



WHAT IS GOOD JOURNALISM?

● by Nancy Baker & Others

Journalism is the “work of collecting and writing news stories for newspapers, magazines, radio, and television” according to the Oxford Dictionary. Most people add some dimension of quality to it just as they do education. There is **good** journalism and **bad** journalism, journalism that **doesn't tell an accurate story** and journalism that is **bias politically**, etc. etc. What is good and what is bad journalism?

Journalism can be introduced in secondary schools as an elective subject, or for some students as an “easy” replacement for required language classes. Other schools have it as an academic major leading to a degree. So, institutions themselves give a different level of “standing” to journalism as an academic subject.

We know that journalism is rated by the person who is reading the magazine or watching the specific television show. A person who reads “New Yorker Magazine” and “The Wall Street Journal Newspaper”, or watches the Political Forum in the United States is perceived as an intellect and one interested in business and world affairs. He/She probably has a college degree, comes from at least the middle class and has a reasonably good paying job or is on the upward swing towards the “upper crust of society”. The vocabulary is scholarly and the issues speculative.

The language in publications like “Newsweek”, “Time”, “the San Francisco Chronicle”, and other major city newspapers is written more

toward the masses of people.

Here journalism may be said to be at its best because here you are going to write to reach the most people. You will have a mix of educated and non-educated. You will have print, television and radio with vocabulary that most people will understand and not be overburdened with flowery words and sentence structure too difficult to listen to, read and comprehend. It is practical to the every days of the reader.

What seems clear in reading several newspapers is that the journalistic style and rules learned in journalism classes are not always followed or are not adhered to from paper to paper. Back in the dark ages when I took journalism (yes, you are surprised, I know), there were the 5 W's in the first paragraph, the lead story always appeared on the right side of the front page, etc, etc. So, I have been confused. Journalism has changed. I have asked five different journalists to answer to the question: what is good journalism? To give each credit, I did not ask them to discuss where the lead story should go or how to write a good story. I just ask them to tell me, “What is good journalism?” Here is how they responded. What would be your answer?

GOOD JOURNALISM

“Good Journalism is writing and speaking in justifiable way. In similar manner, it's collection of information, edition, publication and dissemination, thus, providing quality service to the world as a whole.” Gopal Pd.Thapaliya, SAFMA (-)

ON PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISM

● Babu Ram Aryal

Journalism is often defined as “the business or practice of writing and producing newspapers”.¹ Similarly, Professional means “engaged in a specified activity as one's main paid occupation.”² It means Professional Journalism is to write something in newspaper (or any media)

for which he/she is paid. I have different view on journalism. Simply I do not limit Journalism as only writing for them who pay for this. I strongly believe, journalism is that process which educates the society and helps for development and professional journalism enables person doing so. While talking on professional journalism we have to consider at least three things, viz., **Content, Impact, and Limitation**. In our environment **content** is either almost forgotten or wrongly placed. Even we forget the people to whom we are writing for. Let's take a look on an example; few days back a Motor Road connecting Jumla, a very remote district to Surkhet, a entry point of mid western mountainous area, open formally. Most of newspaper covered the news with high importance. Its true it deserve high importance, but the dimension should have different than we have read so far. If we analyze the content, that is real worry for our journalism, in my opinion. Kantipur on its New Year edition had news "Jumlama Motar (Motor at Jumla)" besides other thing, in its last para, it was written, quoting a local people, "**Now onwards our apple will get market otherwise get rotten**. But following day there was a news," Nepalgunj ko falful Kalikot (Fruits to Kalikot from Nepalgunj)". In its second Para it was written that Banana, Kashmiri Appall, and other vegetables are being sold on high demand. "Most of the newspaper highlighted what were imported, from outside city rather what were exported from that district. And I strongly believe these should have been reported. If there were no export from the district, why it was not so? This is another way of educating people and to contribute on development, that's call Professional Journalism for me. We have to explore the content for development not the developed content. We have to be very cognizant on **impact** of the news. Often reporting or writings are found as they have no responsibility towards society. It should be very accountable and transparent. And lastly, there are many limits but minimum standard should prevail. And obviously we should consider the **limitations**, too. Financial limitations are also there. "There must be Right payment for Right work" but we are not getting fair deal from publication houses. But this is not matter of excuse for professional journalism. No matter what condi-

tion, we most put ourselves in fair cart. We should not think that only paying high money is enough, you most get fair treatment, too. While talking on limitation, we most look into our education on journalism and orientation on journalistic values. This is that area because of what we are still lagging behind. We have to come over. We have to erase our earlier values which are withholding our pens and fingers making us agent of vested interest. Professional journalism denies being agent of vested interest. Currently, society is also being hostile on professional journalism. Society is also getting pleasure from that information disseminated by media with out any objection. If they have any objections, those are for wrong cause. This is leading us towards unprofessional journalism. Its misunderstanding, I say. Society is never got professional attitude (It may be bold statement for others) journalism with content and impact. I have hardly read little news reporting with professional content and real impact to the society. Thus, bottom line of professional journalism for me is accountable, transparent and fair media for development of the society. But I do not mean there is no professionalism at all. Miles to go....

