

Journalists as life writers

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Abstract

Journalists by profession are storytellers across mediums in different languages. After years of practice, many journalists, in the past and even now, step into the world of writing books, particularly life narratives like biographies and autobiographies. One of the reasons to choose the genre is their expertise, as journalists often meet people and unravel their characteristics in the profile and interview formats. Another reason is their ability to do research and delve deep into people's lives. The present study picks up a few journalists at random who have authored biographies and autobiographies, and studies their approach to writing books and the craft of presentation keeping in mind their experience and expertise.

Keywords: Journalist, Biography, Autobiography, Life Narrative, Politicians

Introduction

Over the years, journalists from across the mediums have gone on to become authors of stories in fiction, historical, or life narrative genres. Their innate and inherent ability as storytellers, particularly life narratives, in short profile formats on pages of newspapers and periodicals at frequent intervals give them the much-needed edge over authors and writers who are non-journalists. A majority of English language journalists in India, go on to author books, mostly in the genre of life narratives like memoirs, biographies, and autobiographies

that depend on their skill sets and ability to dig into the lives of people, scavenge information, fact-check and give all those a story format that impress and inspire.

Though journalists are a class of professionals who necessarily author stories on a day-to-day basis, not all become authors of larger narratives like books. Among those who have gone on to become authors of books, many have opted for life narratives as fiction writing involves a completely different approach that harps on the power of imagination more than fact or real-life instances.

However, some journalists like Mark Twain, Neil Gaiman, Joan Didion or Charles Dickens, or Hemingway are exceptions who have excelled as novelists, and taken up writing books as profession.

When we study journalists taking up authoring books, it is important to emphasize the fact that they write and edit on a day-to-day basis, and are already deft in the craft. Even though journalistic writing is not necessarily creative, the people in the profession are trained to write in many specialized beats like finance, and politics, from entertainment to technology and from climate change to profiles or personality stories. Most of these writings are intended for a large target reader base and therefore, plainly written sans any frills and fanciful expressions.

When they take the plunge into the world of books as writers they are already into the systematic processing of collecting data, doing research, collating facts, cross-checking, finding sources, meeting deadlines, concise writing, and a sense of relating to the target readers – all of which contribute to discipline which is paramount to writers as professionals.

Meeting important personalities in everyday life gets journalists into the inner circles which normally remain out of bounds for others. People easily become their sources and fetching information becomes a little easier. Journalists also are trusted persons, known for their stories on the pages of newspapers and periodicals. As the fourth estate is considered

one of the four important pillars of democracy, the journalists have an added responsibility of feeding the masses with objective news, in the process earning the trust of millions of readers. So when these journalists write books on the life of important personalities or their own, the trust factor of readers remains the same or more. They identify with the author and his or her way of narrative.

Journalists are believed to be the harbinger of truth. Their side of the story is easily believable and this is what makes them a class apart from writers, who are not journalists.

The present study deals with journalists who have become life narrators and how they have dealt with personalities of importance. Though innumerable journalists have written books, categorically biographies and autobiographies, the present study focuses on four of them, each with a different take. Monobina Gupta who has authored *Didi, A Political Biography*, on the life of West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, Vir Sanghvi who wrote his life experiences in *A Rude Life – The Memoir*, Nalin Varma who has co-authored with former Bihar chief minister and RJD leader Lalu Prasad Yadav for his autobiography *Gopalganj to Raisina – My Political Journey* and Ajay Bose who has written *Behenji – A Political Biography of Mayawati*, the former chief minister of Uttar Pradesh and BSP leader.

While two of them Ajay Bose and Monobina Gupta were chosen for the study as political biographers, Nalin Verma was included for co-authoring an autobiography. Vir Sanghvi's autobiography was, on the other hand, included in the study to show how journalists write about their own life in the form of memoirs. All four writers have chosen to take the oft-trodden path of being plain and simple in the presentation style and language.

Monobina Gupta as the author of *Didi, A Political Biography* (2012), begins with details of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's upbringing in a lower-middle-class family, her political journey, and the twists and turns in Bengal politics during the Trinamool reign. She describes her character as paradoxical. While Gupta narrates her to be 'exasperating and

magnetic' by turns, she also throws light on her lower-middle-class upbringing which was the eyesore of the CPI-M members. Typically, Mamata remained out of the 'bhadralok' culture in Bengal, Gupta writes, this class of people is rarely seen in Bengal which was unacceptable to most. Gupta tags Didi as nothing close to the usual female politicians in India, who have made it to the top. She mentions in detail about Mamata getting unflinching support from Rajiv Gandhi but also narrates it to be too brief, which did not have a long-lasting impact on her career.

