अखबार निकाल कर, स्पॉटिफ हैं कि आप अपने तरीके से फिक्शन और कविताएं (एक या सबस्टैक जैसे कई माध्यम इसकी व्याख्या करें और शक्तिशाली कविता तलवार से पत्रकारिता में नाम कमा उन मुद्दों के बारे में लिखें से अधिक शक्तिशाली रही हैं। सूची अंतहीन है। जो हमसे, पत्रकारों और है, यह बिल्कुल सच है)। अन्य मीडिया पेशेवरों से

बेशक लीक से हट कर किसी सम्बन्धित हैं। चूंकि स्मारिका साथियो आप आगे बढ़ती भी काम की अपनी चुनौतियाँ हमारा निजी (इन-हाउस) गई दूसरे भी इसमें शामिल हैं। लेकिन समाचार प्रवाह प्रकाशन है, जिसका हमें होते गए। उन चीजों के बारे में सोचा जो आप हमेशा के स्वतंत्रीकरण को सराहना अपनी बिरादरी की दिग्गज, कहना चाहती थीं, लेकिन भी मिली है। निश्चित रूप कर्मठ, जुझारु पत्रकारों सुनने वाला कोई नहीं था। से इसे समाज स्वीकार रहा के कामों को एक दूसरे उस समय आपने अपना रास्ता चुना। अपना चैनल, अपना वीडियो, प्रकाशन, सामुदायिक, रेडियो प्रसारण करना शुरू किया। बस उस की कहानी और अनुभव कई साथियों ने यहा भेजे।



है। इसलिए हमने इस साल तक पहुँचाना है। इसलिए पटना की सालाना बैठक लेखों का एक मकसद के मौके पर निकलने वाली हमारे लिए हमारे द्वारा भी स्मारिका में 'एकला चलो है। लेख किसी भी प्रारूप रे' की भावना का जश्न में हो सकते थे साक्षात्कार, मनाने का फैसला किया है। निबन्ध, व्यक्तिगत निबन्ध, फोटो (लेकिन निश्चित रूप से) ग्राफिक्स, कार्टून, व्यंग्य और यहाँ तक कि पलैश

'एकला चलो रे व्यापक विषय है। हम आपका स्वागत करते

साथियो आप आगे बढ़ती गई दूसरे भी इसमें शामिल होते गए। उन चीजों के बारे में सोचा जो आप हमेशा कहना चाहती थीं, लेकिन सुनने वाला कोई नहीं था। उस समय आपने अपना रास्ता चुना। अपना चैनल, अपना वीडियो, प्रकाशन, सामुदायिक, रेडियो प्रसारण करना शुरू किया। बस उस की कहानी और अनुभव कई साथियों ने यहा भेजे। साक्षी जोशी, किरण शाहीन, विधुलता, प्रिया और विनीता यादव ने हमारा निमंत्रण स्वीकार किया और अपने जीवन संघर्ष, सफलता और अपनी एकला चलो रे की स्वीकारिता को लेख के रूप में साझा किया। पत्रकारिता की दुनिया में महिला होने के अपने मायनों को बताया है। जो हम सब के लिए प्रेरणादायक भी हैं। इन सभी का हार्दिक धन्यवाद करते हुए यह लेख हम यहाँ छाप रहे हैं।

सादर

अपने उसूलों से समझौतों की जरूरत नहीं : साक्षी जोशी



साक्षी जोशी

यूट्यूब चैनल की डिजीटल सम्पादक

प्रश्न: कितने साल से पत्रकारिता में हो?
उत्तर: मुझे पत्रकारिता में 18 साल होने जा रहे हैं। शुरुआत में मैंने टोटल टीवी से 2005 में की थी। तीन साल वहाँ एंकर, प्रोड्यूसर और रिपोर्टर की तरह काम करने के बाद 2008 में इंडिया टीवी में एंकर और संवाददाता के पद पर नौकरी लग गई। 2010 – बीबीसी रेडियो और बीबीसी हिंदी डॉट कॉम में प्रोड्यूसर के पद पर काम किया। 2011 – आईबीएन 7 में एंकर और विशेष संवाददाता के पद पर और 2016–न्यूज 24 में सीनियर एंकर और एसोसिएट एडिटर के पद पर काम किया।

प्रश्न: अपना

न्यूज

चैनल क्यों बनाया? उत्तर: अपना न्यूज चैनल इसलिए बनाया कि न्यूज चैनलों से न्यूज गायब होने लगी थी। जिस वक्त मैंने चैनल छोड़ उस वक्त रिया चक्रवर्ती का 'इंसाफ' के नाम पर चरित्र हनन और कोई नहीं बल्कि मीडिया कर रहा था। जहाँ सुसाइड को ग्लोरिफाई किया जा रहा था। जहाँ सत्ताधारी दल और खुद सरकार संविधान में अंकित धर्मनिरपेक्षता को खुलेआम खत्म कर रही थी, और ऐसे हर उल्लंघन के साथ मीडिया ताली बजा रहा था, नाच रहा था। विज्ञान को केन्द्र कर अंधविश्वास को लोगों के दिलो दिमाग पर बैठाया जा रहा था, समाज में नफरत घोलनी शुरू की चुकी थी, अपने हक की बात करने वाले छात्रों को देशद्रोही करार दिया जा रहा था, सिर्फ अपना काम करने के नाम पर पत्रकारों को एफआईआर का डर बैठाकर डराना धमकाना शुरू किया जा चुका था। पत्रकारिता इसलिए तो करने की नहीं सोची थी कि एक दिन उसके 'मायने' कुछ सत्ता में बैठे लोग बदल दें? बस ऐसे मीडिया में दम घुटने लगा और सोच लिया कि अब और नहीं। ये तो मैं जानती थी कि मैं

पढ़ी लिखी हूँ और कुछ भी करके पेट भर लूंगी पर ऐसा दम घोटकर अपने उसूलों से समझौता कर जीने की कोई जरूरत नहीं समझी।

प्रश्न: महिला पत्रकार के तौर पर काम करने के लिए कैसी विचारधारा होनी चाहिए?

उत्तर: विचारधारा सिर्फ एक पत्रकार के मुताबिक होनी चाहिए महिला या पुरुष के आधार पर नहीं। यानी कोई काम करने में गुरेज नहीं करना चाहिए। कोई भी शिफ्ट हो या घंटों काम करना पड़े, पुरुषों के मुकाबले इस बात की छूट नहीं होनी चाहिए कि हम महिला हैं। हम बस कर सकती हैं। पर हों महिला होकर एक अलग संवेदना हमारे अंदर होनी चाहिए जो हमारी पत्रकारिता में झलके। महिला होने से बल्कि हम बेहतर पत्रकार ही बनेंगे, बशर्ते हम महिला होने पर अपने ऊपर गर्व समझें। मेरी यही विचारधारा है कि महिलाओं के साथ अत्याचार पर बोलना बेहद जरूरी है और बोलना चाहिए वरना हम उन सभी महिलाओं का भी अनादर करेंगे जिन्होंने अपना जीवन सिर्फ औरतों की बराबरी के लिए लड़ने में

लगा दिया। लेकिन उसके ही साथ साथ कोई महिला अगर किसी पुरुष के साथ अन्याय और अत्याचार कर रही है तो ऐसी महिला के खिलाफ भी उसी तरह खड़ा होना पड़ेगा। सबसे पहले मैं एक पत्रकार हूँ और मेरा महिला होना मेरी जजमेन्ट, मेरी राय को प्रभावित नहीं करना चाहिए।

प्रश्न: जिस दो-टुक तरीके से बात रखती हो तो आज के माहौल में कैसा लगता है?
उत्तर: दो टुक तरीके से बात मैं आज से नहीं पहले से रख रही हूँ क्योंकि यही मेरा बेसिक कैरेक्टर है। बचपन से ही बोल रही हूँ, अन्याय होता देख सह नहीं सकती। कहीं दूर मेरी आँखों के सामने कुछ भी गलत होता दिखेगा तो बोले बगैर नहीं रह सकती। मैं जब यूपीएससी की तैयारी कर रही थी तो हमारी क्लास छूटी तो मैंने देखा कि एक लड़का एक लड़की को बुरी तरह मार रहा था। उनके साथ एक और महिला थीं। समझ आया कुछ पारिवारिक झगड़ा है लेकिन अत्याचार तो अत्याचार है। क्लास के सभी बच्चे डर रहे थे ये सब देखकर। तभी मैंने 100 नम्बर पर फोन लगा दिया और उन्हें उनकी गाड़ी का नम्बर बताया और कहा कि ये कौन लोग हैं मैं नहीं जानती पर एक लड़की को बुरी तरह मार रहे हैं। मुझे इतनी सूझबूझ

थी कि उस वक्त उनके बीच जाना खतरे से खाली नहीं था इसलिए मैंने पुलिस को सीधे 111 फोन कर दिया और उन्हें जाने के बाद भी पकड़ सकें उसके लिए उन्हें गाड़ी का नम्बर बता दिया। मेरा ऐसा होने का श्रेय मेरे परिवारों को जाता है, शादी से पहले और शादी के बाद दोनों ही परिवारों से मुझे हिम्मत मिलती है। आज भी मैं वैसी हूँ। हाँ लोग कहते हैं कि आज के दौर में जो मैं कर रही हूँ वो साहस भरा है पर सच कहूँ तो मुझे इसका अंदाजा नहीं हो पाता क्योंकि मेरे लिए ये कुछ नया नहीं है। सही को सही और गलत को गलत बोल पाती हूँ इसलिए सुखी हूँ। नहीं बोल पाती तो अंदर ही अंदर घुट जाती। इसी बात का अंदाजा मुझे चैनल में रहते होने लगा था, कि अभी तक तो मैं कैसे भी खुद को अपने उसूलों पर खींच लाई हूँ, पर आने वाला दौर और भी मुश्किल बनता जाएगा, उससे पहले ही निकल लिया जाये।
प्रश्न: क्या दिक्कत आती है?
उत्तर: दिक्कत बस ये है कि सही और गलत को दबाने में बहुत ताकतें लगी हुई हैं। लेकिन फिर सोचती हूँ, उससे क्या फर्क पड़ता है। सच तो धीरे से भी कहा जाए तो कोई ना कोई जरूर सुनता है और उसे फैलने से नहीं रोका जा सकता। दबाने वालों

