

30th ANNIVERSARY • 2024

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Indian Women's Press Corps the journey so far

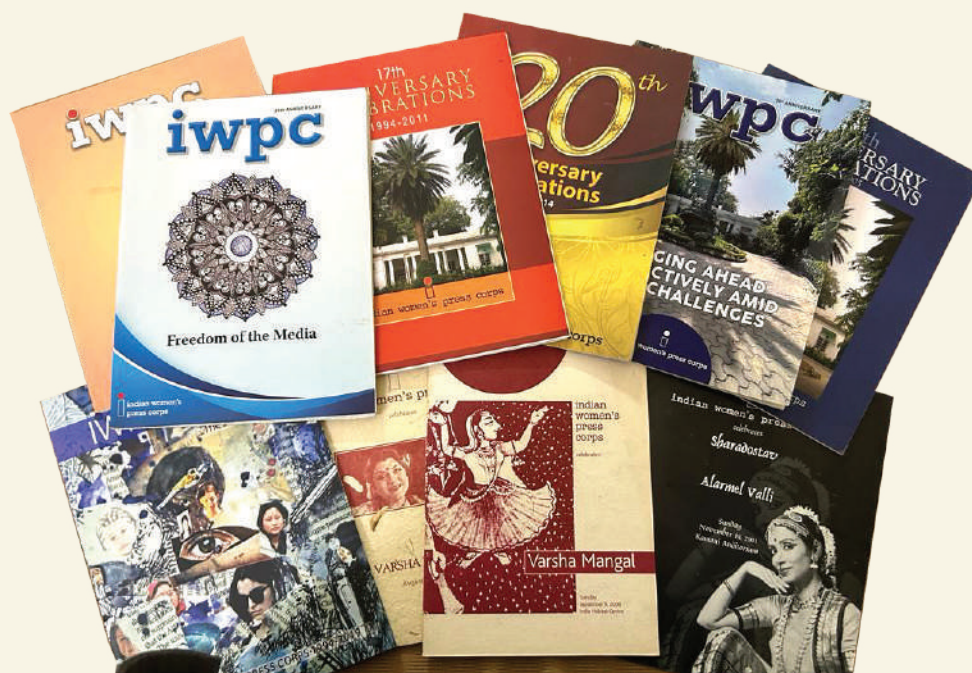
In 1994, 18 women journalists came together to form the Indian Women's Press Corps (IWPC). They felt the need to have a space of their own close to the seat of power and information gathering – Parliament, Ministries and Press Information Bureau. A space to meet and interact with newsmakers and to bond with each other.

The years that followed have amply validated this. Today the IWPC membership stands at 1,000 with reporters, editors, anchors, producers, photographers and camera persons from across print, broadcast, television and digital media.

Centrally located in a heritage building in the heart of Lutyen's Delhi, it is an oasis for members to catch their breath, have a bite, file a story, record a piece to camera or simply share a joke with friends.

The IWPC regularly holds workshops, background briefings and press interactions with eminent personalities. Professional tours both within and outside India are organised for members. Performing arts at the IWPC's anniversary events have been prominent on the capital's cultural calendar.

On our 30 th anniversary, the IWPC re-dedicates itself to the women journalist –enabling her to rise to the pinnacle of her professional and other commitments.



Indian Women's Press Corps
5 Windsor Place, New Delhi-110001

Telephone: 01123325366

Email: iwpcdelhi@yahoo.com/iwpcdelhi@gmail.com

Website: www.iwpc.in

ADITYA BIRLA



HINDALCO

Letter from IWPC President Parul Sharma

Looking ahead!

An anniversary means many things to many people. An institution's anniversary is always a momentous occasion to commemorate, yet reflect as well on the path ahead. The Indian Women's Press Corps has completed thirty years. It has been a long journey and no small feat that the institution, set up in 1994 by a group of committed women journalists, has survived the vagaries that came its way. The journey has been possible with the collective effort of our members. Over the years, the IWPC has grown in strength and size and today it can boast of a membership of over 900 members who look towards the IWPC as a source of strength, fraternity and solidarity.

If the institution has grown, so have the challenges. The media is not what it was thirty years ago. There have been political, economic and technological changes which have shaped the world of journalism as well as that of media persons. In 2020-21, the world was devastated by Covid-19. The media was not immune to it. Several of our fraternity succumbed tragically to the deadly virus. This was also a period when media houses decided to prune their staff drastically. The loss to life and jobs was an irreparable one. Many among us could not find alternate employment. In the absence of any guaranteed social security, media persons had to put up with job losses. Many continue to put up with precarious forms of employment and overwork.

The media is no longer represented by only print and television. Its footprint has expanded. Digital news media today is a part of our lives and so are the journalists working in that space. Women journalists are no exception. They have also learnt to deal with fake news, sometimes as newspersons and sometimes as victims.

Even though opportunities have increased and media persons are learning to cope with the new conditions both at the workplace and the new environment, the safety and security of women journalists is also a pressing issue. First, the Me Too movement exposed the fissures at the workplace. Then women journalists who actively engaged on the social media were targeted for their views by incessant trolling, all of which has raised the need for laws and special provi-



sions to deal with these new forms of violence. Some of them faced serious threats as well. The last few years have been challenging for the journalist fraternity as a whole. Threats, attacks and arrests became more common than ever. India's ranking in press freedom indices dipped as direct and indirect forms of harassment continued. Digital news media bore the brunt of the attacks. Women journalists have not been so much at the receiving end of physical violence like some of their male counterparts but the incident involving a young post-graduate intern in

a government hospital was a wake-up call for everyone. It shook the conscience of the country as young women doctors took to the streets demanding safe work places. The demand resonated with many women across the country. Workplace safety for women is a non-negotiable that cannot be brushed under the carpet.

Interestingly, some people including some government heads felt that violence can be prevented if women weren't allowed to work in night shifts. The solution certainly doesn't lie in excluding women from the workplace. Many among our fraternity work the night shift too, bringing out the edition for the next day. Nursing staff in hospitals work through the night. Just as in the media, everywhere there are more and more young women wanting to join the workforce but it is the paucity of decent and secure employment opportunities, salaries, a guaranteed safe environment that eludes them. Feel good slogans alone by governments will not be sufficient to guarantee an environment where women are not objectified but seen as active agents contributing to the economy and progress. Creating a safe and secure environment and equal opportunities for all women, including working women, is the responsibility of the state first and then the principal employer. It is only by guaranteeing such measures and emancipatory cultural alternatives that more women will be able to participate as equal stakeholders, including in the media.

The 30th anniversary of the IWPC is an occasion to reflect on what has gone by and what lies ahead. That is one reason why we have chosen to focus on safety at the workplace in this souvenir. It reflects our concern and challenges that lie ahead.

About the Artistes

NAZEER KATHA KIRTAN: MUSICAL PRODUCTION BASED ON THE POETRY OF NAZEER AKBARABADI

Nazeer Akbarabadi, the 18th century 'people's poet' was introduced to modern audiences by Habib Tanvir through his famous play *Agra Bazaar*.

Now a vibrant musical production, **Nazeer Katha Kirtan** captures the simple yet captivating sounds and scenes of daily life, as reflected in the poet's works.



Performance of 'Nazeer Katha Kirtan'

Rotiyanama is based on 'roti' or daily bread; *Agre ki Kakdi* is an enchanting vendor's song and *Chidiyon ki Tashbi* is a trilling medley of bird sounds.

The performance showcases Nazeer's poetry for festivals and devotional songs, including *Krishna Kanhaiya ka Balpan* and *Allah-o-gani*.

Through its immersive storytelling and music, *Nazeer Katha Kirtan* directed by **Rajneesh Bisht** has been brought to you by **Khel Tamasha**, a group of young theatre activists committed to reviving traditional forms of theatre to suit the modern context.

The timeless poetry steeped in traditional values of unity, compassion and love reflects the precious *Ganga-Jamuni Tehzeeb* that is as relevant today as it was in the life and times of Nazeer Akhbarabadi.

THE MUSICAL LEGACY OF SUFI POETS

The works of Baba Nanak, Bulleh Shah, and Shah Husain and Sufi poets such as Sultan Bahu reflect deep spiritual truths and personal experiences of the divine. Three artistes bring these to you – as sung in popular lore

Rekha Raj has won international acclaim as a Sufi singer. The grand-daughter of the famed singer of Lahore, Khursheed Begum, she has sung for several films, including Mira Nair's *Monsoon Wedding*.



Poonam Singh



Rekha Raj



Shumita Didi

A socio-cultural activist, **Poonam Singh** is a trained actor, storyteller and the editor of Punjab's renowned heritage magazine, *Preetlari*.

Shumita Didi Sandhu, actor, artist and documentary film-maker curates literary, cultural events. She launched the *Baba Bulleh Shah Di Baithak* in Delhi.

They perform under the aegis of **Saanjhey Rang** that promotes harmony and celebrates India's syncretic culture.

IWPC: A Collective Dream



MRINAL PANDEY

The year was 1994 and there were eighteen of us: gently greying women journalists sitting on the lawns of the Constitution Club, discussed having a press club of our own. We were members of the hoary Press Club of course, and it took us some time to convince our male colleagues that women's press club was by no means an act of separation but of gifting Indian media women a space all their own where they could meet as professionals, get to know each other, learn about journalism in various Indian languages and exchange vital information.

Mrs Sheila Kaul the then minister for world and housing gave us a patient hearing and allotted us a small bungalow at Windsor Place that we soon spruced up and made into a happy welcoming space for all women journalists including freelancers and young graduate part timer temps at various media houses. It is such a joy to see it grow and become a steady part of India's media scene and a hub of activities the year round.

Media has changed much since 1994 but the younger generation of media women has proven its capabilities well to tackle both the print and online media. Their voices and their demands no longer go unheard, unaddressed.

Like Abou Ben Adhem, may their tribe increase!



USHA RAI

There is nostalgia and more nostalgia when I think of how the Indian Women Press Corps was started 30 years ago. There were not that many women journalists in those days and the few of us who were in mainstream media felt we needed a place of our own--- a working space closer to the seat of power and information gathering--- Parliament, ministries and good old Press Information Bureau . A place where to invite and discuss with newsmakers as well as let down our hair and talk of problems of home and office.

We gave a great deal of importance to our kitchen---it had to provide wholesome, tasty meals at reasonable rates and should be better than the food provided by our neighbour--- The Press Club. The staff had to be women -to encourage employment of women and there would be no booze! Not only was a bar licence expensive but some ugly drunken episodes at the Press Club made us abstain. As founding members, 18 of us contributed Rs 1,000 each and built a corpus of Rs 18,000 for our second home.

We brought cushions and durries from home and swept and swabbed, sat on the floor and strategized on building a worthy media hub. It was a lot of fun. In those days there was sympathy for our cause and access to power was fairly easy.

The fact that the IWPC has sustained and grown over the years is a matter of pride. Many of us oldies have lost touch with the new generation. Those bonds need to be rebuilt to steer the IWPC to a meaningful future.



KALYANI SHANKAR

Not all dreams come true, but thirty years ago, a few women journalists led by Coomi Kapoor and others established an exclusive women's press corps in the capital.

The idea of the IWPC germinated on a pleasant winter afternoon. While crossing the Bungalow in Windsor Place, I suggested an exclusive women's press club on the lines of the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. Coomi mobilised other journalists. Soon, a women's scribes team went to the Prime Minister and requested to give us a 5 Windsor Place, which was vacant. That is how the bungalow in Lutyens, Delhi, became our dream house.

The organisation has grown, and many office bearers have worked tirelessly to build it. Elections were held regularly, and though the office bearers changed, the one thing to be admired was the team's collective effort, which contributed to the club's life, fostering progress and growth. Continuing for three decades without interruption is no small achievement. The number of members also grew steadily.

The IWPC has survived and thrived, becoming a vital platform for professional growth, where many scribes meet, share, and discuss numerous professional issues. It became a place to meet and eat, as IWPC ran a reasonably priced canteen .

