

**B.A. MASS COMMUNICATION  
2<sup>nd</sup> SEMESTER**

**BAMC-108**

**NEWS REPORTING**



**Directorate of Distance Education  
Guru Jambheshwar University of Science & Technology,  
HISAR-125001**

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### **LESSON-1**

#### **NEWS: MEANING, DEFINATION &NATURE**

## **OBJECTIVE:**

The objectives of a chapter on "News: Meaning, Definition and Nature" may include:

- **Defining the concept of news:** The chapter will aim to provide a clear and concise definition of what news is and what it encompasses. This would involve discussing the different elements that make up news, such as timeliness, relevance, impact, and human interest.
- **Discussing the purpose of news:** The chapter will explore why news is important and what role it plays in society. This would involve examining the various functions that news serves, such as providing information, shaping public opinion, and holding those in power accountable.
- **Examining the nature of news:** The chapter will analyse the characteristics of news, such as its ephemerality, objectivity, and subjectivity. This would involve discussing how news is created, selected, and presented to the audience, as well as the different types of news media that exist.
- **Highlighting the challenges of producing and consuming news:** The chapter will identify some of the key challenges that journalists and news consumers face in today's media landscape. This would involve discussing issues such as fake news, media bias, information overload, and the impact of new technologies on news production and consumption.
- **Exploring the future of news:** The chapter will speculate on the future of news and how it might evolve in the coming years. This would involve examining trends such as the rise of digital media, the increasing importance of social media, and the changing nature of news consumption habits.

## **INTRODUCTION:**

Human beings are always keen to know something new, rare, unique, exceptional, matchless, interesting. etc. They are curious and inquisitive by nature. They are always looking for information about anything and everything that interests and attracts them. This has been over the ages gone by and time immemorial. Most of the medium of mass communication have by and large been instrumental in satisfying the curiosities of human beings. Newspapers, magazines, books, internet, radio, television and several other mass media have been endeavouring to gather information and disseminate them to the people looking for such information. The most important need that media fulfil is of providing news—latest news from the place one is located, news of region, news of nation and of course of the world. It is hence clear that the most important input that anyone is looking from a mass medium. But what is meant by news? For that we must understand the concept, meaning, definitions and an overview of news

## **INGREDIENTS OF NEWS:**

News has to be written, presented or broadcast in such a manner or style that the reader, listener or viewer gets the most important information in a shortest possible span of time, in minimum words, without using superfluous, unnecessary and redundant words. It is often said that a news reporter should have “a nose for news”. They may have their whims and fancies of ‘smelling’, ‘sensing’, or recognising the news, but there are certain established and well-known factors and ingredients which if present in the event or happening that have taken place, which for sure would be considered raising the event, happening, occurrence to the pedestals of a standard ‘news’ story. Here are some of the most important ones: Timeliness, proximity, prominence, dimension, consequence, conflict, empathy, adventure and weather, among others.

**Timeliness:** The time of occurrence of an event is the most important element of a news story. People want to know about the event as quickly as possible. Report of an event that happened yesterday or the day before yesterday is generally deemed stale and often not considered fit for publication, unless it is of extra ordinary nature, or extremely significant in some manner So, the time of the event's occurrence is immensely crucial for it to be considered news. News may cease to be news after 24 or even after 12 hours in today's race against time and the age of Internet and smartphones. Readers, listeners or viewers now a day, very well recognise the immediacy and perishability as profusely vital factors in 'news fall' and news reporting. It is said that stale news is abhorred as stale bread

**Proximity:** Closeness or nearness of an event or an incident to the audience has tremendous importance for reporters as well as for a newspaper. Proximity could be geographical or relevance to the audience. The more 'local' or closer the site where the event took place, the greater will be its importance to be termed as news. To take an example, Kolkata, June 4 - The Kolkatans were taken aback by a series of blasts that took place in the local Park Street claiming 15 lives on Monday evening. This story would naturally be on front page in all the local newspapers, but may be relegated to a remote corner of the inside pages by the papers in Jammu, Bhopal, Guwahati, Surat, Madurai or Chandigarh. A local angle to the news has greater appeal and greater relevance due to the fact that the victims may be known to the newspaper staff and could be its readers, buyers, and advertisers or people living close to the newspaper office

**Prominence:** If a well-known personality happens to be involved in the event, it will invariably make news. For example, if the prime minister strains his ankle while walking to the car, or a celebrity has a bathroom fall, it makes news. The important fact is that the famous, the infamous and even the eccentric command a special appeal for audiences. This is also due to the fact that high profile families enjoy privacy and often make news for any pleasant or unpleasant event.

