



# In the finest print

A Tale of Women Who Give Voice To Those Who Can't Speak For Themselves

Pics: Kshitiz Saxena, AIS Vas 1, XII B

## Ground reporting

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In a sea of TRP vying and sensational headlines, 'Khabar Lahariya' seems to stand out, not just because it is the only women-run newspaper in India, but also because it (un)covers grave issues from unnoticed corners of the nation. With an aim to achieve an egalitarian society, this one is surely a welcome breeze in pages of yellow journalism.

### The beginning

"Our journey didn't have a rosy beginning, but we were excited to see how such a unique initiative works out."

Khabar Lahariya set out in 2002 in Chitrakoot, Madhya Pradesh, by a group of six women. Initially published in Bundeli, the newspaper covered crime, politics, social issues and entertainment events at the local level. With its focus on rural journalism, the newspaper endeavoured to bring out everyday stories of people living in areas where conventional media does not reach.

### The journey

"We've come a long way from being a publication of few copies to selling 6000 copies in 600 villages in UP and Bihar." The newspaper took a major leap in 2012 as it launched editions in Bundeli,



Team Khabar Lahariya with GT reporters

Awadhi and Bhojpuri dialects from Mahoba, Lucknow and Varanasi respectively. Today, the newspaper also has editions in Bajjikka dialect (Sitamarhi, Bihar). Khabar Lahariya now reaches five million people a month through multiple digital platforms.

### The hurdles

"Since most of us were working for the first time in our lives, it was obvious that we faced hurdles."

Saher, a trainee producer shares, "Initially, we faced a lot of issues while trying to encourage women to be part of the paper. In fact, male reporters of local media organisations found it difficult to

accept the fact that local women were trying their hands at journalism. Nevertheless, with time, people started warming up to this concept." Presently there are 40 women reporters and stringers associated with the agency, all hailing from the remote regions of the country.

### The operations

"We get in touch with different reporters and also laymen who share their stories, either in person or over phone."

Khabar Lahariya is written, edited, produced, distributed and marketed entirely by rural women. "Women joining this initiative need not be extremely qualified; some of us are not even graduates.

Any woman with a will to work for the society is welcome," Kavita, Digital Head, says. The newspaper operates within a closely knit framework, primarily centered on personal interaction with people of various professions.

### The reward

"Our work inspires people, especially women. That is our biggest reward."

This spirit of Khabar Lahariya has led them to win awards such as UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize in 2009, Amazing Indian Award by Times Now in 2012 and Kaifi Azmi Award in 2013. The newspaper even bagged the Laadli Media Award for gender sensitive re-

porting (2012). But the publication finds its biggest reward in the lives it touches. Harshita, Social Media Manager, shares, "It is moving when we see the women who are not working with us anymore, recommend us to other women."

### The road ahead

"It makes us so proud when we see the number of shares and likes online."

In 2013, Khabar Lahariya launched their online website, which is quite similar to the newspaper and republishes some of the popular stories printed in the newspaper. What makes the website unique though is the fact that it is the only website to offer content in local dialects.



GT reporter interacts with a team member



Archives from the newsroom



### Blending of words Editor-in-chief



Blending quality with content

### Blending of art Illustration in progress



### Blending of dedication Final editing of the pages



### Blending of ideas Page Editor at work