से कहीं ज्यादा सच सुनना चाहने वाले हैं, मेरा दायित्व उनके प्रति ही। और जो नहीं सुनना चाहते, उनके लिए मुझे लगता है कि आज नहीं तो कल कभी तो किसी दिन तो मेरी किसी बात से तो सहमत होंगे, उन्हें जागरूक करना भी तो पत्रकार की जिम्मेदारी है। बाकी मेरा काम है सही सूचना लोगों तक पहुँचाना। वहीं करने में ताकतवर आपको हर तरह से काटने, रोकने पर लग जाते हैं। पहले ऐसा नहीं होता था। पत्रकार की आलोचना सकारात्मक ढंग से लिया जाता था। पर आज बिल्कुल उलट हो चुका है। तो दिक्कत यही है।

प्रश्न: 'एकला चलो रे' के तहत, खबरों की दुनिया में अपना मुकाम कैसे बना पाओगी?
उत्तर: सच को किसी झूठ की जरूरत नहीं होती सच अपने आप में सबसे विशाल होता है एक सच का दबाने के लिए कितनी बड़ी मशीनरी लगाई जाती है, इसी बात से साबित होता है कि सच कितना शक्तिशाली है। तो अकेले अगर सच की राह पर चलोगे तो डर किस बात का? झूठ का प्रचार करने वालों को झुंड तैयार करना पड़ता है जो अकेला होता है उसके साथ कारवाँ खुद जुड़ने लगता है।

प्रश्न: स्वतंत्र पत्रकार कैसे सफल हो सकते हैं?

उत्तर: स्वतंत्र पत्रकार अपने आप में सफल हैं। वो स्वतंत्र हैं इसलिए। वरना हर टीवी पत्रकार किसी सेठ, विज्ञापन, टीआरपी और सुप्रीम लीडर के आदेशों पर काम कर रहा है। स्वतंत्र होने का हर किसी का माददा नहीं। इस बात का सबको डर होता है कि अगर हम सफल न हुए तो? हमारे सब्सक्राइबर नहीं आए तो? हमें व्यूज नहीं मिले तो? ये सब अगर मगर से जो ऊपर उठ गया वो पहले ही सफल है।

अपना खुद का कुछ शुरू करना अपने आप में सफलता की निशानी है। इसके अलावा लोगों ने बहुत साथ अब तक दिया है। खूब व्यूज दिए हैं और मेरे काम की तारीफ की है। मेरी चुनावी कवरेज का इंतजार करते हैं ये अपने आप में सफलता की पहली सीढ़ी है। इसी तरह आगे भी सच देखने के इच्छुक लोगा यूँ ही साथ देते रहेंगे।

प्रश्न: यूट्यूब चैनल को कितनी मान्यता मिली है?

उत्तर: यूट्यूब चैनल पर अब तक यूट्यूबर होते थे। डिजिटल स्वतंत्र पत्रकार अभी कुछ समय पहले से ही आए हैं और इतने कम समय में यूट्यूब की भी छवि बदल गई है। इसमें बहुत बड़ा श्रेय टीवी और अखबार की गिरती पत्रकारिता को जाता है और हमें देखने वालों ने हमें चैनलों पर तो देखा ही है। वहाँ भी हमारा काम देखा है और जानते हैं। हम कोई आज से नहीं हैं। काफी अनुभव लेकर आए हैं और छोड़ा क्यों वो भी सब समझते हैं। इस एक बात से उनके अंदर हमारी क्रेडिबिलिटी पहले से है।

प्लेटफार्म को देखोगे तो जानेंगे कितनी मान्यता हमें उन्होंने दी है। चैनल तो टीआरपी मीटर पर खुद को मापते हैं, 40-50 हजार टीआरपी मीटर में 20 प्रतिशत, 15 प्रतिशत व्यूअरशिप होती क्या ही होती है? हमारे व्यूज उससे कहीं ज्यादा हैं। मैं सिर्फ यूट्यूब नहीं कहूंगी बल्कि सोशल मीडिया जिसमें ट्विटर, इंस्टाग्राम, फेसबुक सब आता है। वॉट्सऐप पर वीडियो वायरल होते हैं।

जानने वाले जब एक दो दिन में मेरा वीडियो मुझे भेजते हैं तो उस पर लिखा आता है कि बहुत बार आगे भेजा गया है (थ्वतूंतकमक डंदल जपउमे) तो समझ आ जाता है कि ये वायरल है। बहुत कम लोग जानते हैं कि फेसबुक की व्यूअरशिप यूट्यूब की टक्कर में है और उसे देखने वाले लोग बहुत ज्यादा हैं। सभी लीडर भी खुद के फेसबुक पेज और यूट्यूब

के डिजिटल पर दर्जन भर अलग अलग चैनल खोल रहे हैं क्योंकि वो भी जानते हैं कि भविष्य नहीं है, हर एक के हाथ में मोबाइल है, टीवी अब कोई नहीं देख रहा, वो जगह ओटीटी ने ली है। अब यूट्यूब ही मेनस्ट्रीम है। न्यूज चैनल भी अब मजबूर हो जाते हैं उस खबर को उठाने के लिए जो दिनभर से ट्विटर पर ट्रेंड हो रही होती है।

कितनी बार तो सोशल मीडिया से काफी लेट उन्हें खबर पता चलती है, जब तक हम उसे कर चुके होते हैं। उदाहरण के तौर पर अभी कुछ दिन पहले पटना हाईकोर्ट के जस्टिस संदीप कुमार का एक वीडियो ट्विटर पर मैंने देखा। तब तक उस वीडियो को 3000 लोगों ने देखा था। उसमें वो बुलडोर जस्टिस पर बहुत सख्त टिप्पणी कर रहे थे। मैंने तुरन्त उस पर वीडियो बनाकर डाला। अकेले फेसबुक

बाकी मान्यता देने वाले दर्शक चैनल बना चुके हैं। टीवी पर उसके लगभग 6 मिलियन ही होते हैं और आप मेरे चैनल भी अपने ही चैनल व्यूज हो गये और 1 लाख 40

हजार के करीब सिर्फ शेर ही थे। जब तक न्यूज चैनलों को वो खबर मिलती तब तक तो मेरा वीडियो खूब व्यूज ले चुका था। वहीं नोएडा "रनिंग बॉय" का वीडियो भी मेरे ही यूट्यूब और फेसबुक पर सबसे पहली बार आया था जो आर्मी में भर्ती के लिए मैकडोनाल्ड में काम करने के बाद वापसी में घर तक दौड़ लगाकर जाता था ताकि उसकी ट्रेनिंग भी हो जाये। वो हमारा विषय था। प्रदीप मेहरा उसका नाम था जिसकी चर्चा अन्तरराष्ट्रीय स्तर पर भी होने लगी। उस गरीब लड़के की माँ का इलाज हो गया, उसकी ऑफिसर लेवल की ट्रेनिंग चल रही है। ये सब कैसे हो पाया, हमारे सोशल मीडिया प्लैटफार्म और उसकी पहुँच के कारण। ये वीडियो वायरल ही नहीं बल्कि रेज बन गया था।

प्रश्न: खबरों के लिए क्या दर्शक और पाठक बदल रहे हैं?
उत्तर: जी हाँ, लोगों के पास समय नहीं है। इन्शॉर्ट्स जैसे ऐप में 60 शब्दों की न्यूज ही पढ़ पाते हैं, या चीखने चिल्ली वाले वायरल क्लिप और डिबेट देखते हैं या फिर खबर तो देखना चाहते हैं पर उसमें भी रोमांच बना रहना चाहिए। अटेंशन स्पैन बहुत कम हो चुका है जो हमारे लिए भी बहुत बड़ी चुनौती है। आंकड़े तो हम बताते हैं लेकिन ऐसे बताते हैं कि बोर ना करे। लोगों को

हर जरूरी और मुश्किल मुद्दा आम भाषा में समझाया जाए तो उन्हें समझ में आता है।

प्रश्न: लीक से हट कर पत्रकारिता के मायने क्या बदल रहे हैं?