(Excerpt: While she is that rarity, a self-made female leader, Mamata vehemently denies any affinity to feminism. 'She is not a feminist. Mamata is just Mamata,' writer Mahasweta Devi told me. Director Arpita Ghosh believes that even though Mamata may deny any connection to feminism, she has indeed 'lived her life as a feminist'. She had no benevolent male patron (except, for a very brief stint, Rajiv Gandhi), no father, brother, husband, or partner prodding from the sidelines. Despite many references in her books to members of her large family—sisters-in-law, brothers, nieces, nephews—the Trinamool president believes that her party is her 'very own family'.)

On the whole, the book delves deep into the major happenings of the first Mamata era and how all of it contributed to making her stand out as a politician. From narrating the leader's fearlessness in the face of the 1990 attack on Hazra Road to instances of Singur, Nandigram, and Lalgarh land acquisition, bullets, and manhandling of women issues. Mamata stood firm on her ground and Gupta writes it all threadbare.

As the author, Gupta also writes on Mamata's typical 'black shawl' attire and terms it as a part of a culture of political theatrics. She does not refrain from comparing her to a political character in jatra politician who makes people laugh. Gupta draws a few parallels between Mamata and Lalu Prasad Yadav, both of whom, she says, belong to the 'comedic school of politics'.

Gupta is meticulous in narrating the way Mamata chooses to wear white sarees, “with a ‘thin’ colored border, with her hair pulled back into a bun and the rubber slippers.” But she also states that this was Mamata’s way of making people feel she was their own and thus does not shy away from mentioning her as manipulative – of the circumstances and the media. She would walk for kilometers meeting people when her counterparts take the air route to reach constituents.

Gupta writes about occasions when Mamata was seen shouting at the top of her voice at political opponents and critics while at the other, she would suddenly break into Rabindra Sangeet. She is also stated as a fearless leader who braved bullets. Particularly during a land-related disturbance in the state, she would be on the frontline and face all adversities. But the next moment, she would be someone who could be a painter and apply her paintbrush to the canvas. “She is emotional to a fault, yet ruthlessly dictatorial; a people’s person who could once have passed off as the queen of histrionics ...” is how Gupta describes Mamata’s characteristics. Gupta presents the two sides with ease.

During campaigning, she would face rain and sun with no complaints while many times she was seen campaigning in a wheelchair when she had met with an accident. She knew her moving among people with ‘blood, sweat, and tears’ would create a mark in the mind and hearts of the people. Gupta catches these characteristics of the leader in all details in the book.

Gupta also mentions her single status that made her opponents feel she does not fit into the mold of an admirable Bengali woman. During the days when she took over as the chief minister of West Bengal for the first time, the CPM, her major opponent then, Bengal’s babus were not at ease with the leader’s lack of feminine ways and communication abilities.

Mamata at one point in time advised actors Shah Rukh Khan and Amitabh Bachchan to settle down in Bengal and join her to fight the division of the country through her opponents and Gupta captures it well.

The book revolves around Mamata's early life, entry into politics, and six-month term in power. So Gupta made sure that just basing her performance on a few months would be preposterous to gauge her success as a successful leader. In such a situation, it was expected of Gupta to have come up with a second edition of the book, but that did not happen.

Gupta who has worked as a journalist with the Patriot, the Telegraph, Mail Today, and Indo-Asian News Service, went on to be associated with the Times of India and The Wire during the later part of her career.

In Behenji, A Political Biography of Mayawati, journalist Ajay Bose picks up smaller and bigger details of Mayawati, the Dalit woman who made a place of her own in one of the largest states in the country. With not much known about the person, Bose makes the readers understand Mayawati as an enigmatic personality – either because she interacts with very few people or does not want her personal life to come out. Methodically, Bose unravels the life of the leader and answers some valid questions about Mayawati, the person.

Bose as a political journalist is used to deal with leaders cutting across party lines. For someone who has covered politics as a mainstream journalist, he delves deep into the career of Mayawati as a politician too. Meeting political people now and then, Bose was considered someone who had been close to most political leaders. First hand, Bose can therefore be considered an insider to UP politics and people at the helm, including Mayawati. From his reporting days, he had seen her rise and fall in politics though her personal life remains a mystery. Not much has been unraveled about her lifestyle, insecurities, or ambitions, maybe because, she would not have wished to speak out or not many people are close to her who

would have helped with the information. He falls a little short of decoding her as a complete personality.

