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| **ST. JOSEPH’S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS), BANGALORE-27** |
| **BA EJP: VI SEMESTER EXAMINATIONS: JULY/AUGUST 2022**  **JN 6218 - Covering International Relations & Development Journalism** |
| **Time: 2 ½ HOURS Max Marks- 70**  **Instruction:**   1. **This paper is meant for VI semester students of BA-EJP course who have opted for the Development Journalism elective.** 2. **You are allowed to use a Dictionary.** 3. **You will lose marks for exceeding the suggested word-limit.** 4. **This paper contains FOUR pages and THREE sections.** 5. **Read the following article by Hasiao-Hung Pai, published in the Guardian on the 1st of January 2021 and answer the questions that follow.** |

Over the last decade, migration has become an urgent political issue. The 2010s have been marked not only by the [global movement of people](https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/aug/18/mass-migration-crisis-refugees-climate-change) across national borders but also attempts by governments to [erect walls](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/sep/12/border-wall-organ-pipe-cactus-arizona) and fences in their path. We’ve seen nationalism winning votes and the worldview of the far right mainstreamed.

“Flow”, “flood” and “crisis”. Media imagery and language has shaped public opinion. Of course, migration from the global south to the north – intimately connected to the legacy of colonialism and the west’s military machinations – has been happening for decades.

Libya had always been the migratory destination for many sub-Saharan Africans because of its employment opportunities. Following the [suppression of the 2011 Arab spring](https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/jan/15/arab-spring-badly-wrong-five-years-on-people-power) and [Nato’s intervention in Libya](https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2011/mar/23/nothing-moral-nato-intervention-libya), a lawless society emerged, with racial hatred against sub-Saharan Africans unleashed. Many escaped forced labour and torture, [climbed into dinghies](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/nov/05/over-2200-people-rescued-from-dinghies-in-mediterranean) and began the dangerous sea journey across the central Mediterranean.

Throughout this time, when [tens of thousands](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jun/20/the-list-europe-migrant-bodycount) died at sea trying to reach Europe, Europe has imagined itself to be the victim of a migrant or refugee “crisis”. The concept of a “crisis” caused by the movement of people into the European continent has always been embedded in the Eurocentric way of seeing things. This rupture brought about by the arrival of the “other” creates anxiety and fear in the European mind, as the sociologist Encarnación Gutiérrez Rodríguez has [pointed out](https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007%2F978-3-030-28979-9.pdf) – thus the need to create neverending irrational, ideological justifications for that anxiety and fear.

This can be seen in the way migration into [Europe](https://www.theguardian.com/world/europe-news) has been portrayed as an “invasion” of different cultures and a “clash of civilisations” – in a way that is similar to the justifications of the colonial era where the colonised were cast as racially inferior beings. Colonialism still casts its shadow over the immigration debate. For Europe, the “other” challenges its “way of being” as its presence is a reflection of Europe’s past imperialism, upon which much of the continent’s wealth was built.

In the past decade, we’ve seen [anti-migrant policies](https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/sep/15/from-india-to-britain-every-citizen-is-harmed-by-anti-migrant-hostility) and racism flourish across the world. The EU implemented the [hotspot system](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2018/623563/EPRS_BRI(2018)623563_EN.pdf), filtering people and categorising them as asylum seekers or “economic migrants”.

Back in the 1970s, the critic and writer John Berger depicted Turkish migration to Germany in [A Seventh Man](https://www.theguardian.com/books/2010/dec/18/seventh-man-john-berger-review), which charted migrant workers’ journeys in Europe through their departure, work and return. The “return” represented the future, where a worker could travel freely and see lives improved for his family when he visited home. But in the 2010s, this cycle has been disrupted – many migrants’ and asylum seekers’ irregular status prevent them from visiting home. Instead, they are forced to live invisible lives, illegalised, entrapped and segregated.

Plenty of efforts have also been made – see the Home Office’s [“hostile environment”](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/nov/28/hostile-environment-the-hardline-home-office-policy-tearing-families-apart) – to make life unbearable for asylum seekers and migrants in Britain. Over the decade, I have witnessed asylum seekers leading a subhuman existence, deprived of rights to work (despite the substandard state support) and made to pay for healthcare. They live in desperate limbo, pushed into the world of exploitation and forced labour. While large numbers of people across the globe continue to be denied freedom of movement and illegalised, their determination to survive will not be defeated by walls and borders. Migrant protest movements such as the black vests (*gilets noirs*) in France and the black sardines (*sardine nere*) in Italy show that there is plenty of resolve and a willingness to fight back. We can join them by fighting for the regularisation of people’s immigration status – but also by challenging the system that enables their marginalisation and racial segregation. We must offer a different way of seeing migration; a real alternative that addresses colonialism and the massively unequal world that it has created.

**A. Answer ALLof the following questions in 150 words EACH. (3x10=30)**

1. The writer suggests that the migration into Europe has been portrayed as a “clash of civilisations”. What is your understanding of this phrase? Why does the writer use this phrase to contextualise migration into Europe?

2. The writer says, ‘The concept of a “crisis” caused by the movement of people into the European continent has always been embedded in the Eurocentric way of seeing things.’ What does the writer mean? Elaborate

3. The writer says, ““Flow”, “flood” and “crisis”. Media imagery and language has shaped public opinion on how to cover this story.’ How would you cover the story to replace this narrative?

**II. Read the following extract from an article by Yashica Dutt that was published in the Caravan magazine and answer the questions that follow.**

Notwithstanding the now infamous slap, the 2022 Academy Awards had many firsts. It was the first ever nomination for an Indian documentary: *Writing with Fire*,a film about *Khabar Lahariya*, a rural media outlet led by Dalit women. Following months of relentless buzz, a Sundance Award and multiple global accolades, the Oscar nomination came as no surprise to anyone who had been following the documentary since its global release.