**Dimension:** The number of people involved or affected or losses that occur in terms of huge money by an event makes news. For example, if 500 or more people die in an earthquake in Manila, the Philippines, it makes news even in India as human lives are precious wherever these are lost. But if heavy rains flood low-lying areas in Mumbai or Patna, and 23 people are killed, and four high-rise buildings collapse, it makes much bigger news in India, and automatically gets front page treatment, possibly with tell-tale photographs from the scene. Similarly, if in a fire in Vadodra property worth lakhs is destroyed and several deaths are reported, that too will need front page featuring. Here, we see the number of people though less, but the proximity factor comes in making the news 'local', requiring a different, and serious way of presentation in the newspaper

**Impact:** If the U.S. president or British prime minister announces his plans to sanction military aid to Pakistan, it's bound to impact the Indo-US or IndoBritish ties, and also Indo-Pak relations. Similarly, if the Union Government increases income tax in its annual budget, or levies a tax on purchase of cars, that make all-India news. Or, if the chief minister of a state in India abolishes state grants for the private-aided schools, the children of lower middle class or poor parents availing fee concession may be hit adversely as the consequence of the new policy, thus, it will make big news for all citizens of that state

**Human Interest:** Quite often, newspaper reporters come across situations, which induce emotions of mercy or sentiments or sympathy. For example, if a visually-challenged person performs some daring act, such as scaling Mount Everest, or a hearing-challenged boy scores a meritorious position in a competitive examination, these are human interest stories. Again, if a bicycle rickshaw puller's son gets selected in IIM / IIT admission test, or a primary school teacher's daughter finds herself in the civil services merit list, we call these as human-interest stories. You may recall the incident when a four-year-old child by the name of Prince, fell in a way-side 30-foot-deep well some years ago; the rescue work by the army personnel was put

out live on many television channels. This was a live human-interest story which attracted the interest of viewers all over India for many hours, till the rescue act was completed

**Conflict:** Conflict of any type – political, social, cultural, communal, among some sections of society, difference of opinion among two or more political parties, conflict among some warring groups, or more of such conflicts always make news. As you would have seen those differences between the Bhartiya Janata Party and the Communist Party (Marxist) and the Indian National Congress on the Indo-US nuclear deal made news in India for several months. You will find that many more such issues figure in newspapers as news very often

**Adventure:** As we mentioned earlier, tackling difficult-to-handle tasks easily or smoothly or daringly by disabled individuals always make news anywhere. When a 70-year-old Japanese woman attempted to scale the Mount Everest, the highest mountain peak in the world, and succeeded, it made international news. This was a case of adventure appearing as front-page banner headline in Japan, besides making news in many other countries

**Novelty:** Novel and rare incidents make news. When, for example, an American woman gave birth to eight children, each weighing about 200 grams, and they all survived, it made world news. Again, when an eight-year-old boy in Orissa competed in a marathon race with grown-ups, and won it, that became a novel event to be deemed as news.

**Empathy:** Often, several events mirroring tragedy, humour, oddity, victory, failure take place now and then in our life. Quite a few of these happenings attract our concern or empathy: an old-age couple losing all its children in fire, flood, accident; a child falling off from the arms of its mother in a moving bus/train and getting crushed under its wheels – all make news. For, all human hearts go out in sympathy for the loved ones so affected

**Weather / Climate / Environment:** Weather – extreme heat, cold, rain, storm, pollution affects all of us; and usually bad weather affects us badly. Remember how the Indian Ocean tsunami made news all over the world in so many countries, including India, which killed hundreds of men, women, children, and wreaked unusual, unimaginable losses of property, animals and marine life. For months together, this was considered as an extra ordinary change in weather, and was forecast to be a prodigious problem of environment for all time to come across the globe. Climatic changes, different aspects of environment degradation, pollution as well as efforts towards environment conservation make news. Given above are some of the most important elements, which often make news. However, there are always occasions when we find new situations arising and figuring as eminent news stories in the media all over the world.

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#### **NEWS:**

News is details of information, description, depiction, delineation, narration statement and occurrence which is recent new, fresh or unknown. Broadly speaking, news is anything that report of an event that has just taken place.