Bose's bent to portray Mayawati with a sense of admiration is understandable as he was one of those who have practiced journalism in the same state where she stood her ground and firmly at that. That could be the reason why questions like what was her state of mind when she left her father to be with Kanshi Ram, attacks on her, her beliefs about Kanshi Ram's trust in her, and deception by party members remain, remain unanswered.

There are two ways a journalist looks at a personality when writing the profile. Either one eulogizes to an extent that it feels like patronizing. The second way is to go guns after the personality focusing on the negatives only. There is, however, a third category that balances between the first and the second ways. Like journalists are asked to be objective in their reports, in books on the life of important personalities, most take one side more prominently than the other. Being close mostly is professional, as, in reporting politics, journalists get access to the politicians who are mostly unreachable while in power. Once that bond is created, it makes journalists a little wary of writing something that the politician does not want to be written.

Bose has glimpsed into facets like Mayawati preparing for IAS exams while working as a teacher in a school, her birth and upbringing in Delhi, her dislike for being ignored by parents when all focus was on the sons in the family, being chosen by mentor Kanshi Ram and entry into politics.

Bose documents the work chronologically and mentions every election she fought and the number of votes she got, and the rallies she addressed.

Bose scathingly however writes about Mayawati's craze for power and how "she was willing to do anything for it – make or break from any political party. She experimented with bureaucracy by shuffling people and got the title of Transfer Rani."

It is well known that she was nurturing her strengths to become the prime minister and was successful to some extent. The book narrates this aspect in fragments.

In some places, the author seems biased when he writes about the BJP as a loser. Strongly based in UP, the party was the second largest in the country yet Bose's representation is mostly in the negative. As a critic has stated, "But he states facts where a section of BJP was supporting Mayawati and another was opposing her. A fact that benefitted her and harmed BJP like anything."

Bose, in the third revised edition of Behenji, mentions the end of her career and renames the subtitle as 'The Rise and Fall of Mayawati. He faced backlash from Mayawati's supporters. But he wrote in straight terms that apart from the loss she faced in back-to-back elections and changing equations in UP politics, the BSP or its leader Mayawati could no way stand good for a long time.

Bose also writes about many factors that have contributed to the fading of the 'Behenji phenomenon'. While political pundits were busy writing obituaries of Mayawati's political career after she lost power to her bitter rival Mulayam Singh Yadav in 2003, Bose commenced his research on what he calls the 'most intriguing political phenomenon of the times'. "I started researching for the book after Mayawati's third regime collapsed in 2003, now many of the same people who had then written her off are calling her the most promising politician and I am being commended for the 'timing' of my book," Bose says in an interview.

On what he found most remarkable about the Mayawati phenomenon, Bose mentions the fact that her party has risen on the back of mobilization at the grassroots level and not by gaining the advantage of something violent happening in society.

"The most remarkable thing about her ascent is that she is not riding on any conflagration, in that it doesn't pose any threat to our society," Bose says, explaining that

earlier both Congress and BJP, have stormed to power as a result of some major upheaval in society, the former in 1984 and the latter in 1992.

In the first edition, Bose mostly deals with the beginning of the Mayawati era, from the beginning to her rise, and how she made an impression. The second written after Mayawati's loss in the 2012 election, dealt with the miscalculation she did in the hope of resurrection. The third or the final edition analyzed all parts – all aspects of the leader who came from a humble background, worked hard to make a place, got the right direction to take the world head-on, and then the reasons for her fall and in doing all the editions. Bose's journalistic prowess scores high in the book and his assessment of the iconic Dalit leader is praiseworthy.

(An excerpt: But it soon became clear at the hurriedly called press conference that Mayawati had not come to concede defeat but to raise grave allegations of voting fraud against the BJP government at the Centre. Her face was impassive but one could sense the hysteria as she demanded that the polls be countermanded because the electronic voting machines (EVMs) had been tampered and manipulated with to gift the BJP a record landslide majority).

Ajoy Bose has been regarded as an expert on Mayawati and her Dalit politics. In his 40 years of career in various media houses, he has been a columnist and television commentator and appears on major channels as an expert. He started with the Patriot in the 1970s and then became a part of Sunday magazine. He also started the Delhi edition of The Sunday Observer and then joined the Pioneer newspaper where he became the Executive Editor. He was also an India correspondent of the Guardian, London from 1978 to 1996 and later the New Delhi representative for the Khaleej Times, Dubai. He has broadcast extensively on the BBC, Voice of America, and Radio Netherlands. Ajoy Bose has been the

co-author of two books: *For Reasons of State: Delhi Under Emergency* and *Shah Commission Begins*."

