

## TRAINING WORKSHOP ON RURAL JOURNALISM

Yatrika Guest House, Chitrakoot

July 26<sup>th</sup>- August 1<sup>st</sup> 2007

This workshop was organized by Nirantar Resource Centre to build the capacities of rural women in the area of journalism. The workshop was especially designed to train new entrants in this arena; women who were undergoing selection process to become reporters with *Khabar Lahariya* in Chitrakoot and Banda were trainees at the workshop. A group of five women who were going to initiate the production of a local newspaper in Ajmer district of Rajasthan were also participants at the workshop.

The workshop was visualized as an input that would enable women to understand the basic principles of journalism. Developing an understanding on what constitutes news, sources of news and information, news collection, interviews and writing news were some of the key content issues. As most participants were women who had no previous work experience in this domain, the workshop was also structured to provide them an exposure to the public domain. Regular field visits, interactions with members of the community, service providers and district level officials were part of the course content. The workshop also included discussions and debates on gender. As participants had not been exposed to discussions on gender in the past, the course attempted to introduce gender through reflection on ones own experiences. The 7 day workshop was also designed in way that allowed participants to interact with each other and the trainers and understand each other. The workshop content and structure is attached to Annexure 1 of the report.

Participants at the course were women with varied levels of literacy and work experience. Activities, field visits and written assignments were therefore planned in groups. A list of participants is attached to Annexure 2 of the report. The course methodology included group discussions, analysis of written material, field visits, film screening, debates, lectures and role plays. Along with members of Nirantar Resource Centre two senior members of *Khabar Lahariya* (KL), Meera and Kavita were also resource persons who were involved in planning the sessions and in facilitating discussions and field visits. The course provided an opportunity for them to share their experience of working as journalists in rural areas of Chitrakoot and Banda district. Training and establishing other women and groups of women as journalists is one of the objectives of Nirantar and KL. The course was therefore organized in Chitrakoot. The experience of producing KL in Chitrakoot was seen as a learning ground for the participants and this was the reason for the workshop being organized in Chitrakoot. Other members of the KL group also came in to share their learnings and to provide feedback and suggestions to participants at the workshop.

The Mahila Jan Adhikar Samiti (MJAS) group members from Ajmer had attended two Material Production Courses organized by Nirantar. Nirantar will also support the production of the MJAS's local newspaper.

### DAY 1

#### Key concepts:

Introduction to the workshop

What constitutes news?

Participants at the workshop were welcomed by the trainers. Introductions were done in pairs. In addition to sharing names and work experience of partners, other interesting information like favourite food, past time and family details were also shared by some participants.

Participants were also asked to share their expectations of the training workshop as this was the first journalism workshop for most of them. Their expectations were to learn to:

- get news from villages
- talk to officials
- write news
- conduct interviews
- distribute and sell the newspaper
- start ones own newspaper

Some participants also stated that they wanted to learn more about KL. Besides learning trainees also saw the seven days an opportunity to sightsee and have fun!

The trainers introduced the participants to the workshop content and structure. The design of the workshop provided space to address their learning needs. Distribution of newspapers was not part of the workshop content but the KL experience allowed for some sharing on that, especially during the field visits.

### Creative and imaginative recording

This exercise was conducted to allow participants to express themselves in creative and imaginative ways. The purpose was to break away from the developmental style of writing and functioning that people are more familiar with and to express thoughts and feelings. The exercise was conducted in two rounds in which four words written on pieces of paper were passed around, each participant got two words and a few minutes to write what came to her mind on reading the words. The words were - *aankhein* (eyes), *muhabbat* (love), *mausam* (weather) and *ghunghroo* (anklets).

In the first round there were mixed responses to the words. Some expressed themselves through Bollywood songs around *mausam* and *aankhein* while some came up with humorous limericks. The essay type of writing that was a little self conscious in style was also shared.

In the second round participants felt more comfortable and this could be seen in their writing. In this round some people's nascent poetry emerged, the *ghunghroos* brought out the songs once again and there was much appreciation for each other's writing. One participant said at the end of the exercise that it was fun because '*man kii baat likh dii*' (we were able to write our feelings).