Today, the IWPC has come to be recognised in the media world as a credible organisation. It invites the newsmaker to interact with the members and to have a separate briefing with ministers and other important people.

Now, it is the perfect time to reflect on past glories and failures and how to move forward .



COOMI KAPOOR

I was instantaneously captivated by the idea of starting a women's press corps, when my former colleague Kalyani Shankar, first mooted the proposal. Many women scribes excitedly volunteered to pitch in and convert the vision into a reality.. True, there were nay sayers as well, including sarcastic male colleagues and some from our own gender, who acted as if we were setting up some sort of a rival press club.

We had to explain repeatedly that the club we envisaged would

be very different. Not just a watering hole to relax after work hours, but an organisation which could assist women in their professional duties and serve as a much needed meeting place for women scribes, especially those who were desk bound. Another important function was to be a support group for women scribes who needed a shoulder to lean on. It was not easy for women to break into this once all- male preserve in the early years, particularly in conservative Delhi.

It was also a forum for ensuring professional integrity. If our dreams became a reality it was because our original members gallantly and generously pitched in. For instance, Rashmi Saksena spent hours in consultations and writing the constitution. Kalyani, Rashmi, Saroj Nagi and myself went on a sleuthing expedition looking for a vacant bungalow in Lutyens Delhi.

Thanks to our investigative skills we zeroed in on 5 Windsor Place, which had been mysteriously lying vacant for years. There was dogged opposition to our audacious plan and the Housing Ministry dismissed our cheeky request out of hand. But we also benefited from the goodwill and contacts we had built up over the years.

One of our well wishers was then Prime Minister, P V Narasimha Rao. I knew the battle was finally won when I heard the dour Rao politely tell off the then housing minister's aide, later indicted for corruption. His minister should be aware whose wishes she was defying he simply remarked.



SHEELA BHATT

The process of institution building is one of the most difficult human endeavours.

More so in New Delhi where politics of all shades interferes with the processes.

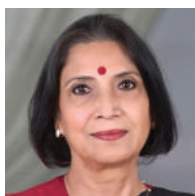
In view of realities that surrounds us, the shaping of IWPC has been a remarkable phenomenon in Indian media.

It has been a slow-moving process with many road-breakers and heart-breaks but we have survived. What one likes the most about IWPC is that it's far different from many other media-related institutions.

It has developed a survival-bone within. It's vulnerable at one level but time has proven that it's sturdy enough to face adversities.

There are pluses and minuses in running of IWPC, but there is a desirable level of consciousness in its public conduct.

It must remain balanced, broad-based and accommodative of differing opinions of its members. Once more, it's time to remember that united we stand, divided we fall.



RASHMI SAKSENA

As IWPC celebrates its 30th birthday, it stares at its very continuation and survival. It is battling dwindling funds. IWPC must not lose this battle simply for the sake of what it has come to mean for women journalists in the print and electronic media.

IWPC is their very own space in the midst of the Capital city's challenging milieu. It has

evolved into a spot that provides them privacy, camaraderie and at times news leads.

30 years ago, when 18 of us founding members put Rs.1000/- each into the kitty to start IWPC, we naively thought we had a king's ransom to launch our dream project. Housekeeping was expensive.. Obviously, our collective euphoria had outweighed the currency bag! We started counting our pennies. The thrift mantra included "family" (IWPC members) hold back when invitees came for tea. We brought snacks and table linen from home and personally supplemented cash. We came up with fundraisers. The sole aim was to establish IWPC and get it going. Slowly IWPC had a decent corpus as FD's in the bank.

The overriding spirit then was "to give more than take". The IWPC family must sing from this music sheet again to stay alive.



PAMELA PHILIPOSE

What can one say about the IWPC@30? A green oasis in the crowded heart of the National Capital? A venue to file a story in peace amidst the frenzy of deadlines? A site to exchange ideas and to flag breaking news? A safe space to laugh and play in an often heartless world? A spot to catch a quick, inexpensive, delicious bite, with lunch that is always waiting for you as you rush in from a

non-stop, newsgathering morning, ravenous and faint with hunger? A Place of Our Own when doors elsewhere are shut and windows bolted? A facility to go to, to GO...for that much needed toilet break mid-afternoon? And, above all, an institution founded and nurtured by women journalists, for women journalists, which has over three decades become not just a professional institution but an iconic centre signaling to the world that women journalists matter.



RASHME SEHGAL

Iam filled with a sense of deep nostalgia when I remember the wonderful days when a group of us women journalists decided to set up our own press corps. We were so elated with the idea that none of us stopped to consider the obstacles that we could face given that our pool money was so meagre. Also each of us was a busy with our professional

obligations and the arduous task of looking after our families.

But we muddled through somehow with members a personally contributing pieces of furniture, crockery and other household items to set up a bare- knuckle establishment. Fortunately, the location paid dividends and the list of members grew long enough for us to ensure a running kitchen and a minimal staff who have stayed with us through thick and thin.

The focus on those heady days was to invite experts to hold interactive sessions on a range of vital subjects relating to health, environment, politics and of course women. Initially, we started by having a creche for young kids but that did not work out since members'

work hours were too erratic and bringing and picking up kids was too complicated. But summer workshops for kids were extremely popular with fun activities and during winter, the tables spread out in the sun, always attracted a full house.

Running the IWPC was always a financial struggle but we managed somehow to build a corpus. We managed to attract all manner of dignitaries and senior ministers to hold press meets at our place. On holidays, members could use it, after making a payment, to hold informal lunches and dinners.

Running an institution requires the ability to incorporate all points of view. Sadly, a few years ago, the IWPC was marked by a divide with some members choosing to go public with their grievances. That should have been best avoided or sorted out within the institution. The division has persisted and it is now for the younger generation to take over the baton to iron out differences and make sure that our legacy based on the highest principles of journalism and sisterhood, is not thrown by the wayside as seems to be the case with several institutions.



RITAMBHARA SHASTRI

Firstly, a big shoutout for IWPC ! For all that it embodies, for emerging as a voice to reckon with, for being the place of comfort for women journos, for articulating media concerns, for the invited luminaries enriching us with their experiences and raising essential issues and for so so much more....

That IWPC has survived three decades despite many odds is indeed commendable but whether it continues to stand as a prominent force to reckon or is becoming a fissured entity needs to be pondered . Such fissures are, however, only reflective of the deep political and societal divides seen in the country in recent years.

In its birth and early years all stood together purposefully and with bonhomie to set up the place not merely as a comfort zone. IWPC's engagement with political and social developments in the country and abroad, brought illustrious leaders and experts to discuss, debate, interact with the members. All with a determined spirit and pride in this place that we call our own.

It also was an opinion generator as women journos raised concerns through press statements and conferences and interactions. Our beloved IWPC had come of age and were we proud of it !!

Three decades later although it stands seemingly robust it still needs to be put on its feet solidly. Better revenue generation to make it strong and independent would require members to rally together purposefully, speaking powerfully to make it a tough media force instead of an unquestioning compliant one.

Essential is to raise concerns shorn of the “ they and us” syndrome that is symptomatic of the current times. The priority concern of all members should be the survival of this one of its kind institution which represents the aspirations and hopes of the new generations of women journalists across the country.

After all, IWPC is one place which we struggled to set up,

nurtured with much love and tender care in the spirit of bonhomie through three decades.

No small achievement that!!



KULKUM CHADHA

My mind goes back to those days when we had the building but no furniture; we had a place but nothing to fill it up with: we would get cushions from home and tea in a flask when each time the cups would fall short. But we had an idea: and the will and determination to see it through.

It was an idea to have a club of our own: a club which was set up by women. In one sense it was for women too but that was as far as the technicality of membership was concerned. It never was one that would bar entry of our colleagues who were men. In that sense it was inclusive, yet one where the writ of women would run: one which would focus on the needs of women journalists who often got crowded out in a profession that was male dominated: at least 30 years ago.

A lot has changed since then: the gender lines somewhat blurred and our headcount quite respectable if not enviable.

The IWPC has grown from strength to strength; today we don't worry about our cushions or cups falling short: today we look ahead and take pride in the club of yesteryears shaping up as an institution that has stood the test of time: one that has covered several milestones and continues to leave a mark on the sands of Time...



HARMINDER KAUR

Founded in 1994 by 18 women journalists, the Indian Women's Press Corps (IWPC) was created with the vision of providing a space where women could connect, support one another, and thrive professionally. Over the yearws, IWPC has grown into much more than just a professional hub. It has become a place for personal connections, where we share experiences, engage with political

leaders and prominent personalities, and celebrate cultural festivals. It's also a space to relax and recharge amid long working hours.

As a founding member, I take immense pride in seeing IWPC evolve into a vibrant, thriving organization with about 1000 members across print, electronic, and digital media. Each elected committee has played a crucial role in its growth.

Looking back, I am proud of what we've built: a resilient, creative, and independent community that has supported women journalists for 30 years. One of the most encouraging developments has been the annual elections, where members now choose their office bearers—a significant shift from the early days when leadership roles were assigned.

As a founder member it is my desire to see office bearers should step aside after two consecutive terms, allowing younger members to bring fresh energy and vision to the organization.

The Ringside View and the Threats



Saba Naqvi

I have thoroughly enjoyed my career in Indian journalism that has given me a ringside view of contemporary history. But along with an interesting career, being a journalist reporting on Indian politics has also brought ugly threats, hostility and profiling. These have ranged from despicable ones such as rape, incarceration, death to expulsion from the country.

Apparently this is a given now if you happen to have a Muslim name, and a double whammy if you are a woman to boot and are critical of the regime. Across the world, media studies by independent outfits, the *Guardian* newspaper in the UK and bodies dedicated to press freedom, note that the most profiled and targeted are members of the minority groups in terms of race or religion. It is worse if those writing or speaking on public issues are women. Trolling by the right wing having been the most fierce the world over –has been studied. It has been known to attack people for their gender, beliefs, sexuality, faith, race, ethnicity and political views.

So, what does one do for security? First, social media requires some caution now (unless you happen to be Donald Trump!). There are many landmines in the internet space and they need to be navigated carefully. Yet there are advantages of being read and/or heard through social media sites. If there is abuse, there is also support out there.

In the real physical world, a journalist who is likely to be recognized, needs to be mindful in a riot or a situation building up to a conflict. Let me also confess that at times, reporting in a polarized situation, I have just been vague about my identity.

But that's no longer possible, so I have refused to let fear get into my head. I walk into RSS offices in the districts, introduce myself and begin a conversation. I did so while reporting on the 2024 elections from Uttar Pradesh. It works for me because of my long experience in covering the BJP and Sangh Parivar. For journalists having minority names, I would recommend travelling along with colleagues.

During the 2022 Assembly election in Uttar Pradesh, I went to Dasna, where the serial hate-monger Yati Narasinghanad's temple is located, with a big sign outside that says, "Muslims not allowed". Hate-mongers, vigilante groups and toxic individuals abound in today's India. There were other people to talk to in the town, including those from both the majority and minority communities.

A journalist's world is also about camaraderie during assignments and I have, over the years, nurtured friendships and links with colleagues in states such as Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Kashmir, Gujarat, from where I have reported the most frequently. I thank all of them. It requires curiosity and humility and the ability to get along with

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people of all shades of opinion to be a reporter/journalist. An individual has subjective views but the job is not to preach or talk down to people. Rather it is to explore views and lives of others. It is with fellow scribes that I have done the most memorable assignments in the field.

Even those who become columnists and editors but began with reporting, would be egalitarian people. For the craft of reporting requires humbly asking (if not begging) for appointments and/or quotes and going to the field with ordinary folk in cities and the countryside. Every reporter has lived through the anxiety of space for their story and worry if it would be cut or edited.