As we go to the next journalist Nalin Verma who wrote *Lalu Prasad Yadav's life in Gopalganj to Raisina* (2019) when the leader was behind bars, we get to know that it is a combination of biography and autobiography where both the writer and the 'protagonist' are co-authors.

The meteoric rise of Yadav from the poverty of Gopalganj to the riches of becoming a politician to the leader of a party like RJD. Verma extensively covered all aspects of the leader, eulogized him, and critiqued him too. He has dealt with the personality of someone who is a popular leader and interesting. Co-writing the life narrative, Verma spices up every part of the book with subtle doses of humor and terms him as the only politician of this specialty to laugh at himself.

Gopalganj to Raisina is mostly about the leader's political journey and is far from a hagiographic account of Yadav. Some book analysts have said, "The memoir takes a predictable route, scarcely interjected by insights into anything other than Yadav's politics."

"Be it getting yellow and red cards in football games to 'avenge foul play' against his teammates, or his first ever words to Rabri: 'I am the leader of a big movement going on in Bihar'" is how Verma explains the leader's characteristics.

Verma also narrates about Lalulal's admiration for his mentor Jai Prakash Narayan and cites an instance where Yadav goes on to explain to him that 'Babuji, I drink toddy at times because I am from a village background where toddy-drinking is common,' he says.

Verma also mentions Yadav admitting that he and Nitish Kumar kept loitering around the PMO to be noticed for ministerial roles. The narration laced with elements of fun comes as a stellar example of storytelling, which necessarily binds a reader to anything in print or visual media.

Every aspect of the persona is meticulously woven like Yadav's claim that he arrested LK Advani on the way to Ayodhya during his rath yatra or stating to Advani that 'Maine ma aur bhainsdono ka doodhpiya' seem untrue yet believable coming from Yadav himself. There are times when the book seems a little out of context.

There is no exceptionality in the book that has been written. But it certainly presents Lalu Yadav, as the person he is in real life. Be it as a person or politician, Yadav was different from fitting any mold and carved his character and this is what readers get to read. The book says his personality was 'eternally intriguing, perplexing and unmissable'. But contextually speaking, journalists have a habit of getting too close to the people they talk to and meet at intervals. Lalu sure was a person who people liked to see on television or read about in newspapers but how many would like to read him as a person in a book is doubtful. So Verma chose the subject only because of his affinity to Yadav.

What touches most about the book is the detailed analysis of life in backward classes and the process through which Lohia and JP wrote the narrative during their tenure in backward Bihar to bring in social justice and social engineering which they made sure affected Yadav to plunge into politics.

As Lalu Prasad Yadav himself is the co-author, he adds to the drama of explaining the story in a rags-to-riches format by touching upon his childhood at college in Patna in detail. Outright and truthful narration adds to the strength of the book as in many autobiographies, authors tend to hide some information. Here however Lalu Yadav is unabashed about writing all the things that a lay reader would want to know about the leader.

Interestingly, Lalu's narration about his Patna University Students' Union days has interesting anecdotes. In those days, Union Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad, the BJP's candidate from Patna Sahib, and Deputy Chief Minister of Bihar Sushil Kumar Modi were together at Patna University. Jayaprakash Narayan or JP had then called for prohibition in the

name of “total revolution”. Though the ideologies of Yadav and the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) leaders Prasad and Modi were poles apart, the two leaders, as per Yadav’s description, complained to JP that he had consumed liquor and collected money. So JP pulled him up. Yadav accepts to have been consuming toddy at times but was not someone to collect money. JP let him go but not without warning him about stopping to smoke or drinking alcohol.

The narration about Yadav getting then BJP president L.K. Advani arrested in Samastipur during Advani's 1990 rath yatra is another interesting read. The infamous fodder scam from the Lalu perspective and the birth of Rashtriya Janata Dal have been dealt with in detail. The book not only throws light into the life of the leader but on the then political atmosphere with equal strength.

How much ever the fodder scam damaged his reputation, Yadav, as Verma writes, seemed always consumed in happiness and contentment. His son was also the reason Lalu felt all is well even when he was in jail.

Verma as a political journalist for years and knowing Lalu well, agreed to co-author the book with Lalu. The openness between the two seems natural given their close connection for years.