उत्तर: अब पत्रकारिता सिर्फ कहां हो रही है। उससे लोगों को मतलब नहीं है बशर्ते पत्रकारिता सही हो रही हो। जिसे गोदी मीडिया बुलाया जाता है वो भी अगर सही पत्रकारिता कर लेंगे तो लोग उन्हें भी उसके लिए सिर आँखों पर बिठा लेंगे। लोग सिर्फ मूल पत्रकारिता को तरस रहे हैं।

ये बात इन चैनलों की समझ में नहीं आ रही है और बहुत जल्द ये सब बर्बाद हो जायेंगे। सब चैनल एक्सपोज हो चुके हैं। डिबेट कराकर उसमें चीखम चिल्ली कराकर पूरी पत्रकारिता खराब कर दी है। स्टोरीज हो ही नहीं रहीं। इन चैनलों पर भी जगह ही नहीं है देश के मुद्दे दिखाने के लिए, दूर कहीं किसी गांव में आज भी पीने का पानी नहीं है ये खबर नहीं दिखेगी क्योंकि उनकी नजर में खबर लो प्रोफ़ाल है। हाँ, झूठ बोलने, किसी बड़े स्टार को फंसाने की बात हो तो पूरा दिन चौबीसों घंटे लगे रहेंगे। अब खोजबीन और स्टिंग ऑपरेशन वाली पत्रकारिता का दौर है ही नहीं। ऐसी भी पत्रकारिता सिर्फ गिने चुने अखबार या पोर्टल कर रहे हैं जिनपर संसद में हंगामा हो।

उदाहरण के तौर पर पेगासस की स्टोरी और कुछ दिन पहले ही भारत चीन के बीच झड़प की खबर ट्रिब्यून और हिन्दू में छपना। वो खबर छपी तो विपक्ष ने हंगामा किया और सरकार को जबाब देना पड़ा वरना पूरा देश कभी जान ही नहीं पाता इस घटना के बारे में। वहीं लखीमपुर खीरी में किसानों पर मंत्री के बेटे द्वारा अपनी थार गाड़ी चढ़ा देना। ये खबर लीक से हटकर सोशल मीडिया पर की गई तब जाकर उसके खिलाफ एक्शन हो पाया।

प्रश्न: पत्रकार मीडिया घरानों से अलग क्यों हो रहे हैं?

उत्तर: मीडिया घराने अब सिर्फ दबाव में काम कर रहे हैं। कोई कम तो कोई ज्यादा लेकिन दबाव में सभी हैं। सरकारी ऐड का दबाव, इंटरव्यू न मिलने का दबाव, ज्यादा कड़क सवाल पूछ लिया तो स्थायी बॉयकॉट का दबाव, मीडिया कॉन्क्लेव में अपने से मना करने का दबाव और भी बड़े बड़े दबाव जो एजेंसियाँ द्वारा इस्तेमाल किया जाता है और जो वाकई पत्रकार हैं वो ऐसी जगह नौकरी नहीं कर सकते।

बिहार में

एक स्त्री का पत्रकार होना मानो ओखली में सर देना: किरण शाहीन



किरण शाहीन
वरिष्ठ पत्रकार

बात उस रात की है जब घड़ी ने बारह का बज़र बजाया ही था कि पुलिस के बूटों और लाठियों की ठक-ठक की आवाज से पटना विश्वविद्यालय का इकलौता गर्ल्स हॉस्टल सहम गया, दीवार के पार बहती गंगा की लहरें गर्मियों के ओर दिनों की तरह की शांत थी। दो दिन पहले ही पूरे चाँद की रात हो कर गुजरी थी, सो चाँद अभी भी पूरे शबाब पर रहते लहरों से अपनी गुफ्तगू जारी रखे था। कालिदास के आषाढ़ का पहला तो नहीं, मगर दूसरा दिन गुजरने की राह देख रहा था और उसी वक्त ठीक आधी रात को, जब कैलेंडर में तारीख बदली, आपने ऊपर पढ़ा ही कि बूटों और लाठियों की डरावनी बंदिश ने हॉस्टल के वाशिंगों को थरथरा दिया। कैलेंडर की वह क्षण भर

पहले बदली तारीख छब्बीस जून थी और साल था उन्नीस सौ पचहत्तर, जेल के रास्ते में पता लगा सिर्फ पटना ही नहीं, पूरे देश की सड़के बूटों की घमक से गूँज रही है, यह इमरजेंसी का आगाज था, कारागार के ताले हमें अंजाम की तरफ ले जा रहे थे, कहीं न कहीं इस दिन का इंतजार भी था, और दिल ही दिल में उसकी तैयारी भी थी, लेकिन आधी रात को? इस बात को एक स्त्री पत्रकार के आत्मकथन की शुरुआत में कहना इसलिए जरूरी है कि जिस आन्दोलन को कुचलने के लिए इंदिरा गाँधी को इमरजेंसी लगानी पड़ी, 18 मार्च 1974 को शुरू हुए उस बिहार से सबसे ज्यादा भागीदारी रही, इन पंक्तियों की लेखक भी उनमें से एक है। यहीं से सामाजिक-राजनीतिक जीवन की मेरी यात्रा की शुरुआत हुई, जो जेंडर और नागरिक अधिकार के सवाल पर एक्टिविज्म से होती हुई मुझे, एक स्त्री को, पत्रकारिता के पेशे में ले आई, आज बहुत बड़ी संख्या में औरतें मीडिया में हैं, और उनके लिए शायद यह कल्पना करना मुश्किल है कि इतने बड़े मास मूवमेंट के बावजूद, सैकड़ों बल्कि

हजारों छात्राओं के सड़कों पर उतर आने के बावजूद 1977 में गैर कांग्रेसी सरकार के सत्ता में आने के बावजूद और सालों साल से पटना से मुख्य धारा के चार-चार (दो हिन्दी और दो अंग्रेजी-कमश: आर्यावर्त और प्रदीप तथा इंडियन नेशन और सर्व लाइट) अखबार निकलने के बावजूद स्त्रियों के लिए मीडिया या उस ज़माने का शब्द इस्तेमाल करें तो, स्त्रियों के लिए कोई जगह नहीं थी। स्त्रियाँ लोकतंत्र के इस चौथे स्तम्भ के सबसे निचले पायदान तक पर पाँव नहीं रख पाई थी। मैं यह बात आपको उस कालखंड की बता रही हूँ जब 1975 के साल को संयुक्त राष्ट्र अंतर्राष्ट्रीय महिला वर्ष के रूप में कई साल पहले ही घोषित कर चुका था, जब महाराष्ट्र के चंद्रपुर इलाके में एक आदिवासी लड़की मथुरा के साथ पुलिस वालों द्वारा किये बलात्कार के खिलाफ देश भर में महिलाओं के नेतृत्व में एक व्यापक जन उभार दिखाई देने लगा था और जब उच्चतम न्यायालय में देश के प्रमुख स्त्री-पुरुष न्यायविदों द्वारा दायर की गई याचिका के जवाब में बलात्कार सम्बन्धी कानूनों में



संशोधन तक किये गए। ये आन्दोलन की नींच रखी गई चाहे वह परिवार के अन्दर वो कालखण्ड था जब उत्तर, जिसका नेतृत्व मुख्य रूप से दो, या एकल स्टेटस में हो मध्य और दक्षिण बिहार के स्थानीय भूमिहीन स्त्रियाँ कर और आखिर में एक और ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों में भूमिहीन रही थीं, और इस आन्दोलन बात का जिक्र किए बगैर मजदूरों का एक सशक्त की पहली और आखिरी बिहार की जनधर्मी चेतना आन्दोलन चला जिसने मांग थी भूमि सुधार अधि की बात अधूरी रहेगी। 1971 बिहार में सामाजिक न्याय नियम के तहत भूमिहीनों में बिहार में पिछड़ी जाति की एक नई परिभाषा गढ़ी। को दी जाने वाली सरकारी और अत्यंत गरीब परिवार यही वो समय था जब शायद जमीन का पट्टा औरत के के कर्पूरी ठाकुर मुख्यमंत्री देश में पहली बार बिहार के नाम पर बने, यानी जमीन बनते हैं और महिलाओं के बोधगया में एक ऐसे स्त्री पर मालिकाना स्त्री का हो, लिए सरकारी नौकरियों में

3 प्रतिशत आरक्षण लागू करते हैं, इस मंडल आयोग से बीस साल पहले की बात है, जाहिर है कि आन्दोलनों और सामाजिक सक्रियता के इस उदारवादी और कृष्ण हृद तक प्रगतिवादी माहौल तक बिहार में जमींदार, आदमखोर कहलाने में अपना गौरव समझते थे जहाँ बंधुआ मजदूरों को उनकी जरा की हुक्म उदूली पर भूखे बाघों के पिंजरे में फेंक दिया जाता था, जहाँ दलित की दुल्हन विदाई होकर आने के बाद पहले स्वर्ण जमींदार के घर ले जाई जाती थी, जहाँ दिन भर खेतों में खटने के बाद भूमिहीन श्रमिक को सवा किलो मोटा अनाज मिलता था, महिला मजदूर को उसका भी आधा, जहाँ दलितों को जिन्दा जला देने का रिवाज था, जहाँ औरतें, युवा लडकियाँ, प्रेम की बात को दूर, अगर पढ़ने की खाहिश को भी आगे ले जाना चाहतीं तो सामंती मूल्यों से लदे परिवार उनकी चिता या कब्र की तैयारी में लग जाते।

ऐसे बिहार में एक स्त्री का रोजगार या काम के एक ऐसे मैदान में उतरना सिर्फ स्वर्ण आदमियों को ही प्रवेश मिलता था, वहीं मीडिया जैसे वर्जित क्षेत्र में स्त्रियों का आना तो लोहे के चने चबाने जैसा काम था। बिहार यहाँ तक कि राजधानी पटना

से निकलने वाले अखबारों में भी आठवें दशक के मध्य में स्त्रियाँ प्रेस या मीडिया में अनुपस्थित क्यों रहीं, इस पर विचार करना बिहार की आत्मा को झकझोरने जैसा है। बिहार के जातिवादी और घोर मर्दवादी समाज में एक स्त्री द्वारा अपने संघर्ष की कथा लिखना आग की लपटों में उँगलियाँ डुबो कर काल की छाती पर नया इतिहास लिखने जैसा है। अपने जीवन की महज एक कोनोलॉजी लिखनी होती तो मेरे लिए यह आसान काम होता, उससे भी आसान शायद एक बायोडाटा लिखना होता, लेकिन बिहार के सामाजिक जीवन की त्रासदियों के समानांतर चलते हुए एक स्त्री के पत्रकार बनने और निरंतर विरोध और बाधाओं के बीच अपने आप को साबित करने की जददोजहद के बारे में लिखना आसान नहीं है।

