The Role of Media in Conflict and Peace: Exploring Alternatives

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Acknowledgements

Background Note

"The term 'new media' seems to escape its very definition. Loosely, new media is a way of organizing a cloud of technology, skills, and processes that change so quickly that it is impossible to fully define just what those tools and processes are. For example, the cell phone in the late 1980's could be thought of as part of new media, while today the term might only apply selectively to a certain type of phone with a given system of applications, or even more commonly, the content of those apps."

– Bailey Socha and Barbara Eber-Schmid[1]

Socha and Eber-Schmid of the New Media Institute aptly describe the phenomenon of rapidly expanding access to news, knowledge and information via the internet and mobile technologies, in addition to existing models of print media, television and radio broadcast, and the much older practice of word-of-mouth. The internet is becoming the most popular entry point to news and information for young India, especially those between the ages of 16-24. As of 2014, there were 120.5 million social network users in India – almost double the 63.1 million users in 2012. This number is estimated to rise to approximately 197 million by 2018.[2] If used responsibly, social media has tremendous potential to influence and inspire both young and old. In a world where there are at least forty-one active conflicts and nine in the South Asian region alone[3], there exists, now more than ever, a great responsibility to report and consume news conscientiously, to avoid adding fuel to already existing fires.

Media and Democracy

Article 19 of the International Declaration of Human Rights and Article 19 (1) (a) of the Indian Constitution guarantee freedom of speech and expression. When applied to the media, the freedom of speech serves the purpose of not only educating the public, but also enabling them to

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[1] http://www.newmedia.org/what-is-new-media.html

[2] http://www.statista.com/statistics/278407/number-of-social-network-users-in-india/

[3] https://acd.iiss.org/

make well-informed decisions—this is an essential element of democracy. The media is often considered the Fourth Estate, or an unofficial socio-political force of influence outside the state. It has a considerable impact on the progress of democracy, and therefore has the responsibility to be accurate, impartial and reliable. As Professor Amartya Sen has succinctly articulated:

> "*The media can greatly help in the functioning of Indian democracy and the search for a better route to progress including all the people — and not just the more fortunate part of Indian society. What is central to the functioning of the news media in Indian democracy is the combination of accuracy with the avoidance of bias. The two problems, thus, complement each other*."[4]

While the freedom of speech is vital to a free press, the deregulation of broadcast media in many countries has resulted in a gradual concentration of ownership and rising commercial pressure that obstruct free and fair reporting.[5] The increasingly competitive nature of media landscapes around the world can "hamper the ability of the democratic system to solve internal social problems as well as international conflicts in an optimal way."[6] Peace journalism theorists McGoldrick and Lynch identify sixteen obstacles that prevent the media from fulfilling its democratic potential, illustrated in the following chart:

Increasingly, the media itself is implicated in violence. Philosopher and social theorist Jean Baudrillard has observed that the circulation of spectacular violent imagery through mass media reduces the viewer's sensitivity to the pain and trauma normally associated with war.[7]

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[4] Sen. A. The glory and the blemishes of the Indian news media. *The Hindu*. April 25, 2012. http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/the-glory-and-the-blemishes-of-the-indian-news-media/article2781128.ece

[5] Herman, Edward S.; Chomsky, Noam. *Manufacturing Consent*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1988

[6] Fog. A. "The supposed and the real role of mass media in modern democracy". Retrieved 4 April 2012.

[7] Baudrillard.J. "The Violence of the Image." A paper Jean Baudrillard was originally commissioned to present at the International Symposium attached to "media_city," Seoul's 2002 Biennial. (English). http://www.egs.edu/faculty/jean-baudrillard/articles/the-violence-of-the-image/

We live in an era of 'mediatised conflict' where the narrative chosen is often state-led and partial, frequently portraying 'enemies' as an unambiguously immoral, violent, and unworthy – thereby potentially exacerbating conflicts.[8]

The atmosphere of violence and racial intolerance that led to the 1994 genocide of half to one million Tutsis in Rwanda was in part a result of hate media and propaganda disseminated through the radio station *Mille Collines*, which particularly incited young listeners to murder with its programming.[9] The role of media in the 2002 bout of ethnic violence in Gujarat has also been linked to anti-Muslim propaganda disseminated via mass media, such as the print press.[10] On the other hand, the Arab Spring saw the use of social media to gather people in nonviolent protest against entrenched and authoritarian regimes – notably in Egypt and Tunisia. Closer to home, recent reportage on the September 2014 Kashmir floods by mainstream national media focused on the relief work done by the Army, ignoring the substantial contribution of the

8   Sreedharan.C. "War and Peace Journalism" in *Journalism: New Challenges* edited by Karen.F. Watt and Stuart Allan, 462. Centre for Journalism and Communication Research, Bournemouth University, 2013.

9   David Yanagizawa-Drott. PROPAGANDA AND CONFLICT: EVIDENCE FROM THE RWANDAN GENOCIDE. 2014. http://www.hks.harvard.edu/fs/dyanagi/Research/RwandaDYD.pdf

10 Dhamija.C. *Ordinary People, Extraordinary Violence: Naxalites and Hindu Extremists in India*. Routledge Publishers, 2012.

local community. This fuelled a controversy which eventually became political in nature.

According to media framing theorist Gadi Wolfsfeld's politics-media-politics cycle, the media can "one, define the political atmosphere; two, it can influence the nature of debate; three, it can impact the strategy and behaviour of the parties involved; and four, it can raise or lower the legitimacy and public standing of the parties involved."[11]

Media and Conflict in South Asia

Deep social stratification, the rise of identity politics, recent economic globalization, and tension within the nation-state has fundamentally shaped the media discourse around conflict in South Asia in particular.[12] A recent roundtable of media theorists and practitioners across the Subcontinent highlighted some tendencies of media in the region:

- An episodic treatment of conflict and human rights issues that ignore the histories and processes that generate any one event or instance of violence.

- Human rights concerns are often subordinate to 'larger concerns' like national interest or state security.

- Heightened competition and pressure to constantly produce 'breaking news' in broadcast media has resulted in a fragmented, theatrical and spectacular presentation of events, without analysis or complexity.

- The quality of news gathering in broadcast journalism has suffered in the competitive 24 hour news era: "the need to be the first with news became the central preoccupation, the due diligence that went into the newsgathering of an earlier era – the careful checking and re-checking of facts, the insistence on the counter-view, the prompt issuing of errors and rejoinders, careful follow up, and so on – was observed more in the breach."

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[11] Sreedharan.C. "Reporting Kashmir: An analysis of the Conflict Coverage in Indian and Pakistani Newspapers." D.Phil Dissertation, Bournemouth University, 2009.

[12] "Conflict, Media and Human Rights in South Asia: Report from a Roundtable," PANOS/TISS/ICHRP, 2011. Page 1.

- Ideological biases based on language, class, caste, gender and other power relations result in systematic preference for opinions of authority figures and celebrities rather than poor or uneducated people more directly affected. The latter are often instead represented as hapless victims.

- Shades of grey are sacrificed for a simplified 'common sense' interpretation of conflict as a fight between good and evil – particularly in the North East, Kashmir, and Maoist regions of India.

- Systematic silencing or exclusion of marginalized voices in militarized zones of conflict, including a selective amnesia of past traumatic events such as civil wars and ethnic cleansing.

- A shift from reporting events to becoming an interested player – by covering events orchestrated for media visibility, campaign coverage, etc. This is a double-edged sword – while the media can assist civil society initiatives, it can also contribute to the cycle of violence by spreading communal images and sentiments.[13]

Specifically in Kashmir, former journalist and media researcher Chindu Sreedharan's recent analysis of top headlines in two Indian newspapers and one Pakistani national newspaper reveal an emphasis on conflict and violence. As he puts it, "The result is that — here I run the risk of oversimplification — the public in India and Pakistan has been mostly presented with stories that portray the self as 'good' and the other as 'evil.' There have been very few discussions of substance or reports that promote peace — hardly any on the front pages."[14] Journalists sent on assignment to J&K are often illiterate about the political complexity of the situation: "by and large, journalists haven't done their research, nor have they stopped to apply their mind, nor, more worryingly, are they really bothered. Many have already written their leads in their heads. Many are happy to report from the safety of Srinagar, visiting the same places, the same sources in Badami Bagh, Gupkar Road, or Raj Bagh. And the sources, they know this."

[13] Conflict, Media and Human Rights in South Asia: Report from a Roundtable," PANOS/TISS/ICHRP, 2011. Page 4.

[14] Sreedharan.C ."Reporting Kashmir: An analysis of the Conflict Coverage in Indian and Pakistani Newspapers." D.Phil Dissertation, Bournemouth University, 2009.

Prior to the end of the 1980s, Srinagar was a peaceful reporting location. As militancy grew, the press became both a target and tool for terrorist outfits. Local and 'outsider' reporters were killed, the printing presses of some daily papers were destroyed, and several newspapers were banned in the valley. In addition to the threat of retaliation by militants, the state and central government both have practiced censorship of print, broadcast, and social media. The foreign press was threatened as well; their coverage lacked depth and fairness. Due to the continuing conflict, "in Kashmir, apart from becoming a militant, one of the easiest professions to pick up is to work for a local rag. With some luck, one can get stringership for a foreign TV or newspaper agency."[15]

On Conflict

In order to better understand how one's reportage can contribute to peace, one must also understand the deeper mechanisms of conflict. **Conflict can be defined as "a state of relationship between parties who have real or perceived incompatible goals, needs, values or aspirations**."[16] It can be both overt and latent:

- **Latent Conflict** can be a set of unjust and imbalanced rules, culture, structure, customs and institutions, which sometimes go unrecognized and unexpressed; even if it is perceived as a conflict by those who suffer, it is not sensed as such by those who benefit from the system.

- **Overt Conflict** consists of physical and evident clashes which can result from the frustrations of latent conflict.

If so understood, peace can be considered not only as the absence of overt conflict, but an active transformation of forms of latent conflict as well. Conflict should also be considered a driver of change and a precondition for productive shifts in the status quo. The difference lies in how one **acts** upon conflict. When acted upon destructively, conflict leads to violence and turmoil. But constructive engagement with conflict, which includes the use of non-violent tools of

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[15] Rai. A K. Conflict Situations and the Media: A Critical Look. Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses. http://www.idsa-india.org/an-jun-900.html

[16] Approach as adopted by Centre for Justice and Peace-building, Eastern Mennonite University, USA.

communication like dialogue, advocacy, protest, persuasion, and campaigns, can result in positive social change.

