
An Analytical Study of Move from Traditional Journalism to Investigative Journalism

Mr. Sandeep Singh

Assistant Professor , Department of Law, University of Rajasthan, Jaipur.

*“NEWS IS WHAT SOMEBODY, SOMEWHERE WANTS
TO SUPPRESS; ALL THE REST IS ADVERTISING.”¹*

Journalism is an art of writing and intimating the people about the things which is happening around the vicinity nationally and internationally, of which they don't have the knowledge. Of Journalism, the real heroes are journalists, who extract out the story and portrait it before the reader or viewer, so that they have the first hand information or knowledge of the thing happening around them.

Journalism has its different form, and can be used in any of the existing form as per the requirement of that particular hour. News, opinions of people, comes through journals, newspaper and also by an online writing. We have seen while watching news channels the flash of breaking news and different investigative story these are part of NEWS. If we look for public opinion, we get it through newspaper editorial and different columns written by experts and persons who have personal experience of the story or have knowledge about it. Now if we look on the online journalism, the first think which strike is BLOGS in which people write what they feel, what is happening in their life, they pass sarcastic comment upon others which becomes news, social media and many other discussion boards?

The basic requirement of journalism is to have information about the story, and this job is to be done by journalist, that is to collect as much information as possible. To gather information for reporting there are few ways which are as follows:-

To interview the person, who have the information about the story!

To reach to the spot, where news is taking place, as soon as possible.

Gather from the public records, other reports and any other important printed material.

There are different forms of journalism; few important of them are here:

Journalism: - which till now we have discussed above is called journalism which includes only reporting the information which is available.

Muckraking: - in this the main aim of it is to find out as much as ‘BAD’ information as can be found about an individual or any organisation. It focuses on negative, errors or fault. Its object is to destroy.

Investigative Journalism:- it is form of journalism in which journalist go into the depth of topic of interest, which involve crime, corruption, or corporate wrongdoing.

Now the basic Journalism is moving towards Investigative Journalism. The need of investigative journalism is because of the changing scenario, there is rampant corruption in the society, and crimes are committed without the accused been booked form their crime and mismanagement in the organisation/company. So to make them liable for the act done by them there is a need to make people aware of the fact, which is possible by one of the way of investigative journalism.

Another reason to have investigative journalism is to increase the declining revenue of newspaper and other media. This decline is due to the lack of demand of traditional journalism as has been defined above. People are more attracted towards investigative story, investigated by journalist and these create demand in the society of newspaper or electronic media, which creates its TRP and by this means revenue, is generated, though in the garb of investigative journalism some journalist is going for the fabricated story to increase their revenue.

WHAT IS INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM?

Investigative journalism is extracting, revealing and presenting such news which people try to conceal. It is similar to reporting the News which is open to all, except that the people, who will be affected by such revealing, not cooperate or create hindrance in your way of getting that information, and getting it is an easily task, and if such information is revealed it will hamper the reputation and cause financial loss or get people involved in such activity into prison.

SHEILA CORONEL² has given the five different definitions of, What Investigative Journalism IS NOT? And three definitions of what Investigative Journalism IS ?

Investigative Journalism is NOT:-

Daily reporting;

Leak Journalism;

Single source reporting;

Misuse of information;
Paparazzi journalism.

Investigative Journalism IS:-

Watchdog journalism;
Exposing how laws & regulations are violated;
Holding the powerful accountable;

Above definitions create a hitch in the mind of the people what is ‘Leak Journalism’? And it is misunderstood to be a part of investigative journalism, but it’s not the ground reality, as leak journalism is the news which is available because of negligence from the other part, but for investigative journalism it is an active part to be done by journalist and search out the hidden information. This could be better understood by the help of an hypothetical example, if a person commits murder of another person and dispose of the body of that victim, and no evidence is easily available and any journalist took the active step in finding out the evidence against that person, and he finds out those evidence of murder it is called Investigative journalism.

MARK LEE HUNTER³ defines investigative journalism by delineating it from ‘conventional journalism’:-

“Investigative Journalism involves exposing to the public matters that are concealed either deliberately by someone in a position of power, or
Accidentally, behind a chaotic mass of facts & circumstances that obscure understanding if required using both secret and open source and documents.”

Now it is clear that investigative journalism is part and parcel of journalism, and it is an indispensable part of the democracy, that is why it is called the fourth pillar of the democracy. It is the need of the society to have journalism which can put a check upon the government and on the persons who misuse the power which they have, and put those person under fears, so that they hesitate in doing anything against law or against morality.

According to Dutch Flemish association for investigative journalism, VVOJ

“Investigative journalism is CRITICAL & THOROUGH journalism”

Critical means that journalism is not merely passing on ‘news’ that already exist. It implies news, which would not be available without any journalistic intervention. This can be done

by creating new facts, but also through re-interpretation or correlation of facts already at hand.

Thorough means that one makes an own substantial effort, either in quantitative terms – much time spent in research, many sources consulted, etc. - in qualitative terms – sharp questions formulated, new approaches used, etc., or a combination of both.

From this we can make out different form of investigative journalism, though to an extent they overlap each other:-

By piercing the veil, which covers scandals, which find out violation of laws, rules and regulation and different norms set by the authorities, done by different organisation and persons (especially, persons in authority and have power).

To go through policies and functioning of government and the basic focus is on the work done or to be done in the name of development.

So in public interest, it is the duty of journalists to find out from the hideout the corruption in the society, violation of law and maladministration by the authorities. It is the duty of journalist towards the reader and viewers of electronic media, in the garb of administration or public sector entitles, these organs hamper the work of development of society for their person benefit.

What are the different means used to investigate?