मुझे अपने पत्रकारीय जीवन और उसकी चुनौतियों के बारे में लिखना था, लेकिन बिहार की चुनौतियों के बारे में लिखे बगैर, चुनौतियों ने मेरा सामना पिछले चार से भी ज्यादा दशक तक कैसे किया, इसकी पड़ताल भी उतनी ही जरूरी थी/है, मेरी कहानी, मुझ अकेली की कहानी नहीं है, यह बिहार की उन तमाम औरतों की कहानी है जिनके लिए जिदंगी की रुचियाँ

और इंसाफ की लड़ाई एक ही सिक्के के दो पहलू हैं। मैंने बिहार आन्दोलन में अपना वांशिक परिवार छोड़ा, इमरजेंसी में जेल गई, लौट कर पटना से स्त्री मुक्ति आन्दोलन का पहला लघु अखबार 'अपनी आजादी के लिए' निकाला, और जेंडर और नागरिक अधिकार आन्दोलनों की अग्रणी कतारों में रहीं, 1982 से 85 तक आर्यावर्त और इंडियन नेशन अखबारों के लिए घोस्ट प्रूफरीडिंग का काम किया क्योंकि प्रबंधन को किसी महिला के न्यूज डेस्क पर आ कर बैठने पर एतराज था। 1986 में नवभारत टाइम्स के नए पटना संस्करण का हिस्सा बनी जो शायद पटना की मुख्य धारा के समाचारपत्र में किसी स्त्री की पहली नियुक्ति थी। जिसके बारे में मेरा ये कहना है कि तथ्य गलत साबित हो तो उन्हें बेइन्तेहा खुशी होगी। आने वाले वर्षों में बिजनेस इंडिया टेलीविज़न, संडे मेल, बीबीसी और नई दुनिया में नौकरियाँ की, पत्रकारिता संस्थानों में कम्युनिटी मीडिया का पाठ पढ़ाया, सामाजिक डोक्युमेंटरी फिल्में बनाई, फिलहाल मैं हिमाचल के एक गाँव में रहते हुए साहित्यिक लेखन और स्त्रियों के मानसिक स्वास्थ्य पर काम कर रही हूँ।

पत्रकारिता मेरे लिए स्वाभिमान है : विधु लता



विधु लता

मासिक पत्रिका औरत की सम्पादक

एकला चलो रे – दरअसल एक ताकत भी है, एक स्वाभिमान भी, जब आप किसी दवाब में या किसी की हुकूमत में काम नहीं करना चाहते, आप स्वतंत्रता से एक फैसला लेते तो और अपनी पूरी ताकत से उस काम में जुट जाते हो जो करना चाहते हो, इसका कारण भी यही है या तो आप सही होकर भी नकारे जाते हो या स्त्री होने के कारण सामने वाला आपसे बेजा फायदा उठाना चाहता है – तब क्या आप समर्पित हो जाते हो? या अपना स्वतंत्र अस्तित्व बनाने की जुगत में मेहनत के साथ जुट जाते या आपकी काबलियत पर किसी संस्थान को भरोसा ही नहीं होता, तब इन्हीं में से कई कारणों से या किसी एक में से स्त्री पत्रकार 'एकला चलो रे' की राह पर चल पड़ती है, पूरी हिम्मत के साथ। स्वतंत्र पत्रकारिता आग के दरिया में कूद कर काम करने जैसा

है।

अपनी बात कहूँ तो – बंद कमरों या डेस्क की पत्रकारिता मैंने कभी नहीं की हमीदिया आर्ट्स एन्ड कॉमर्स महाविद्यालय और मोतीलालविज्ञान महाविद्यालय भोपाल में हिन्दी की बोरिंग एडहॉक लैक्चररशिप की नौकरी छोड़ने के बाद एक राजनीतिक पत्रिका शिखर वार्ता में 24 बरस की उम्र में सब एडिटर का पद मेरे लिए चुनौती भरा था जो दो बरस से ज्यादा नहीं चला। मालिक सम्पादक की अपेक्षाएं दुखी करने वाली थी बाद में बरसों में नई दुनिया भोपाल इंदौर में अनुबंध पर

अपने लेखन के शौक और अनुभव को मैंने जुनून की हद तक लिखा और बतौर फीलांस उन्हें अखबारों में भेजा जो हमेशा छपता रहा, काम करते हुए जो भी जहाँ सीखने-सिखाने का मौका मिला सीखती रही। देश भर के सभी प्रमुख अखबार/पत्रिकाओं में छपते हुए ही समझ आया कि आप स्वयं क्या कर सकते हो। वो वक्त था जब नाम और शक्ल से कम लेकिन लिखे से आपको ज्यादा जाना जाता था।

नौकरी करते हुए इंटरव्यू की तकनीक सीखी, देश भर के बड़े नेताओं और भी नामी

गिरामी हस्तियों के इंटरव्यू किये उन्हीं दिनों माखनलाल चतुर्वेदी विश्वविद्यालय में पढ़ाते हुए/काम करते हुए छह माह का ग्रामीण पत्रकारिता का पाठयक्रम भी तैयार किया फिर लोकमत और दैनिक भास्कर हेतु राजनैतिक रिपोर्टिंग करती रही। पैसा तो बहुत कम था लेकिन संतुष्टि बहुत ज्यादा थी पर मुश्किलें ढेर थी। दैनिक भास्कर के सिटी पेज के लिए ऑटो रिव्यू से की गई वो साल भर की राजनैतिक रिपोर्टिंग मेरे पत्रकारिता के कैरियर में शायद मैं कभी भी ना भूलूँगी जब मुझे 1500 रुपये का चैक दिया गया उसे मैंने अपना अपमान

समझते हुए प्रमुख सम्पादक की टेबिल पर तुरन्त फाड़ दिया, मुझे रुपयों की सख्त जरूरत थी। मेरी 7 साल की

बेटी का आपरेशन होना तय मिल गया। इसी बीच मेरी जन के बीच एक सेतु बन था। व पैसा ना के बराबर बच्ची का सफल आपरेशन गई, फिर एक पत्रकार मित्र था, मैं घर लौट आई रोना हुआ। इस पत्रकारिता ने कहा – विधु शादी नहीं गवारा नहीं था (यहूदियों की सफर में, मैं अपने हमसफर करती तो एक बड़ी पत्रकार कहावत याद आई – ईश्वर का सहयोग कभी नहीं भूल होती। मैं भौंचक्क थी और के सामने रोओ मनुष्य के सकती जब उन्होंने मेरे देर तक बड़े पत्रकार होने का सामने हँसो) आत्मा ने कहा सपनों को पूरा करने में सौ मतलब खोजती रही। क्या तुम गलत जगह हो, फैसला प्रतिशत सहयोग किया और स्त्री की शादी और बच्चे इस किया एकला ही चलेंगे। पत्रिका को भी सुचारू ढंग सृष्टि का पहला कर्तव्य बड़ा

फिर 5 दिन बाद भास्कर की तरफ से 5 हजार का चैक मिला शायद उन्हें गलती का अहसास हुआ हो लेकिन मैं तो एक कदम आगे बढ़ा चुकी थी। फिर भी सोचा था कुछ बड़ा करने का। मैंने अपने भीतर एक ताकत पैदा की कि जो भी करना है पत्रकारिता करते हुए ही करना है, उन्हीं दिनों भास्कर



काम नहीं है जिसे बहुत अच्छे से और संतुष्टि से करने के बाद भी पत्रकारिता में कुछ करना शेष था? वैसे जि त नी मे ह न त लगन और ईमानदारी स पत्रकारिता की मैंने पत्रकारिता और अपनी गृहस्थी

के एक मित्र के सुझाव पर से चलाने में समर्थ हुई तो और बच्ची की परवरिश को अपनी पत्रिका निकालने का लगा कि अकेले काम करते मैंने हमेशा सामानांतर रखते विचार बना। सबने कहा तुम हुए परिवार का भरोसा और हुए नम्बर वन पर रखा। कर सकती हो। यह वाक्य सहयोग पा लेना भी जरूरी बावजूद इसके बहुत से मेरे लिए ब्रम्हा वाक्य बन था। गरिमामय अवार्ड मिले।

गया। बकायदा इस बात पर मंथन हुआ उन्हीं दिनों दिल्ली दूरदर्शन से प्रेरित होकर मैंने भारत सरकार से अपनी पत्रिका का 'औरत' नाम (टाइटल) मांगा जो मुझे

एक पत्रकार मित्र ने कहा एकला चलो कहना आसान क्या होगा ग्रामीण रिपोर्टिंग है लेकिन वो आपकी सहन करके, कौन पढ़ेगा? लेकिन शक्ति और गंभीरता, काम पत्रिका सरकार और ग्रामीण करने के तरीकों अपनी बात

वज़नदार तरीकों से कहने और उसके असर को देखने समझने का भी एक अवसर है, महिला हो तो समानता के इस सुनहरे युग में भी आप भेदभाव की शिकार होती रहोगी। लेकिन सुख भी है कि मैं उसे उस मुकान तक पहुँचा पाई जो मेरी/ उसकी चाहना थी, इस पेशे के (एकला चला रे) की राह में जब-जब 5 साला चुनाव आए सरकार ने संशय से देखा, कई बार पूरे मध्यप्रदेश की ग्रामीण रिपोर्टिंग की। लेकिन पत्रकारिता करते हुए मैंने कोई विकल्प इस पेशे के समानांतर या बाद में नहीं रखा क्योंकि बस पत्रकारिता की ध्येय था और रहेगा।