George Hough again adds and remarks, "News is also whatever people think. What a reporter or an editor finds interesting or exciting or important for the people. "Hence, news is something that interests, excites or concerns people"

## **MEANING OF NEWS:**

When you ask ten newsmen to tell you the meaning of a news, you are most likely to get eleven meanings of news. News is in fact one of the most known items in today's world. All those who understand a language and who have access to a mass media, understands the meaning of a news. As a matter of fact, the concept of news was born when man was born and shall survive as long as man survives. Hence, it must have existed even before the beginning of the era of mass media. You may find relics of a old system in a remote of the remotest village where people exchange local news during market hours just by interacting with each other. When two brothers meet after sometime, they often share useful information which may be described as personal news. Similarly, when two friends or relatives write letter to each other it may be described as news by them and for them. This type of news sharing has been there since time immemorial. We all agree to the point that death makes an important news. And the importance of this news relates to the importance of the person. Pranab Mukherjee, veteran congress leader and former President of the Republic of India died on August 31 at the age of 84. It was a big news. This news was important due to the importance of Pranab Da. But even an ordinary death of a person will make news at least for those who know him and are related to him. It may not be published in a newspaper or any other media, but it will be definitely a news for some people. Hence, we may conclude here that the concept of news in our society is as old as the recognition of death as an event and its communication to those whom the event would affect.

Before the advent of mass media, news was communicated by word of mouth. Though the concept of news is as old as mankind, yet the word "News" is relatively recent in its origin. In English, it appeared as "news" in 1423, "new yes" in 1485 and evolved to "news" in 1523. But it was only after 1550 that it became "news".

The meaning of news is often described as the representations of the four directions—North, East, West and South. News may come from any of these directions. However, we have ten directions and as we see every day all events do not make news. Only relevant, concerning, important and interesting events make news. Moreover, an event itself is not news—it becomes news if and only if its account is available. Thus, Sushant Singh Rajput's death made a big news several weeks after the events. History is also an account of several case studies and important events. But it pertains primarily to the past events. News is nothing but timely and current history. Today's newspapers will be the source material for the historians of tomorrow as today's historians consult newspapers of yesterdays in the archives. What is occurring today may be recorded in the history. But its account which newspapers or media give now is news because of its news worthiness. Not only events but opinions also make news. Opinion of the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi about world peace and terrorism makes news of international order. The opinion of the man on the street about the Union Budget or about their favourite leaders or stars makes news. Coverage and analysis of Indian Prime Minister or President in the foreign newspapers will make important news in India. What the UK Press published about the Lok Sabha elections in India may be hot news for the Indian newspapers. What the US Press wrote about Abhishek-Aishwarya marriage was news for the Indian newspapers.

Hence, the other meaning of news may like this, "News is an account of recent event or opinion which is important or interesting or concerning."

Importance, interest and concern are the three factors that depicts a lot of varieties and hence explain why an event is newsworthy for one newspaper or broadcasting stations and not for many other newspapers and radio or TV networks. Why the press in India publishes more about UK or US than our own villages? Why one news item becomes an international news while the other is suitable only for a local or regional newspaper?

## **DEFINATION OF NEWS:**

We all are aware of the famous cliché, “When a dog bites a man, it is not a news. But when a man bites a dog, it is news.”

### **There are several other definitions of news:**

“News is something revealed.”

“News is something which somebody wants suppressed.”

“News is anything, you did not know yesterday.”

“News is any event, idea or opinion that is timely, that interests or affects a large number of people in a community and that is capable of being understood by them.”

“News is what the newspaper prints and radio broadcasts.” News is a compilation of facts and events of current interest or importance to the readers of the newspaper printing it.”

“Sex, money, crime—that is news.”

“News is anything and everything interesting about life and materials in all their manifestation.”

What is new is news.”

“News is anything out of the ordinary.”

“News is anything published in a newspaper which interests large number of people.”

“News is what newspaper people make.”

“Good news is not news.”

“News is anything a big shot said.”

“News and truth are not the same thing.”

“The function of news is to signal an event.”

“News is any recent, up to date information of an event received from the different directions.”

“News is history in a hurry.”



“News is the honest and unbiased and complete account of events of interest and concern to the public.”

“News may be defined as any accurate fact or idea that will interest a large number of readers.”

“News is anything timely that is interesting and significant to the readers in respect of their personal affairs or their relation to the society, and the best news is that which possesses the greatest degree of this interest and significance for the greatest number.”

News may be defined as an accurate, unbiased account of significant facts of a timely happening that is of interest to the readers of the newspapers that print the account.”

“News is the first report of the significant events which have interest for the public.”

“News is an account of the current idea, event or problem that interests people.”

News is the record of the most interesting, important and accurate information obtainable about the things man thinks and says, sees, describes, plans and does.”