The Indian media is an interesting contradiction in terms. On the one hand, it employs thousands of women journalists. Some of the best political reporters in the national capital throughout the three decades of my reporting have been women. Yet when it comes to public debates, the media rarely includes women. Press bodies give their space to what I would mockingly call a MANEL – be it of lawyers, policy wonks or practitioners of media where men alone will sit and pontificate, It excludes women.

These men, many fine and courageous individuals, are mostly from a particular social background or caste. There would occasionally one Muslim male. It is no laughing matter that the Indian media is still the preserve of one social strata, male and female, and there is little attempt made to consciously include Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and other historically discriminated communities in the newsroom.

In Western democracies, this would be seen as a lack of social and racial diversity. In India, we just plod along and some of the greatest liberals choose to never flag or seek to change this.

Outside conventional media, YouTube is booming. Here too although some all-male chats may show ideological independence but no social diversity whatsoever.

As far as security for journalists goes, perhaps the IWPC can set up a small fund to assist women reporters in the districts who get harassed, targeted and sacked for investigative journalism or just reporting against regimes.

Whatever problems someone like me with a Muslim name may have confronted, it is nothing compared with what young women reporters in small towns and districts face. I have also come across some fine Dalit women reporters but they seem to be out of the mainstream and working in platforms that foreground subaltern issues from the perspective of their caste reality. Journalism is also a low-paying profession and this too must be factored in.

As for me, being profiled as a Muslim woman, let me share that my father is a Muslim, my mother a Christian and the father of my daughter, a Hindu. So, I consider myself representative of the India rooted in our Constitution and love covering whatever is going on -- the good, the bad and the ugly in my country.

Saba Naqvi is a journalist with over three decades of experience. She is also the author of four books.

Whatever problems someone like me with a Muslim name may have confronted, it is nothing compared with what young women reporters in small towns and districts face. Perhaps the IWPC can set up a small fund for those who get harassed, targeted and sacked for investigative journalism or just reporting against regimes



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For women journalists, how safe is safe?



Pamela Philipose

The Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) that surveys the status of women journalists every five years on a global plane notes that digital intimidation is the “newest threat” facing women journalists. Risks range from pernicious, gendered online harassment to overt, targeted attacks that frequently involve threats of sexual violence

The stories we write do not tell the stories we live through as women journalists. For the most part, experiences of sexual harassment, even sexual attacks, are placed in a black box buried deep in the recesses of memory. The siren that plays in the head after such assaults is loud and insistent: move on, move on; the job is too important, the story is too important, the deadline is too important, the opinion of the news editor is too important.

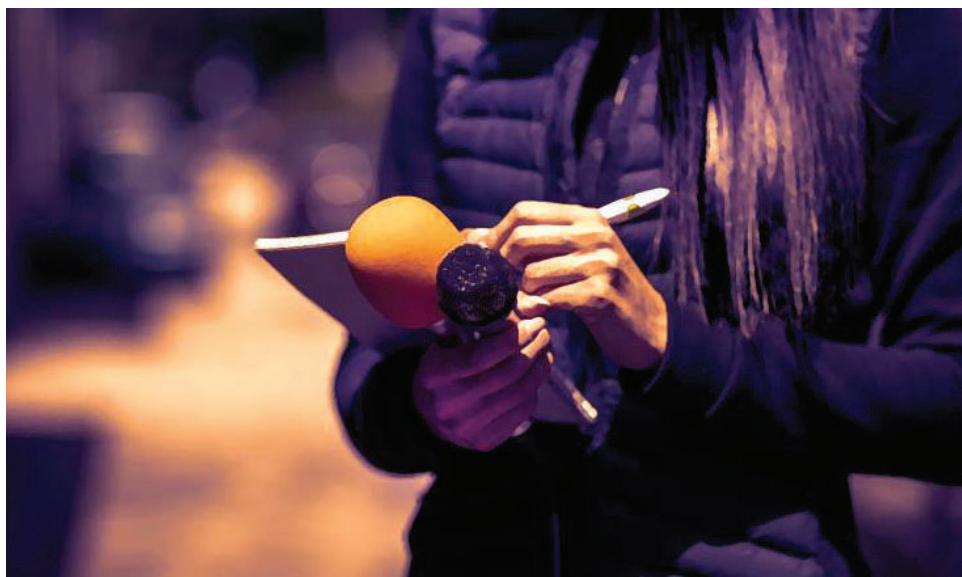
Almost every woman journalist who has encountered grievous sexual harm in the course of professional assignments has expressed the singular fear of losing out professionally should she go public with her story. In 2011, we had a rare and graphic account of what could happen to women when reporting momentous breaking news amidst raging crowds.

On the night in 2011 when Hosni Mubarak was overthrown during the Arab Uprising—in the crowd that converged at Cairo’s Tahrir Square was CBS News’ Lara Logan. She later summoned the courage to recall how her clothes were torn off and her muscles agonizingly stretched as she was separated from her crew and swallowed into

a mob of 200 -300 men. She had fleeting recollections of cell phone cameras taking pictures of her naked body: “I didn’t even know that they were beating me with flagpoles and sticks and things because I couldn’t even feel that because I think the sexual assault was all I could feel, their hands raping me over and over and over again.”

She clutched desperately to the arm of her bodyguard, Ray, but was soon separated from him: “When I lost Ray, I thought that was the end. It was like all the adrenaline left my body. ‘Cause I knew in his face when he lost me, he thought I was going to die. They were tearing my body in every direction. And they were trying to tear off chunks of my scalp.” Of course Logan screamed as loud as she could but her screams only seemed to excite the mob: “The more I screamed, it turned them into afrenzy,” she said.

A few months after Logan’s experience, 48 women journalists who have undergone varying degrees of sexual violence spoke to the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists. The running thread through all their accounts was a reluctance to speak about their experience – not because they would face a backlash from the



family, or possibly lasting stigma, but because going public with the story would mark them in the opinion of their bosses as unsuitable to handle tough assignments.

Two years later, under the shadow of the Nirbhaya gang rape horror, in Mumbai's Lower Parel a 22-year old photojournalist assigned to do a feature in the abandoned Shakti Mills was trapped by five men and subjected to repeated rape. This showed that what happened to Logan could happen to any woman media professional in India—given the nature of journalistic work. The men were later identified and are today serving prison terms but what was striking was the manner this young photojournalist faced up to the situation. She made two very remarkable statements: that she wanted to get back to work as soon as possible; and that rape is not the end of life.

The courage of such individuals apart, larger society needs to understand the nature of this crime and how it impacts journalism as it is practiced. If woman journalists are preyed upon to the extent that they are forced to give up on their profession, media coverage will be much the poorer because gender representation in the newsroom brings important dimensions to reportage and analyses. It is the crucial process of women's emergence, self-actualisation, and professionalism that has contributed immensely to introducing equality and balance into Indian media coverage.

Over time, the culture of intimidation and assault along gender lines has grown exponentially. The ubiquitous rape culture in the real world, often glorified through media products like cinema and popular music, has impacted the security of all women professionals, but more so that of media workers whose jobs entail the projection of their public persona.

By the second decade of the 21st century, a new threat emerged with the arrival of digital media. The internet is rightly recognised as a game changer in terms of the democratization of access to information and engendering self-communication in amazing ways, but it also enabled egregious practices like targeting and trolling.

The Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) that surveys the status of women journalists every five years on an global plane notes that digital intimidation is the "newest threat" facing women journalists and media workers (along with their female sources). It notes that the "risks range from pernicious, gendered online harassment to overt, targeted attacks that frequently involve



threats of sexual violence. Increasingly, they also include digital security breaches from the exposure of identifying information (exacerbating the offline risks) through to malicious misrepresentation using Artificial Intelligence technologies."

In her detailed chapter on 'Women and the Internet in India', free media activist Geeta Ses-hu recalled how Sagarika Ghose, then a television anchor, Kavita Krishnan women's activist and writer, Chinmayi Sripada, Tamil playback singer and Meena Kandaswamy, writer have all faced rape threats from anonymous trolls, largely for their publicly stated political views.

How can mediapersons battle this severely distressing phenomenon? Individual solutions like blocking trolls go only that far. Sexual harassment in the digital and physical space should get transformed into an issue of both media and public concern. Newsrooms should be made conscious of this phenomenon to enable institutionalized measures to counter it, including filing of cases and the publicizing of such crimes. The big social media platforms which stand to benefit monetarily from such aggravated assaults should be made accountable for the crime they are perpetuating. In addition we, as media professionals, need to share our experiences and battle the challenge collectively.

Pamela Philipose is has held senior editorial positions in *The Indian Express*, *Women's Feature Service*, and is currently Ombudsperson of *The Wire*. Among the books she has authored is '*Media's Shifting Terrain Five Years that Transformed the Way India Communicates*'.

Almost every woman journalist who has encountered grievous sexual harm in the course of professional assignments has expressed the singular fear of losing out professionally should she go public with her story

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How Women Journalists Changed India

One Report, One Headline, One Battle at a Time



Suparna Sharma

I had read Coomi Kapoor, Manini Chatterjee, Pamela Philipose, Radhika Roy, Usha Rai, Amita Verma, Nikhat Kazmi, Sucheta Dalal and so many others. These women journalists and so many other reporters and sub-editors in Hindi, Urdu and regional press had charted their own course in what had been a boys' club

The one practical reason why I and many other upper caste, city-bred, convent-educated, English Literature types of my generation were drawn to journalism in the mid-1990s was because we had no skill apart from lamenting a dangling participle or quoting Shakespeare without irony. But the real, existential reason why we wanted to be journalists was because so many women journalists who had come before us, our trailblazing predecessors, were so damn cool.

As a child of the 1970s, I grew up watching Pratima Puri reading the news on Doordarshan. As an adolescent, I had a crush on Nalini Singh who, with her kajal-lined eyes and half-a-smile, would single-handedly interview a daunting panel of politicians, including Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Harkishan Singh Surjeet, Pramod Mahajan and Ram Vilas Paswan.

I had read about Homai Vyrawalla, India's first woman photojournalist; followed the work of Eve's Weekly and Star & Style's editor Gulshan Ewing; Illustrated Weekly's intrepid reporter Bachi Karkaria; Prabha Dutt, the spunky chief reporter at the Hindustan Times and Femina's Frene Talyakhan, Vimla Patil and Sathya Saran.

In the Northeast, The Telegraph's Seema-Goswami had covered the region riding on a bike! I had stared gobsmacked at Sheela Bhatt interview-

ing Dawood Ibrahim. I had read articles by Nirupama Subramanian and Anita Pratap reporting from Sri Lanka on the LTTE. Olga Tellis in Bombay who broke stories in the Blitz and fought a court case to protect the rights of pavement dwellers in Mumbai. Teesta Setalvad took up the struggle for riot victims and Harinder Baweja spied on spies and chased terrorists everywhere.

I had grown up reading the deliciously mean Bollywood 'gossip ki maharani' Devyani Chaubal and Shobhaa De. I had read Coomi Kapoor, Manini Chatterjee, Pamela Philipose, Radhika Roy, Usha Rai, Amita Verma, Nikhat Kazmi, Sucheta Dalal and so many others covering crime, politics, riots, rape, dowry deaths, court, elections, governance, corruption, insurgency, militancy, business, sports, and women's movements.

These women journalists and so many reporters and sub-editors in Hindi, Urdu, Bengali, Marathi, Malayali, Punjabi, Gujarati, Kashmiri and other regional press had charted their own course in what had been—a boys' club. And they had shattered the glass ceiling, moving the start-line for my generation. Whatever we did, whatever we could do was because they had shown us how it's to be done.

When I joined The Asian Age newspaper in 1993, launched by M.J Akbar, it was for me and many others—our first job. It felt like we had landed



Coomi Kapoor



Manini Chatterjee



Radhika Roy



Mani Vyarawalla



Sheela Bhall



Nalini Singh



Nirupama Subramanian

on the Moon.

We worked long hours without a single day off for months. Leaving office late at night, 8-9 of us crammed into a cab that did a full Dilli Darshan ! In the office, there was one tiny bathroom –mostly clogged for about three dozen women. And we'd have to queue up at the AFP office bathroom across the corridor!