ये सच है पत्रकारिता में भी कई स्याह काले अँधेरे कोने हैं स्त्री को हर जगह बरगलाने की कोशिशों की जाती है, जो जारी है। ये स्त्री पर निर्भर है कि वो अपनी और अपनी महत्वाकांक्षाओं की उड़ान कितनी भर सकती है और इसके लिए क्या-क्या कर सकती है ये उसकी बनाई सीमा या असीमा साथ ही इच्छा पर भी निर्भर करेगा हर गलत सही की वो खुद जज है, इस पेशे में स्त्री पुरुष समान जरूर है लेकिन पुरुष पत्रकार हमेशा हावी होने की कोशिश करते हैं, जैसे उन्हें हमेशा लगता है रसोई फैशन, मेकअप जैसी बीट के लिए ही वो बनी है,

साथ ही वह स्त्री को हमेशा कमतर आंकते हैं, पेज मेकिंग या टेबिल इंचार्ज पता नहीं क्यों नाम का फोंट स्माल कर देते हैं और कई दफा तो पॉलिसी की आड़ में नाम ही नहीं छापा जाता या कभी अनुबंध के नाम पर आपकी रिपोर्ट किसी और नाम से भी छाप दी गई। फिर भी अपवाद हर जगह की तरह इस पेशे में भी है।

मैंने अपना लक्ष्य तय किया और सामाजिक पत्रकारिता की तरफ कदम बढ़ा दिए, जिसमें लिखते हुए अब तक कई ऐसे सरकारी और गैर सरकारी मनुष्य हितैषी काम हैं जिन्हें पत्रकारिता के बगैर कभी नहीं पाती। पत्रकारिता मेरे लिए पेशा ही नहीं मेरा स्वाभिमान भी है कई ऐसे कारण थे जिन कारणों से मुझे अकेले ही इस पेशे में काम करना शुरू करना पड़ा। अपनी पत्रिका 'औरत' का 2001 में रजिस्ट्रेशन करवाया और कभी पीछे पलट कर नहीं देखा। शुरू में आर्थिक मुश्किलें थी बाद में सरकार को भी मेरे काम की

महत्वा समझ आई चाहे मेरे काम को लोग कम जानते हैं, लेकिन इसी बल बूते 2006/2007 में यूरोपीय देशों की (जेंडर इक्वैलिटी) को लेकर मेरी देश भर की प्रमुख पत्रकार महिलाओं के साथ की गई यात्रा, पत्रकारिता

सफर का प्रमुख पड़ाव है। पत्रिका के इस बीच कई महत्वपूर्ण और विशिष्ट अंक निकले, जिनमें मध्यप्रदेश की जेलों में उग्रकैद सजायाफता औरतों की कहानियाँ प्रमुख हैं, मध्यप्रदेश के बुनकरों की स्थितियों पर और ग्रामीण मतदाताओं के रूझान और स्थितियाँ जैसे अनेक अंक – अपनी पत्रकारिता यात्रा में कभी किसी गॉडफादर की मोहताज मैं कभी नहीं रही सबसे बड़ी संतुष्टि आज भी यही है।

इस पेशे में, बस आपके पास भाषा हो उसके संयोजन का ज्ञान हो। आँख देखी लिखने की कला हो, सुनी बात पर चौकन्ने होकर लिखने का ज्ञान हो, तमीजदार और एक सलीका हो, सहनशीलता हो, जो होनी ही चाहिए, बाकि चीजें तो आज (संचार क्रांति ने) उपलब्ध करवा दी है, आज की पत्रकारिता में इतना संघर्ष ही नहीं, जब थे तब के संघर्ष किये बगैर यह हासिल ना होता। सीधी बात जब आप अकेले होते हो तो बेहतर तरीके से पहचाने जाते हो अपने काम को प्रभावी ढंग से बताते हुए एकला चलो रे और चलते हुए दुःख आये तो ईश्वर के सामने रोइये मनुष्य के सामने हँसिये, बस एकला चलते चलो, काम करते रहो।

नए मीडिया में महिलाओं की चुनौतिया : बीना (प्रिया) कुमारी



बीना (प्रिया) कुमारी
स्वतंत्र पत्रकार

मीडिया में महिलाओं के अधिकार और समानता को लेकर बड़ी बड़ी बातें की जाती हैं, लेकिन क्या मीडिया ने कभी अपने दामन में झाककर देखा है कि हम महिलाओं को कितना बराबरी का अधिकार दिया है।

महिला सशक्तिकरण, महिला आरक्षण, लैंगिक समानता जैसे गम्भीर और सरोकारी मुद्दों पर बहस और अभियान चलाने वाले मीडिया सेक्टर में महिलाएं आज भी बराबरी पर नहीं हैं। भारतीय मीडिया के अमूमन सभी क्षेत्रों में चाहे वो प्रिंट मीडिया, इलेक्ट्रॉनिक मीडिया, मैगजीन आदि सभी जगहों पर महिलाओं का औसत पुरुषों की तुलना में बेहद कम है और जो है भी वो इस ओहदे पर नहीं है

की कोई निर्णायक भूमिका निभा सके। आखिर क्यों, क्या महिलाओं में प्रतिभाओं की कमी है या कोई और कारण है कभी इस पर सवाल नहीं उठाया जाता लेकिन हम चौबीस घंटे गला फाड़कर बहस जरूर करते हैं।

मीडिया में दिल्ली, बंगलूर, मुंबई जैसे शहरों की बात हम नहीं कर रहे हैं बल्कि छोटे शहरों की बात कर रहे हैं, जहाँ आज भी महिलाओं का प्रतिनिधित्व ना के बराबर है।

बड़े शहरों में न्यूज चैनलों,

बिहार में अभी भी जितने न्यूज चैनल हैं चाहे राष्ट्रीय हों या क्षेत्रीय सभी में महिला पत्रकारों की संख्या नहीं के बराबर है। यह स्थिति सिर्फ इलेक्ट्रॉनिक मीडिया में ही नहीं प्रिंट मीडिया का भी यही हाल है। आखिर अभी भी महिलाओं के साथ यह भेदभाव क्यों?

अखबारों और पत्रिकाओं को देखे तो बहुत सी महिलाओं ने एंकर, सम्पादक और पत्रकार के तौर पर बहुत नाम कमाया है और लीक से हटकर काम किए। महिला पत्रकार ने दंगा, युद्ध, प्राकृतिक आपदाओं या राजनीतिक मुद्दों हो काफी

अच्छी तरीके से कवर किया और अपने काम का लोहा मनवाया है और कई चैनलों का चेहरा भी बनी हैं। लेकिन यह सिर्फ गिनी चुनी महिलाओं की कहानी है, जिसको हम पुरुषों की तुलना में बराबरी पर नहीं देख सकते। इसे देखकर हम ऐसी धारणा बना सकते हैं की मीडिया में महिलाओं ने काफी नाम कमाया है। बल्कि हकीकत यह है कि महिलायें आज भी बदलाव के एक ऐसे सिरे पर हैं जहाँ उन्हें लम्बा सफर तय करना है अगर महिला स्वतंत्र पत्रकारों की

बात करें तो बिहार जैसी जगह में काम मिलना और करना काफी मुश्किल है। खासकर कोविड के बाद तो रही सही सभी कसर निकाल दी। कोविड के बाद तो कई पत्रकार सड़क पर आ गयी हैं या फिर स्वतंत्र पत्रकारिता

करने लगी हैं। बदलते परिवेश में किसी ने यूट्यूब चैनल्स, ब्लॉग या फिर सोशल मीडिया का सहारा ले रही है। आज स्वतंत्र पत्रकार इक्का दुक्का काम तो कर रही है लेकिन वो भी सिर्फ नाम का ताकि उनकी कुछ पहचान बनी रहे और उनकी कुछ आर्थिक स्थिति भी बची रहे, लेकिन आज कई ऐसी महिला पत्रकार हैं जो मजबूरी में अपना प्रोफेशन छोड़कर दूसरा प्रोफेशन चुन रही हैं।



आखिर मीडिया इंडस्ट्री कौन से नीति पर काम कर रही है जहाँ आज भी इतने भेदभाव है। क्या प्रेस की नियामक संस्थाओं का यह दायित्व नहीं बनता की सरकार के समक्ष वस्तुस्थिति को दर्शाए ताकि इसके लिए सही नीति तैयार हो सके और महिलाओं की भागीदारी सुनिश्चित हो सके।

लेकिन इन सब के बीच एक नई उम्मीद भी जागी है, जो नए मीडिया के रूप में है। नई मीडिया पारम्परिक मीडिया से बिल्कुल अलग है। यह एक ऐसा माध्यम है जहाँ कोई किसी की अभिव्यक्ति की आजादी को सीमित नहीं कर सकता। जहाँ हम देखते

हैं कि मुख्यधारा की मीडिया वाणिज्यिक, सार्वजनिक रूप से समर्थित या सरकार के स्वामित्व या किसी एजेंडा के रूप में काम करती है वही नई मीडिया अपने स्वतंत्र रूप में काम करती है। मुख्यधारा की मीडिया जिन खबरों को स्थान नहीं देती वहीं नई मीडिया स्वतंत्र रूप से अपनी आवाज दे सकती है। आज की तारीख में नई मीडिया हम महिलाओं के पक्ष में बहुत प्रभावकारी रूप में उभरा है। समाज में महिलाओं की स्थिति को हमेशा दूसरे लोग अपने तरीके से प्रस्तुत करते आ रहे हैं, लेकिन नई मीडिया एक ऐसा प्लेटफार्म है जहाँ महिलाएँ अपनी सोच को प्रस्तुत कर सकती हैं, जो उनकी सामाजिक स्थिति में परिवर्तन लाने में महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभा सकता है, बशर्ते उसका सही उपयोग करना आता हो।