Former Editor-in-Chief of Indian Express Arun Shourie defines news as “When someone somewhere is trying to hide something, that is news and all other things are advertisements.”

His definition is more pertaining to investigative news as he is already well-known for his investigative reporting.

According to former Editor-in-Chief of The Hindustan Times, “The standard definition that only ‘man bites dog’ is news is obsolete and inaccurate. In view of the communication gap in a democratic society that which is reported becomes news and that which is not reported remains non-news. Sensationalization, disaster, fraud and the like are news but it is not ‘sole news or the highest news.’”

Varghese cogently argues that reporting of more constructive developments and trends in great social, economic and political changes, technological advances, modernization processes rather than concentrating only on political news.

A well-known American Editor Stanley Walker defines news as, “News is more unpredictable than the winds. Sometimes it is the repetition of tales as old as the pyramid with new characters and again it may be almost outside the common experience.”

An eminent and legendary American Editor Joseph Pulitzer defines news as, “Original, Distinctive, Romantic, Thrilling, Unique, Curious, Quaint, Humorous, Odd and Apt-to-be-talked-about.”

Hence, it is proved that no two newspapers look at ‘news’ in an identical manner. In modern times, journalism professionals, newsmen and media personalities are most likely to define news in terms of what people, readers, listeners, viewers—want to know, i.e., whether it is local news, a national event or war and peace.

No news interests all. Without consciously realizing it, most people love to read only part of the newspaper they purchase. In other words, their perception and hence their reading is highly selective in nature.

#### **EXPLORING THE FUTURE OF NEWS:**

The future of news is likely to be shaped by a range of factors, including technology, changing consumer habits, and broader societal trends. Here are some possible directions that news may take in the coming years:

**Digital-first:** With more people consuming news online, many news organizations are likely to shift their focus towards digital platforms. This could include greater investment in mobile apps, social media, and personalized content delivery.

**Personalization:** As news organizations collect more data about their audiences, they may be able to offer increasingly personalized news experiences. This could involve recommending

articles based on a reader's interests, or tailoring news coverage to specific demographics or locations.

**Automation:** Advances in artificial intelligence and machine learning could enable news organizations to automate some aspects of the news-gathering process, such as analyzing data or summarizing articles. This could allow for faster, more efficient reporting, but also raises questions about the role of human journalists.

**Collaboration:** As traditional news organizations face increased competition from social media and other sources, they may need to collaborate more closely with each other and with independent journalists. This could involve sharing resources, pooling expertise, or even forming alliances to pursue common goals.

**Trust and transparency:** With the rise of "fake news" and concerns about media bias, news organizations may need to place greater emphasis on building trust with their audiences. This could involve greater transparency about sources and methods, fact-checking initiatives, or even partnering with third-party organizations to verify content.

Overall, the future of news is likely to be shaped by a complex interplay of technological, economic, and cultural factors. While the specifics may be uncertain, it seems clear that news organizations will need to be agile and adaptive in order to thrive in an increasingly competitive and rapidly changing media landscape.

**SUMMARY:**

- News is a form of information that is timely, relevant, impactful, and often has a human-interest element.
- The purpose of news is to inform, educate, entertain, and shape public opinion.
- News can be created through various means, such as traditional journalism, citizen journalism, and social media.
- The nature of news is characterized by its ephemerality, objectivity, and subjectivity.
- News is subject to various challenges, such as fake news, media bias, information overload, and the impact of new technologies on news production and consumption.
  
- The future of news is likely to be shaped by digital media, social media, and changing news consumption habits.

**SELF ASSESSMENT TEST:**

**What are the key elements that make up news?**

- a) Timeliness, relevance, impact, and human interest
- b) Humour, irony, satire, and emotion
- c) Opinion, bias, sensationalism, and conflict
- d) None of the above

**What is the purpose of news?**

- a) To inform, educate, entertain, and shape public opinion
- b) To promote a particular political agenda
- c) To sell advertising space
- d) None of the above

**What are some of the challenges that journalists and news consumers face in today's media landscape?**

- a) Fake news, media bias, and information overload
- b) Censorship, propaganda, and government control
- c) Lack of funding and resources
- d) None of the above

**What are some of the emerging trends that are likely to shape the future of news?**

- a) Digital media, social media, and changing news consumption habits
- b) Print media, traditional broadcasting, and cable TV
- c) Radio broadcasting and podcasting
- d) None of the above

**What is the nature of news?**

- a) Characterized by its ephemerality, objectivity, and subjectivity
- b) Objective and factual
- c) Biased and subjective
- d) None of the above

**Answers: 1. a, 2. a, 3. a, 4. a, 5. a**

**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS:**

1. What is news, and what are the key elements that make up news?
2. What is the purpose of news, and what are some of the functions it serves in society?

