

CENTRE FOR CULTURE, MEDIA & GOVERNANCE

Jamia Millia Islamia
New Delhi



CCMG INVITES YOU TO A LECTURE ON

INSIDE TELEVISION: BREAKING NEWS AND BEYOND

By

Mr. Sandeep Bhushan

Indian Television Journalist

About the Lecture

The talk is specifically about English-language television news. Reporters- this writer included, who have reported the innards of Lutyens Delhi, the ministries and the political parties and the political circus surrounding it- evocatively captured in the short-hand term 'hard beats'- are privy to the acute interdependence of the media and the political class and the terms of their engagement. Across the ranks of television editorial pyramid that places reporters at the bottom and editors/stars at the top, each is aware of the essentially unequal nature of their 'access' to the political leader- especially if he/she happens to belong to the ruling party.

It is true that editors and stars can and do have a better access than a lowly reporter, but only if the political leader feels that it works to their benefit. In other words, this is a relationship mediated through power. In the prevailing 'breaking news' culture this asymmetry becomes sharper since only access can guarantee speed of news delivery. It is important to remember that a certain asymmetry in the politician-journalist nexus was always inscribed in the very act of news-gathering and production. The root of this asymmetry runs much deeper. In many ways it is a structural asymmetry rooted in a powerful state and a media that has its origins not in the growth of technology or capitalism but has grown and thrived within the womb of the state itself. India's television media bears the impress of a state that has deep roots in its colonial past and remains essentially paternalistic in nature. It is this structural asymmetry that puts the state and its players- both individual and institutional- in almost a naturally position of power in relation to the television media.

This lecture brings to bear an 'insider's' perspective on these issues, each of which are complex enough to merit separate research. The fundamental assumption underpinning my talk is that while India's television media shares worldwide trends affecting media, it has traits that are rooted in indigenous culture and economy. Indian English-language television is purely Indian in its nomenclature even though global templates bear an impress--like for instance the manner in which Fox news has influenced the basic television grammar of Times Now and now Republic. The central concern of the talk is a concern that every single reporter in television news in India grapples with- their overwhelming marginalization and the privileging of the anchor and the studio. In other words the studio-ization of television 'news' is overwhelming reality- a largely post-meltdown pervades phenomenon, though a closely controlled editorial by promoters has been the central leitmotif of Indian news television.

About the Speaker

Mr. Sandeep Bhushan has done his MPhil in Modern Indian History from JNU. He has been a television journalist for around twenty years having worked with Business India Television, NDTV, India Today TV; and Tehelka. He has also contributed to all leading magazines and web portals such as EPW, Wire, Outlook, Hindu, TOI, Open and He has taught Media Policy at CCMG and been part of project that mapped the transition from analogue to digital cable operations. Caravan. We will be soon reading his book on Television tentatively titled- Inside television: Breaking News and beyond to be published by Westland later this year.

Venue: CCMG, Network Governance Lab.

Date: Thursday, 5th April, 2018

Time: 2:00 pm

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