कोविड के बाद मीडिया का एक नया चेहरा देखने को मिल रहा जो स्वतंत्रता की

अभिव्यक्ति को एक नया आयाम देने का काम कर रही है। आज मीडिया में कई महिलाएँ अकेले दम पर अपनी अलग पहचान बना रही हैं। इसलिए इनकी जिम्मेदारी भी है कि छोटे शहरों में काम करने वाली महिला पत्रकारों को रास्ता दिखाए और उन्हें नई टैक्नॉलाजी से अवगत कराए।

इन सबके साथ हमें यह भी सुनिश्चित करना होगा कि मीडिया में महिलाओं की भागीदारी बराबरी की हो। भारत में क्या ऐसा कोई कानूनी नहीं है जो कार्यस्थल पर बराबर कार्य के बराबर वेतन का अधिकार देता हो। मीडिया को हम समाज का चौथा स्तम्भ मानते हैं तो क्या हमारा चौथा स्तम्भ इतना कमजोर है कि महिलाओं को बराबरी का अधिकार भी नहीं दे पाता, इसके लिए क्या कोई निर्णयक नीति नहीं है। जब हम खुद किसी के अधिकारों का हनन करें तो हम समाज के लिए क्या आवाज उठा सकते हैं।

महिलाओं के साथ सिर्फ मीडिया में ही नहीं बल्कि सभी क्षेत्रों में भी भेदभाव हो रहा।

खबरों की सच्चाई को दिखाते हैं निजी चैनल : विनीता यादव



विनीता यादव
यूट्यूब चैनल न्यूज नशा की
संस्थापिका व सम्पादक

करने की चुनौतियों से मेहनत के बाद ऑफिस को मुक्ति मिल गई और मैं देती थी फिर उसका हटा अपने चैनल के माध्यम से दिया जाना और कोई वजह खबरों की सच्चाई को दिखा न बताना समझ नहीं आता सकती हूँ। मीडिया घरानों था।

में काम करने के दौरान मुझे कई बार ऐसा लगा कि जैसे पत्रकारिता में महिला होने अच्छी खबर होने के बाद के नाते विचारधारा अलग ठीक ऑन एयर जाने से हो ये सही नहीं है महिला हो पहले खबर हटा दी जाती या पुरुष विचारधारा सिर्फ

मैं पिछले
23
साल

से पत्रकारिता में हूँ। मैंने दूरदर्शन से अपना कैरियर शुरू किया। फिर बीएसजी प्रोडक्शन हाउस में दूरदर्शन, स्टार न्यूज, टीवी18, न्यूजनेशन में काम किया।

खबरों का स्तर क्योंकि अब गिरता जा रहा

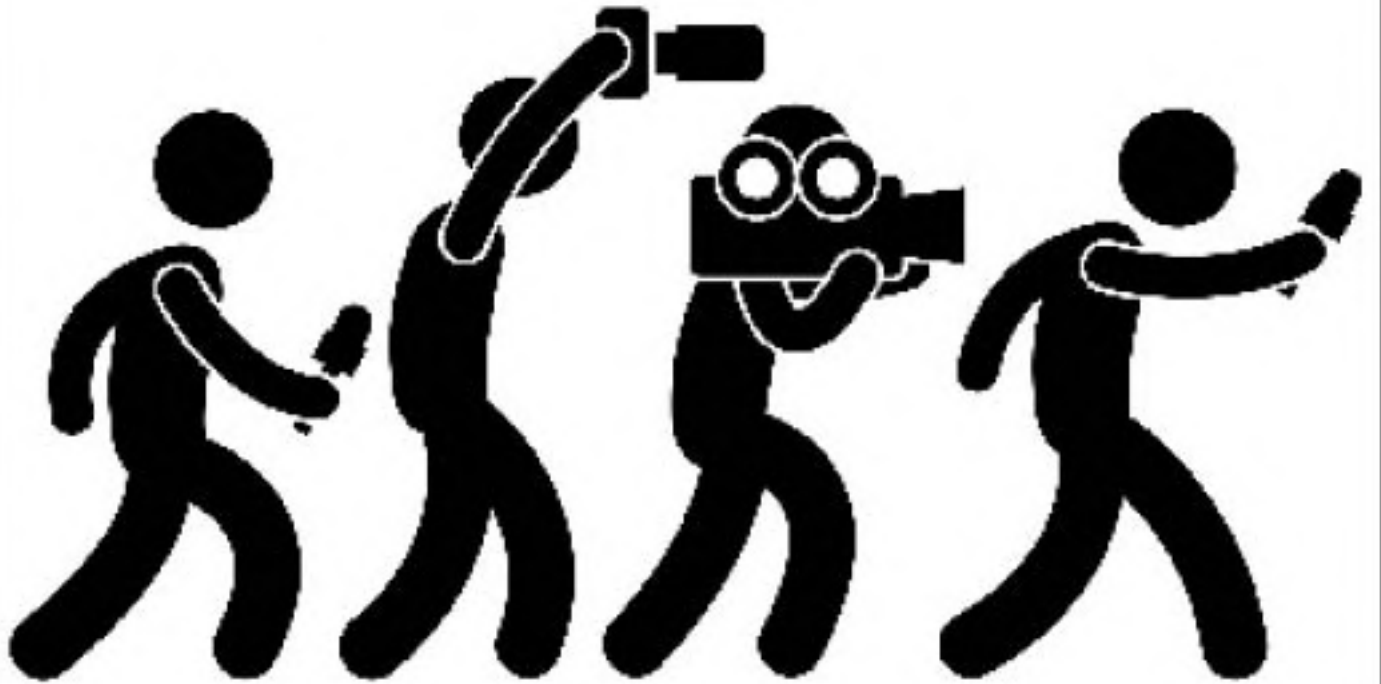
है। मैंने अपना निजी चैनल 'न्यूज नशा' नाम से शुरू किया। इसका कारण मुझे लगता है कि मुझे खबर



थी। मैंने खोजी पत्रकारिता कोई खास गलत नहीं है में पूरा जीवन काम किया लेकिन कोई भी चैनल चाहे और एक खबर को कई दिन वो डिजिटल क्यों न हो

पत्रकारिता की होनी चाहिए बाकी महिला होने की वजह से तो पत्रकारिता में कई बार पुरुष समाज की सोच का कई बार सामना करना पड़ा ऐसा मेरा मानना है।

यूँ तो 'एकला चलो रे' भी



अगर आप उस पर काम कर रहे हैं तो आपको एक टीम की जरूरत होती है और अकेले चलते हुए मेरे साथ कई साथी जुड़े और अपनी टीम बनायी है जो दिन रात उस विचार पर काम करती है जो कि एक पत्रकार का विचार होना चाहिए।

आज जनता कि बात करके ही खुद को आप सफल कर सकते है वो भी सोशल मीडिया में ऐसा मेरे न्यूज नशा चैनल के दर्शकों के प्यार और विश्वास के बाद मैंने समझा है।

डिजीटल मीडिया के लिए अभी कोई नीति नियम नहीं

है। इसीलिए हर रोज नित नये यूट्यूब चैनल खबरों की दुनिया में पैर पसार रहे हैं। नीति बनाने पर सरकार विचार कर रही है लेकिन डर ये है कि विचार सोशल मीडिया की स्वतंत्रता पर नहीं बल्कि अंकुश पर हो रहा है। अंकुश गलत नहीं लेकिन एक तरफ नहीं होना चाहिए।

आज पाठक और दर्शक बदल गये हैं। पहले जो खबर उन्हें दी जाती थी उसे वो देखते थे अब कुछ खबरों को अपने मनमाफिक देखना चाहते हैं कि खबर

सच भी हो तो उसे झुठलाने की कोशिश करते हैं ऐसे में खबर की दुनिया पर कई तरह के सवाल खड़े हो गए हैं क्योंकि खबर का दर्शक तक पहुँचना बेहद जरूरी है। लीक से हटकर पत्रकारिता के मायने काफी बदल गये हैं क्योंकि अब पत्रकारिता के नियम सब अपनी मर्जी से बनाने लगे हैं।

पत्रकार मीडिया घरानों से अलग हो रहे हैं क्योंकि पत्रकार अपना काम अपनी तरह से कर सकते हैं। स्वतंत्र पत्रकारिता उन्हें आकर्षित कर रही हैं।

भारत में हिंदी भाषायी पत्रकारितारू राज से स्वराज और उससे आगे तक की यात्रा लेखिका: मृणाल पांडे

किताब पर पहली नजर पली—बढ़ी हूँ लेकिन अंग्रेजी यह बात पहली बार सामने डालने पर ही मेरा ध्यान माध्यम की शिक्षा के कारण आई है, इस तरह की बातें सबसे पहले इसके शीर्षक यह दूरी और बढ़ गई। कई लेखकों ने पहले भी पर गया जिस पर थोड़ा इस पुस्तक में मोटे तौर पर कहने का प्रयास किया है। विचार करते हुए जब मैंने तीन समयावधि का जिक्र है।

इसे पढ़ना शुरू किया, तब मेरे मन में पहला सवाल यह आया कि किताब के नाम में श्भाषा शब्द जोड़ने की आवश्यकता क्यों हुई होगी। किताब के नाम में शहिंदी पत्रकारिता लिखना क्या पर्याप्त नहीं था? मैंने जल्दी ही किताब के पन्ने