I remember the many battles that Seema Goswami fought for us, for bathrooms, for office transport, for assignments.

I recall one evening when a dignified senior correspondent had a loud, ugly argument with the editor inside his cabin. We then heard a resounding slap. It was the first time I had seen a woman stand up to an editor's predatory ways.

Later at the Indian Express, I worked under Ritu Sarin. Her work ethic was stuff of legends. Holding her small diary of contacts, she would be constantly on the phone, then suddenly rush out and return to file a Page 1 scoop. All the while eating sambar-idli or vada!

These and hundreds of women journalists negotiated misogyny at work and in the world outside. They taught us how to speak up for ourselves, how to fight for assignments, ignore hardships, to be bold in thought and action. Which irritating eye rolls and sexist comments at meetings to ignore and which battles to pick.

Starting my reporting career on the crime beat, I recall sexist jokes in news meetings. Most 'women's stories' including rape, dowry deaths, molestation, sexual harassment -- would be assigned to women, with male colleague getting other 'exciting' assignments. Women would often get bypassed for a promotion, a salary hike or for a greater responsibility.

Despite this, women journalists managed to mainstream 'women's stories' –one rape, one acid

attack, one sexual assault at a time.

Battles for women's rights were being fought on the streets, in police stations, courts and in Parliament, And by women journalists in newsrooms -- for more space for their stories, for more stories on crimes against women, for stories that treated rape as a crime and not a titillating aside, for headlines that didn't sensationalise or shame the victim, that humanised the victim without violating her privacy. Sometimes a battle over an objectionable graphic, a photograph or to bear witness to events that are unfolding, to report them as only women can.

In my lifetime, I have seen the reportage of rape and sexual assault go from being a brief, routine news item to stories that speaks of a deep-rooted societal malady. One that is borne out of patriarchy and skewed power equations in society where caste and class are at play.

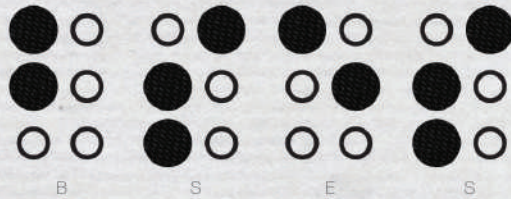
Although today many journalists – men and women both have buckled willingly, turning journalism into a craven 'karva chauth' for those in power –for every cringe correspondent doing the government's bidding – that there is a fearless woman reporter who won't cow down.

While we heartily celebrate men for the big battles they fought, for taking on the powers that be, we often forget the hundreds of women journalists across the country who have fought pitched battles in newsrooms and outside.

It is time that we celebrate these women who walked before us, because if we look back, we'll see that we are walking in their footsteps.

Suparna Sharma is a senior journalist based in Delhi. Former Resident Editor of The Asian Age, she writes on politics, corruption, crime and cinema for Al Jazeera, Rolling Stone India and Frontline.

Hundreds of women journalists negotiated misogyny at work and in the world outside. They taught us how to speak up for ourselves, to fight for assignments. Which irritating eye rolls and sexist comments at meetings to ignore and which battles to pick



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Livestreaming RG Kar Case Expose Women Advocates to Trolling



Ritika Jain

With over 358,490 people watching the first hearing live on YouTube, it became easy for trolls to match names with faces. The hearings were also simultaneously aired live on several news and YouTube channels amplifying the coverage and the viewership

On a seemingly ordinary August morning, advocate Astha Sharma woke to find the inbox to her LinkedIn and Instagram accounts inundated with hate mail. The Supreme Court had just begun hearing the RG Kar case—where a female doctor was found raped and murdered in a Kolkata hospital earlier this year in August. Sharma, along with her colleagues, was representing the state of West Bengal and Kolkata police. A false online campaign however had convinced the public that they were representing the accused and should face the wrath for it.

The messages were chilling: “I curse them all these lawyers ... they will see same things happen with their love ones...” “Most of them are women’s...,see they are defending rapist. Bhagwan-nakare kal inki beti ke sath rape ho or tab inhe patal age dard ka...(God forbid, tomorrow their daughters will be raped, then they will understand the pain)” “Instead of others...these lawyers family should suffer, then they will fix every system of India.”

Sharma wasn’t alone. Her colleagues, particularly the women, faced similar threats. The catalyst? A video released by BJP spokesperson Shehzad Poonawala, where he read out the names of the 21 advocates representing the state of West Bengal.

The RG Kar Case: Lawyers Caught in the Crossfire

On August 19, on the eve of the first hearing, the SC registry informed lawyers that the RG Kar case would be live-streamed. It was this decision of the court to livestream the proceedings that had led to these women lawyers being targeted.

Lawyers associated with the case found this move surprising, because primarily, this was a sexual assault case before it became the issue of protesting doctors.

“We were surprised but we rolled with it,” said an advocate working with Astha Sharma.

With over 358,490 people watching the first hearing live on YouTube, it became easy for trolls to match names with faces. The hearings were also



simultaneously aired live on several news and YouTube channels amplifying the coverage and the viewership.

“When people read your name in an order, or read about the case in the paper or online, it is different,” Sharma explained. “In this case there was a face to put with those names,” she added.

“It felt as though we were under constant scrutiny,” said one of the female advocates who got trolled. She recalled her mother’s message during the hearing: “Don’t laugh, don’t smile, don’t fidget.” The hate campaign lasted for weeks.

Women lawyers, in particular, faced threats of sexual violence and acid attacks. Their social media accounts were flooded with friend requests and also abusive messages.

“The people in the comment section are educated people,” Sharma added. “If you see their profiles, a lot of them are doctors, CAs, lawyers who probably advocate for safe working places for their female colleagues, but respond in such an unsavoury manner,” she told Decoder.

The trolling stooped to such a low that Sharma’s female colleagues petitioned her for precautionary measures like CCTV and guards outside the office. The women being trolled acknowledged that the week following the release of Poonawala’s video was tough. The real fear stemmed from the worry whether the online violence would translate to offline violence. This was especially stressful for colleagues who live alone.

The comments sections on the Poonawala video were hurtful, advocate Mehreen Garg, one of the nine women lawyers representing the West Bengal government, said. “We were even called escorts in some of them,” she said. “I don’t know where this slut shaming came from.”

The impact rippled beyond their individual selves. Families faced second-hand trolling, with parents receiving distressing messages about their daughters. Sharma recalled the difficult conversation she had with her parents: “I had to sit them down and tell them everything. All the threats, the rape comments, everything.”

Clickbait Videos

The livestreaming also led to sensationalised media coverage. Clickbait video titles like “Solicitor General Lashes Out At Kapil Sibal” and “CJI Rips into Sibal Plea” went viral, further fuelling public misunderstanding. Clips made from the original videos were shared out of context as memes. Leading news agencies posted YouTube videos with clickbait titles



to amplify and portray a confrontational narrative. Several meme pages shared reels of Sibal laughing in court.

Sharma acknowledged that Sibal was brutally trolled, but with a difference. “The threats against women are always sexual in nature,” she said.

Calls to Stop Livestreaming Sensitive Cases

After the second hearing, several attempts were made to stop the livestreaming of the RG Kar case. Sibal petitioned the Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud in court flagging the risk when you livestream matters that have huge emotive implications. The matter was heard by a three-judge bench.

The top court, however, said that it was a matter of public importance and refused to stop livestreaming, assuring lawyers that it would take care of any threats.

Decoder spoke to several advocates, sitting judges and retired judges for their view on livestreaming of cases. Almost all agreed that livestreaming, while bringing transparency to judicial proceedings, must be subject to certain conditions.

The top court’s Swapnil Tripathi judgement that greenlit livestreaming of judicial proceedings, too cautioned against airing cases pertaining to sexual assault.

“The livestreaming enabled the hearing to become reality TV,” a woman advocate said

Ritika Jain has been a photojournalist for a decade and is currently a journalist covering the Indian judiciary. She has worked for DNA, The Indian Express and several digital portals before joining BOOM.

Women lawyers, in particular, faced threats of sexual violence and acid attacks. Their social media accounts were flooded with friend requests and also abusive messages

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मनीषा भल्ला



फील्ड रिपोर्टिंग में रीड की हड्डी होते हैं स्थानीय रिपोर्टर और आपके संपादक। ज्यादा जोखिम हो तो आप उनकी मदद ले सकते हैं। कम से कम उन्हें पता होना चाहिए कि आप कहाँ हैं अगर आप चौकस हैं तो थोड़ी सी समझदारी से जोखिम भरी रिपोर्टिंग कर ले जाते हैं।

रिपोर्टिंग करते हुए मुझे अंदाजन बीस साल हो गए हैं। इस दौरान मैंने गाँव, देहात, जंगल, टापू, श्मशान, कब्रिस्तान, हिंसक भीड़, सुनसान, स्याह अँधेरा, नक्सली गाँव यानी देश की मुख्य धारा से कटे हुए इलाकों में रिपोर्टिंग की है और आज भी कर रही हूँ। जाहिर है कि जब आप ऐसी जगहों पर होते हैं तो सब कुछ अनिश्चित रहता है।

ऐसी स्थिति में वैसे तो महिला पुरुष दोनों को ही समान दिक्कतों का सामना करना पड़ता है, लेकिन कई बार महिला होने के नाते ऐसी जगहों पर मुश्किलें और बढ़ जाती हैं। या कई बार हालात हमें असहज कर देते हैं। जैसे हमने कुछ ऐसा शूट कर लिया, जो उनके

हिसाब से, हमें नहीं करना चाहिए था तो मसला हो जाता है। मिसाल के तौर पर कई बार तांत्रिक पूजा अघोरी पूजा या श्मशान में तांत्रिक किस प्रकार जल रही लाशों की ताक में रहते हैं ताकि उन्हें उनकी खोपड़ी या कोई हड्डी मिल सके। ऐसा कुछ भी अगर रिकार्ड कर लिया तो दिक्कत हो जाती है। अब वहां कैसे रिपवट करना है, सामने वाले को कैसे सहज करना है और उनका भरोसा कैसे जीतना है, यह सब थोड़ा सा कठिन हो जाता है। वैसे भी इन इलाकों में रात के समय आमतौर पर शराब और नशाखोरी चल रही होती है।

कुछ जगहें ऐसी भी हैं जहाँ जाना अपने आप में जोखिम भरा होता है। जैसे कि आधी रात को श्मशान



अगर रात में कभी रुकना पड़े तो होटल का चुनाव सावधानी से करें। होटल का सुरक्षित होना बहुत जरूरी है। छोटी जगहों पर अक्सर होटल बहुत सुरक्षित नहीं होते हैं।

या किसी शवगृह [मार्चरी] में जाना। किसी जंगल या किसी टापू पर रिपोर्टिंग के लिए जाना। इन स्थानों पर जाना जोखिम भरा तो है, मुश्किलें भी कम नहीं हैं। लेकिन फिर भी मुझे लगता है कि अगर थोड़ी सी सजगता और सूझबूझ से काम लिया जाए तो कठिनाइयों के बावजूद काम किया जा सकता है। तब काम करने में उतनी मुश्किल नहीं होती।

अगर आप ऐसी किसी जगह पर रिपोर्टिंग करने जा रहे हैं तो घर से निकलते वक़्त ये निश्चित होना चाहिए कि आपका मोबाइल चार्ज हो। मोबाइल एक ऐसी चीज है जो जरूरत पड़ने पर आपकी जान भी बचा सकता है। दूसरे जहाँ जोखिम हो वहाँ पहुँच कर अपनी लाइव और करंट लोकेशन कम से कम तीन लोगों को शेयर करनी चाहिए। एक आफिस में, दूसरा आफिस में किसी दोस्त को और तीसरा दफ़्तर के बाहर किसी दोस्त को। वहाँ जाने के बाद अगर माहौल बिगड़ जाता है तो हमारे पास भागने का विकल्प होना चाहिए। आपको वहाँ किसके साथ जाना है, यह सबसे अहम बात है। क्योंकि वही व्यक्ति है जो भागने में आपकी मदद करेगा। अगर खतरा ज्यादा है तो स्थानीय पुलिस स्टेशन पर सूचित करके जाना ठीक रहता है।