Violence is often the focus of professional reportage when commenting on or covering conflict. It is essential for journalists to recognize the different forms of violence before reporting:

- **Physical violence** is visible to the naked eye in any situation of violent conflict, but it is the underlying cultural and structural violence that needs cognition for effective reportage.

- **Cultural violence** can be the way a group has been thinking about another group for many years. It can include talk, images or beliefs which glorify physical violence. These include hate-speech, xenophobia, myths and religious justification for war, and gender discrimination.[17]

- **Structural violence** is harm which is built into the laws and traditional behaviour of a group or society. Harm is permitted or ignored. It can include racism, sexism, extreme poverty, corruption and nepotism, and structural segregation.[18]

Peace Journalism: Practice

Media democracy theorists propose that to counteract violent and corporatizing trends, libertarian media models should be replaced with democratic and non-profit models with strengthened public service broadcasting, more inclusion of citizen journalism and alternative media voices, variegated sources, and a transformation of a passive audience into active participants. These principles can be combined with the practices of peace journalism, a self-conscious framework for journalists to use when reporting on wars and conflict.[19]

Peace journalism builds on the theory of conflict transformation, and was first proposed by Norwegian peace scholar Johan Galtung and journalist Indra Adnan in the 1970s. Galtung observed that war

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[17] Howard. R Conflict Sensitive Journalism. Denmark: IMS and IMPACS, 2004,(Excerpted and adapted from Peace Journalism What is it? How to do it? by Lynch and McGoldrick).

[18] Ibid.

[19] Background Note: Exploring Peace Journalism. A WISCOMP Workshop, New Delhi: WISCOMP, 2007.

journalism had a tendency to discuss conflict in zero-sum terms common to sports journalism – winners and losers, keeping the score – rather than in a more complex way to promote understanding of cause and effect, more in line with health journalism. Alongside Wolfsfeld's politics-media-politics cycle, peace journalism analysis identifies a destructive **feedback loop in mainstream press: a bias towards violence and violent actors that further disrupts any potential for peaceful negotiations**.

In peace journalism, reporters do not simply 'report facts' – they are instead involved in a "complex dynamic between their sources, the issue, the audience and the consequence of their reporting" which ultimately plays a significant role in the conflict itself.[20] While peace journalism is concerned with truth, people and solutions, conventional journalism tends to concentrate on violence, propaganda, elites and victory. Lynch and McGoldrick point out that in peace journalism, "editors and reporters make choices – of what stories to report and about how to report them – that create opportunities for society at large to consider and value non-violent responses to conflict." They employ "a deliberate creative strategy to seek out and bring to our attention those portions of 'the facts' routinely under-represented; the significant views and perspectives habitually unheard."[21]

Conflict-sensitive journalism builds on established practices of impartiality, balance and accuracy of conventional journalism while reporting on diverse parties, and takes these principles one step further by. With effective conflict analysis, journalists can better identify more sources for information, better understand what diplomats and negotiators are trying to do, and are therefore better-equipped to report more reliably.[22] Lynch and McGoldrick (2005) have suggested the following as journalistic habits that facilitate conflict transformation:

• Correcting misperceptions and humanizing the actors involved

• Providing an emotional outlet for grievances and anger

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[20] Ibid.

[21] Lynch. J and McGoldrick. *Peace Journalism*. Gloucestershire: Hawthorn Press, 2005.

[22] Howard. R. Conflict Sensitive Journalism. Denmark: IMS and IMPACS, 2004.

- Exploring different viewpoints; departing from the 'objectivity paradigm' to 'informed subjectivity'
- Investigate more deeply into dominant discourses and political platforms to identify the underlying interests of multiple stakeholders - rather than repeating old grievances by dominant elites.
- Focusing on presenting solutions
- Report-ing on long-term effects
- Orienting the news towards local people, i.e. the grassroots
- Channelling communication and building trust between groups at war
- Searching for common ground
- Reporting on and naming wrong-doers on all sides
- Disaggregating the 'us' and 'them' into smaller groups
- Avoiding victimising lan-guage such as 'devastated', 'defenceless' and 'pathetic'
- Avoiding imprecise use of emotive words such as 'tragedy', 'massacre,' etc.
- Avoiding demonising adjectives and labels such as 'brutal', 'barbaric', 'terrorist' and 'fanatic,',
- Not making opin-ions seem like established facts.[23]

Trauma and Alternative Histories

Integral to the practice of peace journalism is sensitivity to trauma, a challenge specific to reporting on violence and tragedy. **While peace journalism does not shy away from reporting violence and attempts to place it in context, the question that persists is "how" to do it effectively and sensibly.** Reporting on trauma has a profound impact on both the journalist and the audience; in fact the media can determine "how people make sense of traumatic events and how they manage their fears."[24]

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[23] Ibid 8.

[24] Rees.G. "The Trauma Factor" in *Journalism: New Challenges* edited by Karen. F. Watt and Stuart Allan, 411-417 Centre for Journalism and communication research Bournemouth University, 2013.

It is important to note that trauma results in a feeling of disempowerment, loss and insecurity for the victim, survivors, and witnesses. Fact-checking in these cases becomes a sensitive task – how does one inquire about an event without opening vulnerable wounds and upsetting the interviewee? Or how does one confirm an account without implying disbelief? **Developing emotional literacy becomes necessary for responsible reporting in these circumstances. This requires inter-personal skills, non-judgmental and active listening, and judicious representation of the lives of trauma victims and survivors**; ultimately, "insightful trauma reporting can promote accountability, bolster the resilience of individuals and help the public to meaningfully engage in issues that have a determining value to the quality of their lives."[25]

An **excellent source of alternative narratives outside dominant discourse and official histories are oral histories, or a collection of information about the past gathered from interviews with witnesses**. Collective memory was for centuries transmitted via oral rather than written traditions; in this manner, many elderly people preserve otherwise inaccessible historical details. One example of silenced histories in the subcontinent is the experience of women – particularly their memories of communal conflicts such as Partition.[26] Feminist historians such as Urvashi Butalia, as well as folk historians across the world, have tried to uncover these hidden histories obscured by gender, class, caste, and language boundaries. Journalists digging for alternative angles and missing voices can consider gathering oral history interviews, provided they balance between investigation and sensitivity in their oral history gathering.

New Media

The participatory and crowd-sourced nature of new media ecology merges with the principles of peace journalism and media democracy in interesting ways. Social media can complement and augment the exercise of our rights to freedom of expression, freedom of association, and freedom of peaceful assembly. Established professional values are

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[25] Ibid.

[26] Urvashi Butalia. *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India*. India: Penguin Books, 1998.

being rapidly recast in an emerging and evolving relationship between journalists, elite sources and citizens via the social media. Attributes of participation, openness, conversation, community and connectivity are characteristic of such media[27].

The diversity of the available platforms and their interactivity has increased rapidly as well. Online User-generated Content (UGC) created via platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and blogging sites are not subject to the traditional media gate-keeping, and are thus often simultaneously diverse and low-quality. Web 2.0 has further enabled participative web activity; users can now more easily generate online content with little technical knowledge. Examples include chat rooms, web forums, and comment mechanisms across websites. Social media refers to the channels through which content is distributed, discussed, and consumed. It amplifies traditional media channels, in addition to linking UGC through peer-to-peer sharing networks.[28]

Information and communication technologies (or ICTs) consist of telecommunications and computer networks, which increasingly intersect with social media through 2G and 3G networks, and widespread wireless internet. Recent UN reports indicate that ICTs have tremendous potential in conflict scenarios, crisis situations, and for long term peacebuilding.[29] Social media too is a promising new frontier of media democracy. Content curation involves human skills and expertise in sorting and displaying information in a way that it appeals to a particular community.[30] Web-based activists from Kashmir claim to use social media as a new form of intergenerational storytelling

[27] Thorsen. E. "Live Blogging and Social Media Curation" in *Journalism: New Challenges* edited by Karen.F. Watt and Stuart Allan, 123-124. Centre for Journalism and Communication Research, Bournemouth University, 2013.

[28] Cominos. A. The Role of Social Media and User-generated Content in Post-Conflict Peace building. Washington DC: TDRP,2013.

[29] Daniel. S, William. D, Paul. C and Steinberger. J. Information and Communication Technology for Peace: The Role of ICT in Preventing, Responding to and Recovering from Conflict. United Nations ICT Task Force, 2005. http://www.unapcict.org/ecohub/resources/information-and-communication-technology-for-peace-the-role-of-ict-in-preventing-responding-to-and-recovering-from-conflict/at_download/attachment1

[30] Claudine.P."Content curators: The DJs of the web" in *Journal of Digital Research & Publishing*, 2011

and archiving tool of collective memory. They are using mobile phone recordings, blogs and YouTube channels to honour martyrs, record violence and express grief and mourning in public.[31]

On the other hand, social media can also be used to incite further violence and create distrust between the parties and stakeholders. Like all other technologies, the nature of social media use is not predetermined. It is a double-edged sword which can be used at times to promote peace, other times violence. An ethical approach therefore becomes essential to ensure that the content is responsibly curated and does not lead to mistrust or confusion between different groups.

Crowdsourcing is an effective tool to warranty the credibility of the content, and to uphold standards of verification. This practice is similar to the concept of active listening:

> "*Listening is as important as talking on social media. Listening to social media channels can demonstrably be very useful in violence prevention (for example crisis mapping for violence prevention), but it can also be helpful for post-conflict peacebuilding. Utilizing social media and user-generated content for post-conflict peacebuilding does not simply mean making a Facebook or Twitter account for your organization. Social media involves conversation, and listening as well.*"[32]

The intersection of new technologies and old, corporate ownership and state censorship, and politics and violence have rapidly changed the face of media practice across the world. Many debates then emerge on the nature of social media:

• Do the new media, any more than old, improve chances of constructing a public space in which we can address each other as effective equals?[33]

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[31] Ibid 14.

[32] Ibid 17.

[33] Couldry. N. "The Forgotten Digital Divide: Researching Social Exclusion/Inclusion in the Age of Personalised Media." Paper presented to the Media in Transition: Globalisation and Convergence conference, MIT, 10-12 May 2002.

- Who is the audience that we are trying to access via social media? Does everyone have equal access to it?

- How can the global reach and interactivity of social media be utilized or explored for peace-building?

The contemporary media ecology and climate of conflict also raise a number of challenges for responsible journalists:

- What does ethical reporting entail?

- How does one balance between objectivity and sensitivity?

- How can one sensitively report traumatic stories?

- How does one handle institutional pressures to filter information?

- How does one sort through the variety of sources available today?