"I strongly believe, journalism is that process which educates the society and helps for development and professional journalism enables person doing so. While talking on professional journalism we have to consider at least three things, viz., **Content, Impact, and Limitation**. Bottom line of professional journalism, for me, is accountable, transparent and fair media for development of the society."

Good journalism

1. Well informing people, (general public)
2. Change in policy/implementation in thinking or situations

● **Rajan Shama**

Senior News Editor, Channel Nepal

Good Journalism

If a reader, while reading a news story senses like witnessing the incident himself the spot and draws conclusions of his own, the news story I believe it is a good news story.

● **Surendra Nepali**

Senior Editor, Rastriya Samachar Samiti (RSS)

Good Journalism

Journalism, which is often understood as the literature in hurry, is an academic activity concerned with the dissemination of news and views occurred in the society. Because of its challenging, sensitive, competitive and expressive nature, this profession seems to have been more popular than ever before in this fast growing democratic world. Journalism is based on certain principles and ethics like any other profession. Accountability, honesty, truth, accuracy, fairness, decency and fair play are some of the common principles to be followed by every journalist. Being the “voice of the voiceless” and the supervisory line of work, journalism succeeds the best — and best deserves success which consequently fears God and honors Mankind.

We are at the era of democracy and freedom. Every good democracy demands good journalism and vice versa. So journalism reveals the fault lines of the governments screening the better course so as to promote the best benefit of the larger mass in order to create a welfare state. Thus the innermost rationale of journalism is to endow with common citizens with accurate and reliable information they need to function in a free society.

● **Pushpa Raj Poudel**

Program Manager, Education Journalists' Group (EJG)

Ed> **THANK** you to all of OUR CONTRIBUTORS this week on our topic: “what is good journalism?” we thank you for your perceptions and views.

WELCOME: HRITHIK SINGH RAJBANSHI

Competing against eight other candidates for the position of Office Assistant, Hrithik Singh Rajbanshi rose to the top in impressing the Interviewing Committee with his personality and skills.

Although Hrithik has not worked in an office setting before, he comes with good organizational skills, is able to solve problems that may come up in this environment, and has a pleasing smile and personality that will allow him to work well with a diverse group of people. He will put forth a good image for EJG in the public sector.

Why did you want to work for EJG?

It would give me an opportunity for self development. I will be able to increase my English skills and earn more money to continue my studies in commerce. I am taking a little time off right now.

Where did you work before coming to EJG?

I worked mostly in restaurants and stores like department stores where I learned to organize things and meet many people.

What do you hope to gain by working at EJG?

I want to improve my English vocabulary. It will give me a chance to speak with foreigners. I will be able to read more.

GETTING TO KNOW HRITHIK BETTER



Born	: Jhapa, Nepal
Birthdate	: Jeshtha-27, B.S. 2043
Favorite color	: Blue
Favorite car	: Sports cars, Ferrari
Favorite food	: Daal, Bhat & Tarkari
Favorite singer	: Celin Dion
Hobby	: singing
School	: SLC and classes in commerce
Favorite movie	: Titanic
Family	: Parents, 4 brothers, 2 sisters and No girlfriend!

UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN continued Articles 14-24

ARTICLE 14 you have the right to think what you like and be whatever religion you want to be, with your parent's guidance.

ARTICLE 15 You have the right to be with friends and join or set up clubs, unless this breaks the rights of others.

ARTICLE 16 You have the right to a private life, for example a diary *

ARTICLE 17 You have the right to collect information from the media ...and be protected from information that might harm you. *

ARTICLE 18 You have the right to be brought up by your parents, if possible.

ARTICLE 19 You have the right to be protected from being hurt or badly treated.

ARTICLE 20 You have the right to special protection and help if you can't live with your parents.

ARTICLE 21 You have the right to have the best care for you if adopted or fostered...*

ARTICLES 22 You have the right to special protection and help if you are a refugee.*

ARTICLE 23 You have the right to the best health and medical care.*

ARTICLE 24 You have a right to the best health possible and to medical care...*

*paraphrased or information left out.

The English Language Papers in Summary: April 16-20

RN= Rising Nepal, KT= Kathmandu Times, KP= Kathmandu Post.