### What is news?

The session started with a discussion on the participants understanding of what constitutes news. Some of them read newspapers, some watched news on television. They were asked what according to them was news or newsworthy. Participants said that news provided information on current developments; it alerted them about disasters and made them more careful; it helped them become more aware; news

brought the country and the world closer as it provided information on political, social and other changes in different areas. Participants also said that they learnt about natural calamities and accidents through newspapers and TV news.

The trainers shared that in addition to the issues mentioned above which were more related to current development, news could also be related to developments in the past and could also be based on what might happen. For example, for over a month TV and newspapers covered news related to how the country would possibly have a woman as the President for the first time even before Pratibha Patil was elected to the post.

To take the discussion further, participants were divided into four groups to read and discuss news that had been put together from mainstream newspapers, TV news and editorial discussions at *Khabar Lahariya*. Participants were given five different 'news reports' and were asked to read and analyse them in groups. They were then asked to make presentations on what they thought was a good news piece and what was not.

### Group discussion

The 'news report' on snake birth created quite a stir. Some participants believed that this was possible, while others said that they had heard of the incident and it was true.

Some even said that since there were 60 people who had witnessed the incident, it was quite possible that something like this did take place. There were some who said that there was no truth in the story. It was biologically not possible for a woman to give birth to a snake and there had to be some other reason behind the story.

The report on the functioning of the government hospital appeared to be a duty report to some groups. One group said that such reports are in fact written by the hospital staff for their own record. Another group said that this was a news report because the government hospital never functioned so smoothly! The fourth group said that it was news because this is how it should be, it was an informative piece and people could use it to demand accountability from the district hospital staff.

#### What is news?

A summary of the five articles given for analysis

**Snake birth:** a woman in Madhya Pradesh gives birth to a snake. Almost 60 people witness the incident. Her husband, a medical assistant with the army conducts the surgery. People see a black snake slithering out of her womb and disappearing into the pond next to which the entire operation was carried out.

Based on a KL editorial discussion after one reporter spoke to the 'eye witnesses'

**Hospital functions regularly in Karwi:** on 26<sup>th</sup> July 2007 work at the district government hospital in Karwi started on time at 9 am. There was a long queue of patients who had come from different blocks of the district. The eight doctors at the hospital attended to each patient, provided medicines and in some cases referred them to bigger hospitals. The hospital was well stocked with medicines and as per the rule patients were given injections and medicines. In the evening before closing time the doctors gave the next date for check up to those patients who required further treatment and made their

The news report on British land records was considered news worthy by most groups as it provided information on the exploitation of the poor, something that happened even today. Participants felt that this was also news as it had a 'proof' - the document that was found was historical and therefore important even in today's context.

The fourth story on Sajni was considered to be problematic by all groups. Everyone admitted that TV channels and newspapers did include such news reports as many readers enjoy such stories. Participants objected to the fact that the description and character of the woman had been highlighted in the story in a derogatory manner and this was unethical. People also said that 'personal' matters should not be included in papers. This generated a discussion on what is considered to be personal. Would a case of domestic violence or battery be seen as personal and therefore not reported on? Some participants said that it was usually the woman's character that was highlighted, she was held responsible for the problems, men's lives do not figure in stories in this manner. Also, a great deal of moral policing is done by the media when it comes to women's lives. In this story too the fact that she was a mother of four who ran away was the main focus. A participant from the Ajmer group also said that in the media today the image of the modern woman is being promoted. The educated, 'empowered' woman who knows her place as woman, wife, and mother is the image of the ideal woman.

The last story was discussed animatedly in all groups. Participants thought that it was not a news report because it seemed like a story, a piece of fiction. It could not be true. Some participants also said that stories like these spread superstition and should not be included in papers or on TV. One participant said that such stories are easy to write and also grab people's attention so a lot of papers use these. One participant said that she was convinced that this was a real story as she had heard something like this from her grandmother. Others countered her by saying that things that one hears are not always true and therefore should not be believed.

The group discussion had generated a lot of interest among participants. The trainers built on the issues raised by the trainees to summarise the discussion on what is news-

- News is always a true incident/event/ happening, a piece of fiction cannot be considered newsworthy.
- News is usually a current story, something that is of relevance to people. An incident that took place in the past can be informative, but may not necessarily be news.
- News is usually something new, not a report of mundane things. That does not mean that everyday stories are not news worthy, in cases where they raise larger issues, they are newsworthy, but a listing of everyday things cannot be newsworthy.
- News stories are those that have a wide relevance. A fight between two people may not be news, but a case of family violence is newsworthy.

