

# EVENT REPORT

ON

## “One-day Training for Women Journalists on Responsible Reporting on Gender Based Violence in Nepal”

### A. Background:

Gender-based violence (GBV) includes all acts of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence that occur within the workplace, family or domestic unit or between former or current spouses or partners, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the identical residence with the victim. Women are predominantly the victims of GBV and their intersecting identities shapes their experience of multiple discriminations. Mass media plays a vital role in shaping the overall awareness of the society about violence, considering the way they represent violence in their reports, language and narrative, and therefore the audience they reach. Proper analysis of media content can provide answers to whether the topics of gender-based violence are sensitively covered.

Moreover, it is never easy to report on pain and violence, especially when it involves gender-based violence, which can be especially intimate and traumatic. Despite the challenges, journalists play an important role in bringing these issues to light and raising awareness about them. Journalism, at its best, can be a powerful force for change. Journalists can help to dispel myths and stereotypes, challenge social norms that perpetuate violence, and hold those in power accountable for their actions by reporting on gender-based violence. Journalists can also provide a platform for survivors to share their stories through their reporting, which can help to break the silence surrounding gender-based violence and empower others to speak out.

The media plays a crucial role in increasing awareness about GBV. A collaborative approach that combines sensitive reporting together with advocacy, sensitization and support from media personnel would contribute in curbing the menace. MAG in partnership with JiG envisioned this training with an aim to raise awareness on existing GBV issues and their reporting. Additionally, the participating journalists were also oriented on the guide from **Centre for Women’s Global Leadership ‘Silence and Omissions: A Media Guide for Covering Gender-Based Violence** focusing on survivor centred approach to reporting and reporting through the human rights approach on GBV. These critical issues are highly relevant for journalists to practice responsible reporting on GBV.

## **B. Rationale for the training with journalists**

Media can be labelled as the key actor responsible for communicating information relating to GBV issues. These issues are always revolving in the general public sphere and are being reported in the media and are talked about in society. For this reason, solely, it is crucial to start out the debate on the responsibility of the media and also the way they report such cases.

It's reassuring to note that Nepalese media outlets, both national and sub-national, report on violence against women on a nearly daily basis. Many news reports or articles, on the other hand, are judged to be sensational and not focused on addressing the issue's core causes. As a result, increased media responsibility to raise public awareness of GBV and ethical reporting based on current international and national legal instruments would aid in addressing the problem.

Covering the topic of GBV is a difficult undertaking for a journalist. Not only is the subject misunderstood, but it is also becoming increasingly complex in the context of COVID-19 pandemic, making coverage on GBV issues even more challenging. More importantly, journalists must be aware that if they do not follow strict norms and ethics, their reporting can have negative repercussions on GBV survivors. Journalists may unintentionally and unknowingly contribute to the problem by employing insensitive interviewing techniques, inaccurate reporting, personal unconscious biases and beliefs about gender and sexuality, and a lack of knowledge of laws and policies. Hence, comprehensive training for journalists on how to report on GBV issues in a more responsible manner is required.

MAG in partnership with JiG carried out this one day training to push for responsible reporting on GBV among women journalists of Kathmandu. The discussion from this training can also help to create a more informed and engaged public, foster a greater sense of empathy and understanding, and contribute to positive change.

### **Objectives:**

- To Orient and familiarize 25 journalists on the **'Silence and Omissions: A Media Guide for Covering Gender-Based Violence developed by Centre for Women's Global Leadership**
- To identify the issues, challenges, risks and threats faced by women journalists while covering issues of GBV.

### **C. Participants' Profile:**

The training participants included women journalists from different media houses, including both print and electronic media personnel particularly those reporting on social issues and Gender were prioritized. Inclusivity was ensured and there was participation of journalists from different castes/ethnicities, regions, experiences, and positions held in their respective media houses. As one session of training was conducted in English, priority was given to working women journalists who were proficient in the language to ensure better comprehension.

### **D. Resource Person's Profile:**

The team which delivered the session comprised of one lead trainer from JiG and two co-trainer from Nepal. Given below is a brief description of the trainers along with their sessions.