Sting operation is one of the best means to investigate. For example Tehelka a journal which in the past disclosed the commission in arms deal.

Wikeleaks is through the use of internet, in which JULIAN ASSANGE leaked different government communication between authorise.

What is the need of investigative journalism?

It is the fundamental right of the people of the society, to know what in reality is going on what authorities are doing what politicians are doing whom they have elected. So to find out what exactly is going on, is to extracted through investigative journalism:-

It is fundamental right or you can say, to be out of conflict, the legal right of society to know what about the society.

Right to know about illegal act which will affect the people for whom journalism is made.

Those people who are in the power they try to misuse or you can say they in reality misuses those power to make it conducive for themselves, violates law and many other acts which could be harmful to the people. So to expose them there is need of investigative journalism. The politicians, who have been elected on some specific promises made to their electors, are fulfilling such promises or not, or in the garb of such promises they are doing something which is fruitful to his /her followers, so to find out the ground reality investigative journalism is the need of this hour.

INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM AND LAW:-

Along with national laws, media work within the protection of international law, this is basically under The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and this freedom is through the following clauses:

Article 15: the right to form, hold, receive and impart opinions.

Article 16: free and equal access to information inside and outside state borders.

Article 17: freedom of speech and expression, equal access to all channels of communication, and no censorship (though restrictions under defamation laws are allowed; see below).

Article 18: the duty to present news and information fairly and impartially.

Article 19: the right to freedom of expression and opinion including “freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information through any media regardless of any frontier.”

The circumstances in which governments can limit these rights are outlined in Article 29 of the Universal Declaration. The Political Covenant of the Declaration details the restrictions on these rights article by article, as follows:

- To ensure respect for the rights and reputations of others (anti-defamation)
- To protect national security, order public (the circumstances necessary to keep a state governable), public health or morals

- To prevent incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence.

Few example of investigative journalism:-

- This has been called the biggest undercover news story in Indian journalism. In 2001, a popular newspaper from India called Tehelka (meaning “sensation” in Hindi) launched its first major sting operation, “**Operation West End**” to expose the alleged culture of bribery at the India’s Ministry of Defense.
- A young Bihari girl, Soumya Pratheek along with social activists Rachel Morgan and Manish Swarnkar (all working for rescue and rehabilitation of women forced into prostitution) carried out a sting operation to **expose a women trafficking nexus** in Forbesganj in **Araria district of Bihar**. The sting showed on camera how girls were being forced into prostitution, which forced the police to act and rescue about a dozen girls and arrest some pimps and other involved in the nexus.
- Just last year some aware villagers in the jurisdiction of **Kshipra police station** in Indore used their mobile phone to carry out a sting operation to expose **police officers taking bribe**. The villagers caught six cops on camera extorting money from the villagers. The incident shook all corners of the country and raised a question “if cops are involved in taking bribe, then who is going to stop corruption”.
- Online magazine Tehelka with journalist Ashish Khaitan as the undercover agent carried out a sting operation titled ‘**Operation Kalank**’ in Gujarat, wherein they secretly recorded on camera confessions of various 2002 Gujarat riot accused along with three three Naroda Patiya massacre accused boasting of their misdeeds. The CD worked as evidence in court against the three accused in Naroda Patiya massacre.
- CNN-IBN carried out an undercover sting operation in 2008 to expose the **CASH-FOR-VOTES scandal**, in which the Sonia Gandhi led UPA allegedly bribed other party MPs to survive a confidence vote in Parliament. Cash for votes’ scandal really rocked the parliament and was made certain through a sting operation by CNN-IBN, which showed on tape Amar Singh aide giving money to a BJP MP. The BJP MPs waved money around the Parliament

alleging that they were bribed by UPA to cast vote in their favour during the confidence vote on Indo-US nuclear deal.

- Following an FIR lodged by Congress MP and Jindal Steel Chairman Naveen Jindal and a **sting operation done by the Jindal Group on Zee group's editors**, two senior Zee editors were arrested by Delhi Police for allegedly demanding Rs 100 crore to drop the news report accusing Jindal and his company for alleged involvement in the coal block allocation scam.
- Sting operation by Tehelka magazine first and later by Star TV played a significant role in conviction of Manu Sharma in model **Jessica Lall's murder case**. After Manu Sharma was set free when witnesses turned hostile, the aforementioned agencies carried out a sting operation in 2006 to expose how witnesses were persuaded to speak in favour of Manu Sharma. The tapes played vital role in getting the case reopened, which finally led to Manu's conviction.”⁴

Now from the above discussion, we can easily conclude that, in the present situation there is a need of investigative journalism for democratic country like India. This create fear in the mind of corrupt politicians, organisations which deals with public and companies which have the intention of harming the people by their illegal means of dealing in day to day practice. If at the back of the mind of the organisation or politicians there is fear of been caught by such type of investigation, they hesitate in doing the corrupt practice. On the other side, there is danger of been misuse of such investigative journalism. People who have the authority of doing thing which is helpful in the development of the society, they hesitate in doing such thing, because these type of investigative journalism make authorities to hesitate in working for development purpose. So we have to keep balance between the two different situations, on one side we have to pierce veil behind which corrupt practice is been done and on the other authorities can freely act without fear the development work.

ENDNOTES:

1. Lord Cliffe, The Great British Newspaper publisher.
2. From The Stable Centre for Investigative Journalism at Columbia University New York.
3. A study on Investigative Journalism by Mark Lee called story based inquiry: A manual for investigative Journalism.
4. <http://topyaps.com/top-10-sensational-cases-of-sting-operations-in-india>

REFERENCES:

- i. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- ii. Tachelka magazine.