3. What are some of the characteristics that define the nature of news, and how is news created and presented to the audience?
4. What are some of the challenges that journalists and news consumers face in today's media landscape, and how can these challenges be addressed?
5. What are some of the emerging trends that are likely to shape the future of news, and how might news evolve in the coming years?

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- "The Media and Modernity: A Social Theory of the Media" by John B. Thompson

## LESSON NO.2

### TYPES OF NEWS

#### OBJECTIVE:

The objective of this chapter is to help readers understand the difference between hard news and soft news, the importance of the date line in news reporting, and the function of a credit line in journalism.

News has to be written, presented or broadcast in such a manner or style that the reader, listener or viewer gets the most important information in a shortest possible span of time, in minimum words, without using superfluous, unnecessary and redundant words. It is often said that a news reporter should have “a nose for news”. They may have their whims and fancies of ‘smelling’, ‘sensing’, or recognising the news, but there are certain established and well-

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**Prominence:** If a well-known personality happens to be involved in the event, it will invariably make news. For example, if the prime minister strains his ankle while walking to the car, or a celebrity has a bathroom fall, it makes news. The important fact is that the famous, the infamous and even the eccentric command a special appeal for audiences. This is also due to the fact that high profile families enjoy privacy and often make news for any pleasant or unpleasant event.

**Dimension:** The number of people involved or affected or losses that occur in terms of huge money by an event makes news. For example, if 500 or more people die in an



earthquake in Manila, the Philippines, it makes news even in India as human lives are precious wherever these are lost. But if heavy rains flood low-lying areas in Mumbai or Patna, and 23 people are killed, and four high-rise buildings collapse, it makes much bigger news in India, and automatically gets front page treatment, possibly with tell-tale photographs from the scene. Similarly, if in a fire in Vadodra property worth lakhs is destroyed and several deaths are reported, that too will need front page featuring. Here, we see the number of people though less, but the proximity factor comes in making the news 'local', requiring a different, and serious way of presentation in the newspaper

**Impact:** If the U.S. president or British prime minister announces his plans to sanction military aid to Pakistan, it's bound to impact the Indo-US or IndoBritish ties, and also Indo-Pak relations. Similarly, if the Union Government increases income tax in its annual budget, or levies a tax on purchase of cars, that make all-India news. Or, if the chief minister of a state in India abolishes state grants for the private-aided schools, the children of lower middle class or poor parents availing fee concession may be hit adversely as the consequence of the new policy, thus, it will make big news for all citizens of that state

**Human Interest:** Quite often, newspaper reporters come across situations, which induce emotions of mercy or sentiments or sympathy. For example, if a visually-challenged person performs some daring act, such as scaling Mount Everest, or a hearing-challenged boy scores a meritorious position in a competitive examination, these are hu

man interest stories. Again, if a bicycle rickshaw puller's son gets selected in IIM / IIT admission test, or a primary school teacher's daughter finds herself in the civil service merit list, we call these as human-interest stories. You may recall the incident when a four-year-old child by the name of Prince, fell in a way-side 30-foot-deep well some years ago; the rescue work by the army personnel was put out live on many television channels. This was a live human-interest story which attracted the interest of viewers all over India for many hours, till the rescue act was completed

**Conflict:** Conflict of any type –

political, social, cultural, communal, among some sections of society, difference of opinion among two or more political parties, conflict among some warring groups, or more of such conflicts always make news. As you would have seen those differences between the Bhartiya Janata Party and the Communist Party (Marxist) and the Indian National Congress on the Indo-US nuclear deal made news in India for several months. You will find that many more such issues figure in newspapers as news very often

**Adventure:** As we mentioned earlier, tackling difficult-to-

handle tasks easily or smoothly or daringly by disabled individuals always make news anywhere. When a 70-year-old Japanese woman attempted to scale the Mount Everest, the highest mountain peak in the world, and succeeded, it made international news. This was a case of adventure appearing as front-page banner headline in Japan, besides making news in many other countries

**Novelty:** Novel and rare incidents make news. When, for example, an American woman gave birth to eight children, each weighing about 200 grams, and they all survived, it made world news. Again, when an eight-year-old boy in Orissa competed in a marathon race with grown-ups, and won it, that became a novel event to be deemed as news.