इसके अलावा आपको अपने पास पानी और खाने का कुछ सामान रखना चाहिए, आपको हर पल सतर्क होना चाहिए। सामने वाले पर नजर रहनी चाहिए कि वह कैसे रिएक्ट कर रहा है। वह क्या करने जा रहा है।

उसका अगला पासा क्या होगा। सामने वाला अगर नशे में है तो उससे कितनी दूरी से बात करनी है, अपनी बात को कैसे रखना है कि उसे बुरा न लगे। सामने वाला अगर किसी बात पर नाराज हो गया तो बात बिगड़ भी सकती है। इसलिए जो भी बोलें सोच समझ कर बोलें।

अगर रात में कभी रुकना पड़े तो होटल का चुनाव सावधानी से करें। होटल का सुरक्षित होना बहुत जरूरी है। छोटी जगहों पर अक्सर होटल बहुत सुरक्षित नहीं होते हैं। जैसे जूनागढ़ में एक वीडियो शूट करने पर रात के समय जूना अखाड़े के सभी साधु मेरे होटल में आ गए थे। उन्हें कैसे पता चला कि मैं फ़लां होटल में रुकी हुई हूँ? बाद में पता चला कि मेरे टैक्सी वाले से, जो स्थानीय था, उन्होंने पता लगाया कि मैं कहाँ रुकी हुई हूँ। तब समझ में आया कि टैक्सी वाला भी सोच-समझ कर हायर करना चाहिए। होटल के रिसेप्शन पर रात के समय कैसे लोग ड्यूटी पर होते हैं इस बात का भी ध्यान रखना जरूरी होता है।

फील्ड रिपोर्टिंग में रीढ़ की हड्डी होते हैं स्थानीय रिपोर्टर और आपके संपादक। ज्यादा जोखिम हो तो आप उनकी मदद ले सकते हैं। कम से कम उन्हें पता होना चाहिए कि आप कहाँ हैं अगर आप चौकस हैं तो थोड़ी सी समझदारी से जोखिम भरी रिपोर्टिंग कर ले जाते हैं।

वरिष्ठ विशेष संवाददाता
दैनिक भास्कर, मुम्बई

LOOKING BACK AT AN EVENTFUL 2023-24



Kabir Bani by Shabnam Virmani



Releasing the Souvenir



Marking Press Freedom Day, 2024



Interaction with Ritu Khanduri, Speaker, Uttarakhand



Alka Lamba speaks at IWPC



Understanding impact of AI on election



With Supriya Shrinete, Congress Spokesperson



Mango Mania



Dental Camp in progress



Ready to dive in the Andaman



A friendly chat with Women MPs



Gujarati Feast



Contributing for Wayanad flood



Kahi Ankahi with Yakub and Sadia



Health Testing for Members



Sharing the festivity of Diwali with staff



IWPC lights up for Diwali



Remembering Ira jha



Film maker Tigmanshu Dhulia holding forth



Hans katha paricharcha: a literary discussion

Editorial team: Sushma Varma, Aditi Nigam, Sujata Raghavan, Aruna Singh.

Photo Courtesy: Mr Shankar Chakravarty. Assisted by Managerial Staff: Satya Swamy & Rohit Bhardwaj

UNICEF celebrates its over seven decades of partnership with India

UNICEF began its work in India in 1949 and established an office in Delhi three years later. Currently, it advocates for the rights of India's children in 16 states.

UNICEF celebrates its partnership with India. Strong foundations that have nurtured children and their health. From the first-ever penicillin plant in India to providing crucial technical support to Amul to partnering with the Government to install the MARK series of handpumps and usher in the water revolution in the country. In 1954, India's first DDT plant was set up to supply the National Malaria Eradication Programme launched by the Government of India. The plant was set up with the equipment provided by UNICEF. In the early 1960s, the GOI and UNICEF signed an agreement for the reorganisation and expansion of science teaching in the schools of India. The emphasis was on teaching through demonstration kits rather than chalk and talk. NCERT, UNESCO and UNICEF worked together. A nationwide village-based Applied Nutrition Programme was introduced in

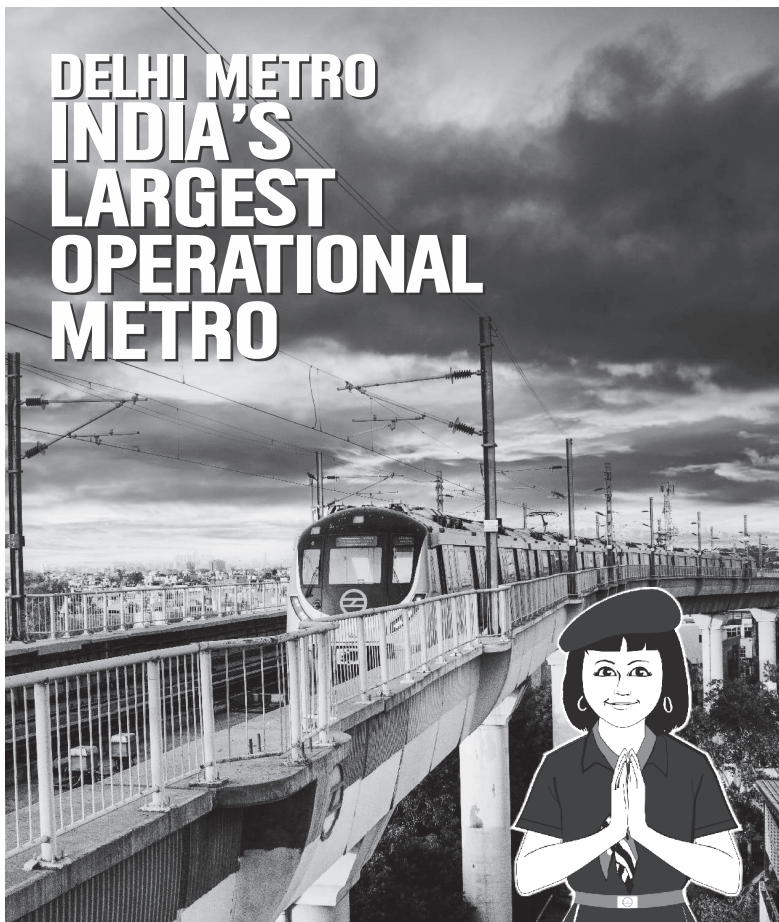
1963. India signed a master plan of operation with UNICEF and its sister agencies, WHO and FAO; UNICEF assisted ANP with equipment and supplies.

Working as one with the Government, partners, and front-line health workers, UNICEF supported in eradicating smallpox and polio from India. From 200,000 polio cases in the 1980s to zero cases in 2012.

UNICEF worked closely with Government of India to ensure the Right to Education for every child in India. UNICEF supported the India Newborn Action Plan and the Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao Campaign.

UNICEF was the proud partner in the Honourable Prime Minister's vision of Swachh Bharat Mission and helped India's vision of becoming Open Defecation Free. And during this pandemic, UNICEF remain committed to the fight against COVID-19.

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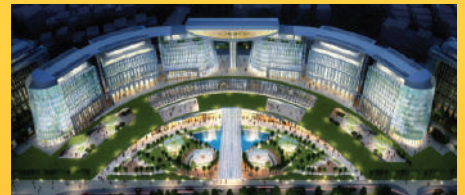
AMRAPALI PROJECTS
AT NOIDA & GREATER NOIDA



VANIJYA BHAWAN
AT NEW DELHI



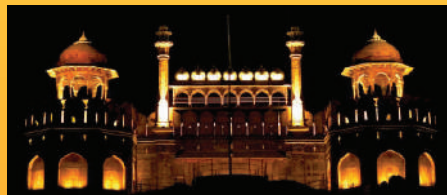
DHANA DHANAYE AUDITORIUM
AT KOLKATA



NAUROJI NAGAR
AT NEW DELHI



SUPER THERMAL POWER PROJECT
AT NAGPUR, MAHARASHTRA

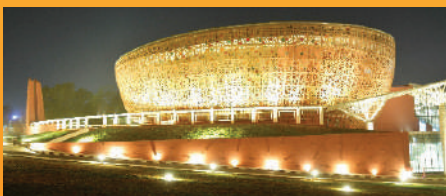


ILLUMINATION OF LAL QUILA
AT DELHI



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नरेश कौशिक

डब्ल्यूएन. आईएफआरए वूमेन इन न्यूज की अरब क्षेत्र की निदेशक दलाल सौउद कहती हैं कि युद्ध की रिपोर्टिंग संघर्ष के प्रति जनता की समझ और नीतिगत प्रतिक्रियाओं को आकार देने में महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाती है। यही कारण है कि महिला पत्रकारों को अशांति और युद्ध क्षेत्रों की रिपोर्टिंग में अग्रिम मोर्चे पर पहुंचना जरूरी होता है।

दुनिया के विभिन्न हिस्सों में जिस गति से असंतोष और युद्ध की विभीषिका फैल रही है, उसी अनुपात में महिला पत्रकारों के समक्ष चुनौतियां भी बढ़ती जा रही हैं। संयुक्त राष्ट्र शैक्षिक, वैज्ञानिक और सांस्कृतिक संगठन (यूनेस्को) के आंकड़ें कहते हैं कि पत्रकारों के लिए कोई जगह सुरक्षित नहीं है। 2020-2021 में 117 पत्रकार विभिन्न कारणों से अपने कार्यालयों से बाहर मारे गए। तीन, सितंबर 2022 तक के आंकड़ें बताते हैं कि मारे गए पत्रकारों में 11 फीसदी संख्या महिला पत्रकारों की थी, जो पिछले वर्ष 6 प्रतिशत थी।

इंटरनेशनल फेडरेशन आफ जर्नलिस्ट के अनुसार, 2023 में विश्वभर के युद्ध क्षेत्रों में 14 महिला पत्रकार मारी गईं। इस संगठन ने 1995 से दुनियाभर में पत्रकारों की मौतों के आंकड़ें संग्रहित करने शुरू किए थे। उसका कहना है कि बीता साल पत्रकारों के लिए सबसे घातक रहा।

आठ मार्च, 2024 को अंतरराष्ट्रीय महिला दिवस की पूर्व संध्या पर वर्ल्ड एसोसिएशन आफ न्यूज पब्लिशर्स और अरब जगत में उसके सहयोगियों की जॉर्डन में एक बैठक हुई। इसमें युद्ध और कठिन परिस्थितियों में रिपोर्टिंग करने वाली महिला पत्रकारों की सुरक्षा और उनके समावेशीकरण पर चर्चा की गई। फिलिस्तीन में पत्रकार सहकर्मियों के लिए वैश्विक समर्थन बढ़ाने का आह्वान भी किया गया।

गाजा में युद्ध की पृष्ठभूमि में हुई इस गोलमेज चर्चा में पत्रकारों, विशेष रूप से महिला पत्रकारों, के सामने आने वाली चुनौतियों का समाधान करने की तत्काल आवश्यकता को रेखांकित किया गया। इसमें वक्ताओं का कहना था कि सच्चाई की तह तक जाने और संघर्ष क्षेत्रों की महत्वपूर्ण कहानियों को विश्व के सामने लाने के लिए महिला पत्रकारों को खतरों का सामना करना पड़ता है।

डब्ल्यूएन। आईएफआरए वूमेन इन न्यूज की

अरब क्षेत्र की निदेशक दलाल सौउद कहती हैं कि युद्ध की रिपोर्टिंग संघर्ष के प्रति जनता की समझ और नीतिगत प्रतिक्रियाओं को आकार देने में महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाती है। यही कारण है कि महिला पत्रकारों को अशांति और युद्ध क्षेत्रों की रिपोर्टिंग में अग्रिम मोर्चे पर पहुंचना जरूरी होता है।