Despite being embroiled in scams and allegations of corruption, Lalu Yadav, for a common man, was never looked down upon. He could draw people, however, unconnected one was. His no-holds-barred personality was endearing and Verma rightly terms him an undiluted politician. “He has a charm, a rustic element, and earthiness. When you meet him, he will ask you things like how old are you, when are you getting married, etc. He is a very clear-hearted person.”

Verma acknowledges the leader as helpful. “He genuinely wants to help the poor. He is pained whenever he sees a poor man in tatters. He might have helped lakhs and thousands

of people. See, if Lalu Prasad comes here now, it does not matter if he is in jail or if he is convicted, thousands of people will gather around him. People say that whenever he gives speeches, it makes them laugh. That happens because of his individual connection with the people.”

This Varma stated in an interview. Journalists tend to get close to people they interview and need as sources for their professional requirements. In the process, there are issues of getting biased toward some people and also to their stories. So it is natural that Varma’s association with Lalu Yadav might have made his writings a little skewed but that has not let him not speak about Yadav’s weaknesses.

“He is a ray of hope and will continue to be, in whatever situation it is. One can’t just shackle his idea,” Varma says.

Nalin Verma is a veteran journalist who has worked in senior editorial positions with The Telegraph and The Statesman. He started his career with Hindustan Times in the late 1980s. He has written extensively on society, politics, and governance in Bihar for over three decades. Of late, he has shifted to teaching and research and is a visiting faculty at many institutions of mass communications in India. His collection of Bihar folktales, *The Greatest Folktales from Bihar*, is published by Rupa, India.

Vir Sanghvi’s biography *A Rude Life* (2021), reflects on his own life albeit with a difference from what other journalists have done in their memoirs. While many editor’s biographies often smack of complaints against owners of media houses, Sanghvi’s career in journalism seems to have been spent on a bed of roses.

In other words, the biography seems to be more about a happy and successful journalist, which is not so for most others of the ilk. His only reference to dissatisfaction with the employers or owners is about ABP’s Aveek Sarkar in issues of business strategy.

In 1988 Sanghvi was the editor of a magazine, the Calcutta Weekly Sunday, and earlier than that he was the youngest magazine editor. He also worked in Bombay-based monthly, Imprint. With the limitations of a bright future in journalism in India, Sanghvi's book surely looks like a ready reckoner on how to make a career in journalism and be successful.

He has written about arts, food to literature, and travel. But these beats in a magazine termed as soft news never became impediments in the road to his success as a most important political correspondent as well. The same however does not hold good for the journalists across mediums who rue about being neglected for covering soft beats.

He writes about a plethora of things – from his career details to national politics from 1980 onwards that he met in his lifetime.

Most of the book is plain and flat prose style. Pranab Mukherjee “was a nice man, with a droll sense of humor”. “A very nice man answered the phone.” “I went out to London as much as I could, saw lots of rock concerts, and had a good time.” “The best thing Oxford had to offer was a chance to pit my wits against great minds.” The writing, however, is uninteresting.

Despite any amount of criticism, Vir Sanghvi in his book defines an era of journalism in India's English-language media – from the Emergency to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Sanghvi writes on the decline of the press from “editoritis” (one who cannot face life as ordinary citizens. They try to cling to power somehow.) He certainly makes a point that for him editoritis was never acceptable and he remained free of pomposity or the illusion of relevance. But critics of the book and people who know him closely attribute “Delhi Syndrome” to him.

This syndrome is about journalists' affinity to subjects of Delhi only and nothing beyond that.

Sanghvi has narrated about his closeness to Rajiv and later Sonia Gandhi, also with the likes of Madhavrao Scindia, and Atal Bihari.

Though a memoir is always not an autobiography because it gives the author the independence to choose what he may allow the readers to read. In fact, at places, a reader feels, the story is not necessarily about Sanghvi the journalist but a tale of emerging India over the years. Glimpses into his parents' marriage and the socio-cultural-political milieu in the country can be understood from certain parts of the book.

Characters are replete in the book though a few like his 'godfather' the "Oxford don" who helped him pursue education in London seem quite realistic.

Sanghvi mentions Raj Kapoor, who was making the iconic Satyam Shivam Sundaram, was telling him, "Take a stone," he said. 'It is just a stone. But put some religious markings on it and it becomes God. (I assume he meant a Shiv Ling.) It is how you see things that matter. You hear a beautiful voice. But only later do you discover that it comes from an ugly girl...' He paused. 'Take out the thing about an ugly girl,' he commanded. 'Lata will get upset.'"