Session:	Name	Designation	Session Title
1.	Ms. Babita Basnet	Senior Journalist, Executive Director, Media Advocacy Group (MAG)	Conceptual Clarity on GBV and existing media practices towards it
2.	Ms. Cathy Otten	Senior Program Lead, Journalism Initiative on Gender Based Violence	Responsible reporting on survivor-centered approach to reporting, and the human rights approach
3.	Ms. Maiya Twayanbasu "Matina"	Journalist, BBC Nepal	Ethical Reporting based on : Silence and Omissions: A media guide for covering gender-based violence, CWGL

### **E. Venue and Date:**

Venue: Alfa Complex, New Baneshwor, Kathmandu Nepal

Date: 5<sup>th</sup> February 2023

## **F. Proceedings:**

### **Session 1: “Conceptual Clarity on GBV and existing media practices towards it”, Ms. Babita Basnet**

Her session entailed Conceptual Clarity on GBV and existing media practices towards it the following sub topics:

- i) What is GBV?
- ii) Difference between GBV and Violence against Women
- iii) Types of GBV
- iv) Violence against LGBTQI+ Community
- v) Violence against women in politics
- vi) Status of Violence against women in Nepal
- vii) Online GBV
- viii) GBV in Media
- ix) GBV in the world of work
- x) Role of Media in covering GBV
- xi) Existing media practices in covering GBV
- xii) Way forward for responsible reporting on GBV

She also briefly touched upon the issue of GBV in the world of work. Following her session, a group

Discussion was conducted to clear any queries and also collect inputs form the group.

*Ms. Basnet wrapped up the session and introduced Ms. Cathy Otten to the group inviting her for her session*

### **Session 2: Responsible reporting on survivor-centered approach to reporting, and the human rights approach, Ms. Cathy Otten, Senior Program Lead, Journalism Initiative on Gender Based Violence, Institute for Women's Leadership**

Ms. Otten focused her contents based on the handbook Silence and Omission and talked about survivor-centered approach and the human rights approach to GBV reporting.

Her session on reporting on gender-based violence (GBV) emphasized the importance of adopting a survival-centered approach and pursuing solutions journalism. They were advised to focus on solutions and not just highlight problems. Moreover, participants were encouraged to avoid asking detailed questions about the GBV incident as details of the incident is not required in GBV reporting. They were also reminded that sensationalizing the issue can cause enormous trauma to the victim. Overall, the session successfully emphasized the need for responsible and respectful reporting on GBV issues.

### **Session 3: Ethical Reporting based on: Silence and Omissions: A media guide for covering gender-based violence, CWGL, Ms. Maiya Matina**

Ms. Maiya focused her session on contents related to ethical reporting on GBV. Her presentation was based on the Journalist's handbook developed by CWGL and entailed the following subtopics:

- i) Reporting on Sexual Violence in Conflict and Post-Conflict Settings
- ii) Challenges and setbacks
- iii) Follow up in post-conflict settings
- iv) Reporting challenges
- v) Role and impact of journalist reporting GBV

#### **G. Expected Outcome:**

- Enhanced understanding of participating journalists on the guidelines for sensitive and responsible reporting on GBV and dissemination of GBV issues.

#### **H. Achieved Outcome:**

The training provided the participating journalists with an enriched understanding of reporting GBV issues and equipped them with the tools to be more effective and responsible reporters along with other key achievements listed below:

- 25 participating women journalists were able to enhance their understanding of the critical criteria for covering and disseminating Gender-Based Violence (GBV) topics in a sensitive and responsible manner.
- Participants were introduced to solutions journalism and encouraged to pursue it, as well as to be change agents and change makers in the media field.
- Challenges faced by women journalists while reporting on GBV issues were identified, and actionable recommendations were discussed to address them.
- Participants gained a better perspective on their roles and activities as a result of the reflective exercises, and developed a clear vision for moving forward with improved reporting skills.
- The journalists were also able to share their professional and personal experiences with one another in a constructive manner.
- The participants expressed their commitments to implement the knowledge and skills learned from the training in their reporting and to share the information and knowledge to other fellow journalists.

## **I. Challenges and Learnings**

The training was conducted smoothly however there were a few challenges and learnings:

The training timeframe (8 a.m. to 2 p.m.) was extended to guarantee that all attendees participated fully. Despite this, participants participated fully and actively. Effective facilitation and intelligent time management aided in completing the agenda in the allotted time.