**Empathy:** Often, several events mirroring tragedy, humour, oddity, victory, failure take place now and then in our life. Quite a few of these happenings attract our concern or empathy: an old-age couple losing all its children in fire, flood, accident; a child falling off from the arms of its mother in a moving bus/train and getting crushed under its wheels – all make news. For, all human hearts go out in sympathy for the loved ones so affected

**Weather / Climate / Environment:** Weather – extreme heat, cold, rain, storm, pollution affects all of us; and usually bad weather affects us badly. Remember how the Indian Ocean tsunami made news all over the world in so many countries, including India, which killed hundreds of men, women, children, and wreaked unusual, unimaginable losses of property, animals and marine life. For months together, this was considered as an extraordinary change in weather, and was forecast to be a prodigious problem of environment for all time to come across the globe. Climatic changes, different aspects of environment degradation, pollution as well as efforts towards environment conservation make news. Given above are some of the most important elements, which often make news. However, there are always occasions when

we find new situations arising and figuring as eminent news stories in the media all over the world.

### **INTRODUCTION:**

In journalism, it is important to distinguish between hard news and soft news. Hard news refers to the coverage of events that are considered important and relevant to the public, while soft news refers to news stories that are more light-hearted and entertaining. Understanding the difference between the two is crucial for journalists, as it affects the tone, style, and approach of their reporting.

Another important aspect of news reporting is the use of a date line. A date line indicates the location and date of the event being reported and provides readers with important context for the story. It is a key component of news reporting that helps to establish the timeliness and relevance of the information being presented.

Finally, a credit line is an essential element of journalism that gives recognition to the author or reporter who wrote the story. It is important for establishing the credibility of the journalist and acknowledging their hard work and contribution to the story.

This chapter will delve into these concepts in greater detail, explaining the differences between hard news and soft news, the importance of the date line in news reporting, and the function of a credit line in journalism. By the end of this

### **HARD NEWS VS SOFT NEWS:**

All media provides two different types of news: hard news and soft news/ feature news . Feature news is also called soft news. The following compares the two types of news

**Hard news** talks about a current event that affects the audience on the other hand **soft news** appeals to the emotional side and doesn't directly affect the audience.

**Examples of hard news:**

1. Price rises of motor cars.
2. Finance minister presents the budget
3. Car rams into the truck
4. Heavy rain falls recorded in the north India

**Examples of soft news:**

1. RRR got national awards
2. How to keep your hair healthy
3. Trick to get yourself more fashionable
4. Ranveer Singh to celebrate his birthday in Dubai

**Key differences:**

**Hard news:**

1. Are timely and concise
2. Include all key information (who, what, where, why, when and how) in the first paragraph
3. Present the more important information first and the less important details toward the end

**Soft news:**

1. Do not need to be timely or concise
2. Can be written less formally than a hard news story
3. Might include an interesting, odd or heart-warming story
4. Are presented in a variety of journalistic styles

#### **HARD NEWS WRITING:**

**Hard news** articles are written so the reader can stop reading at any time, and still come away with the whole story. This is very different from an essay, which presumes that the audience will stick around to the end, and can therefore build to a finish. There is no need to put a "conclusion" on a news story. Each individual reader will "end" the story whenever he or she gets bored. A particularly interested reader will keep reading to the end.

**The Headline:** Convey the general message in as many words as will fit (usually quite a small space). A headline should be informational, and can be clever, as long as the cleverness does not interfere with the information or earn groans from readers.

**The Lead:** The lead, or the first sentence of the story, is arguably the most important part of the article. Based on the content of that first sentence, a reader will either look deeper into the story, or move on to the next one.

Therefore, how you craft your lead is very important. There are some basic rules one can follow: • The who, what, when, where, how, why lead. • Basically, just like it sounds. This lead tries to answer the 5 w's and one h in one sentence.

**Experimental leads.** If you answer the "5 w's and one h" on the second or third sentences, you can be more creative with the first. The results can flounder and die, or have a great impact.

**Direct Quotes:** Quotes breathe life into a story, but can be abused. Don't quote material that isn't quote-worthy

**Inverted Pyramid:**

In a straight news story, it's best to **get the most important information in your story up to the top--**

your reader will often stop reading after the first few paragraphs, so it's important that they have a good grasp of the story. Put the least important stuff at the end, and leave the unimportant stuff out altogether

**Length of Paragraphs:**

This is different than a term paper for English class. Keep your paragraphs short (one or two sentences) and make each of your points concise. Readers grow tired of big blocks of text, so it's best to break it up a bit.