A Rude Life by Vir Sanghvi is much more than a memoir. His stature as a journalist helps him have contacts and those who have worked for him. His first big story was the result of his interview with Giani Zail on his relationship with PM Rajiv Gandhi. He also had a rare in-flight opportunity to interview Rajiv Gandhi. And both the incident are mentioned in the book

Straddling both print and broadcast, Sanghvi presents wannabe journalists to tread a path that is not lesser known.

The memoir reads through as a combination of personal life details, political colors of then India, its leaders, celebrities, and interactions through generously sprinkled doses of humor, pun, and candor. But as is with all other forms of life narratives, his account in the

form of a memoir does not harp much on failures or the negative aspects of a human as much as on the celebration of who he is as a person, a journalist, and a successful professional.

Conclusion, limitations and further scope of research

After a study of all the life narratives chosen for the paper, it came to the fore that when it comes to profiling important personalities, journalists excel in writing books as much as they do in their field of expertise at media houses.

In the case of Didi and Behenji, both the journalist-authors, Gupta and Bose have tried to delve deep into the lives of Mamata Banerjee and Mayawati, who have occupied important places in their respective states. Normally, people assuming charge of the highest offices are difficult to be studied as they maintain certain privacy when it comes to their personal life.

However, since life narratives necessarily focus on all aspects of a personality, those from their careers are already in the public space. But finding details of their childhood to youth to adulthood throws a big challenge. Since both the authors have tactfully mentioned on the covers of the books as ‘political biographies’, they benefit from keeping the writing mostly focused on their subjects’ careers.

That does not take away the appreciation the authors deserve for bringing up some important and unknown facets of the lives of the leaders and interestingly presenting them. Both the authors being political reporters, had close connections with their subjects much before they wrote the biographies, and that must have made churning out information a little swift and easy.

Similarly in Nalin Verma’s portrayal of Lalu Yadav, he gets the advantage of being the co-author which means, most of the facts were told by the leader himself and Verma presented them with his add-ons. Coming from the personality himself, the need for research

becomes less tasking. Autobiography as a life narrative is therefore less weighty a work than a biography.

Even then, there are many parts in the book that keeps Yadav away and makes Verma delve into the life of the leader from his standpoint, which supplements the narrative and adds life to the description. He too was close to Yadav in a way that the leader trusted him to be a co-author. The onus of right and wrong in co-authoring autobiographies lies mostly on the lead author as he or she drives the narrative.

In the case of Vir Sanghvi's memoir, he is selective and safe. He has the liberty to cut, add and inflate or deflate parts of his life events as he wants. Therefore, it is important to know whether journalists are as truthful in their autobiography as in their profession of reporting on issues affecting people in general. Sanghvi seems to make an impression that his life is an open book but not every reader would be privy to what he has been secretive about. Unlike biography, autobiography has the freedom to pick and choose. Biography becomes selective when it is authorized only.

A comparison of the journalists as authors of life narratives reflects their plain style of writing, sans any frills of creativity. Doses of humor and pun do exist in most books, but given their training in mass communication, most journalists have written in the most simple and straight manner.

Since not much research has been done on Indian journalists who are also life narrators as authors of books, there are a vast number of writings that could not be brought under the purview of the present study.

From writing profiles and doing interviews in newspapers and periodicals, journalists always have been into the trade of collecting facts and details about the personalities they deal with as per professional requirements. But their association with personalities, who later

become the protagonists of their life narratives or biographies could make them prone to becoming biased. Finding whether the descriptions and narrations are away from any personal attachments with the personalities they write about could make another interesting study.

Case studies of biographies, autobiographies, memoirs, and letters could vary in their characteristics. A comparison can throw light on characteristics of each form.

Journalists who usually write political commentaries, editorials, and news stories have a unique style of writing. But when they become authors of life narratives, their styles differ from one another and also from authors who are not journalists. Studying each of the styles – from hardcore authors and journalist-turned-authors and a comparative analysis could be important to find the techniques each follow.

Journalists writing in other Indian languages or those from other countries and their life narrations would also bring in fresh elements in the research in life writings.

Journalism is a profession that is based on the premise of truth. It is about finding facts, verifying those, and communicating to thousands of people through many mediums. Finding out requires a variety of skills because those in power often prefer that journalists know only so much as they want them to. But do life narratives written by journalists stick to facts is a question that can be another area of research.

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Conflict of Interest Policy

Kasturi Ray declares that they have no conflicts of interest related to this research.

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