

How To Draft Fact-Finding Report?



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How To Draft Fact-Finding Report?

A fact-finding report is a written record of the truth about an incident. It clearly explains when, where, and how the incident happened, and who was involved. This report is not based on hearsay, but on solid evidence and witness accounts.

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What Is Fact-Finding Report?

A Written Report

A documentation of incident / crime

Document – based on solid evidence and witnesses

It is not a document of personal opinions or hearsay

Process of Fact-Finding Report

Selecting the incident or issue

Visiting the place of incident/crime and conducting an inquiry

Speaking with the victim, their family, & members of the community

Collecting necessary documents, photos, and government records

Cross-checking the information gathered from different sources

Writing down the findings clearly and in order

Importance & Power Of Fact-Finding Report

In our society, especially in the case of marginalized communities, incidents are often suppressed or distorted. Many times, the police either refuse to register an FIR or file one in a way that hides the whole truth. In such situations, fact-finding becomes a tool to document the truth - in the voice of the victim and the community, supported by evidence. This report takes the form of a strong record, which cannot be ignored.

It is also a powerful tool because it shifts the balance of power. Normally, the "official" version of an incident is shaped by police reports, administrative statements, or media coverage - many of which may be incomplete, biased, or outright false. A well-prepared fact-finding report challenges these narratives by presenting verified evidence from the ground. This forces authorities, journalists, and the public to pay attention to the real story, rather than accepting the version given by those in power.

This record can then be used to support legal cases, demand compensation under laws like the SC/ST (PoA) Act, and challenge false claims made by perpetrators or officials, and hold officials accountable when they fail to perform their duties.

Importance & Power Of Fact-Finding Report

Beyond its legal value, fact-finding is a tool of activism. It brings together community members, activists, lawyers, and sometimes journalists to collectively investigate the truth. This process itself builds awareness and unity within the community, as people learn to identify violations, ask the right questions, and demand accountability. When shared publicly, fact-finding reports can create pressure on the government, influence policy debates, and inspire solidarity from other movements.

Historically, activists, journalists, & people's organisations have used fact-finding reports to expose incidents of caste violence, custodial deaths, sexual violence, & other forms of injustice. For example, reports prepared after major caste atrocities such as the Tsundur massacre (1991) not only documented the specific events but also highlighted patterns of systemic discrimination, leading to greater public awareness & action. Even at the local level, smaller fact-finding reports by grassroots groups have helped families secure delayed compensation, get FIRs registered, or push for stricter action against perpetrators. In this way, fact-finding is not just about collecting information - it is about transforming truth into a form that can be used to fight for justice.

Importance & Power Of Fact-Finding Report

**Unbiased,
reliable record**

**Ensures
transparency &
accountability**

**Helps lawyers,
journalists, and officials
understand the reality**

**Strengthens the
community's voice
through truth**

**An instrument of
movement/activism**

Who Can Do Fact-Finding Report?



- *It is imperative that the individual undertaking fact-finding acts with integrity, remains free from bias, and gives utmost consideration to the safety and dignity of the victim and witnesses.*
- *With appropriate training & adequate preparation, even ordinary individuals can participate in this process and amplify both their own voice and that of their community.*
- *If you are an ordinary citizen, you may enhance the credibility of your fact-finding report by associating with a social activist, social worker, lawyer, doctor, organization, or collective*

Format Of Fact-Finding Report

PART 1

Write Brief Description of the incident:

Time, date, month, incident year, and brief details - details of victim/survivor, and the accused person?

Write Context of the Incident

(In this section, provide information about the demographics of the area and the socio-geographical, political, and historical context of the incident location.)

(This section should explain to the reader the significance and seriousness of the incident. It is usually written after collecting and understanding the preliminary information. If possible, mention whether similar incidents have occurred in the area before, or if the region is socio-economically backward. During fact-finding, if there were any prior disputes related to "land" or "labour" at an individual or community level, that should also be noted.)

(If possible, attach a map of the village or area where the incident took place. If a map is not available, include some collected photographs of the village & houses.)

PART 2

Write the Socio-economic profile of the immediate family of the victim/survivor

(In this section, write the names and ages of all family members, their social and economic status, the number of earning members and dependents, the type of house they live in (kutcha house or pucca house), employment, ownership of land or property, and citizenship details. Record all this information here.)

PART 3

Detailed description of the incident

(In this section, write the details of the incident carefully and thoroughly — remember: only record the information provided by the victim, their family, and the villagers, and ensure that it matches the information written in the FIR. If the information given by the family and villagers does not match the FIR, note the differences only if the family confidently asserts that the FIR has been recorded incorrectly.

Before finalizing this section, it is important to consult a lawyer, either one working on the case or someone who has a clear understanding of the matter.)

Be sure to record the statements of the following persons in this section –

- *Of all the victim's family members*
- *Of eyewitnesses from the village, neighborhood, or settlement (and, if possible, video recordings as well)*

Note: All information collected regarding the incident must be verified and confirmed as accurate before being documented

PART 4

Role of Media and NGO/Organization

In this section, provide details if the incident has been covered in any news reports. Also, include information about any NGO/organization that provided help or support during this time.

- 1. Include the link to the news or media coverage in this section.*
- 2. Record the testimonies of NGO/organization members here as well*

PART 5

Role of Investigating Agencies and Legal Teams

(Based on the initial findings and people's testimonies, this section should describe the role of the investigating agencies and the law.)

- Testimonies of the family and villagers regarding the role of the police*
- Statements made by police officers or staff about the incident*
- Concerns or questions raised by the family, the fact-finding team, and other key persons*

(These questions can help in understanding what aspects need to be considered during the investigation and what should later be included in the recommendations.)