अम्मान में हुई इस बैठक में सौ से अधिक समाचार संगठनों की प्रमुखों ने एक खुले पत्र पर हस्ताक्षर किए जिसका मकसद फिलिस्तीनी पत्रकारों का समर्थन करना और उनके साथ एकजुटता प्रदर्शित करना था। उन्होंने विश्व स्तर पर मीडिया संगठनों का भी आह्वान किया कि वे इस क्षेत्र में महिला पत्रकारों की दुर्दशा, उनकी सुरक्षा तथा रिपोर्टिंग की स्वतंत्रता सुनिश्चित करने पर ध्यान केंद्रित करें।

आईएफजे के महासचिव एंथनी बेलेंजर कहते हैं: “हम पत्रकारों को हमेशा याद दिलाते हैं कि कोई भी कहानी उनकी जान से बढ़कर नहीं है, लेकिन कई बार हालात ऐसे होते हैं जहाँ उन्हें जानबूझकर निशाना बनाया जाता है।

पत्रकार और फिलिस्तीन के लिए डब्ल्यूआईएन के कंट्री कोऑर्डिनेटर शूरुक असद कहते हैं कि दुनिया भर के पत्रकारों को अंतरराष्ट्रीय कानूनों के अनुरूप स्वतंत्र रूप से रिपोर्ट करने में सक्षम होना चाहिए।”

लेकिन यहां सवाल उठता है कि महिला पत्रकारों का अशांत इलाकों, संघर्ष और युद्ध क्षेत्रों की रिपोर्टिंग करना इतना जरूरी क्यों है जहां हर समय जान का खतरा मौजूद रहता है।

डब्ल्यूएन -- आईएफआरए के मीडिया विकास और समाचार विभाग की कार्यकारी निदेशक मेलानी वॉकर युद्ध रिपोर्टिंग में महिलाओं की आवाज को बुलंद करने के महत्व पर जोर देती हैं। वह कहती हैं, “महिला पत्रकार संघर्षों की कवरेज में एक भिन्न दृष्टिकोण और अंतरदृष्टि लाती हैं। स्थिति की अधिक व्यापक समझ



उनके काम की प्रकृति अनिश्चित है, जहां उन्हें युद्ध और संघर्ष की विभीषिका से स्वयं को बचाने के साथ ही शारीरिक, भावनात्मक और डिजिटल खतरों की जटिलता से भी पार पाना पड़ता है।

तथा युद्धों के महिलाओं पर पड़ने वाले प्रभाव को सामने लाने के लिए उनकी उपस्थिति आवश्यक है।''

वॉकर कहती हैं कि संघर्ष की विविध वास्तविकताओं को सही मायने में प्रतिबिंबित करने के लिए हमें उनकी आवाज को बढ़ाने के लिए सक्रिय रूप से काम करना चाहिए।

इस दृष्टिकोण के साथ काम करना बहुत जरूरी है क्योंकि यदि हम अपने पाठकों तक युद्ध रिपोर्टिंग को अधिक न्यायसंगत और लैंगिक समानता के सिद्धांत के साथ पेश करना चाहते हैं तो हमें महिला पत्रकारों को सुरक्षा, समर्थन और अधिक समावेशी माहौल को प्रोत्साहित करना होगा।

इस युद्ध को पत्रकारों के लिए अब तक का सबसे घातक संघर्ष करार दिया गया है। संघर्ष क्षेत्रों में जहां रिपोर्टिंग और व्यक्तिगत सुरक्षा के बीच की रेखा धुंधली है, वहां महिला पत्रकारों के लिए यह खतरा कई गुना और बढ़ जाता है क्योंकि उन्हें दुर्व्यवहार, डराने धमकाने समेत विभिन्न प्रकार के उत्पीड़न का सामना करना पड़ता है। हालांकि यह भी एक कड़वी सच्चाई है कि संघर्ष की अराजकता के बीच, महिला पत्रकारों की आवाज और दृष्टिकोण को हाशिए पर रखा गया या अनदेखा किया गया है। अध्ययनों से पता चला है कि विभिन्न कारणों से संघर्ष क्षेत्रों से रिपोर्टिंग करने वाले पत्रकारों में महिलाओं की संख्या बहुत कम है, जो प्रतिनिधित्व में स्पष्ट असमानता को उजागर करता है।

यह स्थिति न केवल लैंगिक पूर्वाग्रहों को बढ़ावा

देती है, बल्कि युद्ध क्षेत्र की कहानियों की विविधता और जटिलता को भी कम करती है। इसके अलावा, मीडिया में लैंगिक प्रतिनिधित्व पर एक शोध में पाया गया कि समाचारों में औसतन चार में से एक बार महिला पत्रकारों की आवाज होती है – जबकि आबादी में उनकी हिस्सेदारी करीब 50 प्रतिशत है।

उनके काम की प्रकृति अनिश्चित है, जहां उन्हें युद्ध और संघर्ष की विभीषिका से स्वयं को बचाने के साथ ही शारीरिक, भावनात्मक और डिजिटल खतरों की जटिलता से भी पार पाना पड़ता है। इन चुनौतियों के बावजूद, महिलाएँ युद्ध रिपोर्टिंग के जोखिम भरे क्षेत्र में साहसपूर्वक आगे बढ़ती रही हैं। वे संघर्ष की वास्तविकताओं और समुदायों पर इसके प्रभाव से दुनिया को अवगत कराने के लिए मजबूत इरादों के साथ मोर्चे पर डटी हुई हैं।

यह सर्वविदित है कि युद्धों और संघर्षों की सर्वाधिक मार महिलाओं और बच्चों पर ही पड़ती है, उन्हें विस्थापन, भुखमरी, आपात चिकित्सा स्थिति की दुश्चारी झेलनी पड़ती है।

इसीलिए इस आधी आबादी को प्रतिनिधित्व देने के लिए महिला पत्रकारों की युद्ध क्षेत्र की रिपोर्टिंग में भागीदारी को बढ़ाए जाने की आवश्यकता है। महिला पत्रकारों का सशक्तिकरण प्रेस की स्वतंत्रता और लोकतंत्र की उन्नति का आधार है।

समाचार संपादक,
भाषा, प्रेस ट्रस्ट ऑफ इंडिया

कभी खत्म नहीं होगा प्रिंट मिडिया का दौर



जयंती रंगनाथन

चलिए, आपको दो मजेदार किस्से बताती हूँ। पहला किस्सा दसके दिन पहले का है। मैं अपनी मौसी से मिलने मुंबई गई थी। महामारी के पहले तक वो घर में अखबार मंगवाती थीं और पूरी शिद्दत से दोपहर तक ओना-कोना छान कर अप टु डेट रहती थीं। अब वो सोशल मीडिया में खबरें पढ़ कर संतुष्ट हो लेती हैं। मुझसे बातचीत की शुरुआत उन्होंने की, राहुल गांधी और शोलापुर की सांसद प्रणीति शिंदे की तथाकथित शादी से। उन्होंने ताल ठोक कर कहा कि नवंबर में होने वाली इस शादी की उन्हें पूरी जानकारी है। कहां से मिली? तो जवाब आया, फेसबुक में आने वाली रील की दुकान से। मैंने उन्हें दलील देने की लाख कोशिश की कि इस खबर में सच्चाई नहीं है। सोशल मीडिया और रील में फेक न्यूज चलती हैं, उन्हें यकीन नहीं हुआ। अस्सी साल की मेरी मौसी के लिए हर खबर बस खबर

है और सही है।

दूसरा किस्सा, सालों पहले का है। मैं पत्रकारिता की दुनिया में आई ही थी और टाइम्स ऑफ इंडिया में प्रशिक्षु पत्रकार थी। हमारे बैच में विभिन्न भाषाओं के तीस पत्रकार थे। उनमें से लड़कियां थीं, सात। एक दिन एक वरिष्ठ महिला पत्रकार हमारी क्लास लेने आईं और हम सातों लड़कियों को कैटीन ले गईं। वहां चाय पीते हुए हमें ज्ञान मिला कि हमारी आगे की जिंदगी चुनौतीपूर्ण होने वाली है। हमें खबरें निकालने के लिए अपना भेष भी बदलना पड़ सकता है। रात-बेरात बाहर जाना पड़ सकता है। ऐसी जगहों पर जहां ना पीने का पानी मिलता है और ना महिलाओं के लिए टायलेट की व्यवस्था होती है। हमारे साथ कुछ गलत भी हो सकता है। हमें अपनी सुरक्षा का ध्यान खुद रखना होगा। उनकी बात सुन कर हम लड़कियां डर भी गईं और उत्तेजित भी

सुनने और पढ़ने से कहीं आकर्षक होता है देखना. देखने और दिखाए की खबरों ने पत्रकारिता की सोच ही बदल डाली . जिन दिनों टीवी पत्रकारिता की शुरुआत हो रही थी, प्रिंट वालों को मीटिंग में बार-बार यही नसीहत दी जाती थी कि हमें कैसे अपने पाठको को रिझाना है, कैसे उन्हें खुद को पढ़ाना है।



हो गई। हां, आने वाले दिनों में हमारे सामने कई तरह की चुनौतियां भी आईं, पर उस तरह से नहीं, जैसा कि हमारी सीनियर ने बताया था।

सच है कि आज भी जब महिलाएं रिपोर्टिंग के लिए जाती हैं, तो उन्हें प्रोफेशनल और पर्सनल कई तरह की दिक्कतों का सामना करना पड़ता है। पर इस क्षेत्र का यही रोमांच भी है और संभवतः इसी वजह से हम पत्रकारिता से जुड़ते भी हैं।

पिछले चार दशकों में पत्रकारिता का स्वरूप काफी कुछ बदल गया है। हमारी पीढ़ी जब पत्रकारिता से जुड़ी, तो इस क्षेत्र में ग्लैमर नहीं था। पत्रकारिता की विधिवत पढ़ाई से ज्यादातर लोग अवगत नहीं थे। सब अलग-अलग कोर्स करके आए थे। कुछ साथी इंजीनियर, डॉक्टर थे, सीए भी और टीचर भी थे। मैं खुद बैंक की नौकरी छोड़ कर आई थी। ग्लैमर नहीं था। पर नौकरी में पैसे अच्छे थे। काम में सच्चाई थी। लोग दिल से काम करते थे। उस समय इस क्षेत्र में स्त्रियां कम थीं और कई बार हार्ड बीट के लिए लड़ना भी पड़ता था। एक आदर्श समय में सही करियर चुनने का फायदा हमारी पीढ़ी की महिलाओं को मिला। इसके बाद के सालों में पत्रकारिता इतनी तेजी से बदली कि यह एक चुनौतीपूर्ण करियर से ग्लैमरस करियर बन गया। हमारे समय ने देखा, प्रिंट का सुनहरा दौर। इसके बाद टीवी पत्रकारिता, ऑन लाइन या डिजिटल पत्रकारिता और अब सोशल मीडिया। टीवी पत्रकारिता हमारे समय में एक बहुत बड़ी चीज थी। सुनने और पढ़ने से कहीं आकर्षक होता है देखना। देखने और दिखाने की खबरों ने पत्रकारिता की सोच ही बदल डाली। जिन दिनों टीवी पत्रकारिता की शुरुआत हो रही थी, प्रिंट वालों को मीटिंग में बार-बार यही नसीहत दी जाती थी कि हमें कैसे अपने पाठकों को रिझाना है, कैसे उन्हें खुद को पढ़ाना है। अपने आपको पढ़ाओ नहीं दिखाओ। पन्ने आकर्षक होने चाहिए तस्वीरें बोल्ट होनी चाहिए। यहीं से पत्रिकाओं और फीचर के पन्नों का चरित्र बदलने लगा। नामी-गिरामी पत्रिकाएँ भी अपना चेहरा बदलने को मजबूर हो गईं। हम बिना सोचे समझे बेशर्मा से लेखन और ले आउट में अंग्रेजी की नकल करने लगे। इससे हर पत्र-पत्रिका की जो अपनी एक पहचान थी, वह खत्म हो गई और हमें फायदे की जगह नुकसान होने लगा।