- How does one make effective use of social media?

The Media workshop brought together students of Journalism and Mass Communication to discuss these very contemporary issues. Young journalists from four different institutions in New Delhi and Kashmir came together: Islamic University of Science and Technology, the Media Education and Research Centre at Kashmir University, Lady Shri Ram College from Delhi University, and Jamia Millia Islamia.

Participants explored the concepts and ideas of conflict transformation, peacebuilding and non-violent communication. The workshop also introduced concepts and practices of peace journalism and media democracy. It provided a space for the participants to interact with experts to develop conflict reporting skills. It was hoped that the participants would emerge from the workshop with a consciousness that truths and untruths in a conflict situation are not self-evident – that there are layers of truth which need to be carefully peeled and analysed for holistic reportage.

Introduction

Meenakshi Gopinath, Director, WISCOMP in her welcome address gave a brief background of WISCOMP's engagement in Kashmir over the years including its *Athwaas*[34] initiative which primarily worked with women in Jammu and Kashmir. However, she emphasized that WISCOMP aims at building collaboration and not confrontation between women and men in matters of peace, conflict transformation and justice. WISCOMP seeks to encompass the values of Wisdom and Compassion in its work – Wisdom to help see the reality for what it is, to look at the fault lines in society and to acknowledge that they exist, and Compassion to be inclusive in its approach.

Dr. Meenakshi Gopinath, Founder and Director, WISCOMP

WISCOMP commenced its journey in early 2000 with a group of women peace animators belonging to different parts of the J&K region (Jammu, Kashmir valley, Ladakh) where they spoke to each other across several fault lines in an effort to build a space for dialogue, at a time when the region was reeling in political turbulence.

From the very beginning it was made evidently clear that Peace was not just the absence of violence and therefore, was not to be understood as merely maintaining the status quo; instead, it came with a lot of connotations and baggage. WISCOMP thus did not work with any pre-conceived agenda on what would be the ideal solution to the political problem of Kashmir, it rather attempted to build trust between different communities through its *ATHWAAS* initiative wherein the endeavour was to reach out to the 'other' while simultaneously acknowledging differences and looking for commonalities. *Athwaas* served as a desirable space for non-violent communication, dialogue and conversations across different sections of the society for discussing how the prolonged conflict has impacted the lives of people in similar

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[34] The word Athwaas means handshake in Kashmiri

yet different ways. This foregrounded the need for confidence building measures as a pre-condition for any involvement or engagement with issues set in a conflict context.

Post 2010, there was a realization that a dialogue in Kashmir would be quite incomplete without paying heed to what the youth had to say; it was necessary to listen to the opinions, grievances and aspirations of the young people from the region. It was also deemed essential to bring the youth from the J&K region and the youth from rest of India together to clear the cobwebs of misunderstanding, open spaces for dialogue and to look at how political and social alternatives can be built.

Speaking about the ubiquity of media in our lives, she urged the group to look at the media and media engagement through a new lens. She expressed that the time has come to make a move from Peace Journalism to Journalism for Peace. She explained the two dominant views on journalistic practice – one states that journalists should not have a predisposition and should be unbiased in their reporting; the other states that personal ideologies, experiences and viewpoints do land up colouring ones reportage, more so when a situation deeply impacts one's life.

She also noted that Truth becomes the first casualty in areas of conflict, but truth is not ultimate. It is contextual in nature and there are many truths. She referred to the Indian epic of Mahabharata wherein each character, no matter however truthful he/she claimed to be, had to make compromises, when thrown into a particular context. With this reference, she emphasized the point that there are many prisms through which one can approach a particular situation.

This in turn leads to an interrogation about the role of journalism or media. She posed important questions like: Should it become a force multiplier? Should it aggravate sentiments of mutual suspicion? Or must it attempt to give space to voices — at least those willing to engage in dialogue?

She cited the example of the role of radio in exacerbating hate during the Rwandan genocide, and the school system which was immersed in propagating and upholding the long history of alienation, resentment and marginalization. In contrast to this, she also cited an article on the

recent state elections held in Kashmir (November- January,2014) from a leading English daily. The author of this article very skilfully shed light on problems of rigging in elections, deployment of military, existence of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act in the region, while simultaneously tracing the trajectory of the changing face of Kashmir - how despite the existing problems, it is now possible to arrest the exacerbation of some problems, for instance rigging.

Gopinath moved onto to discuss the need to give fairly civilized and balanced accounts of factsfor responsible and accountable journalism to serve the cause of democracy. She also introduced the idea of Waging Conflict Non-violently to the group. It is necessary to recognize that Peace moves beyond violent conflicts which subvert democratic aspirations; it is more than the mere absence of violence, it is about people exercising their rights, developing a context to articulate grievances and demand justice.

She concluded on the note that the workshop was as much about opening hearts and minds as about learning.

Digital Storytelling

Akanksha Joshi, resource person for the opening session, began by stating that one must find a space of Peace within one's own self before embarking on a discussion about Peace in the environment around us. With music playing in the background, she asked everyone to do some breathing exercises with their eyes closed as directed by her, and think of one experience that each one of them would want to take away from the workshop over the next few days. As the background music continued to play, she passed around chits of paper on which the participants were later asked to write down their identities – stating their name, age, gender and where they hailed from – this was then put aside in a bag. The participants were then asked to close their eyes again and try to distance themselves from their conventional identities for the next three days and contemplate a fresh outlook, perspective and new identity so as to write one's life script anew. They were asked to choose a new name for themselves, like a title for their own story.

Joshi then moved on to play a game with the participants which served both purposes of warming up to each other and introducing subtle but essential aspects of story-telling. She asked the participants to imagine that they were passing around a big, hot and colourful ball amongst themselves. While passing the ball around, each of them had to have a clear body language to indicate whom the imaginary ball was being passed on to, be aware and maintain eye-contact. She explained that these qualities of imagination, consciousness and knowing one's audience were important to develop as story-tellers. This exercise was followed by a few games to know the new names that the participants had taken up and celebrate each other.

After a short break she started with building an understanding of digital storytelling.

The session commenced with her stating that Story-telling is essentially about *Gupshup* – informal conversations, which can be both serious and playful. She narrated the experience of her work during the film making in the relief camps of Gujarat soon after the 2002 riots in the area, where the focus was not on the horrendous incidents that had

happened during the horrific riots, but on the emotions of the people to give a humane side to the story. She believes that story-telling should not just be limited to being sad with people - it is also about celebrating people and their many humane emotions; journalism for peace should then be like looking for the silver lining of the cloud.

She articulated that emotions are extremely important in story-telling and closely related to this is the language that one uses for initiating a conversation and

telling the story, which should have a sense of both – intimate and universal. Speaking of the importance of being brief and precise in one's presentation in this day and age, she asked the group to think of one word or phrase that comes to their mind when they think of journalism. A diverse set of words were shared by the group: search, present, change, creativity, objectivity, subjectivity, alternatives, expressions, influence, justice, peace, enjoyment, human interest, credibility, responsibility, courage, presenting life, voice, alternatives, enjoyment, people-interactions, empathy, truth, mediation, beyond boundaries, non-violence, emotions among others. She suggested that a basic tool for doing all the above is to practice **Active Listening** with empathy. while at the same time maintaining the right distance so as to be able to write objectively and sensitively.

Elucidating the point of retaining the right distance and balance, she asked the participants to move their hands very close to the eyes first, and then far away – this explained that maintaining the right distance is essential as it is quite difficult to notice the features when the hands are either too close or too far. This is also applicable when writing or presenting a story, since it helps capture the beauty of the story.

She moved on to discuss certain facts and benefits of storytelling in the digital age, stating that the digital media has a huge potential and can offer anonymity, a global and instantaneous outreach, the option to verify through different knowledge sources and also has the freedom of working independent of editorial pressures.

Joshi then expounded the two important aspects of storytelling – Content Creation and Distribution.

She elaboratedthe essential facets of Content Creation, the basic being KISS – Keeping it Short and Simple. It is crucial to bear in mind that the language used should be simple enough to be able to reach out to people for effective communication. She also mentioned the necessity to minimize the use of figures and statistics, to break down technical jargon and complexities around a theme and build connections at the level of a story, to keep it inter-personal, cover it and share it as a friend and not as a mere observer, to capitalize on the cultural elements of a story as a writer or presenter so as to communicate the story in a beautiful and heartfelt manner. She primarily pointed out that sustaining a human touch through the process of storytelling is of utmost importance.

She also highlighted in her session how smart-phones can be fashioned as an effective means to record, create and transmit digital-stories. She screened two of her own stories where she used mobile-phone videography to generate digital stories. Another important aspect pointed out was the necessity to get off the internet, beyond virtual spaces and have human conversations to discover spaces and foster connections for storytelling.

Joshi also explicated the significance of choosing a thoughtful perspective and angle to tell one's story – one that can evoke a sensitive space within us and not aggravate the conflict. She explained this with another example of her own work about the landslide in the state of Uttarkhand in 2013, where instead of harping upon the pain and trauma of the landslide, she gave it a poetic perspective of a love-affair between the mountains and the river, and how this story had gone viral on the internet.

The workshop being on journalism for peace, she explained that there are different forms of conflict that exist, ones which may not always be political in nature, but are experienced in our daily lives. She conducted a small activity with the participants to elucidate certain elements like – seeing a story, maintaining the right distance, different perspectives – which are essential for sensitive storytelling.

The participants were divided into groups of three each with one observer and two persons in conflict. However, she noted that these conflict situations were not to be political in nature but small tussles that we come across in everyday life.

The participants simulated a conflict based on the following situations: bus conductor and passenger, husband and wife, project colleagues, between friends over political views, room sharing, etc.

Each member of every group was to switch roles every two minutes. They were also asked enact their roles with full conviction so as to experience what it is like to witness a conflict and how to tell the story, what is the right distance, what it means to be switching roles and see things from a different perspective.

Before bringing the session to a close, she ascribed a couple of assignments to the participants to engage in further conversations with each other and also practice the art of storytelling.

As part of the first assignment, the participants were grouped as partners and asked to write a biography about each other, with a photograph, in about 600 words. The partners were asked to listen to and share with each other the most beautiful moment of their life. Where do they see themselves 10 years from now, and what has been the most sensitive moment in their life? She asked them to focus on the style of storytelling and not just mere facts.

As a second assignment, participants were grouped together in teams and asked to take on a name and describe the group in a physical action or gesture to impress upon the idea that images have a longer shelf-life than words. The participants came up with the following names for their group: Squirrel, Falcon, Sparrow, Gulzar, Dove, *Aam*, Orange. These groups were asked to report creatively on the sessions that they would be attending over the next three days using photographs, theatrical piece, video, story from a perspective, power-point presentations etc.