**Objectivity vs. Opinion:**

Your readers aren't interested your opinion on the latest Clinton scandal -- so keep yourself out of the story. Attribute every claim or opinion you report to someone else, and don't editorialize. If you do, you take the entire element of objectivity-- and thus, truth-- out of your story

**FEATURE WRITING:**

The newspaper term for a piece of nonfiction intended to involve, teach or amuse the reader by giving him information of human interest rather than news. Features may use some of the conventions of fiction, including plot, symbolism, character and dialogue.

They are colourful pieces that deal with real events, innovations, trends, issues and processes, placing an emphasis on the people involved. Feature writing is not concerned so

much with formula (as in the inverted pyramid structure of "hard" news writing) as it is interested in impact. The

the gamut of subject matter and writing style employed by feature writers is nearly endless, as "feature" becomes an umbrella term for many literary structures. Personality sketches, narratives, interviews, essays, exposes, how-to's, columns, miniature anthologies and reviews may all be considered features. Ideas for writing features come from having a keen news sense, an awareness of human interests and a healthy curiosity. A successful feature story's coverage must be suited to its news value. Its tone and slant must be appropriate to the article's intended effect. For example, features that grow out of a slumping economy reflect the anxiety and despair of the individuals who are most affected

All well-written news stories have most of the parts listed below.

Most basic news stories should have:

- **A headline**
- **A lead (sometimes written lede)**
- **A backup quote**
- **Attribution**
- **Reaction**
- **A "nut graph"**
- **Background**
- **An ending**

**1. The Headline.** The headline is a one- or two-line summary of the contents of the news story, in larger type, that tells readers what the story is about. *Headlines act as an index of the contents of the newspaper, and a summary of the information in its stories.*



**2. The Lead.** The lead is usually defined as the first sentence of a news story, so metimes as the first few sentences. The lead is the beginning of a story. The lead on a hard news story is often called a *summary lead*. Lead should contain the most important facts of the story -

at least some of the Five Ws. Most agree that the ideal lead is short -

no more than 25 or 30 words. Leads should be "tight" -

that is, written with economy. *A news story with a strong lead is more likely to be read.*

**Ironic leads, Great-quote leads, Person-centred leads, Contrast leads, Play-on-word leads, Situational leads, Nightmare leads -**

**3.The Backup Quote.** Most news stories, except the briefest of briefs, should have a backup quote placed soon after the lead. Ideally, the backup quote -

attributed to comprehensible and entertaining way.

**Attribution.** All news stories require attribution. **Attribution is the explanation of the**

**source of the information in the news story.** Attribution allows the reader to judge for herself whether the facts set out in the story have merit. The best stories contain lots of quotes -

and all quotes *have attribution. A news story without attribution is worthless.*

**Reaction.** All news stories that contain controversial statements, should have reaction

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the comments of someone who is familiar with the situation, or of someone with an alternative view of the main thesis of the story. A representative of the government should have the opportunity to *respond. Fairness requires reaction.*

**The Nut Graph.** A nut graph informs readers of the focus of the story. The lead will serve the same purpose as the nut graph. A nut graph is essential to set out for the reader what is going on.

**Background.** Most stories need some background for the reader to understand what's going on. The more complicated the story, the more pressing the need for background. *Background helps explain the action.*

**The Ending.** Sometimes writers end a story with a reference to future action that is expected.

### **Active Voice Versus Passive Voice**

Most journalists, and most journalism textbooks, say that news stories should be written *in the active voice*. The *active voice* describes the action. The *passive voice* describes the recipient of the action. The active voice delivers a clear, strong statement of what happened. The passive voice can make an exciting event dull.

OVERALL- Journalists are usually encouraged to write in the active voice.

- The active voice describes the action; the passive voice describes the recipient of the action.

- A simple way to remember how to write in the active voice is to memorize the order of subject, verb and object - SVO.

- Sometimes, however, the passive voice is better because it doesn't indicate who was the author of an action.