April 16 RN Ed. "Wishing Success" "87% enrolled shows promise although there may be other problems like retaining children in schools ... where poverty remains a pervasive malady... campaign to 90% this year".

April 17 KP "Too many book burden Li'l Shoulders" by Anjali Subedi-some children carry or need as many as 20 textbooks". There is a question of this indicates quality education.

HT Minister of Education Pradip Nepal told the Prime Minister that he will quit if Vice Chancellors are not appointed by May 8. He indicated a group of teachers are creating hurdles. (ed. Is this a sign of leadership at the MOES?)

April 18 HT Ed. By Yubaraj Sharma "Private Sector: New Paradigm in Nepali Education" Challenges the government to form an entrepreneurship and private initiative in higher education to support universities.

KP Ed. "Exam Ironies" by Hem Raj Kafle. No trend of regular learning has caused panic.

RN Basudev Poudel, a trainer at ETC in Bhartauda was killed by 8 people of the JTMM.

RN India provides 44.2 million for 2 schools and buildings in Mahottari . 190 projects have been supported by India in the areas of education, health, and community service.

April 19 HT Guna Raj Lohani, President of Education Republic Forum talked at the EJG Forum about the need for corruption being curbed. The forum on "Problems of Teachers in Private Schools" also heard Umesh Shrestha, President of Private Boarding School Organization Say teachers have genuine demands. He stated that private schools are not needed if government school improve the quality of education. Sushil Pandey, Education Director of the Central Region called for amendments to existing laws. He stated there are too many private schools and that make them difficult to regulate.

RN Silver Mountain School Celebrates its 3rd birthday for hotel management skills.

RH Ed. “Scholarship Quota” dalits and girl children quotas are grossly inadequate. 585,000 per year in primary grades. 50% go to girls. RS350 go to 700,000 students. The first installment of 100 rs will go to students by mid-May.

April 20 HT Civilians and students protested at Ramnagar against Maoists who destroyed a private school building.

KP ANNISU-R is concerned that the government schools are charging fees against the agreement with private schools

RN Student Enrollment Campaign in Dang, Ed. The target enrollment is being raised from 88.5 90% by four strategies: publicity, infrastructure assessment, resource collection, and school level awareness. Door to door campaigns will take place in rural areas. The HSEB Teachers Association submitted a 7-point memorandum for five lecturers in public secondary schools and the fixing of facilities to be done by MOES. If not done, A sit-in will be held April 20-21.

RN Ed. By Yuba Nath Lamsel, “Focus on Retention”. The Millennium Development Goals Identify 90% enrollment for primary schools. But only 50% of the students ever graduate from fifth grade. Education is a right not a gift. 13% of the students still remain out of school. There is no monitoring or follow-up done. Illiteracy is caused by poverty, poor economic backgrounds, unemployment, and ignorance. The SLC results are still poor. There are 2.6 child workers in Nepal.

EJG INTERACTION: Problems of Private School Teachers

The Teachers’ Union of the community schools has continuously been in the protest programs putting demands of the private schools’ teachers about their job security and additional reforms in the education sector. The founders of the private schools and the government reached in an agreement last month about the problems of the private schools teachers. Teachers have also given the ultimatum to the government

that if their demands will not be fulfilled by 23rd April, they will bring out the sequential protest program.

In this regard, EJG organized an interaction program on 18th April inviting all the stakeholders in its conference hall.

Gunaraj Lohani, president of the Republican Educational Forum confirmed his acceptance for the demands put forward by the teachers’ union. He further said that the movement would compel the government to bring out reforms in the education sector and narrow the gaps created by the present education policy. But the government and the founders of the private schools have often discouraged the movement. They have focused on the table talk which will only solve the problem. The leader of the dialogue team formed by the government, Sushil Pandey said that the government would amend the education policy soon and resolve the problem. In the program, Umesh Shrestha, the president of PABSON and Gita Rana, the president of N-PABSON prioritized on the dialogue, performed their readiness to resolve the problem through table talk and requested the teachers not to bring out protest programs. Suprabhat Bhandari, president of the Guardians Association opined that previous agreements reached between the government and the different stakeholders of education regarding the monitoring of the school fees were not implemented properly.

The program was chaired and conducted by Bhupa Raj Khadka, the president of Education Journalists’ Group. (Ed. 45 persons were in attendance).

- Reported by Pushpa Raj Poudel
Program Manager/EJG

Send comments, suggestions for us:

Mail us at: newsletter@ejg.org.np

Editor: Nancy J. Baker (nancy@ejg.org.np)

Also available on www.ejg.org.np