



FIVE SIMPLE RULES FOR REPORTING ON GENDER VIOLENCE

1. Use active voice in reporting crimes related to gender violence.

For example: "A 32-year-old man is accused of raping a 23-year-old woman..." instead of "a 23-year-old woman was raped by a man..."

2. Interview appropriate experts with expertise and genuine perspective on the issue.

For example: It is important to guard against the common, but mistaken, assumption that anyone who works on "women's rights" is qualified to comment on a case of gender violence; and equally important to take the trouble to find people with the right, relevant expertise.

3. Link the specific instance to larger issues.

For example: An incident of honour killing following an inter-caste marriage offers an opening for commentary and features to extend to broader questions such as the role of caste and patriarchy in such killings or traditional beliefs and customs that have the force of law or the absence of laws to cover many kinds of gender violence including honour killings.

4. Undertake more follow-up stories and stories that highlight trends.

For example: After the initial reports on a given instance of rape or molestation, in addition to follow-up on the specifics of that investigation and trial, ancillary reportage could highlight other cases of sexual harassment and abuse in similar circumstances (employers, government officials, relatives, as the case may be) or the impact of delayed, miscarried justice or the social costs of such violence.

5. Focus attention on the many forms of gender violence, debilitating even when they are not dramatic.

For example: A dowry-related death or suicide may have been preceded by other forms of domestic violence including psychological, economic or verbal abuse. However, because certain forms of gender violence are seen as more dramatic or newsworthy than others, they are more frequently in the public domain. In the process, incidents of gender violence that may have precipitated or led up to the dramatic incident in question are often ignored.

*These guidelines emerged from the discussion at the
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