They were also asked to look around the market and the park in the vicinity of the workshop space to find a person whose story they would like to tell or share with the larger group of participants. She named

this assignment *Gupshup,* as it would involve informal conversations with strangers, one that would foster human connections.

She concluded the sessions by asking the participants to close their eyes and think of a word or phrase which they learnt from the morning's session. The participants shared the following: well-beginning, trying new things, informative, perspectives, life is a playground, initiatives for peace, eye-opening, relaxing, emotion to the story, interactive, uninhibited, getting out of comfort zone, *gupshup*, fading boundaries, new ideas, learning and unlearning, life is unpredictable – workshops can be fun.

She urged the participants to engage in conversations and dialogue beyond the workshop space before bringing the session to a close.

Understanding Peace Journalism

Nilova Roy Chaudhury, a senior journalist facilitated the session and introduced the concept of Peace Journalism. She placed on the table a few initial points around ideas of journalism and conflict resolution, and then had an interactive and open discussion. At the very onset, she stated the necessity of being aware of facts in order to be able to understand the causal issues and in turn, avoid some of the needless conflicts.

She explained this point further by moving away from the larger political and national conflicts of the region and referring to an incident of rape of a young girl who had fallen asleep in a cab that she had taken to get back home, which was making news headlines around the time of the workshop. In her condemnation of the horrific incident, she indicated the physical and mental stress that the woman had to go through, which probably could have been averted had she been awake and aware during her ride in the car.

In a conflict there are a minimum of two parties involved, where one not only looks, but also requires to blame the other. It is thus essential to understand in this regard that a basic problem in a conflict is the lack of suitable awareness and a gap in communication. Therefore, suitable awareness would also mean knowing each other's mind.

Nilova Roy Chaudhury speaking at the workshop.

In this context, Roy Chaudhury narrated some of her personal experiences before, during and after the 1984 riots in Delhi. It was roughly about 30 years since independence, a time when the nation was beginning to bear the fruits of independence in the form of growth and progress, when the capital was thrown into a state of turmoil. As a background to this she shared how shocked she was to find military fortifications within the Golden Temple Shrine complex in Amritsar, and her pain at seeing the shrine devastated soon after the army action during Operation Bluestar. She noted the difficulty of being an unbiased

observer as a journalist when faced with such situations.Written words get in some way coloured by one's feelings. However, despite such a predicament, it is necessary to ensure that a journalist does not enflame passion and contribute to aggravating the conflict through his/her reportage.

Referring to the vicious cycle of continuing violence, she shared her experiences and views about the 1984 riots which resulted from the assassination of the then Prime Minister Mrs. Gandhi, which in turn was a follow up to the carnage at Amritsar. She reiterated that in a situation where violence begets violence, it is essential for the media to handle reportage in a manner that brings in different perspectives so as to facilitate a closure to the cycles of violence.

She also stated that it is difficult and undesirable for a State to try to resolve a conflict all on its own. In this regard, she discussed the changing roles of media in present times where it is increasingly trying to play a larger role in conflict resolution.

She took the discussion forward by posing a question to the participants about the most troublesome aspects that they find in reports covering conflict. She illustrated the incident of a bomb exploding in a certain area. The participants expressed their disturbance with the superficial and episodic treatment of such incidents which lack context and are not reported holistically. In response to this, Roy Chaudhury stated that unfortunately, the focus of such coverage remains limited to the bomb explosion because of the rat race to capture sensational bytes where there is hardly any time to explore the depths of the context, lamenting the fact that the narratives from different points of view are fractured and seemingly have no point of convergence. Even when one tries to define something within a context, the nature of journalism is unfortunately such, and the nature of communication per se is such that it tends to focus on the event – the more gruesome the event, the more blurred the context gets.

It was also pointed out that in areas of prolonged conflict, media coverage often neglects or ignores the reporting of positive factors that exist or improvements that take place in a society. She cited the example of Afghanistan where the media mostly reports drone attacks and terror attacks but ignores the development of the primary health

care centres in the region. In the example of Kashmir also, she brought forward how even the most trivial and regular fights between neighbours are often given a state versus separatist perspective. It is therefore imperative to move towards a human level of interaction whereby local issues can remain local and not develop into a state-wide or nationwide conflict. It should not assume overtones that were not necessarily in the conflict. It also has to become a matter of individual common sense and judgment where one needs to be aware and alert.

She articulated that basics of journalism can begin to show a certain path. The fact that editors should make a choice about what to report and how to report is not only specific to Peace Journalism but is also fundamental to all kinds of journalism and communication. As there are a minimum of two sides in a conflict, both should be given equal weightage; it is then ill- advised to publish something without considering the other possible viewpoints. However for equal consideration of both sides, a journalist also needs to have access to hear both sides in order to give equal weightage in their reportage, but if one side does not respond to such calls, the problem continues to fester.

In response to the participants' grievances that the Indian society is more perturbed with a rape incident in Delhi than one in Kashmir, or even belittles the threats that women face in the valley, Seema Kakran, Deputy Director, WISCOMP noted that the protest movements following the horrific December 16 rape case had actually turned into a social movement concerning women's issues all across the region and was not limited to threats women face in Delhi alone. She gave the example of how often the students of Delhi University had gathered to protest in solidarity against appalling incidents of sexual and gender based violence committed in other regions of the country, especially those where the AFSPA is in force. Unfortunately, the lack of knowledge and understanding amongst the youth clearly demonstrates that we perceive realities and formulate opinion about the 'other' based largely on what the media reports.

Roy Chaudhury steered the discussion further by asking the participants to break down the complexities into what they understand as the most eminent problem of the J&K Region and the Kashmir conflict, to which the response was as follows:

- Polarisation, and fractions in the region (3 separate entities)

- No common view/ground even amongst the people of each of the regions on what they want

- The impact of militarization

- Human rights violations and failure of judiciary

As the group was lamenting the exceptional situation of Kashmir, Roy Chaudhury pointed out the similarities with other parts of India and referred to the situation of militarization, human rights violation and protracted conflict in the North East of India, thereby asking the participants to not think of Kashmir in isolation.

She also took the opportunity to point out that sometimes, bad things can happen randomly, and not all incidents of violence could be attributed to deliberate attempt by the state to subjugate. She cited the example of two young boys being mistakenly shot in Delhi because of mistaken identity, sometime in the early 1990s. Hence, it is essential for a mind-set to emerge which moves away from the element of victimhood and regains agency to assert rights.

She also reiterated that the media's portrayal of a situation is not the ultimate;, it is necessary to develop one's own senses and cultivate rationality. She also brought in the idea that India, being a much younger nation compared to other parts of the world, is still grappling with fears of secession and social movements. Once a state is mature, these fears diminish.

Roy Chaudhury then discussed the need to rectify the practice of spectacle and parachute journalism. She also problematized the **Breaking news syndrome** – which, because of the peculiar nature of broadcast media,leads to time constraints and subsequently a lack of corroboration of facts and sources. In comparison to this, Print media has more time to check and cross-check before publishing any news article. She also contrasted the manner of reportage of the 26/11 terror attacks in Mumbai, India and the London bombings in July 2005. While the media enflamed passion and aggression through its reportage of the terror attacks in Mumbai, the BBC reportage showed enormous restraint in broadcasting gruesome images. While they did not shy away from reporting violence, they did exercise some limitation to avoid

aggravating further violence. It is therefore imperative for the media to realize that the need to know does not override the need to prevent death. She urged the participants to think beyond conventional journalism and develop a practice of Peace Journalism which incorporates viewpoints that go beyond the ideas of victimhood.

State of Media Industry and Ethical Challenges

Rita Manchanda, Senior Researcher and Journalist, in her opening remarks, drew attention to a publication which is based on a dialogue amongst media practitioners, editors and owners from South Asia on reporting conflict. She urged the participants to look at the publication in order to develop the right sensibility and ideas for practicing responsible journalism. She posed a vital question for discussion at the onset: What is the most important link between Kashmir & Delhi? In response to this, she stated that apart from the evident sequence of Centre & Periphery or Centre & Conflict Zone, the linkage also draws attention to something that feminists have brought to the forefront – the continuum of violence – as understood through lived experience sand commonalities that are shared between everyday life in Delhi and a heightened conflict in J&K in terms of structures of violence, latent conflict, overt violence.

She invited a quick comment from the participants on their opinions about the possibility of a dialogue for which the students from Delhi

Rita Manchanda and Ahmed Ali Fayyaz addressing the participants.

and Kashmir were brought together. She asked whether they considered it as an enabling exercise to bring people from two different parts of the country across the table.The participants, both from Kashmir and Delhi, responded that it was a unique platform for them, though they would have preferred to have people from other states also, especially from the North East of India, to share common experiences, overcome divisions and take conversations beyond the surface and discuss situations and complexities that they have to negotiate on a daily basis.

Gopinath, at this point, asked the participants from Kashmir, who were typically from a generation often called 'children of conflict', to share with those from Delhi the memories from their childhood; images which, though buried deep in their minds have become a part of their consciousness. Manchanda added a media perspective to this frame when she asked them to share their opinions about the everyday experience of the 'children of conflict' which has been missing from the media narrative.

This invited a plethora of responses with the participants sharing their frustrations, disappointments and grievances at having to watch strangers (security personnel) entering their houses and raiding through their most personal and private spaces and belongings, not even sparing the cupboard of a six year old kid; at having the internet blocked every so often, and at theabsence of freedom of speech. They shared the insecurities of those growing up in a more volatile area even within the Valley where they were constantly faced with intrusions from both sides of the conflict – the State and also, from across the border. The dilemma and compulsion to succumb to the request for a nigh-shelter from those coming across the border, followed by the disturbing presence of the army in the living quarters the next day and the male members being taken away for days at a stretch to places never disclosed.

The participants from both Kashmir and Delhi felt that the media has been largely instrumental in not only stereotyping the conflict, but also in neglecting and ignoring the ground realities and the lived experiences of those who negotiate with the conflict in their daily lives.

"The Media has been disappointing. I think the movie Haider gives a good idea of the ground situation," observed one participant.

Manchanda, at this juncture, pointed out that as journalists, it is necessary to not let emotions overwhelm oneself; they should try to translate emotions into powerful communication. In this regard, she suggested that it is best to avoid too many adjectives in one's reportage. Closely related to this is also the necessity to make space for demographic diversity in one's approach to reporting on conflict, more so at a time when even the media is under pressure to homogenize.