Earlier that week, *Khabar Lahariya*’s team had released a statement declaring that the documentary, which had taken close to five years to finish, inaccurately represented their journalism. While they acknowledged that the film was a “moving and powerful document,” they asserted that the film had misrepresented them as focussing on just “one political party,” the Bharatiya Janata Party. The statement read. “It is a story which captures a part of ours, and part stories have a way of distorting the whole sometimes.”

In close to ninety minutes, *Writing with Fire* follows the lives and work of Meera Devi, Shyamkali and Suneeta, who report on local news in the Bundelkhand region of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. The film opens with Meera speaking to a rape survivor who describes the sexual violence and terror she is subjected to by her dominant-caste rapists. In a moving sequence that lasts a little over two minutes, we learn of the immense trust the survivor’s family shares with Meera. The subsequent shots of Meera questioning the police about their failure to file a first-information report, or describing what this work means to her, firmly establish the narrative of hard-working journalists doing honest-to-god reporting. This narrative is cemented further as we meet Suneeta, a former child miner, reporting on the illegal mining mafia that is responsible for the deaths of its workers and the ensuing silence around it. As she stands among a sea of men, confronting the dismissive mine “manager” and taking her rightful space as an equal, it is hard not to feel a rush of pride, admiration and terror.

For its first half, the film shows the journalists learning to incorporate mobile phones in their reporting. They are seen covering a range of issues, from violence against Dalits to the absence of toilets in a Dalit colony, attending press briefings and making multiple trips to police stations. We also witness their personal histories, which are rife with poignant details of struggle. Their YouTube channel, we learn, has crossed a million views.

But, as the film heads into the second half, the tone shifts. Meera, Suneeta and Shyamkali are off to interview a state minister who is contesting an election on a BJP ticket. At his sprawling bungalow, we see the battle lines drawn clearly: the three diminutive journalists on one side and the minister, with two full rows of menacing lackeys, on the other. Even though the sequence is from the run up to the 2017 Uttar Pradesh assembly election—before the BJP assumed power—the brute intimidation of the ruling party is more than evident.

Setting up *Khabar Lahariya* as the David to the BJP’s Goliath, *Writing with Fire* pays exhaustive attention to BJP rallies in its second half, instead of a more diffuse focus on what the journalists have described as a politics of “*jal*, *jangal*, *jameen*”—water, forest and land.

*Writing with Fire*effectively frames the journalists as “rural Dalit heroes taking on a powerful government.” But, in doing so, the filmmakers break the cardinal rule of good journalism, which, in current times, could also be synonymous with good documentary filmmaking.

Since the release of *Khabar Lahariya*’s statement distancing the organisation from the documentary, some have questioned their claims of misrepresentation. “I understand if that’s part of the story, but how can it be the entire focus? It creates an image of us as a one-sided organisation,” Kavita Bundelkhandi, the editor-in-chief of *Khabar Lahariya*, told me. “Our audience is not interested in the political rallies. They are well aware of the empty promises.”

Reporting in rural India is often afflicted by a myopia that results from urban and semi-urban journalists’ blinkered approach to covering these areas. The highly publicised deaths of two teenage cousins found hanging from mango trees in Uttar Pradesh’s Badayun district, in 2014, remain tragic reminders of the short-sightedness of such frames of reference. Almost every major news outlet based outside of the district framed the incident as a sensational rape and murder, but the deaths were ultimately revealed to be suicides driven by fear of patriarchy, exposing the biases most city-based journalists bring to their coverage of rural issues.

Over the two decades of its existence, *Khabar Lahariya* has positioned itself as a Dalit women-led organisation that covers rural issues from a “perspective sensitive to structures of power—whether it is gender, caste, class or religion

The newsroom, under the leadership of Kavita Bundelkhandi and Meera Devi, who are both Dalit, employs women from various marginalised backgrounds, including journalists who are Adivasi, OBC, Muslim but also upper-caste. In *Writing with Fire*, Suneeta, who reports on the illegal mining mafia, is not Dalit, but instead belongs to an OBC caste.

Thomas and Ghosh are an inter-faith couple, coming from Christian and Hindu dominant-caste backgrounds respectively. “We were always aware of entering this initiative as outsiders—to the organisation, but also to the caste and class positions of the protagonists of the film,” they told me in an email. “In fact, representation and authorship are both central to the narrative of the film. We are conscious of the responsibility that comes with telling these stories through a lens that is not from within the community.”

The art of filming a documentary and gaining admission to the most intimate truths of the lives of mostly marginalised, vulnerable subjects can be a tricky act to balance. The ethics of documentary filmmaking state that that process requires an incredible amount of trust, which the filmmakers must not only gain prior to entering and capturing the private lives of their subjects but maintain throughout, sometimes until after the material is released into the world.

**II. Answer ANY TWO of the following questions in 250 words each (2x15=30)**

1.The Khabar Lahariya team issued the following statement about the film, ‘Writing with Fire’, “It is a story which captures a part of ours, and part stories have a way of distorting the whole sometimes.” What is your understanding of this statement? Elaborate

2.The writer says, “The art of filming a documentary and gaining admission to the most intimate truths of the lives of mostly marginalised, vulnerable subjects can be a tricky act to balance.” Discuss this statement, drawing from the documentary films that you have seen this year.

3. The writer says, “Reporting in rural India is often afflicted by a myopia that results from urban and semi-urban journalists’ blinkered approach to covering these areas.” What kind coverage has resulted from this ‘blinkered approach’? Elaborate with examples.

**III. Write a short note, titled ‘What I learnt while journaling development issues this year’ in 150 words. (10 Marks)**