पलटने शुरू कर दिए ताकि मैं यह समझ सकूँ कि किताब की लेखिका ने हिंदी भाषा के विचार और उसके योगदान को भारत की पत्रकारिता के संदर्भ में कैसे जोड़ने की कोशिश की है। इस किताब को पढ़ने का एक और महत्वपूर्ण कारण उस शून्यता को भरना था, जो एक मीडिया शिक्षक के तौर पर हिंदी पत्रकारिता की दुनिया से कटे रहने के कारण बना है। हालांकि मैं हिंदीभाषी क्षेत्र बिहार में ही

‘राज’ अध्याय में ब्रिटेन के औपनिवेशिक उत्पीड़न वाले दौर में हिंदी भाषा और पत्रकारिता पर चर्चा की गई है। इसमें इस बात पर जोर देना है कि श्भारत जिसका वर्णन न केवल फारसी, अरबी और संस्कृत जैसी भाषाओं के संरक्षक के रूप में किया जाता है, उसके प्रिंट उद्योग के इतिहास को केवल अखबार के स्वामित्व, संपादकीय टीमों या बिक्री और विपणन के रुझान के संदर्भ में ही नहीं दिखाया जा सकता है। ऐसा नहीं है कि

यह बात पहली बार सामने आई है, इस तरह की बातें कई लेखकों ने पहले भी कहने का प्रयास किया है।

यह देखना दिलचस्प है कि भारत में पत्रकारिता के लिए बहुभाषिता और बहुभाषाविदों के योगदान (ए के रामानुजन, 1993 ने भी इस पर चर्चा की है) के महत्व को रेखांकित करके, हिंदी भाषा पत्रकारिता पर काम की शुरुआत का पूरा ब्योरा दिया गया है। इस संदर्भ में लेखिका यह बताती हैं कि हिंदीभाषी क्षेत्रों में निजी प्रिंटिंग को संरक्षण देने वाले रियासती घराने न केवल फारसी, अरबी और संस्कृत जैसी भाषाओं से वाकिफ थे बल्कि वे उत्तरी क्षेत्र की बोलियों से भी बखूबी परिचित थे, जैसे कि खड़ी बोली, ब्रज, अवधी, भोजपुरी, मैथिली, पंजाबी और राजस्थानी। भारत में 1,652 ऐसी भाषाएँ थीं (आरजीसीआई, 1961)

और इनमें से कम से कम 29 भाषाएं 10 लाख से अधिक लोगों द्वारा बोली (आरजीसीआई 2001) जाती हैं, जिनमें से हिंदी का प्रचलन 11 उत्तरी राज्यों में है।

देवनागरी लिपि में हिंदी का उभार और औपचारिक भाषा बनने की कहानी, भारत में हिंदी प्रिंट तकनीक की शुरुआत और प्रिंट से दूरी बनाने वाले भारतीय अभिजात्य वर्ग के बीच बदलाव लाने की प्रेरणा, वास्तव में शुरुआती वर्षों में भाषायी पत्रकारिता द्वारा सामना की जाने वाली कठिनाइयों को उजागर करती है। यह पुस्तक कई ऐतिहासिक संदर्भों से समृद्ध है और इसका एक उदाहरण यह भी है कि किस तरह भाषाओं का वर्गीकरण ब्रिटिश औपनिवेशिक शासन के दौरान विभिन्न चरणों में हुआ और इसका निर्धारण उस समय के शासकों ने किया। इसकी एक मिसाल यह है कि फोर्ट विलियम कॉलेज, जहां गिलक्रिस्ट (1759-1841) के अध्ययन के साथ ही औपचारिक रूप से हिंदी का उभार हुआ।

लेखिका किताब में लिखती हैं, 'दो भाषाएं, जिन्हें कभी एक-दूसरे से अलग नहीं माना जाता था उनमें काफी तेजी से दूरी बढ़ती गई और यह दूरी उत्तरी क्षेत्र के दो अलग-अलग धमा.

*, हिंदू और मुस्लिम के बीच जितनी ही थी जिस तथ्य का राजनीतिक रूप से महत्वाकांक्षी दलों ने काफी फायदा उठाया।' हिंदी भाषा प्रकाशनों और हिंदी सीखने वालों की संख्या बढ़ने पर हिंदी लेखन पर अलग से जोर दिया जाने लगा जि. सकी वजह से अप्रत्यक्ष तरीके से क्षेत्रीय आक्रामकता बढ़ी और ठीक इसी दौरान इसके सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र का विस्तार भी हुआ।

बीसवीं शताब्दी के पहले, चार दशकों के दौरान जिस तरह धर्मनिरपेक्ष और आक्रामक राष्ट्रवादी भावनाओं के साथ निजी प्रिंटिंग प्रेस के जरिये भाषाओं ने अपनी यात्रा तय की उसका जिक्र, साहसिक प्रयोग, नई शैलियों और राजनीतिक रूप से जागरूक स्वतंत्र लेखकों में शृणात्मक तेजी

के रूप में किया गया है।

उल्लेखनीय बात यह भी है किसी की जाति और उनकी सामाजिक स्थिति की वजह से हिंदी के संस्कृतनिष्ठ या मिश्रित संस्करणों के इस्तेमाल की दिशा तय हुई। इस तरह

बीसवीं शताब्दी की शुरुआत में संपादकीय से जुड़े कई वरिष्ठता क्रम बरकरार रहे और किताब के पहले अध्याय में जाति-आधारित हिंदी समाचार पत्रों की बात की गई है।

इस किताब में गांधी के समाचार पत्रों जैसे कि 'नवजीवन' और अन्य राष्ट्रवादी प्रकाशनों पर अंकुश लगाने के लिए सेंसरशिप का उल्लेख भी है और यह भी कि गांधी ने नेहरू के साथ मिलकर एक ट्रस्ट शुरू करने का प्रयास करते हुए हिंदी में 'नवजीवन', अंग्रेजी भाषा में 'नैशनल हेराल्ड' और उर्दू में 'कौमी आवाज' निकाला जिससे यह अंदाजा मिलता है कि औपनिवेशिक शासन के खिलाफ उस समय की सार्वजनिक और राजनीतिक यथार्थ में क्षेत्रीय भाषाआ.

के महत्व की एक झलक शासन के मुद्दों पर जनता ध्यान आकर्षित करता है। मिलती है। लेखिका ने इस को जोड़ने में सक्रिय भूमिका कई किताबों में यह बताने बात को संक्षिप्त तरीके से निभाई। निश्चित तौर पर की कोशिश नहीं की गई स्थापित करने के लिए उर्दू इससे यह भी संकेत मिलते हैं कि इन समयावधि के के शायर अकबर इलाहाबादी हैं कि कैसे भाषायी प्रेस दौरान हिंदी प्रेस कैसे के एक मशहूर शेर शजब तोप ने भारत से जुड़े नेहरूवा. बदल रहा था और शायद मुकाबिल हो, अखबार की विचार को मजबूत करने इसी वजह से यह किताब निकालोश का जिक्र किया है। या उस पर सवाल उठाने में डिजिटलीकरण के दौर महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाई। के आगमन के कारण दिख रहे बदलावों को भी स्वराज या स्वतंत्रता के बाद की अवधि को भारत में चूंकि विभिन्न दशकों के उजागर करने में सफल रही है। हिंदी के सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र के दौरान पत्रकारिता से जुड़े इसके अलावा नए बाजार विस्तार की अवधि कहा गया विमर्शों को प्रभावित करने से जुड़े बदलावों जैसे कि है, जिसमें यूरोप के विपरीत, वाली सामग्री का ब्योरा स्वामित्व से जुड़ी नई न तो कोई समानता थी और इस पुस्तक के केंद्र में नहीं संरचनाएं और मीडिया न ही एकरूपता। दक्षिणप. है, ऐसे में हिंदी भाषा को एकाधिकार का उभार, थियों द्वारा हिंदू पहचान के प्रभावित करने या इससे प्रबंधन और संपादकीय प्रतीक के रूप में हिंदी का प्रभावित होने वाले अन्य विभागों के बीच का कम राजनीतिकरण, हिंदी और प्रमुख घटनाक्रमों की चर्चा होता अंतर, राजनीतिक अन्य क्षेत्रीय भाषाओं के बीच की गई है। इनमें से 1972 की विज्ञापनों में वृद्धि और फर्श बढ़ती दरारें, अंग्रेजी का एक न्यूजप्रिंट नीति शामिल थी से अर्श तक पहुंचने वाले संपर्क सूत्र भाषा बने रहना जिसके तहत समाचार पत्रों लोगों की कहानियों का कुछ ऐसे विशिष्ट आयाम में पृष्ठों की संख्या अनिवार्य जिक्र भी इसमें है खास. हैं जिन पर लेखिका ने कर दी गई थी और इससे तौर पर विजय सिंह का इस किताब में चर्चा की है। पहले न्यूजप्रिंट की बढ़ती जिक्र भी है जो शहॉकर से ऐसा प्रतीत होता है कि लागत के संदर्भ में प्रेस को हाकिमश (2018) के नाम से लेखिका ने स्वतंत्रता के नियंत्रित करने के तरीकों मशहूर हैं और जिन्होंने हिंदी पहले दो दशकों पर भी के रूप में चर्चा की गई है। समाचार पत्रों के प्रसार को अपना ध्यान केंद्रित किया इस किताब में उदारीकरण, बढ़ाने के लिए नए तरह की है क्योंकि इस अवधि को वैश्वीकरण और निजी. शजुगाड़श वाली मार्केटिंग विकास पत्रकारिता के युग करण के दशकों से लेकर रणनीतियों की मदद ली। के रूप में देखा जाता है कोविड के बाद के समय यह पुस्तक 1990 के दशक जब प्रेस ने नीतियों और तक का जिक्र किया जाना, के बाद हिंदी अखबारों के