The discussion moved on to citizen journalism on social media. She compared the difficulty of expressing complex realities in micro-spaces like Twitter. Blogs were seen as a more plausible option in addition to the existing print and broadcast media. She added that a journalist should be cautious when working on social media as it is often difficult to sift truth from rumour on social networking sites. Social media poses unique regulation challenges, but unfortunately, these regulations may end up curbing freedom than developing a fair space. This also necessitates the responsibility of the consumer to become media literate. She concluded with an observation that Power and Interest are integral to media; while Objectivity may not always be possible or ideal, it is most essential for journalists to aim for fairness, accuracy, and attempt to balance and understand both/multiple sides.

Ahmed Ali Fayyaz, Jammu and Kashmir Bureau Chief, *The Hindu*, began by making some observations about the context of the Kashmir conflict. He pointed out that how, despite being a protracted conflict zone, there have been some significant changes since the early 1990s which have also impacted the different domains and altered the space available for journalists to work on and report. In this context, he cited the example of the change of mind-sets regarding elections in Kashmir. At one point in time, people believed that elections were a farce to a situation where those very people

"I hail from Downtown in Srinagar which has been a volatile area since 1989. I was also born in 89; since birth I have seen security personnel walking in and out of my home, even cross-border people - though not as brutal as the security forces but were terrifying and had to succumb to their request of a shelter for the night, next day the male members of the family were taken away by the army to places unknown for more than a week. I have also seen friends killed and shot down during the civilian uprisings in 2206, 2008 & 2010, killing students is unjustified. During these incidents Local and Social media was banned."

chose to be active participants in the electoral process - campaigning and contesting.

He then chose to put forth his views on some of the concerns that had been raised earlier in the session on responsible reportage and social media. He briefly discussed the existence and importance of the Press Council guidelines which were evolved to enable responsible reportage on Conflict during situations of strife in Punjab and in the North East.

Fayyaz also elucidated the idea that Truth can be manifold in a conflict situation and due importance should be given to multiple narratives. He then explored the intersection of and the debate on the issue of Privacy and Freedom of expression regarding Social Media. Considering the peculiar situation of J&K, he stated that citizen journalism requires not only a certain amount of regulation to ensure fairness and balance, but also some amount of education on part of both the reporter and the reader to enable responsible dissemination and consumption of news, prevent further conflict, avoid danger to someone's life and security, and develop healthy and respectful conversations on the internet.

From the Field: Practicing Peace Journalism

The Panel discussion on *Practicing Peace Journalism* discussed skills required on the field. Pervez Majeed, Senior Reporter with Sahara Times,shared practical experiences while Subi Chaturvedi, Researcher in the field of Mass Communication and Media Studies, foregrounded the theoretical perspectives related to such a praxis.

Pervez Majeed began with certain basic practices that a freelancer/ journalist should follow:

Subi Chaturvedi at the Panel discussion

• Keeping a glossary of terms handy

• Archiving a copy of each published article

• Need to establish one's credibility through relevant senses open to know when the opportunity for reporting on an important issue approaches

• It is necessary to be soberly dressed always and also to dress according to the situation/occasion. (e.g: one can't go for an interview or write about an incident of destruction/cover a funeral story in flashy garments.)

• Relevant and responsible reporting matters and counts more than popular pieces of writing

• It is important to establish a space for a dialogue between the reporter and the editor; healthy communication between the two would enable acknowledging different perceptions and opinions

• Reliable and responsible reporting – once that is established, seniors/ editors do not pose much problem, the content therefore becomes significant

• Should always be ready and active

- It is imperative to be cautious and avoid being overtly friendly when working with/ covering/ interviewing controversial figures

- Fact-checking with the interviewee and also with the larger team on board at the media house is an important aspect of credible reporting to avoid controversy

- It helps to be incisive and thoughtful as a person

Following this, Chaturvedi deftly paraphrased Majeed's ideas within a theoretical paradigm. She listed his suggestions thematically under the following heads:

- Agenda setting and gate-keeping

- Cultivating sources and staying neutral

- Doing unusual profiles (referring to the case studies of those interviewed by Pervez Majeed)

- Asking the right questions

- Not becoming too obvious in confrontation

- Distinguishing between News *in* Public Interest and News *of* Public Interest. News in Public Interest or Public Interest journalism refers to using resources equitably and adequately, speaking truth to Power, acknowledging, understanding and respecting the diversity and plurality of perspectives, and the different ways in which a story can be presented.

Pervez Majeed then moved onto explore the contours of Peace Journalism and elucidated that:

- Peace Journalism is inquisitive in its approach and looks for the scene behind the news

- It reports what is not generally being told in conventional reporting

- Using social media to one's advantage – tapping a comment on something as tip/track for further crowd sourcing

- Need to strike a balance between activism and journalism

- Necessary to convert negative into positive; i.e. not to always portray a grim picture

Majeed also elucidated certain important aspects of journalistic practices that impacts reporting through the following demonstrations:

Demonstration 1 brought one girl and one boy up from the participants. Each of them were first made to stand in two different corners of a platform, and then asked to move a step closer and wave to each other. This continued till the two of them were close enough to shake hands and talk to each other. Through this he demonstrated how people become conscious in their appearance when in the physical vicinity of others, this leads to greater focus and warming up of the parties than when at a distance, which in turn helps to have a more effective conversation when interviewing and reporting.

Pervez Majeed, J&K Correspondent, Sahara Times sharing some of his work with the participants

Demonstration 2 had two scenes being enacted simultaneously. On one hand, there was the scene of a noisy fight amongst a group of boys and on the other, there was a peaceful gathering of a group of individuals. He took this point to emphasize that as the fighting and chaos grabs a lot of attention, it is immediately paid heed to and reported (even if it was just a trivial argument amongst friends or a dispute between two neighbours) whereas on the other hand the peaceful gathering may be contributing to the larger picture through non-violent action but is not picked up as an instance to report about.

In the backdrop of these two demonstrations, Majeed enunciated the principles of Peace Journalism which he averred helped in **'reporting silences'**.

Subi Chaturvedi then elucidated the value of Print Journalism; and also shed light on the essential differences between Peace and conventional Journalism – how unlike conventional journalism, Peace journalism doesn't focus on the conflict as a win-lose situation or a zero-sum game.

She also explained the need and value of Active Listening as a journalist – to unlearn, decondition and observe one's environment.

Journalism in an Age of Corporatization

Raj Chengappa, Editor-in-Chief, The Tribune Group, in his presentation provided an analysis and interpretation of news in the print, television and social media, foregrounding how the three mediums had evolved over the years. At the onset, he proposed two questions for consideration- Who are we reporting for? What is the interest? This instituted the need to establish a "connect" between the news item and the news reader. He explained the need for drawing a connection with his theory on the

Raj Chengappa addressing the workshop participants.

"Thread of Life". He shared his own experiences of reporting on environmental degradation to foreground the fact that within this,there are different types of conflicts - between man and animal, between man and forests, between and amongst people, and that there's a delicate balance holding us all together. Greatness does not lie in the exclusivity of a singular large event; rather, it is the smaller events which link together over a period of time to create a big event. This is because of a chain of reactions wherein a small event matters significantly on the larger map. To create a better sense of connectivity between the reader/ viewer with the news, it is advisable to break down the complexities. It is also essential to remember the basic ethics and rules of the game, no matter how experienced one is – this guarantees responsibility which in turn ensures fairness and balance.

He also stated that a Newspaper organization is a collective of brains which come together, and there is a need to build trust between the organization and the reader because of which objectivity and accuracy become a prerequisite.

In response to a query regarding the efficacy and validity of print media, where the news comes after a 'breaking news' is already all over the internet and television, Chengappa replied that it always serves best to not move with the assumption that the reader knows it all beforehand, and also to exploit the scope that the print media provides for exploring
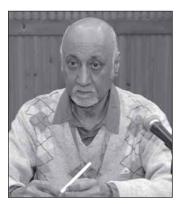
and reporting new aspects even when the news has already been broken. This gives an opportunity to a journalist to go beyond what has been doing the rounds.

He concluded on the note that Journalism, then, should be understood as a quest for truth, which is not universal but makes space for different perceptions and involves sensitivity in selecting and writing when presenting a conflict.

Understanding Peace, Conflict and Journalism

Achin Vanaik, Former Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Delhi commenced the session by problematizing the idea of 'peace' and then postulating three ideas important to gain an understanding of this term. Any attempt to understand peace really depends upon understanding its antonym, he argued. He therefore asked the participants if peace meant the absence of conflict. If peace was absence of conflict, then conflict would always be something that is negative and unwanted, which in his view was not true. He then proposed that peace is the absence of violence.

He articulated how violence has both a broad conception, in terms of structures and cultures of violence and a narrow conception seen only as physical violence. Closely related to this is also the external and internal conception of violence, where in internal abrogation of violence transcends beyond physical violence to engage in a spiritual quest to perfection. Various Indic religions talk about a striving to quash violence within one self. These external and internal dimensions imply that collective change is an aggregate of individual change.

Prof. Achin Vanaik, Formerly at University of Delhi speaking at the Workshop

A third factor related to Peace, which is largely associated with, and also determines the coverage of Peace within the journalistic paradigm is Armed Conflict and the absence of it – which covers conflicts between states, within states and across states.

He further explicated the different conceptions of Peace as: Peace by equilibrium which is the balance of power dependent upon order. He argued that order could be established by using different mechanisms like:

- Hegemonic peace,

- Imperial peace,

- Peace by Terror which has its roots in the notion of 'just wars', and

- Peace by Satisfaction which is related to prosperity, democracy and justice

Vanaik moved on to interrogate the role of journalism in relation to peace and conflict. Conventionally, journalists are expected to ensure the aspects of accuracy, balance, impartiality and fairness (justice) in their reportage. He stated that accuracy, being factual in nature, is easy to attain; the rest may not come as easily.

With regard to journalism, he articulated how the conception of truth is often shaped by one's values, ideas, circumstances and environment. However, he mentioned that there is no escape from committed journalism, and the imperative question then is - who and what one is committed to. Hence, it is necessary to decide for oneself the framework of values within which one wants to operate in an effort to answer whether journalism can connect to make the world a better place. Unfortunately, for most people, the horizon of the desirable is largely shaped and constrained by the horizon of the possible.

Vanaik also noted the two major and significant changes in the Media that have taken place over the last twenty-five years. First is the Corporatization of Media, and the second is a change in terms of the relationship between a journalist and the management of press – which has in turn contributed to restricting the freedom and flexibility of journalists. Another dimension to this change is the increasingly powerful nexus between the corporate sector and governments, which also influences journalism as a profession.