**Mother of four runs away with lover:** Sajni, a 35 year old woman, mother of four children left her husband and ran away with her young lover on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2007 from Tindwari village of Banda district. Sajni's husband is unemployed and the family survived solely on her income that came from stitching clothes. Sajni was well known as a woman who was outspoken and boisterous. Her husband suspected her of having a relationship with the young man when he confronted her, she had denied it. On being asked about the incident, neighbours said that they had never seen anyone as cruel as Sajni who did not once think of her children before absconding with her lover.

Based on a news report from a local newspaper

**British document on land tax found in Banda office:** Ahmed Khan, a clerk at the Land Revenue office at Banda discovered a 100 year old document related to taxes levied by the British rulers on farmers in Banda, Mahoba and other areas of Bundelkhand. The document was quite revealing as it had figures on the high taxes levied during the British regime. One farmer Nand Lal of Padui village paid as much as 30 % tax in 1907. Other farmers also paid taxes between 15-25% on their crops to British revenue officials. Sources believe that the document is quite important as it provides information on British policies, especially those related to land taxes. Transcribed from an English news report

- News also has geographical relevance. A report on weather in Kolkata may not be of interest to readers in Banda, however, if there are serious issues that have wider implications, the geographical location of the story may not be relevant and the story would be meaningful to people in other areas as well.
- News is not based on the reporter's views and opinions; it is a presentation of facts that have been substantiated.
- It is important to validate and substantiate facts that are included in news reports. Some things cannot be news only because people have 'seen' or 'heard' about it.
- Gender and news  
Mainstream media usually reproduces images to reiterate patriarchal power structures. Women are portrayed as 'bad women', victimized women or sacrificial women who are also 'good women'. It is important to guard against using or propagating these images when we write.

### Field visit

Participants were sent for their first field visit in four groups. Each group was sent to a different village. They were asked to identify an issue that according to them was newsworthy. Each group was given two to three hours for the field visit. Resource persons from KL and Nirantar accompanied them during the visit and facilitated the discussions that they had with members of the community. The KL group had also identified newsworthy issues in each village; they were therefore familiar with people and issues. This was not shared with the participants before the visit. The participants visited Rampurmaafi, Bharatpur, Akbarpur and Khaptiha village. All four villages were located in a radius of five kilometers from Chitrakoot.

### DAY 2

#### Key concepts:

What constitutes news?

Sources of news

### Presentation and discussion on field visit

Group 1 had gone to Rampurmaafi village. According to them, there was nothing in the village that was newsworthy. The group said 'aam logon kii aam samasyaaein hain, kuch khaas nahiin'. (The problems are of mundane nature and are to do with common people, the villagers, nothing special). When asked to explain further what they meant by this, the group said that there were small problems, but no lives had been lost and no serious damage to property had been caused. This statement raised many issues-should we only report on accidents, casualties and disasters in rural areas. Why should news on the absence of electrification (which was an issue concerning the entire population of Rampurmaafi) in a village be included in our papers? If we do not address such issues, are we any different from mainstream media?

Group 2 had gone to Bharatpur village and had spoken to several people in order to understand the problems facing people there. There were problems of drinking water and absence of health care facilities in Bharatpur. The issue that the group chose to

report on was a very different one- an incorrect announcement had been made by the person who does the rounds of the village in order to inform people about important dates etc. as a result of this people, including old women had come to the wrong place on the wrong date and after waiting for very long they realized that they did not have the correct information. While the incident was newsworthy, it left many questions unanswered- why did the person making announcements give the wrong information- nobody had spoken to him? Was there some other reason behind this? Did everyone in the village have wrong information or was it only one particular section of people?

Group 3 had gone to Akbarpur village. They shared that the village had several problems- there were no sewage tanks in the village, people did not have ration cards, there were some people who were not getting the due pensions, there were also problems of job cards where those eligible for employment (under the employment guarantee scheme) had not been given job cards. The group chose to focus on the issue of ration cards as this problem was of a more serious nature and there was more evidence for this. The visit of this group made it clear that there was a need for planning stories, and a need to prioritize. The group should have divided up in the village in order to speak to more people. This visit also raised the issue of substantiating information- looking at ration cards, applications, pension documents to understand the seriousness of the problem.