It was a diverse and well-represented group from multiple media sectors, and coordination was crucial for a program that required a diversified collection of journalists from several media fields. The selection of participants is a critical stage in assuring the program's viability. Active coordination at every step of the project can result in the success of such programs and discussion.

Moreover, the subject of GBV and its responsible reporting is an extremely significant subject and hold the capacity to generate a lot of discussion and sharing. Therefore, devoting more time to discussion sessions served the purpose of the project.

In addition, the design of the program allowed participants to share their stories and experiences which helped them personalize and contextualize the issue of violence and harassment. This helped them to realize that the issue of violence and harassment needs to be prioritized and need to be adopted by each media houses.

Furthermore, the trainers were able to bring in their expertise as media professionals, emphasizing the topic with their personal experiences. Having Ms. Cathy Otten as an external trainer from outside the country allowed participants get perspective and practices around GBV reporting that are happening in other countries or developed and powerful countries that were new to them and were undoubtedly valuable.

## **J. Feedback from the participants:**

The feedback received from the training participants indicates that they were highly satisfied with both the mode and content of the program. The participants expressed that they were able to share their experiences and challenges related to reporting Gender-Based Violence (GBV), which made them feel more at ease. Additionally, they were able to relate to each other's experiences, which was helpful.

However, the training materials covered a lot of heavy content and the time allocated for group sessions and other learning activities was limited. As a result, the participants recommended that similar training programs should be extended to at least two days for better impact and effectiveness.

## **G. Conclusion and Recommendations:**

The results of the training indicate that the curriculum can help journalists connect and share their experiences while covering any GBV or harmful norms-related issues. They

could also communicate reporting ideas and potential news themes and write editorials and news reports.

The training provided a platform for participants to adopt a survival-centered approach when reporting on GBV issues, and it also encouraged participants to pursue solutions journalism rather than simply highlighting problems.

In addition, participants were encouraged not to ask more detailed questions about the GBV incident to the victim because details of the event are not required when reporting as taught in the training. They were also reminded that sensationalizing the issue of GBV is not a respectable way of reporting on the issue and can cause enormous trauma to the victim.

Moreover, reporting on GBV issues can be especially difficult and upsetting for journalists. As a result, programs incorporating psychosocial counselling for journalists should be developed to ensure journalists' mental health.

As platforms that enable GBV violence emerge, there is a need for a more extensive discussion of responsible reporting on social media platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, and TikTok.

Lastly, programs like this should be organized on a regular basis to capacitate women journalists in the responsible reporting of GBV.

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## Annexes

### Annex 1: Program Agenda

#### **Workshop for Journalists on Responsible Reporting on Gender Based Violence**

**Date: 5<sup>th</sup> February 2023**

Draft Program Agenda

Venue: Alfa Complex, New Baneshwor

Time	Activity	Responsible Persons
8:00 A.M – 9:00A.M	Breakfast/Registration/ Participants Joining the training	MAG Team
9:00 A.M.- 9:30 A.M	Opening of the Program Welcome Remarks and Introduction Ms. Anita Bindu, President, MAG Remarks and Objective Highlight: Ms. Cathy Otten, Senior Program Lead, Center for Women's Global Leadership	
	Introductory Session of Participants	
9:30 A.M.- 10:00 A.M	Conceptual Clarity on GBV and existing media practices towards it	Ms. Babita Basnet, Senior Journalist
10:00 A.M. – 11:00 A.M	Responsible reporting on survivor-centered approach to reporting, and the human rights approach	Ms. Cathy Otten, Senior Program Lead, JiG
11:00 A.M.- 11:30 A.M	Discussion, Question/Answer and Sharing	Participants
11:30-11:45 A.M	Tea Break	
11:45 A.M – 1:00 P.M	Ethical Reporting based on : Silence and Omissions: A media guide for covering gender-based violence, CWGL	Ms. Maiya Twayanabasu “Matina” Journalist, BBC Nepal
1:00- 1:30 P.M	Discussion, Question/Answer and Sharing	Participants
1:30-2:00	Feedback collection, Closing of the program	
2:00 P.M	<b>LUNCH</b>	

Overall facilitation of the program: Ms. Babita Basnet, Senior Journalist

*Annex 3: Major photographs of the event (also shared in email)*