PART 6

In this section, write a complete account of the investigation that has taken place in the incident so far

- 1. Access to Justice: For example, if the police have shown negligence in this case, it is important to bring it to light - so that such incidents can be prevented in the future and recommendations can be made accordingly.*
- 2. Investigation and FIR: What investigation has been carried out so far, and whether an FIR has been registered or not.*
- 3. Procedures: What has been recorded in the documents, and what steps have been taken so far.*
- 4. Current Status: Where the case stands at present and what the current situation is.*

PART 7

Key issues in this case that warrant attention.

Write about how the case has been investigated and how the court hearings have taken place. If there are any suggestions for the government or the community, or if the community has made any demands to the government, those can also be included here (if applicable).

PART 8

This section should record any crucial observations, if available, that may assist in guiding the course of the investigation.

Any information that may be difficult to verify at this stage but could prove useful for subsequent investigations by social or governmental bodies should also be documented. However, care must be taken not to include rumors, unfounded assertions, or false information, as these may misdirect the investigation.

PART 9

Recommendations or Charter of Demands

(This section is optional; however, if such details are available, they must be recorded. It constitutes a significant part of the report, and documenting it is regarded as a good practice.)

PART 10

Annexed Documents – gathered by the fact-finding team.

(This part may subsequently serve as both a knowledge resource and a body of evidence, which makes its documentation essential.)

Things To Keep In Mind While Conducting Fact-Finding

1. Account of the Incident (from the family's perspective)

- *Gather information from the closest family members, community witnesses, and local people about what actually happened.*
- *Understand the full timeline - when the incident occurred and at what time.*
- *It is also important to ask how each family member came to know about it.*
- *From where is the information being received?*
- *Does the information appear reliable, or can it be further strengthened by collecting more evidence?*

2. Legal Details (from the family's perspective)

- *FIR: Was an FIR registered? Does the family have a copy of it? Does the family agree with what has been written in the FIR? Do the charges in the FIR correspond accurately to the incident?*
- *Post-mortem: Was a post-mortem conducted? Was it done by a special medical team (panel)? Were photographs taken or a video recorded of it?*
- *Other Investigation: Have the statements of family members and witnesses been recorded? Was there any recovery or seizure of items?*

2. Legal Details (from the family's perspective)

- *Lawyer: Does the family have a lawyer? If yes, are they satisfied with the lawyer's assistance? Has the lawyer advised them on what steps to take next?*
- *Crime Scene: Was the place of incident sealed or secured? If yes, are there photographs or official documents available as proof?*
- *Additional Evidence or Witnesses: If the family believes there are other witnesses or pieces of evidence that could help the case, these must be collected and properly recorded in written form.*

3. Socio-Economic Status of the Victim/Survivor and Family

- *Document the age of family members, their occupations, who depends on whom, the condition of their house, their main sources of livelihood, annual income, and whether they own any land. In addition, one must understand the family's vulnerabilities—for example, issues related to health, employment, education, or the need for legal assistance.*
- *Gather information about the accused: their occupation, caste, level of influence, and whether they have the power to obstruct or distort the legal process. Details such as where the accused lives & the distance from the victim's family should also be noted.*

4. Contact Information:

- *Family members' names, phone numbers, and address (if necessary).*
- *Name and contact details of the lawyer.*
- *Details of others involved in or supporting the case - such as community members, social workers, or local leaders - should also be recorded.*

5. Status of Compensation:

- *Has the family been informed about compensation? Has any process been initiated to secure it?*

6. Any prior conflict between the victim and the accused (if any)?

- *Was there any previous dispute, enmity, or ongoing hostility between the victim and the accused?*
- *Have there been earlier incidents of fights, land disputes, or any criminal cases between them within the village or community?*

7. Threats or Intimidation:

- *Has the victim's family been threatened or intimidated? If yes, by whom?*
- *Are they receiving any support from their neighbors or the community?*

8. Role of the Police:

- *What is the family's opinion about the actions taken by the police? And what did the fact-finding team observe or understand about it?*

9. Any Other Party or Complication

- *Is there any other perspective or rumor circulating in the village or media about this case that is creating suspicion or confusion?*

10. Family's Demands:

- *Does the family only want to seek compensation, or do they want both compensation and justice? Are they prepared to pursue a long legal battle if necessary?*

11. Opinion of the Villagers:

- *What are the villagers, neighbors, and other community members saying about the incident?*

12. Further Investigation or Necessary Steps:

- *If, due to time constraints, some investigations or documents could not be completed, they should be carried out later so that they can be useful for the police or for documentation purposes in the future.*



ACTION RESEARCH &
RESOURCE CENTRE

At present, our work focuses on identity-based discrimination and violence. We believe that all incidents of individual violence and discrimination are rooted in the structural and functional realities of society, and when persons/communities affected by systemic oppression lead the struggle for change, the Constitution can become a site of transformative justice.

We adopt a grassroots-informed, interdisciplinary approach where action informs research and research informs action. Through legal interventions, training, research, and advocacy, we work together with community-based organizations as well as victims of systemic and identity-based violence to strengthen their efforts for justice, dignity, and systemic accountability.

This booklet explains how to prepare a fact-finding report. It has been published in Hindi by the Part III Foundation. Its purpose is to help people understand what a fact-finding report is, why it is important, who can prepare it, and the correct way to make it. It clearly states that such reports are not based on rumors or assumptions, but on actual evidence, testimonies, and documentation.

Part III has offices in New Delhi and Patna. For more information about our work, please visit our website: www.part-three.org