



# Listen to them

---

## THE GOOD REPORTER: A MEMOIR OF JOURNALISM IN THE 21ST CENTURY

By Disha Mullick, Geeta  
Devi, Harshita Verma, Kavita  
Bundelkhandi, Lakshmi  
Sharma, Lalita, Meera Devi,  
Nazni Rizvi, Shyamkali and  
Sunceta Prajapati,  
Simon & Schuster, ₹699

---

Newspapers are full of reports of dowry deaths, honour killings and sexual violence. These stories enrage, as they should. But how often do we pause to think of those who report such crimes? Do the women on the job flinch or grieve, or remain stoic as they work on these stories?

*The Good Reporter* answers these unasked queries in this collective biography of reporters of *Khabar Lahariya*, an all-women Hindi newspaper, which is sold exclusively in Bundelkhandi towns and villages stretching across Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.

The answers are not absolute; neither are they moralistic. They come out as snapshots. For instance, a respondent, while recalling reporting on a *sati* in 2019 in Shabhajpur village, says that the crime brings back a childhood memory: "I was eleven years old. There were lakhs of people collected in the village. A woman was about to become *sati*. You couldn't buy coconuts and sugar candy in the shops, even if you were ready to pay... I thought it was a *mela*." Another reporter notes how she always asks for water to drink while reporting from Dalit *bastis* to signal that she has no caste bias.

Interestingly, these women challenge the assumption that a good reporter should be invisible. The chronicles are rarely attributed to any one person. This narrative technique allows the women to bring forward uncomfortable truths about their bodies, strategies, politics and negotiations in and out of the newsroom.

Throughout, *The Good Reporter* continues to be in dialogue with its readers. But it is not about asking questions only. They are inviting you to sit with them in a pink room on the third floor of a building facing the Hathikhana *masjid* — *Khabar Lahariya*'s office — and become one with the soil and the news of Bundelkhand.