Within the context of journalism he posed the question - is the essence of impartiality in journalistic reportage limited to not taking sides? He enunciated that while on one hand there are issues which are very complicated and layered where it is best not to take sides, there are, on the other hand, different types of issues also, where there can be seen a very clear defining line. However, adequate coverage, and accurate reporting and representation of both sides are not only desirable but also essential to a reportage which takes a stance on a particular issue.

One way of looking at issues for the purpose of Peace journalism is always to ask the important questions of who the victims are and who the victimizers are. Sometimes,this is complicated and at other times, it is clear. When clear, it is better to take sides with the victim, he argued,because often, the only hope to justice that they have is through a clear and adequate reporting which brings to the forefront the situation on the ground. As human beings, we have multiple identities and therefore also the capacity and empathy to side with the victims.

He noted at this juncture that implicitly or explicitly personal biases do reflect in one's reportage;nonetheless, that should not prevent one from reporting both sides.

To conclude, he observed that at a time when institutions are weighed in the service of power, including independent media, it is crucial to speak truth to power as journalists.

Following the panel discussions and lecture discussions, a skill building session on writing was next. Facilitating the session, Nilova Roy Chaudhury referred to two news articles reporting on a particular incidence of violence in a long-drawn conflict context in one of the news dailies. She used the articles to explicate how both were very factual; they sadly remained limited to just that and failed to give an account of what preceded the violence and why the outburst took place – the very point that peace journalism tries to make in its endeavour to humanize the conflict.

Following this, she opened the floor to discussion around the question – how can a journalist contribute towards the restoration of certain equilibrium through his/her reporting? Though the responses were many, most of them had certain common aspects like reporting on background settings of the conflict, acknowledging that there is a problem, understanding it in a context and reporting compositely. The participants then had a vibrant discussion on issues around the Kashmir conflict and the rationale behind actions of the Indian state.

Oral Histories: Alternative Stories, Alternative Tellings

The facilitator, Pamela Philipose, Senior media person and Trainer, commenced the session with an explanation of the concept of Oral Testimony, which she articulated as the archiving of human experiences that shine the light on human lives and encounters in general. Oral Testimonies, she posited,can be recognized in many ways as sources of journalism, especially in complex human situations such as conflict or disaster. This is further foregrounded when journalists use their personal testimony to express in their reportage what they see or observe behind the survey. The skill of journalists lies in the ability to weave the oral testimony of sources with one's personal account.

She cited the example of four major events in history to explore and elucidate how oral testimonies can translate into effective journalism.

The first example was Web Miller's eye witness account of the Dandi March, or protest against the Salt Tax on May 21, 1930. While she read out the journalistic account, she stated that Miller was the only foreign journalist on the site. His powerful testimony, in which he shared minute but interesting details not generally known. and the captive imagery created through his writing, captured the moment for generations to come.

Next was the example of Marsel Juno's account of visiting Hiroshima on 9 September, 1945, approximately a month after the atomic bomb explosion. Through his article, she brought forward how Juno helped recreate the scene for a larger audience and consciousness by translating carefully an eye witness account of a Japanese journalist.

He used the power of western media to improve human understanding of the terrible consequences of the atomic bomb, a testimony which depicted the ground situation and provided more than mere accounts of military men. This not only changed the way people looked at the world but also servedas a reservoir of human appreciation.

This was followed by Robert Fiske's account of the massacre at the refugee camps of Sabra & Shatilla which demonstrated how journalists can become effective commentators of the events that human life experiences.

The fourth example was of the recording, documentation and dissemination of the testimonies of the Bhopal Gas tragedy. She referred to an image of the face of a child staring out at the world with wide whitened eyes that portrayed the catastrophic incident to the world at large. She read out a BBC report which captured reality as events unfolded by documenting oral testaments, statements and general experiences.

She then explained how these examples of personal accounts of events changed the face of human history. The detailed descriptions gathered by journalists after the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings preserved the horror of the experience, contributing to the global decision to ban weapons of mass destruction. The careful Documentation of the Bhopal gas tragedy was used as evidence in court, and contributes to the continuing memory of the event today.

Pamela Philipose, Senior Fellow, Indian Council of Social Science Research introducing Oral

Philipose further discussed how Oral testimonies are always related to a truth – that what we have experienced inour life will impact the lives of those surrounding us also. In this context, she shared with the participants two links on the internet. These were websites which have been documenting oral histories, testaments and local narratives and translating them into effective journalism on one hand and careful archiving them on the other for further dissemination. One of them was the example of citizen journalism by CNN-IBN, the other was the documentation of the Partition archives by a web-based group of historians.

The participants were divided into three groups and asked to discuss and share with each other certain events or incidents that they have

come across in their lives which have affected not only their lived experiences but also had a social impact on the lives of the people living in the vicinity. While sharing their stories, they were asked to bring in aspects of human experience and small but significant details.

Through stories, the participants shared their experiences of relief work done by the localities during the flood in Kashmir, of innocent victims of the protracted conflict in the region, of systematic targeting of civilian homes in the strife between military & militant – all of which sprouted from the personal and lived experiences of the group, which are often ignored or neglected by mainstream media.

The discussion was carried forward to examine how the mainstream media often creates a certain discourse which somehow leads to distorted versions of reality, generates stereotypes and freezes identities. It is in this background that the benefits of oral testimonies can be identified as:

- capturing elusive details,
- fostering intergenerational and cross cultural understandings,
- deepening the quality of journalism by incorporating the values of listening, understanding and empathizing, and
- creating the space for interpreting, reproducing and disseminating information.

Before bringing the session to a close, the facilitator stated that the important thing to remember is that human-centred documentation of events can be instrumental in human-centred policy making.

Exploring New Media

This Panel sought to explore the horizons of non-violent communication, and using alternate and new media for journalistic purposes.

Shuddhabrata Sengupta, Writer, Raqs Media Collective began by foregrounding the need to have conversations rather than just being passive consumers of news. Speaking of new media, he stated that the term "new" is subjected to time as all forms of media are new to begin with and eventually turn old with the passage of time. He moved on to discuss that along with the notion of newness in media, there is also the pressure of knowing what is new in the sense that "What can be considered as News". To this, he responded by referring to the Mahabharata which states that in the cauldron of delusion, it is time that cooks us all to make news. News therefore consists of all of us, and it is our digestion and consumption of ourselves that makes news.

There are different news cycles which exist – monthly, weekly, daily, wherein different incidents can seem very distant or very close in time even if they did occur in the same year. He gave the example of the spectacle of the elections in Kashmir replacing the trauma of the floods, which demonstrates that there are two realities which overlay each other, each depending on how close or farther away in time it is.

The role and paradox of new media in this regard is that New Media foreshortens as well as archives the events of our time. All of us (the general public) are now the actual creators and receivers of information within the paradigm of the new media. He cited the Kashmir floods which portrayed two realities of the same news transmitted in different news cycles– on one hand, the rescue and relief operations by the armed forces were glorified by mainstream media whereas on the other hand, there was a narrative of local and student operations being conducted through communication over new media and mobile devices.

Concurrently, it is important to observe that all new media spaces are also the playing fields of disinformation. There are concerted efforts on-going simultaneously to produce disinformation. Even if the immediate reaction is to strive to stop such concerted spread of

disinformation by censorship, it would be wrong. The only effective way to combat rumours and disinformation is active engagement. which can be done by producing disturbances in these narratives of certainties that are constantly being produced.

Referring to the 2010 protests in Kashmir, which resulted in the death of many young students, he articulated how New Media also creates a historical archive where conversations can be read to not only sieve out the truth from rumours, but also to get a sense of the complexity of the realities that exist in time and not oversimplify a situation in terms of conventional headlines – this generates Archival Expansion. In the heat of the movement, it is necessary to be cautious, careful and check before publishing things, and in case of an error, it is essential to issue a rectification immediately as web posts tend to go viral and multiply in a very short span of time, and may accentuate the conflict.

Sengupta also noted that there exist other types of conflicts in our societies which are not often covered by the media – like patriarchy, class and industrial disputes amongst many others.

At a time when the existing mainstream media borders on war mongering, there is a need to introduce an element of sanity and compassion within the framework of media. New media can contribute to this by allowing complicated realities to surface and producing a 'journalism of citizenship' which is different from citizen journalism.

Shibayan Raha, a Social Activist who uses New Media to generate support and awareness forvarious issues, spoke about his current work (Seven Sisters Project) and the possible ways to apply means and methods of non-violent communication in conflict areas. He shared his experiences which led to the establishment of a portal to disseminate news from the North East regions of India – the Seven Sisters Project, which is a community media portal that combines mobile phones and New Media to bring out stories from the region.

Citizen journalism gives the power to do a story that one wants to without succumbing to editorial and corporate pressures, Raha noted. However, fact-checking is an important component of such alternative forms of journalism and in some instances, even more vital than in mainstream media. In addition to this, it is pragmatic to take adequate

safety precautions so as to avoid unwanted harm and harassment when speaking of the 'other' view. He pointed how new social media can be an effective means to bring 'grassroots' news to the forefront, but at the same time, it serves well to keep the various location trackers and geo-timers switched off to escape avoidable tracking when browsing delicate information.

He also pointed out how trending topics on the web by citizen journalists are analogous to the breaking news syndrome, which eventually leads to loss of focus of the ground situation. In response to a question on web campaigns, he stated that mindlessly initiating or supporting web campaigns does not bear much fruit. It is vital to check whether the campaign fits into the space and narrative of the movement and the news, and whether it serves the purpose of meeting the long-term goal of the campaign. He also mentioned that it is crucial to have a sensible approach when covering a story and necessary to have the consent of the source before publishing it.

Shuddhabrata Sengupta, Shibayan Raha and Shivani Kaul at the panel discussion on Exploring New Media

Participant-led Sharing Session

Akanksha Joshi started the session with an energizing activity before moving onto the presentations that were to be shared by the groups which were formed on Day One.

The groups presented their short digital stories on various people and personalities that they had come across while exploring the city's market places and neighbourhood parks. There were stories of rag-pickers, tea sellers, balloon vendors, security guards and other people whom the participants had interacted with while walking down the city's roads. The participants were happy to share that this task prompted them to strike conversations with strangers, overcome inhibitions and come across some interesting individuals whose stories are not generally told.