कारोबार में आए बदलाव चुनाव के साथ ही की मीडिया से जुड़े विमर्श और पाठक सर्वेक्षणों की राजनीतिक विज्ञापन, पक्षपाती में पाठकों की विशेष रूप भूमिका, हिंदी और अंग्रेजी पत्रकारों और संस. से दिलचस्पी हो सकती है के बीच टकराव से बाज. रशिप के जरिये हिंदी खासतौर पर वैसे छात्र जो 19 पर पड़ा बड़ा प्रभाव, पत्रकारिता में बदलाव आया मृणाल पांडे की पत्रकारिता सैटेलाइट टेलीविजन का क्योंकि कई अहम कवरेज और उनके साहित्यिक लेखन उभार, डिजिटलीकरण और के विरोध में संसरशिप की का अनुसरण करते रहे हों। गंभीर रिपोर्टिंग की कमी बात बेहद आम हो गई। इसके अलावा किताब की जैसी सभी पहलुओं पर लेखन शैली सामान्य है विस्तार से चर्चा करती हिंदी मीडिया में और इसमें लेखिका के है। किताब में इस बात महिलाओं की स्थिति से जुड़े अपने निजी अनुभवों का को उल्लेखनीय तौर पर एक संक्षिप्त खंड ने मेरा जिक्र भी है जो पुरुष वर्च. बताया गया है कि किस ध्यान आकर्षित किया क्या. स्व वाले हिंदी समाचारपत्रों तरह हिंदी, अंग्रेजी पर कि इसमें न्यूजरूम के कई के दफ्तरों से जुड़े हैं। वह इस हद तक भारी पड़ती अहम पदों पर महिलाओं की हिंदी पत्रकारिता के संदर्भ हुई दिखती है कि इसका अनुपस्थिति के विषय पर में स्त्री-पुरुषों के सामा. इस्तेमाल अंग्रेजी समाचार भी बात की गई है मसलन जिक्र वर्गीकरण की बारीक पत्रों के प्रसार में समर्थन गंभीर खबरों के लेखकों के परतों पर एक विशिष्ट पि. देने के लिए किया जाता है। रूप में, टीवी पर विशेषज्ञों रप्रेक्ष्य में बात करती नजर लेखिका ने संपादकीय और पैनलिस्टों के तौर पर आती हैं। भारत में हिंदी नियंत्रण में कमी के बढ़ते उनकी अनुपस्थिति है। इस भाषाई प्रेस से जुड़ी यह मामलों और प्रबंधकों में बात को शिकायतपूर्ण लहजे अहम किताब है, विशेष रूप उभार के साथ-साथ में लेखिका दर्ज करती हैं से उन अंग्रेजी पाठकों के राजनीतिक विज्ञापनों में कि महिलाओं से संबंधि लिए जो अक्सर इस विषय वृद्धि, हिंदी समाचार पत्रों के त विषयों में भी महिला से सिर्फ इस वजह से नहीं बदलते कारोबार और उनकी पत्रकार शामिल नहीं होती जुड़ पाते हैं क्योंकि इससे सफलता की कहानियों, पेड हैं। इसके अलावा हिंदी जुड़ा अधिकांश लेखन हिंदी न्यूज के विस्फोट, स्ट्रिंगर मीडिया में दलित और में ही उपलब्ध होता है। और रिपोर्टों की नजरअंदाज ओबीसी लेखकों की अनुप. की गई दुनिया के कारणों स्थिति को लेकर भी इस पुस्तक समीक्षा: श्वेता सिंह और प्रभावों पर चर्चा की किताब में चिंता जताई गई है। अनुवाद: शिखा शालिनी है। विशेष रूप से किताब में अंतिम अध्याय में नई मीडिया इस बात का दिलचस्प जिक्र को लेकर बन रहे माहौल है कि किस तरह 2014 के और कोविड के बाद के दौर

Imparting Quality Legal Education and Shaping Future Judiciary

Chanakya National Law University (CNLU) is a public law school and National Law University in Patna, Bihar, India. It was founded as a public university specializing in legal education in the year 2006 by the Bihar government (Bihar Act 24 of 2006). The Chief Justice of Patna High Court is the ex-officio chancellor of the university. It is one of the autonomous law schools in India. The campus has a surface area of roughly 18 acres and is situated very close to the city's center in the Mithapur neighborhood.

The university came into being on 15 August 2006 under the guidance of its vice- / pro-chancellor, Prof. Dr. A. Lakshminath, former dean and registrar, NALSAR University of Law, Hyderabad, HRD Principal Secretary Madan Mohan Jha, a 1977 batch IAS and Registrar (I/C) Vijay Kumar Himanshu Dy. Director of Higher education, HRD, Govt. Of Bihar. The Chanakya National Law University was established under the Chanakya National Law University Act, 2006 (Bihar Act No. 24 of 2006) and is mentioned

in sections 2(f) and 12(B) of the U.G.C. Act, 1956.

Since the establishment of this institution, it has been a prime leader in the field of providing quality legal study and encouraging meticulous legal research. The University's principal objective is to create and deliver multidisciplinary, comprehensive legal education that is socially relevant. Through this instruction, we aspire to foster the rule of law, promote moral and ethical



principles, and further the goals outlined in the Indian Constitution.

No educational institution is complete without adequate facilities for its students, faculty & employees. CNLU provides an extensive range of facilities on its campus. A well-managed residential accommodation with modern facilities provided to students. Mess and canteen facilities on campus provide everything from a simple coffee and sandwich to a full meal. The University furnishes a complete range of medical services for students and employees who register as patients. In addition to general practice services, CNLU provides a range of connoisseur clinics and visiting practitioners.

There are spacious buildings for administrative and academic blocks, halls of residence for boys and girls, faculty and non-teaching staffs quarters, a gymnasium, indoor & outdoor sports facil-

ity and two guest houses with all necessary amenities with fire fighting equipment installed, and a sprawling lawn with various types of plants add beauty to the landscape. The library—“NISHANTNILAYAM”, a magnificent building, has an opulent collection of 20 thousand books, bound volumes of journals, different magazines, newspapers along with CDs and videos, online databases i.e., WESTLAW INDIA, MANUPATRA, HEIN ONLINE, and JSTOR through INFLIBNET, E-CORPORATE LAW ADVISER, AIR, SCC, and internet services through NKN-NMEICT. The University has subscribed to a backup Internet connection of 180 Mbps with secured Firewall cum UTM device namely FORTINET FortiGate 800C the server room with power backup.

The University has metamorphosed into a robust rostrum for myriad promising and creative brains displaying their charisma on vivid forums, The students of this

institution have proved their prowess by bringing several laurels to its pride competitions ranging from Moot Courts to cultural accomplishments, from sport to debates.

A decade and a half since its inception eleven batches of CNLU have passed and have been placed in leading law firms, corporate houses, and banks and several have been chosen by foreign universities for pursuing their master's degree.

Around 50 students cracked 31st Bihar Judicial Services Examination last year to join the independent wing of the Government i.e. the judiciary. In the past too the performance of students has been consistent with a large chunk of them getting into the judiciary every year. Many students have also joined the bar and are having promising legal practice currently, ranging from the apex court to various high courts and even lower judiciary as well.



The First Private Medical College of Patna



Netaji Subhas Medical College & Hospital was established by Sitwanto Devi Mahila Kalyan Sansthan at Amhara, Bihta, Patna. The Institute is the brainchild of our visionary chairman, Shri M.M Singh. Chairman's idea behind establishment of Netaji Subhas Medical College & Hospital is to provide best in class medical education to the students and nurture world class doctors for the service to the nation. The medical college has a permit from the National Medical Commission, New Delhi and is affiliated to

Aryabhata Knowledge University, Patna for its MBBS course with a capacity of 100 seats.

The medical college is equipped with state of the art infrastructure for teaching and learning. It also has well established laboratories to support the teaching and hands-on learning of the students. The support infrastructure includes hostels for students, residential quarters for doctors and staff, sporting facilities, and recreational facilities are all available in the institute's campus.

Since inception, the vision of the institute has been to provide world class medical facilities to the patients for clinical and diagnostic support. The institute has well established and strong pre-clinical, para-clinical and clinical departments with qualified doctors, trained nursing & paramedical staff.

The medical college serves as a rostrum for the students to nurture their talent and engrave their ideas with their creative best.



**Netaji Subhas
Medical College & Hospital**
Amhara, Bihta, Patna – 801 106, Bihar

UNDERSTANDING IN 3 MINUTES WHAT RSF DOES

Fighting for freedom of information is a complex matter.
We have summarized it in 4 points.



1 PREVENTION

WE PROVIDE THE TOOLS TO KEEP
INFORMATION FLOWING



We lend bullet-proof vests, press vests, helmets, and tags



We train in digital security and provide encryption tools



We publish practical safety guides

2 EMERGENCIES

WE ASSIST THE VICTIMS OF ATTACKS
ON FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AS
QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE



We denounce attacks on freedom of information with campaigns, publications and demonstrations



We intervene urgently with the authorities



We ensure safety and security



We unblock censored websites

3 GROUND WORK



WE TRY TO MAKE A LASTING
DIFFERENCE



We engage in international advocacy



We help develop skills with local NGOs, international NGOs and civil society



We provide legal, administrative and financial support

4 INFORMATION

WE NEVER STAY SILENT WHEN THE FREEDOM
OF INFORMATION IS ATTACKED



We carry out awareness campaigns

We publish investigation reports



We publish the World Press Freedom Index





NWMI

network of women in media, India