Group 4 had visited village Khaptiha. This group found two issues that were newsworthy- absence of roads, ration cards and water logging. The group spoke to several people and got evidence for the ration card story. They decided to zoom in on this story.

#### Journalists or activists

After the field visit on the first day participants were asked to reflect on their experience of news collection. The need for this exercise was based on the observations made by facilitators who had accompanied participants to the villages.

During the field visit some participants gave assurances to villagers that their problems would be solved if they provided information. Lists with names of people who did not have access to government schemes were made and promises made. In one group everyone sat around a house and discussed roles of Panchayat members and their performance. People were asked to come to this meeting and share information. The style of functioning was that of development activists.

When asked to share their experience, participants said that politicians, bureaucrats and others who visited people in villages always promised to solve people's problems, but took no action whatsoever. People in villages had become quite disillusioned as a result of this and therefore did not trust outsiders. They had to promise something in return for taking information and that is why they gave assurances to people. The trainers said that this was unethical to build people's expectations and should not be practiced by anyone. The role of reporters was to highlight issues through newspapers and other media. The consequences of who it reaches and what they do is beyond the scope of journalists. While collecting information, this fact should be made clear.

The trainers also said that reporters needed to be pro active in seeking information; they could not expect people to gather around them and provide information. Local power dynamics also have an impact on the information being provided and therefore public meetings or gatherings were not good places for news collection.

### Sources of news

The group was divided into pairs and participants were asked to list the sources of news. A list of written, unwritten, official, unofficial, primary and secondary sources was made on the basis of what participants shared. The trainers added their suggestions to the list of sources. This list included:

Members of the community

Village Pradhans, Panchayat members, elected representatives

Local bureaucrats, politicians

Artists, artisans, sports persons, musicians etc

Journalists

Service providers- doctors, teachers, lawyers, ANMs, anganwadi workers etc

Public places such as shops, bus stand, railway stations, hospitals, schools, Panchayat bhawan etc

Historical monuments

Government departments

Newspapers, magazines, publications by other groups, newsletters

Posters, pamphlets

Government documents, orders, policy documents, legal documents

Petitions, statements, applications

Reports, research studies, articles

Historical documents

### Field visit

The group was assigned its second field work. In three groups participants were asked to go to three different historical monuments to get information. The first group was sent to Balaji Temple, a temple in Chitrakoot constructed by Aurangzeb. The second group had to get information from Kothi Talab, a pond with a temple in the middle, located in Karwi town. The third group went to Jaidev Akhara, an 18<sup>th</sup> century monument constructed by the Bundelas for recreation and wrestling.

### Verifying sources

Participants were asked to write short reports based on the field visits. The reports by all three groups were similar. Details related to the monuments such as the reason for the construction of the monument, its description and historical facts were missing. The reports were based on information that had not been substantiated or verified. Participants had spoken to *pujaris*, people at the monuments and nearby shopkeepers. Based on this they used whatever little information they had to write up complete reports. The process of distilling facts from myths had not happened.

There was a discussion on the need to get information from reliable sources. Stories such as that of the construction of the Balaji temple get created, they are not

historical facts. Therefore, it is important for reporters to look at written records, a plaque at the temple that had been donated by Aurangzeb had a different version of the story, but very few people know about the existence of the plaque.

The need to state that the reports were based on what people have said is an important part of writing. The manner in which the three reports were written seemed like the reporters were promoting unverified information, stories based on hearsay. Since all three reports were based on unsubstantiated information, it was important to state that in the reports as well.

There was a discussion on how stories around temples and places of worship get created to fit the character of a king or a community. In this story Aurangzeb fits the bill of a cruel, fundamentalist Muslim ruler.