One such example was that of a local tea-vendor outside the India Habitat Centre who had a bruise on his cheek that was presumed to be the result of a fight, but on striking a conversation they found out that he was injured when rescuing a puppy and taking it to the animal shelter. One of the team members disclosed that she too worked for the same organization. This, they realized, was a valuable exercise in not only breaking stereotypes and generating conversations, but also using mobile phones to create content and apply practical techniques like background music, subtitles, etc.

Due to shortage of time, the participants were not able to present their biographies on their 'new' friends, but they were asked to take this exercise further by sharing these stories on Facebook to continue the process of engagement, dialogue and storytelling beyond the workshop space.

In the closing ceremony, the participants were asked to form a circle holding each other's hands and share the most important learning that they were taking away from the workshop. Some of the responses were as follows:

- Alternative perspectives on the same issue
- Love and new saplings of friends that I will nourish

- Happiest interaction
- Other side of the coin
- Interaction with others, conversations
- Best workshop till date, wonderful journey working together
- New and expanded knowledge base, beautiful personal accounts
- Even though we may all be different, we are all human - the art of agreeing to disagree
- PYR - *Pyaar, Yaadein, Rishta*
- Beauty of diversity and belongingness
- Peace beginning from within going outside
- Different realities have different roots
- Sharing of ideas
- Talking Kashmir with different people, face to face
- Space as a world of companionship
- Learning outside of books and meeting new people from the same university

Participant Feedback

The WISCOMP workshop on *The Role of Media in Conflict and Peace: Exploring Alternatives* on the theme of Peace Journalism was a part of the Hum Kadam initiative. It aimed to offer an alternative perspective to journalistic practice with a focus on sensitive, responsible and reliable reporting and communicating of issues, problems and stories set within the context of a conflict with a view to open up spaces of creative and ethical intervention.

The participants were interested in learning about the different ways to report conflict through a peaceful approach without inciting further hatred, violence or polarization of sentiments, and to initiate peace building. While some of them were looking forward to explore different narratives and the role of media in it, others were looking to gain new experiences and explore a platform for exchange. It was interesting to note that there were some who expected the workshop to be limited to a formal lecture and discussion, and were apprehensive about a divisive dialogue between the participants from Delhi and Kashmir. They were pleasantly surprised to engage in an interactive and meaningful dialogue to unlearn and learn, in addition to expanding their knowledge base and academic learning.

In the post-workshop evaluation, majority (approx. 78.12%) of the participants felt that their expectations from the workshop were completely met, while some of them (21.87% approximately) indicated that their expectations were fulfilled to some extent. The participants revealed that the workshop enabled them to find a common ground of similar interests. While one person (of the total 32) expressed certain doubts about the efficacy of the praxis in the Kashmir context, others (approximately 28.12%) felt that the workshop provided them with a space for mutual conversations to look beyond the stereotypical portrayal by mainstream media, explore a diverse range of topics, perceptions and opinions, and comprehend how journalism can also be an effective tool to build peace.

The participants' responses regarding their most useful learning from the workshop were several but there was a collective view on fostering

peace though journalism and learning how to report about a conflict, exploring and acknowledging different perspectives, understanding and respecting alternate truths (approx. 34.37%). Others pointed to the fascinating praxis of peace journalism, ethical practices for responsible reporting, value of Active Listening and the need to move beyond preconceived notions of cynicism, and reporting in a context as some of the most useful learnings from the workshop.

Almost 97% of the participants found the workshop to be very interactive and remarked that certain sessions, wherein the facilitators brought a lot of energy and positive vibe, as more popular than the others. One of the most popular sessions was the panel discussion on Exploring New Media (62.5%) where the participants were enthralled with the persona, openness and honesty of the panellists, and were delighted to learn of the availability of an alternate forum to present one's opinion. This was closely followed by the session on introduction to Digital Story-telling, and a discussion on Understanding Peace, Conflict and Journalism (59.37% each). Those present at the workshop marvelled at the energy and communication skills of the facilitator for the session on Digital Story-telling, while the speaker's upfront perspectives on Peace, Conflict and Journalism influenced some of the participants to explore the space for a convergence of media and academia. Almost 40% of the participants responded that the session on Oral Histories introduced them to the possibility of alternate narratives. 37.5% of the participants found the approach, personal accounts and demonstrations by the facilitators in the session on Experiences from the Field: Practicing Peace Journalism quite influential and pragmatic.

Some of the participants (18.75% approximately) were a little disappointed with the session on Writing Skills and conveyed that it would have been helpful if there was more of actual writing than discussion on writing in the session.

Though most of the participants did not find any limitation with the workshop as such, yet a considerable number (50% approximately) of them felt that time constraints and management was an issue. The participants shared in their opinion that it would have been better if the workshop was spaced over a couple of more days so as to enable

the participants to have more time for informal interaction outside the workshop space and also look around the city. Some others (6.25%) also voiced the opinion that it would have been helpful to screen a documentary reconnoitring the practices of Peace Journalism, while some (6.25%) of them also suggested that the perspectives from the North-East of India could also have been incorporated into the workshop.

> *"It was my pleasure to attend the workshop. I personally would like to thank the members of WISCOMP. The workshop full of knowledge and experience has given us the insights about my future journalistic field, especially discussing Kashmir conflict with Mrs. Nilova Roy Chaudhry. The workshop opened the gates of true peace initiatives to me and given me lot of ideas to research upon especially the Peace by Terror etc. I am thankful to WISCOMP for giving me a chance to interact one of my favorite Editors like Mr. Raj Chengappa. The oral testimonies, storytelling, insights to new media, the ice breaking session and concluding session by Ms. Akanksha Joshi was (sic) exceptionally extraordinary and I extend my warm thank to WISCOMP and all participants of the workshop. And I expect WISCOMP to carry such initiatives for conflict issues, if ever my contribution needed to this auspicious body I will be grateful to contribute."*
>
> *– A participant from Kashmir*

Participants also suggested the following themes for future workshops:

- Media Stereotypes,
- Gender issues, Masculinity and Feminist Studies,
- Women and Children in Conflict,
- Problems in the North-East,
- Environment,
- Naxal Movement,

Stories on Civil Society,

- Human rights,
- Minority issues,
- Identity Politics,

- Discussion on certain specific aspects of Peace Journalism, and
- Workshop on digital story-telling, photo journalism.

In response to how they plan to apply the learning from the workshop, there was a single thread in the responses which conveyed that they would be more conscious as journalists, scout various perspectives before forming an opinion, and use the approach and praxis of Peace Journalism in their film-making, writing, and reporting. However , a majority of them (34.37%) expressed that they intend to implement the learning from the workshop not only in their professional work spaces, but also in their everyday life in terms of compassion, accommodating alternate perspectives, and opening up their minds to dialogic practices.

Programme Schedule

Day 1: 28 December, 2014 (Sunday)
Venue: **India Habitat Centre**

Session 1	*Welcome Address*
Speaker:	Dr. Meenakshi Gopinath
Time:	9:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

Session 2	*Ice Breakers and Introductions*
Facilitator:	Ms. Akanksha Joshi
Time:	10:00 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.
Tea	10:45 a.m. – 11.00 a.m.

Session 3	*Introduction to Digital Story-telling*
Facilitator:	Ms. Akanksha Joshi
Time:	11.00 am – 1:00 pm
Lunch:	1:00 pm – 2:00 pm

Session 4	*Introduction to Peace Journalism*
Facilitator:	Ms. Nilova Roy Chaudhury
Time:	2:00 – 3:15 pm
Tea:	3:15 – 3:30 pm

Session 4	*Introduction to Peace Journalism* (continued)
Facilitator:	Ms. Nilova Roy Chaudhury
Time:	3:30 – 4: 30 pm

Day 2: 29 December, 2014 (Monday)
Venue: **IIC – Annexe**

Session 5	*State of the Industry and Ethical Challenges*
Panelist:	Mr. Ahmed Ali Fayyaz
Chair:	Ms. Rita Manchanda

Time:	09:30 – 11:00 am
Tea:	11:00 am – 11:15 am

Session 6   *From the Field: Practicing Peace Journalism*

Panelists:	Mr. Pervez Majeed
Chair:	Ms. Subi Chaturvedi
Time:	11:15 am – 1:00 pm
Lunch:	1:00 – 1:30 pm

Session 7   *Journalism in an Age of Corporatization*

Speaker:	Mr. Raj Chengappa
Time:	1:30 – 2:15

Session 8   *Understanding Peace, Conflict and Journalism*

Speaker:	Prof. Achin Vanaik
Time:	2:15 – 3:15 pm
Tea:	3:15 – 3: 30 pm

Session 9   *Writing Workshop*

Facilitator:	Ms. Nilova Roy Chaudhury
Time:	3:30 – 5:00 pm

Day 3: December 30, 2014 (Tuesday)

Venue: **IIC – Annexe**

Session 10

Oral Histories: *Alternative Stories, Alternative Tellings*

Facilitators:	Ms. Pamela Philipose
Time:	9:30 am – 11:30 am
Tea:	11:30 am – 11:45 am

Session 11

Exploring New Media

Facilitators:	Mr. Shibayan Raha, Mr. Shuddhabrata Sengupta

Moderator: Ms. Shivani Kaul

Time: 11:45 am – 1:45 pm

Lunch: 1:45 – 2:15 pm

Session 12

Participant led Sharing Session

Facilitator: Ms. Akanksha Joshi

Time: 2:15 pm – 4:15 pm

Session 13

Feedback and Closing Comments

Facilitator   WISCOMP Team

Time: 4:15 – 5:00 pm

Tea: 5:00 pm

Profiles of Resource Persons

Achin Vanaik taught International Relations and Global Politics in the Political Science Department of Delhi University. He is the co-recipient, along with Praful Bidwai, of the Sean MacBride International Peace Prize for the year 2000 awarded by the International Peace Bureau, world's oldest international peace organization. Prof. Vanaik has authored and edited several books on topics ranging from contemporary Indian politics, economy, foreign policy, secularism, international politics and nuclear disarmament. He is the General Series Editor for the 4 volume *ICSSR Research Surveys and Explorations* in the discipline of Political Science published in 2013.

Ahmed Ali Fayyaz is a senior journalist and television producer based in Srinagar and works as Jammu and Kashmir Bureau Chief for *The Hindu*. Previously, he worked at *The Daily Excelsior* (Jammu). In 2003-04, he was the first recipient of the Jammu and Kashmir State Award instituted by the Government headed by Mufti Mohd. Sayeed.