बदलते वक्त और नए परिदृश्य ने युवाओं को पत्रकारिता की तरफ आकर्षित किया और बड़ी संख्या में लड़कियां भी आने लगीं। पत्रकारिता संस्थानों में शिक्षा ग्रहण करने वाले ज्यादातर बच्चे अब भी यही मानते हैं कि पत्रकारिता एक मिशन है और वो इसके जरिए क्रांति

करना चाहते हैं। लेकिन जब हकीकत से सामना होता है तब उन्हें समझ आता है कि पत्रकारिता न तो मिशन है और न ही क्रांति लाने का जरिया। व्यावहारिक बात है कि खबर के साथ क्रांति नहीं की जाती। हां, क्रांति एक खबर जरूर होती है।

दो हजार के बाद तेजी से टीवी पत्रकारिता का उत्थान और फिर पतन हुआ। उसके नतीजों पर भी खूब बहस हुई। सबसे बड़ी बात यह कि वहां सिर्फ खबरों की ही बात नहीं की जाती, खबर को एक लजीज व्यंजन की तरह परोसा जाता है। ज्यादा और खराब पका व्यंजन आदमी हर समय नहीं खा सकता। अब डिजिटल का दौर है। हमारे पास स्मार्ट मोबाइल एक ऐसा उपकरण है, जहां असंभव भी संभव है। हमने सोशल मीडिया को कुछ इस तरह खड़ा किया कि वो भी अपने कद से जल्द ही बहुत आगे निकल गया। लेकिन ये ऐसे माध्यम हैं, जिन्हें आप नकार नहीं सकते। न प्रिंट इससे परे देख सकता है, न टीवी। हर क्षण आपकी उंगलियों पर नया संसार रचा जाता है। खबरें कहने, फैलाने और बात करने का काम अब सिर्फ पत्रकारों का नहीं रह गया। हर व्यक्ति अब रिपोर्टर है और हर किसी के पास खबरें हैं। हर कोई अपने ढंग से अपने लिए कह रहा है। रही बात सत्यता की, तो मेरी मौसी की तरह सत्य किसे चाहिए? जो सामने परोसा जा रहा है, ताल ठोक कर कहा जा रहा है वही सत्य है। पत्रकारिता का यह दौर बेहद रोचक और चुनौतीपूर्ण है। अब यहां जो कदम रख रहे हैं, उन्हें प्रिंट, टीवी, डिजिटल से कोई मतलब नहीं है। उन्हें नए माध्यम चाहिए और चाहिए तेजी। प्रलोभन कई हैं। सत्य-असत्य के बीच की दूरी कम होती जा रही है। अब लड़कियां भागदौड़ में अपने पीरिएड की, पानी या टायलेट ना होने की बात नहीं करतीं। उससे आगे की बात करती हैं।

प्रिंट की बात करूं तो प्रिंट खासकर वर्नाकुलर, अभी कहीं नहीं जा रहा। हर दौर में सुनते हैं कि प्रिंट का जाना तय है। लेकिन बहुत से लोग इस बात को मानते हैं कि प्रिंट का दौर कभी खत्म नहीं होगा। प्रिंट का सर्कुलेशन कम नहीं हो रहा है। खबरों की बात करें तो आज भी प्रिंट की विश्वसनीयता बरकरार है। सोशल मीडिया यूनिवर्सिटी में बेहद हलचल है। एआई इनके साथ है और असत्य का संसार भी। बतौर पत्रकार मैं यह मान कर चलती हूं कि मुझे फेक और रियल न्यूज में फर्क करने के बजाय दोनों में से अपने लिए क्या सही है वही निर्णय लेना अहम रहेगा।

एग्जीक्यूटिव एडिटर
हिंदुस्तान

पत्रकारिता का यह दौर
बेहद रोचक और
चुनौतीपूर्ण है. अब यहां
जो कदम रख रहे हैं,
उन्हें प्रिंट, टीवी,
डिजिटल से कोई
मतलब नहीं है. उन्हें
नए माध्यम चाहिए
और चाहिए तेजी।

उपेक्षा के शिकार कलाकार व पत्रकार



शशि प्रभा

कला और संस्कृति हमारे जीवन का अभिन्न अंग रहे है। यह हमें अपने आप, अपने परिवार, समाज और देश से जोड़ते है। आमतौर पर यहां गाने-बजाने के लिए लोग किसी मंच, उत्सव या पर्व की प्रतीक्षा नहीं करते। आज भी हमारी कला से जुड़े अनेक कार्यक्रम जगह जगह होते रहते हैं। भारतीय पत्रकारिता में भी इसका महत्वपूर्ण स्थान रहा है। एक समय था जब पत्र-पत्रिकाओं में इनसे जुड़े लेखों और समाचारों को महत्व दिया जाता था। पर अफ़सोस आज हमारे मीडिया में इनको उचित स्थान नहीं मिल पाता।

दिल्ली में तो मंडी हॉउस सांस्कृतिक कार्यक्रमों का गढ़ है। इसके अलावा इंडिया हैबिटेड सेंटर, इंडिया इंटरनेशनल सेंटर या सीरी फोर्ट सभागार तथा अन्य कई जगह भी कोई न कोई कार्यक्रम होता रहता है। कई बड़े शहरों में तरह तरह के नामी कार्यक्रम होते रहते हैं। छोटे शहर भी अब इनसे अछूते नहीं हैं। इस सबके बावजूद अखबारों में हमारी कला और संस्कृति से जुड़े कार्यक्रमों को न के बराबर स्थान मिल पाता है। एक समय था जब राष्ट्रीय स्तर के प्रायः हर अखबार

में कला –संस्कृति के लिए पूरा एक पेज हुआ करता था। पाठक उसका इंतजार करते थे। उन्हें कई नए कार्यक्रमों के बारे में यहीं से जानकारी मिलती थी। बहुत से तो कार्यक्रम के बारे में जानने के बाद उसे देखने जाते थे। लेकिन बाजार का असर धीरे धीरे पत्रकारिता पर भी पड़ने लगा। कला संस्कृति से जुड़े पृष्ठों पर विज्ञापन बढ़ने लगे और इससे जुड़े लेखों का दायरा सिकुड़ने लगा। विज्ञापनों को तरजीह देने के लिए कला –संस्कृति से जुड़े लेखों और रिपोर्ट को दरकिनार करना लाजमी सा हो गया। एक समय ऐसा आया कि कला और संस्कृति से जुड़े पृष्ठ अखबारों से गायब होते चले गए। इसका असर इस क्षेत्र से जुड़े पत्रकारों पर पड़ना स्वभाविक था।

आज मीडिया की जो हालत है और जिस तरह की समस्याओं का पत्रकारों को सामना करना पड़ रहा है उससे इस क्षेत्र से जुड़े लेखक और पत्रकार भी अछूते नहीं हैं। वे जब इतनी जद्दोजहद के बाद बड़ी उम्मीद से कोई खबर, कार्यक्रम की समीक्षा या किसी कलाकार का साक्षात्कार लेकर आते हैं तो जाहिर है उसके न छपने

बाजार का असर धीरे धीरे पत्रकारिता पर भी पड़ने लगा। कला संस्कृति से जुड़े पृष्ठों पर विज्ञापन बढ़ने लगे और इससे जुड़े लेखों का दायरा सिकुड़ने लगा। विज्ञापनों को तरजीह देने के लिए कला – संस्कृति से जुड़े लेखों और रिपोर्ट को दरकिनार करना लाजमी सा हो गया।



या उसका महत्व खत्म हो जाने के बाद छपने से उसका मजा तो किरकिरा होता ही है साथ ही निराशा हाथ लगती है। खबर या साक्षात्कार के लिए कई बार उन्हें अजीबो गरीब परिस्थितियों से भी गुजरना पड़ता है।

मुझे याद है कि हैबिटेट सेंटर में किसी वरिष्ठ कलाकार का कार्यक्रम था। मैं उनसे मिलने ग्रीन रूम में गई। उन्होंने कहा कि अभी तो बातचीत संभव नहीं है। कार्यक्रम के बाद डिनर के लिए होटल चलिए वहीं बात हो जाएगी। मैं आश्चर्यचकित थी। मुझे कुछ अजीब लगा क्योंकि इसके लिए मैं तैयार नहीं थी। पर एक सीख जरूर मिली कि जब तक पूरी तरह से आश्वस्त न हों देर रात में कभी किसी से नहीं मिलना चाहिए। इसमें कोई संदेह नहीं है कि कलाकार देश के सांस्कृतिक दूत हैं। सांस्कृतिक धरोहर को इन्होंने संभाला है। लेकिन कुछ लोग यह भूल जाते हैं कि उनके निजी व्यवहार से कला जगत की अस्मिता प्रभावित होती है।

मुझे एक और घटना याद आती है। एक बार मैं एक मीटिंग के लिए गई थी। उस रोज मुझे और एक वरिष्ठ कलाकार को लेने के लिए एक कार आई थी। हम लोग साथ जा रहे थे। मेरे मन में तो ऐसा कुछ नहीं था इसलिए मैंने उनसे कहा कि वापसी में भी हम दोनों साथ ही निकल लेंगे! अरे। यह क्या, मेरे इतना कहते ही वह हाथ पकड़ने को आतुर हो गए। सवाल पर सवाल करने लगे आज शाम को क्या कर रही हैं? आप कब फ्री रहती हैं? आदि आदि।

वास्तव में, सभी एक से नहीं होते। जीवन में कुछ अच्छे अनुभव भी हुए। मैंने बहुत से कलाकारों से बहुत कुछ सीखा भी। डॉ सोनल मानसिंह, पंडित

बिरजू महाराज, गिरिजा देवी, वनश्री राव, डॉ सरोजा वैद्यनाथन, रोनू मजूमदार, गीता चंद्रन, मधुप मुद्गल, माधवी मुद्गल, डॉ संध्या पुरेचा, उस्ताद अमजद अली खां, उस्ताद असद अली खां, पंडित जसराज, पंडित शिव कुमार शर्मा आदि से सहजता, ज्ञान, सरलता, अनुशासन, समय की पाबंदी जैसी बातें सीखने को मिलीं। इन विभूतियों के सान्निध्य में लगता था कि अभी तो बहुत कुछ सीखना बाकी है।

कलाकारों की अपनी एक दुनिया होती है, उनका अपना संघर्ष होता है और अपनी कला यात्रा भी होती है। कई बार कलाकार अपनी बातचीत में निजी बातें भी साझा करते हैं। पर मैंने अपनी ओर से उनकी निजता का हमेशा सम्मान किया और उसकी मर्यादा को बनाए रखने की कोशिश की। जिन दिनों स्टिंग ऑपरेशन का दौर जोरों पर था, मुझे भी कुछ लोगों ने अच्छे पेमेंट का ऑफर दिया। लेकिन मैंने अपने प्रोफेशनल एथिक्स और विश्वास को चुनना बेहतर समझा। उस पल मुझे कुचिपुड़ी नृत्यांगना वनश्री राव की बात याद आई कि सफलता के लिए शार्ट-कट नहीं होता है। आप को आगे बढ़ने के लिए मेहनत और लगन की जरूरत होती है।

सांस्कृतिक पत्रकार के तौर पर मुझे देश के पूर्व से पश्चिम और उत्तर से दक्षिण भारत के साथ-साथ विदेश की यात्रा करने का भी सौभाग्य प्राप्त हुआ। एक ओर कला के विस्तृत संसार का अहसास होता है और दूसरी ओर भारत की अनेकता में एकता की भावना की अनुभूति होती है।

सांस्कृतिक स्वतंत्र पत्रकार
इंदिरा गाँधी राष्ट्रीय कला केंद्र की पत्रिका
विहंगम की पूर्व संपादक

आज मीडिया की जो हालत है और जिस तरह की समस्याओं का पत्रकारों को सामना करना पड़ रहा है उससे इस क्षेत्र से जुड़े लेखक और पत्रकार भी अछूते नहीं हैं। वे जब इतनी जदोजहद के बाद बड़ी उम्मीद से कोई खबर, कार्यक्रम की समीक्षा या किसी कलाकार का साक्षात्कार लेकर आते हैं तो जाहिर है उसके न छपने या उसका महत्व खत्म हो जाने के बाद छपने से उसका मजा तो किरकिरा होता ही है साथ ही निराशा हाथ लगती है।



In Memoriam



REMYA NAIR

Remya Nair had over ten years of experience as a journalist covering the economy and financial sector having worked for business newspapers such as Business Line and Mint She wrote on political economy for The Print. Her untimely death after a brief illness has been deeply saddening.