This also led to a discussion how people are represented in published material. Stereotypes are created and reinforced through writings. Dalits, tribals, rural people and other marginalised groups are often represented as being ignorant, lazy, dirty and as being responsible for several existing problems. Women are represented in certain ways, in history, in school textbooks and even in mainstream media. The sacrificing woman is considered to be ideal. In Chitrakoot, handbooks on Sati Anasuya, a woman who sacrificed everything to prove her chastity, are sold in large numbers. Should we consider this for inclusion in our newspaper?

This discussion was challenging for the trainers as some participants believed that this was part of their faith, and this could not be questioned. As trainers we shared that everyone had a right to their own faith and beliefs in their personal lives, these could not determine the content of our publications. We also shared our perspective on Sati Anasuya and how her story was narrated time and again to promote the image of an ideal woman. However, this was not very convincing for some who felt that issues such as these were sacred and therefore not debatable.

Film: Mrityudand

DAY 3

Key concepts:

Gender

Completing stories

Understanding gender

### Report on Balaji temple written by group one

The temple was constructed by the cruel Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb. Aurangzeb came to Chitrakoot passing through Jhansi and other areas, destroying all the temples and places of worship that he came across. On coming to Chitrakoot he instructed his soldiers to destroy the idol of Balaji. When the soldiers tried doing so, they fainted. The priest who was praying there told Aurangzeb that this had happened because they tried to destroy such a holy shrine. Aurangzeb asked the priest for forgiveness. The priest sprinkled a powder on the soldiers who regained consciousness immediately. It was after this that Aurangzeb gave orders for the construction on a temple. He also promised to give aid from the royal treasury for the maintenance of the temple.

The discussion on *Mrityudand*, the film that participants watched the previous night kick started the discussion on gender. Everyone liked the film and could relate to it. The film had three women who were determined and powerful in their own ways. The women took decisions in their lives, challenged patriarchal norms and became role models for other women. The film also raised issues of sexuality, of sexual violence as well as women's desire.

In order to discuss gender further, participants were asked to reflect on their own lives. They were asked to share their experiences of growing up and of learning and internalizing gender norms.

Experiences of discrimination at home were shared by many participants. Learning to obey orders, limiting one's own mobility, wearing 'proper' clothes, developing woman like qualities- these are some of the things that women have learnt in their families and at school. Women also talked about the kind of education provided to them. The choice of subjects, the extent of education and quality of education are determined by a person's gender. Girls cannot study science, have to learn sewing and cooking, have to clean class rooms, cannot play sports- these were issues that came up for discussion. The choice of profession was also discussed. Teaching is considered to be the ideal profession for women. Work that entails engagement with the public sphere is not considered good for women. It is because of this that there are fewer women in mainstream media. Especially in decision making positions, there are only 18 % women. There is also a division of beats within mainstream media. Women are asked to do 'soft' stories. Reports on politics and governance is considered outside to be beyond women.

In order to question such norms, it is important for women to step into the public domain, to access information, analyse it and present it back to the community. This is the role that women could perform as journalists.

### Completing stories

One of the resource persons narrated an incident to participants. In the story, two people had lost their lives at Manikpur railway station due to a water crisis at the station. The crisis became acute in nature in the summer months when passengers rushed to fill water to the only tap. This caused a stampede due to which people lost their lives. The details of the incident along with names of passengers, their age and the responses of government officials were shared with participants.

After narrating the incident two other trainers who were not in the room earlier stepped in. Pretending to be ignorant, they asked participants to share the incident that had been narrated. None of the participants were sure when the incident had taken place. They remembered a few names and some details, but there was confusion about important facts such as the number of people that died and responses of officers.

The trainers used this exercise to make a point about the manner in which news was collected. Reporters had one chance to collect information, and therefore it was important for them to get the facts correct. They would neither have the time nor the

resources to go back and complete the story if they did not have all the facts in place. Therefore, it was important for reporters to be active and to ask the right questions to get all the information required.

### **Field visit**

In four groups participants were asked to go to four different medical institutes to collect information. Two groups went to Janki Kund, a hospital run by a private trust in Chitrakoot. The third group went to the district government hospital in Chitrakoot and the fourth group to a private clinic in Karwi. Participants were asked to pull out what they thought was newsworthy from the information that had been gathered. They were also asked to write a news report on the basis of information that they had.