Akanksha Joshi is a story-teller who uses films, sound, text and dance to share her experiences of the visible and inner worlds. An award winning filmmaker and photographer, Ms. Joshi's oeuvre stretches from films on conflicts and compassion (*Passengers: A Video Journey in Gujarat*), to films on ecological changes exploring many indigenous cultures across different ecosystems in India (*Chilika Banks, Earth Witness*). She is the recipient of many awards for cinematography and direction.

Nilova Roy Chaudhury is a senior journalist with over 30 years of work experience with some of the world's leading print news publications, including *The Washington Post*, *The International Herald Tribune*, *The Hindustan Times*, *The Statesman* and *The Associated Press*, among others. She is Founder and now Chief Editor of the Indian Review of Global Affairs (www.irgamag.com), an online foreign affairs news magazine that aims to project the Indian point of view on major foreign policy events across the globe.

Pamela Philipose is a Senior Fellow with the Indian Council of Social Science Research. She began her career with *The Times of India* and

until recently served as Director and Editor-in-Chief of Women's Feature Service (WFS), an agency mandated to highlight development issue with a gender focus in media coverage.

Pervez Majeed is J&K correspondent for *Sahara Times*, an English weekly publication of Sahara India Media (New Delhi). He has a Bachelor's Degree in Social Science and a Master's Degree in Journalism from the University of Kashmir. Mr. Majeed has been in the field of journalism for the last five years.

Raj Chengappa is presently Editor-in-Chief of The Tribune Group of Publications. Mr. Chengappa is an award-winning journalist of 33 years' standing. He has written and anchored over 150 path-breaking cover stories for India Today on a range of subjects, including foreign affairs, security, politics, defence, business, science, technology, education, environment, health, sports and entertainment.

Rita Manchanda is Director Research at South Asia Forum for Human Rights, India, where she founded and developed the programs – 'Women Conflict and Peace-building' and 'Media and Conflict'. Ms. Manchanda is also Programme Advisor for a multi-country research programme on Human Rights and Peace Audits of 'Partitions' as a Method of Resolving Ethno-Nationalist Conflicts. She is a writer, researcher, journalist and a human rights activist.

Shibayan Raha is a non-violent direct action trainer and a seasoned community organizer. He has worked with several organizations including Students for a Free Tibet, where he served as the Grassroots Director for India and the global campaigning group Avaaz.org, directing their involvement in the 2011 anti-corruption uprising in India, and also with Change.org, the world's largest petition platform. Mr. Raha is the founder of the Seven Sisters Project which is a mobile-phone based citizen news service working to connect grassroots communities in North-East India to the rest of the country.

Shuddhabrata Sengupta is a media practitioner, filmmaker and writer with the Raqs Media Collective, and one of the initiators of Sarai, which are part of the Centre for Study of Developing Societies, New Delhi. Mr. Sengupta's recent work involves textual explorations of aesthetics, surveillance and cyberculture. He is currently working on a

series of new media and digital culture projects at the Sarai Media Lab.

Subi Chaturvedi is Adjunct Faculty, IIIT-D (A State University by An Act of the Government of NCT of Delhi), Founder & Hon. Managing Trustee of Media For Change, and Founder, Chief Mentor & Editor of the Saltlist. Ms. Chaturvedi is also a member ofMAG, United Nations-IGF (Media & Civil Society), and India-IGF, MoC&IT (Civil Society). The Convener of WG-India IGF, she is a Board Member & Co-Chair, Netmundial Brazil (Future of the Internet). She is pursuing a PhD in New Media Technology and Social Change from Indian Institute for Technology, Delhi.

Profiles of Participants

A.R. Rakshitha (New Delhi) is a second year Journalism undergraduate student at Lady Shri Ram College for Women. She has interned with The Hindu and NADA India Foundation, a Delhi Based NGO, in the past. She has been an active member of the Rotary Club at school and was also the editor of her school's e-newsletter.

Aabid Hussain Bhat (Srinagar) is pursuing her Masters in Journalism & Mass Communication at Islamic University of Science & Technology. He holds a Bachelors' in Arts from S.A.A Degree College Budgam.

Aamir Ali Bhat (Srinagar) is presently pursuing her Masters in Journalism & Mass Communication from Islamic University of Science & Technology. He holds a Bachelors' in Science from Aligarh Muslim University, U.P.

Arshi Showkat (Srinagar) is pursuing her Masters from Media Education Research Centre of Srinagar University. She holds a Bachelors' in Humanities. She enjoys travel, writing short stories and photography.

Deepali Meena (New Delhi) is pursuing Journalism from Lady Shri Ram College for Women (LSR), Delhi University. She has worked with an NGO, called Udayan Care Orphanage home and interned with a production house in the past.

Drishti Mrigwani (New Delhi) has helped make a documentary called ''In Search of Destiny'' with the editor of Lok Sabha channel Akash Arun. Currently she is enrolled in a post graduate program at the Centre for Culture, Media and Governance, Jamia Millia Islamia. She holds a Bachelors' in Journalism from NIILM University, Haryana.

Drushti Joshi (New Delhi) is a final year student of Journalism at Lady Shri Ram College. She is passionate about international relations, media studies and women's issues, and wishes to make a difference in the lives of those affected by social exclusion, stigma and discrimination.

Garima Upadhyay (New Delhi) is pursuing her Masters at the Centre for Culture, Media and Governance, Jamia Millia Islamia. She nurtures

a keen interest in media studies and holds a Bachelors' in Journalism from Lady Shri Ram College for Women.

Geetika Ahuja (New Delhi) is a second year student at Lady Shri Ram College for Women. A project head at the National Service Scheme, she is also the sub-editor at University Express, the Delhi University newspaper.

Ghulam Murtaza Fazily (Srinagar) is pursuing his Masters in Mass communication and Journalism in MERC, University of Srinagar. With over two years of work experience in the field of broadcast media, he has worked in the past as a reporter for 'Kargil Today', a local news channel in Kargil. He is also a columnist for 'Reach Ladakh'.

Hidayat-Ullah-Kawa (Srinagar) is pursuing his Masters in Journalism & Mass Communication at Islamic University of Science & Technology (IUST). Hidayat has worked as a teacher and also in the insurance sector.

Irshad Ashraf (Budgam) is currently pursuing his Masters' in Mass Communication and Journalism. He has a Bachelors' in Science with zoology, botany and chemistry as core subjects and also a Bachelors' in Education.

Ishan Fazili (Srinagar) is pursuing his Masters in Mass Communication and Journalism from Media Education Research Centre, Srinagar University and holds a Bachelors' in Mass Communication and Multimedia Production.

Khalid Bashir (Srinagar) is pursuing his Masters in Mass Communication & Journalism and holds a Bachelors' in Political Science, English Literature and History. He aspires to become a writer.

Mitul Lall (New Delhi) is pursuing her graduation in Journalism from Lady Shri Ram College, Delhi University. She has previously worked in the editorial department for magazines and television. She is currently working with an NGO to help victims of domestic abuse.

Mohmad Faheem Mir (Srinagar) is pursuing his Masters in Journalism & Mass Communication at Islamic University of Science & Technology. He has a Bachelors' in Mass Communication and Video Production from Srinagar University.

Mohsin Hussain Shah (Srinagar) is pursuing his Masters in Journalism & Mass Communication from Islamic University of Science & Technology and has completed his Bachelors' in Science from Shri Pratab College, Srinagar.

Moosa Hayat (Srinagar) is presently pursuing his Masters in Mass Communication and Journalism from department of Media Education and Research Centre (MERC), University of Srinagar. He holds a Bachelors' in Science.

Muhammad Younus (Srinagar) is a media student from University of Srinagar and holds a Bachelors' in Arts (Political Science, History & Economics).

Muzamil Shafi Mattoo (Srinagar) is a graduate from Srinagar University. He has worked with Genpact as a Process Associate and at Exl Services Pvt. Ltd. for two years as a Senior Associate. He is presently pursuing his Masters in Journalism & Mass Communication from Islamic University of Science & Technology.

Nisar Ahmad Dharma (Srinagar) is pursuing his Masters in Mass Communication and Journalism from Media Education Research Centre (MERC), University of Srinagar. He holds a Masters in English from IGNOU. Nisar contributes regularly to the department's fortnightly publication MERC Times.

Nupur Saini (New Delhi) is in her final year of Journalism at Lady Shri Ram College for Women.

Prakriti Gupta (New Delhi) is a final year student of Journalism at Lady Shri Ram College for Women, University of Delhi.

Ritika Saxena (New Delhi) describes herself as a day dreamer who tries to convert these dreams into reality. She loves to shop and explore new places.

Sajid Ali Mir (Srinagar) is pursuing Masters in Journalism & Mass Communication at Islamic University of Science & Technology. He desires to be involved in peace building initiatives at different levels.

Saqib Ur Rehman (Srinagar) is pursuing his Masters in Journalism & Mass Communication at Islamic University of Science & Technology. He holds a Bachelors' in Arts from Govt. Degree College, Anantnag.

Shahnaz Marouf Gazi (Srinagar) is pursuing her Masters in Mass Communication & Journalism from University of Srinagar. She holds a Bachelors' in Business Administration.

Shaina Ahluwalia (New Delhi) is pursuing Journalism Honours from Lady Shri Ram College for Women. Presently interning with *Teach For India*, she has worked closely with the community in past.

Shalini Yadav (New Delhi) is pursuing her Bachelors in Journalism from Lady Shri Ram Women College. She has interned as input department desk in India News Channel and worked with Adept Advertising Pvt. Ltd as content writer. She is working on a Gujarat Art and culture documentary project.

Sibtain Hyder (Srinagar) is pursuing a course in journalism at Media Education Research Centre (MERC), University of Srinagar.

Sohini Chowdhury (New Delhi) is pursuing her Bachelors' in Journalism from Lady Shri Ram College for Women, Delhi University. Alongside, she is also pursuing a diploma course in Conflict Transformation and Peace-building from Lady Shri Ram College. Previously, she has interned with the National Human Rights Commission, The Pioneer Newspaper and Pour UnSourire D'Enfant (Cambodian NGO).

Swati Dey (New Delhi) is pursuing her Masters in Media Governance from Jamia Milia Islamia University. She had earlier worked as a freelance Media & HR Consultant for a year and has also volunteered with various NGOs. She is presently a project-based artist at All India Radio.

Tarana Faroqi (New Delhi) is a second year journalism student at Lady Shri Ram College for Women. She has volunteered for various NGO related to women security, primary education and sexual reproductive health awareness.

Zubair Ahmad Dar (Srinagar) is pursuing her Masters in Journalism & Mass Communication at Islamic University of Science & Technology and holds a Bachelor's in Science from Government Degree College.

Glimpses

Glimpses