IRA JHA

In a career spanning decades, Ira Jha held senior positions at Navbharat Times and Hindustan where she had officiated as Bureau Chief, Chhattisgarh. Battling a lung infection for weeks, Ira succumbed to a heart attack in the hospital. One of the earliest members of IWPC, Ira will be missed by all for her spirited support for the fraternity.



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 9871046695, 7210808157

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कुछ कही कुछ अनकही...

9 AUGUST, 2024
TIME 4 PM
5, WINDSOR PLACE NEW DELHI

Direction
Yaqub Ghauri

Script
Sadia Rahman

FOLLOWED BY TEA.

FOR REGISTRATION 01123325366, 7210808157
IWPC MANAGING COMMITTEE

हंस

‘हंस’ पत्रिका एवं IWPC के संयुक्त तत्वावधान में आयोजित ‘हंस कथा परिचर्चा: एक दुनिया समानान्तर’ कार्यक्रम में आप सादर आमंत्रित हैं।

दिनांक: 07 अक्टूबर 2024 (सोमवार)
 समय: 4 बजे अपराह्न

कहानी : ट्रेन की पटरियां
 रचनाकार : प्रकृति करगेती
 ‘हंस’ जुलाई 2024 अंक में प्रकाशित

स्थान : इंडियन वीमेंस प्रेस कोर (IWPC) कार्यालय, नई दिल्ली
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indian women's press corps

MANGO FESTIVAL

6 JULY, 2024
TIME 12.30 TO 3.30 PM
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ORGANIZED BY IWPC MANAGING COMMITTEE

indian women's press corps

INVITATION

Dear Members,
 We cordially invite you for an interaction with Women Parliamentarians at our premises for a High Tea -
31 July 2024, 3 PM onwards
5, Windsor Place, New Delhi 110001
IWPC MANAGING COMMITTEE
 7210808157, 23325366, [HTTPS://IWPC.IN/](https://iwpc.in/)

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 (GNI India Training Network Trainer)

Date: 04-05-2024
 Time: 15:00 to 17:00 Hrs

Contact for Registration: Rohit- 7210808157, Satya- 9810263697

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DATE
7th SEPTEMBER 2024
SATURDAY

📍 IWPC, New Delhi

Mr. Shrivatsa Somany
AI Expert

ANDAMAN ISLANDS

A Paradise of History, Culture and Nature



Gargi Parsai

The Andaman and Nicobar Islands offer far more than the Cellular Jail, infamous for incarcerating pre-Independence political prisoners. While the “Kala Pani” narrative dominates, it overshadows the archipelago’s exquisite beauty, cultural heritage, and strategic importance. These islands form the boundary between the Bay of Bengal to the west and the Andaman Sea to the east.

Located east of India, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands include about 37 inhabited islands with dense forests, home to indigenous Negroid tribes, such as the Jarawas, Onges, and Sentinels in the Andaman Islands, and the Mongoloid Shompen and Nicobarese tribes in the Nicobar Islands. These hunting and gathering tribes have lived in these reserved forests for centuries.

While these areas are ‘No Entry’ zones for outsiders, some tribes particularly the Sentinel are perceived to be hostile to intruders. As re-

cently as 2018, the Sentinels killed an American blogger and missionary with arrows as he attempted to enter their territory by boat. The little that is known about these tribes, as showcased in the Anthropology Museum in Port Blair, reflects that theirs is an egalitarian society.

Port Blair, now Sri Vijayapuram, is the capital, serving as the entry point by air or sea, from Visakhapatnam, Chennai, or Kolkata. Geographically, Myanmar lies north of the Andamans while Indonesia is south of the Nicobar Islands. A water channel separates the two groups of islands. Together, these islands form a Union Territory governed by a Lieutenant Governor.

With its diverse population of Malayalees, Tamils, Telugus, Bengalis, Jharkhandis, and Sikhs, Port Blair mainly consists of settlers from the pre-Independence colonial era. There are Bangladeshis as well. When asked about their origins, locals mostly say, “We are from here only; our forefathers lived here.” The presence of tem-

The Andaman and Nicobar Islands are home to indigenous Negroid tribes, such as the Jarawas, Onges, and Sentinels in the Andaman Islands, and the Mongoloid Shompen and Nicobarese tribes in the Nicobar Islands

The Cellular Jail



ples, gurdwaras, and churches reflects a secular culture, with diverse communities and different faiths living together.

The harbour was named after Lt. Archibald Blair, a British officer who discovered it for docking ships. After India's first War of Independence in 1857, the British designated the Andaman Islands as an apt penal settlement given their isolation from the mainland. The construction of the Cellular Jail took nine years. Its jellyfish-like design ensured that prisoners in one row of solitary cells could only see the back of the cells opposite, preventing any interaction. Today, one of the jail's main attractions is the second-floor corner cell where political activist Vinayak Damodar Savarkar was imprisoned in 1911.

The island's history has been influenced by the presence of freedom fighter and the leader of the Indian National Army, Subhash Chandra Bose during the pre-Independence era and the Japanese occupation during the World War II. During this period, the Japanese reportedly committed atrocities against the local population and freedom fighters, suspecting them of espionage.

A memorial at Homfrayganj, known as Balidan Vedi, honours Indian martyrs of that period and abandoned Japanese bunkers still dot Port Blair.

The world took notice of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands in 2004, when a devastating tsunami originating from the Indian Ocean caused widespread death and destruction. It took years for the islands to recover, but recover they did. Today, their pristine beaches, turquoise waters, stunning sunrise and sunset, rich flora and fauna, coral reefs, aquatic life, and water sports make these islands a top tourist destination, rivalling places, such as the Maldives and Sri Lanka.

For tourists visiting this 'paradise on earth', government hotels and private resorts offer sea-side views, while tour packages include visits to the historic Ross Island (re-named Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose Dweep) known for its deer, peacocks, and remnants of colonial architecture, and the Havelock Island (now, Swaraj Dweep) with its world-famous white-sand Radhanagar Beach where time seems to stand still.

The other popular destinations include Mount Harriet, Chidiya Tapu for bird-watching, and the Samudrika Naval Museum, accessible via jetty rides, short cruises and by car. A visit to Chatham Island would reveal the most expensive Padauk wood, also known as Burmese teak, which was exported for use in Buckingham Palace.



The Elephant Beach

Indeed, there is nothing more alluring than waking up to the sound of chirping birds, the gentle lapping of waves, and fresh sea air. The Andamans offer all this and more. The Elephant Beach bustles with water sports, such as motor boat and scooter rides, jet skiing, snorkelling, deep-sea diving, sea-walking etc. to observe underwater marine life and coral reefs.

The local fresh seafood – fish, prawns, shrimps, crabs and what have you at exotic restaurants is a diverse coastal cuisine, with ample vegetarian options as well, not to forget the delicious coconut water and the famous papaya salad.

Shopping for high-quality spices and exquisite locally crafted pearl and seashell jewellery are added attractions.

Recently, the union government announced plans to build an international airport in Car Nicobar to attract foreign tourists and develop the Blue Revolution to make the Nicobar Islands a global hub for fisheries.

A team of journalists that visited the islands recently had an informal meeting with Chief Secretary Keshav Chandra (who has authored a coffee-table book on the islands). Further the DIG Sanjay Tyagi hosted an informal dinner for the visiting journalists. All in all, it was a memorable trip with a definite repeat-visit potential.

The Elephant Beach bustles with water sports, such as motor boat and scooter rides, jet skiing, snorkelling, deep-sea diving and sea-walking to observe underwater marine life and coral reefs

Gargi Parsai is an award-winning journalist with nearly four decades of experience in newspapers such as The Hindu and The Hindustan Times. Her impactful reporting helped shape policies on agriculture, environment and public health. She is the recipient of Prem Bhatia and Chaudhary Charan Singh Awards.

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हिमाचल में आई आपदा, कोष था खाली, न केंद्र का समर्थन
सरकार ने फिर भी पूरे किए वचन...

वादा किया, वादा निभाया

20 माह में 5 गारंटी पूरी

पहली कैबिनेट में OPS को मंजूरी-1.36 लाख कर्मचारियों की आस हुई पूरी।

इंदिरा गांधी प्यारी बहना महिला सुख-सम्मान निधि योजना के अंतर्गत 18 वर्ष से अधिक उम्र की पात्र महिलाओं को हर महीने 1500 रुपये।

लगभग 2.37 लाख अन्य महिलाओं की मासिक पेंशन भी 1150 रुपये से बढ़ाकर 1500 रुपये की।

680 करोड़ रुपये की राजीव गांधी स्टार्ट-अप योजना के अंतर्गत ई-टैक्सी खरीदने, निजी भूमि पर सोलर पैनल लगाने के लिए 50 प्रतिशत अनुदान।

प्रदेश के सभी सरकारी स्कूलों में इस शैक्षणिक सत्र से पहली कक्षा से अंग्रेजी माध्यम शुरू।

शिक्षा में गुणात्मक सुधार के लिए हर विधानसभा क्षेत्र में हो रहा राजीव गांधी डे-बोर्डिंग स्कूल का निर्माण।

देश में पहली बार प्राकृतिक खेती से उत्पन्न गेहूं और मक्की की खरीद को प्रोत्साहन। गेहूं के लिए 40 रुपये और मक्की को 30 रुपये प्रति किलोग्राम न्यूनतम समर्थन मूल्य निर्धारित।

गाय का दूध 45 रुपये और भैंस का दूध 55 रुपये प्रति लीटर की दर से खरीदा जा रहा है। दूध खरीद पर न्यूनतम समर्थन मूल्य देने वाला हिमाचल देश का पहला राज्य बना।

“राज्य सरकार व्यवस्था परिवर्तन से आत्मनिर्भर हिमाचल प्रदेश बनाने का सपना साकार कर रही है। पूर्व भाजपा सरकार प्रदेश पर लगभग 75 हजार करोड़ रुपये के कर्ज का बोझ छोड़कर गई। वर्तमान में केंद्र सरकार के पास राज्य की 23,000 करोड़ रुपये की धनराशि लंबित है। लेकिन हमारा दृढसंकल्प है कि धन की कमी को हिमाचल प्रदेश के विकास और जनकल्याण के कार्यों में बाधा नहीं बनने दिया जाएगा। हमारी सरकार ने मात्र एक साल में अपने प्रयासों से प्रदेश की आर्थिकी में 20 प्रतिशत सुधार करने में सफलता हासिल की है तथा 2200 करोड़ रुपये की अतिरिक्त आय जुटाई है। हम वर्ष 2027 तक हिमाचल को आत्मनिर्भर राज्य और वर्ष 2032 तक देश का सबसे प्रगतिशील राज्य बनाने के लक्ष्य की ओर बढ़ रहे हैं।”

ठाकुर सुखविन्द्र सिंह सुक्ख
मुख्यमंत्री, हिमाचल प्रदेश