### **Presentation and discussion on field visit**

Group 1 had visited the female ward of Janki Kund Hospital. The news report had information on the hospital, including its year of construction. The group had also enquired about cases of STDs and RTIs. The hospital staff informed them that treat women with such infections were not treated. In addition to this the group had information on how medicines sold in the hospital were more expensive than those sold outside.

### **Day 6**

#### **Session on interviews**

The big advantage with this session was that the group already had some kind of familiarity with each other, the trainers and the subject of the training. They'd already been into the field a few times, and had first hand experiences of interacting with people to get information, without being formally told this was interviewing. It was attempted, therefore, to keep the explanatory section of this session to the minimum, and design it as far as possible like a discussion (ie, ask the group about what interviews were and what it was important to keep in mind while doing them). Meera and Kavita were asked to give illustrative examples from their experiences interviewing for KL, to add a more real context to the session. Though, occasionally, attention did seem to flag in this as all the other sessions, the level of engagement and understanding seemed to be quite high.

#### **Introduction**

- what is an interview?
  1. way of getting information from a person/ persons for a story
  2. most important primary source of information  
(to discuss)
- why is this important?
- some examples of human sources of information for news stories

#### **3 Parts Of Interviewing**

a) Researching: proper background of person (name, age, position, political party, ideology). Should also know important/current events in the area.  
People more likely to respond/talk if they know the reporter is knowledgeable

Sources: books, magazines, newspapers, other people

b) Setting Up The Interview - Time, Place

- body language/tone of voice (if on the phone) needs to be firm, assertive, because many people will try and evade or put reporters off. Or set interviews at odd times/places (here, eggs from KL)
- can't/shouldn't give up immediately when interviewees are playing hard to get - if source is necessary to complete story, must follow up.
- be clear and confident about who you are, where you are from and why you need the information, some people (especially officials) or places might want to know what questions or what kind of questions. Give just the gist of the issue, not too many details. Some people will be easily put off
- be clear how much time you will need
- the source's convenience, and not the reporters will be a priority. This also depends on how important the source is for your story

c) Doing The Interview

- prepare well. Make the list of questions before
- according to who you are meeting and how much time you will get, arrange questions in order of importance
- there are two ways of doing interviews:

Funnel	Inverted funnel
Begin with getting to know the source, ask general, conversational questions. Later, get to the more important and difficult questions.  This method is used when there is time, and when the source needs to get used to the interviewer/reporter.	Here, the important questions are asked first.  This method is used most often, when there is less/limited time; the source is uncommunicative or for whatever reason, you want to spend as little time as possible; when many people are around also for interviews/information 0 like the scene of an accident or some important incident

Things to remember (this was communicated as a checklist after discussion, during which a lot of the points emerged from the group itself.)

- . body language: seriousness, confidence. How to introduce yourself. People will counter question you
- . prepare well-thought/researches questions. Learn the important ones by heart. All, if possible. Make eye contact as much as you can. Keep writing important information, but don't keep looking down at paper/notebook all through the interview
- . anticipate sources who will not want to give interviews, or will definitely give less time.
  - prepare some important, difficult - 'close-ended' questions.
  - Speak quickly, and finish your important questions first with these difficult interviewees
  - Be insistent, don't just accept or be intimidated by people who say they don't have time.

- . Don't be too forceful. Need to strike a balance between confidence and aggressive behaviour.
- . Very important to be aware and alert through the interview. Sometimes answers lead to new questions you haven't listed/thought of. Don't stick only to the questions you have prepared
- . Questions need to be appropriate to the person, the story, the situation: for instance, the tone and content of questions for officials, victims of violence, grieving parents (etc) will be different
- . Need to be alert about where the interview is going; stop people from rambling, or giving information that is irrelevant, and perhaps wasting time. It takes practice to do this without being rude and abrupt
- . It's a good idea to establish a rapport with the interviewee. Not only will the interview become smoother, but also for future stories
- . Make some notes about the source's behaviour - might be useful
- . If you don't hear something important, then ask the interviewee to repeat. Though not too many times - be alert!

### **Role Plays**

This was definitely the highlight of this session: a combination of entertaining characterizations and the excitement of interacting with the trainers in a different role really worked to draw the group into the exercise. Six groups were formed, and each given a different character to interview - ranging from officials to interesting personalities (A sleazy District Magistrate, a boatwoman, a station master, a woman freedom fighter, a woman pradhan). They were given a situation, and asked to plan/prepare questions for the interview. Some of the issues that emerged were - how to deal with long, rambling, unfocussed interviewees; how to deal with officials behaving inappropriately (and thus distracting attention from the questions asked); and how to extract important information from sources who are busy/evasive. In general, the energy was high through this activity, and provided a spur to the field trips that followed.

### **Field visit to do interviews**

The participants were divided into groups to do interviews; 2 groups went to Ramghat - one to interview a shopkeeper, and another to do tourists  
3 groups went to Karwi, one to interview a shopkeeper, Radha, and two others to meet the ADM or Basic Shiksha Adhikari or the official at the veterinary hospital. General observations of this field trip were that, though the group knew what they were supposed to do in terms of the interview at a theoretical level. Some amount of preparation was done. Once in the field, and with the pressure of either approaching strangers and thinking on the spot, or actually interacting with an official, theory didn't always work. Miscommunication and tensions ensued, around who was asking which questions, and who was writing the answers down. With the Ramghat groups, sometimes people were approached with little observational insight to what questions could be asked, or people who could have made for different/interesting interviews were overlooked. The questions also could have been more flexible, personalized. The Karwi groups had a lot of trouble finding their officials, which was in itself a learning experience! However, the ease and confidence of interviewing is something that only comes with practice, so the groups' hiccups were not at all out of the ordinary, and served as good points for discussion.

### Ways of writing interviews

The evening was to be spent in writing up the interviews taken. A brief input on how interviews can be written was provided, and then the groups worked on their own.

#### 1. The Question and answer style

Unnecessary question/answers can be eliminated. The answers that are included should be transcribed in exactly the words used by the interviewee. Cannot change answers!

The 'lead' of an interview could/should include - who is the interviewee? when and where the interview happened and why?

#### 2. Feature/essay type

There are no questions here; the interview is written in the reporter's words, using quotes from the interview as necessary/appropriate.

### Day 7

The first few hours of the morning were spent in reading and reworking the interviews written up the previous day. The quality of these interviews were fairly good: the biggest issues/problems that were emerging were some unnecessary questions, or questions that could be combined to make the interview more concise/less scattered. The discussions in the groups brought up some good points about writing interviews. It seemed like most people had a fairly detailed understanding of the interview - doing it and writing it.

### Recap

After 6 long days of training, we weren't exactly sure what and how much of the sessions - some of which had been difficult and intensive - had been absorbed by the participants. And how we were to know this - because surely, saying 'lead' or 'khabar' any more times, would just switch the best of them off. The group had responded well to more creative forms of training, and so we decided that some sort of game or competition might be a better way of gauging how much of the training had been retained. Our questions ranged from short, multiple choice questions, to match the following, to true and false statements; also more detailed issues that we had discussed in the sessions. The participants were divided into two groups, and the competition was quite intense. Any 'chusti' that might have been missing in the sessions and the field showed itself in participants jumping up to answer questions. Or sharply admonishing other team members who had got really 'simple' questions wrong. It was deeply heartening to see that most of the group had a grasp of the basic concepts of journalism, but also were able to articulate some of the more complex issues - of what news is important, and why, of how to write certain news. It was also an exhilarating way to end the fairly long and draining week we'd had.

### Feedback

Before a round of written feedback on the course, we had a brief round of oral sharing with the group. The response was good, for the most part. Many participants said they were nervous before they came (Salma, Kiran, Tabassum) - about the work that would be expected of them - but had enjoyed meeting so many people, and speaking to them, and learning so much. Many people listed the key concepts in the course (we were sure none of the 18 participants would ever forget what LEAD or KHABAR or INTERVIEW meant!). some people shared the difficulty in understanding or

remembering words that were used in the course (Mehjabeen, Gulab, Kiran) but hoped that what they didn't recall, they would in the work to follow. Uma shared what a different experience it was to be encouraged to go out and speak to so many different people. Overall, it was heartening that (atleast in the sharing back!) there seemed to be an enthusiasm and curiosity generated in the field of journalism, and in the work that was being taught. Participants from MJAS in Ajmer shared that in subsequent courses, it would be good to learn about actual production work involved in journalism.