### **DATELINE:**

A news report for a newspaper begins with dateline. Though the term 'dateline' seems only to refer to the date, yet it contains two very important information pieces, namely: the PLACE of occurrence, and the DATE of occurrence. It is important for the audiences of the news to know the place from where the news has arisen, and this information is provided in the dateline. It is important to know that the name of the place mentioned in the news story has to be the place from where it has been filed. (Sending of the news story by the reporting staff to the newsroom is called filing of the story). In many cases it may not be the place of occurrence of the event or action. The place of occurrence and place of filing of the story may be the same or different. If different the place of occurrence comes in the main body of the story, but dateline will carry the name of the place from where the correspondent has sent the story. While reporting war or defense many a time the dateline carries information: 'Somewhere in Northern Sector'. It has been observed that many times the name of the place mentioned in the dateline is not familiar for many readers. The reporter or the staff in the newsroom should provide additional information so that the reader is able to properly locate the place in his or her mind. For example, if reporting from a village the name of the District may be mentioned. If reporting from a District of the far away place, name of the state may be given. Similarly, if reporting from a not too familiar location from abroad the name of the country may also be given. It has also been observed in many cases that while reporting from Chandigarh, which is the capital of both Haryana and Punjab and also a Union Territory, even after reading the entire story it does not become clear whether the story was about Haryana or Punjab. The reporters assume that the readers would know and the sub-editor ignores. It would be advisable to refer to the state preferably in the dateline or a

t-

least in the first few sentences of the story. As in the case of place, in the dateline also the date of the filing of the story has to be mentioned. If the date of occurrence and the date of filing are different, then the date of occurrence should be mentioned in the news story

The ways newspapers use the dateline are different. Each newspaper has its own style of mentioning the date and the month.

Some examples are: J

an. 16,

January 16;

16th January;

16th Jan.

Many newspapers including The Times of India, Amar Ujala and Dainik Jagaran have stopped giving date in the dateline. The reason perhaps is to serve late and stale news also, which is not a healthy practice

#### **CREDIT LINE & BYLINE:**

Credit line contains information about the source from where the news has been taken for publication. The news may be taken from a news agency and the abbreviated form of the name of the agency is used. Examples: PTI (Press Trust of India), UNI (United News of India), Bhasha (Hindi), Varta (Hindi), AP (Associated Press), Reuter etc. When the news has been picked from more than one news agency either the names of all

the agencies are given or Agencies is mentioned in the credit line. In some newspapers the name of the agency is given at the end of the news.

Some newspapers have an unhealthy practice of not attributing the story from the source it has been taken. Many newspapers are increasingly using the Internet and net-editions of newspapers but the source is very rarely mentioned. When the staff reporters or correspondents of the newspaper file news stories, there are three ways of mentioning it.

First, credit is given by mentioning the name of the journalist. This is called giving by-line and is used only in special cases when the journalist has done something more than the usual. Second, designation of the person who has filed the story is given. Examples: Our Special Correspondent, Our Correspondent, Our Staff Reporter, HT Correspondent, etc. Similar versions are used in Hindi and other languages. Third, instead of mentioning the name or designation, the news stories are attributed to the newspaper. Examples: Tribune News Service or Times News Network or just Our Bureau.

When a newspaper's own staff and News Agencies have provided the information for news jointly, all the names may be used. In important stories, more than one correspondent may have reported, in such cases joint or multiple by-lines are also given.

The Dateline generally follows the headline and there is no fixed place for the credit line. But every newspaper has its own style of printing the dateline and credit lines. Some examples:

Business Line: Our Bureau Mumbai, Jan.16

The Hindu: BHABHUA/BUXAR/ARA/ (BIHAR), Jan. 16

The Times of India: By M K Venu/TNN New Delhi:

Hindustan Times: Press Trust of India, New Delhi, January 16

Pankaj Vohra and Raveen Thukral, Ambala, January 16

The Pioneer: Navin Upadhyya/Ara (Pioneer News Service)

The Tribune: Aditi Tandon, Tribune News Service, Uri/Hardwar, January, 16

The Indian Express: EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE, AMBALA, JANUARY16

### **SUMMARY:**

The chapter discusses the differences between hard news and soft news, and explains the importance of including a date line and credit line in news articles.

- Hard news refers to serious and important events, such as political developments, disasters, and crime stories. Soft news, on the other hand, is more lighthearted and entertaining, covering topics such as lifestyle, fashion, and celebrity gossip.
- A date line is a line that indicates the location and date of the story's origin. It helps readers understand the context of the news and when it occurred.
- A credit line is a line that gives credit to the writer or news agency responsible for producing the story. It ensures that the appropriate parties receive recognition for their work and helps maintain journalistic ethics.
- Including both a date line and credit line in news articles is important because it provides transparency and accountability to the reporting process, and helps readers understand the credibility and source of the information they are reading.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT:**

1. What is the difference between hard news and soft news?
2. Why is it important to include a date line in a news article?
3. What is a credit line, and why is it important in journalism?
4. Can a news article contain both hard news and soft news, or should they be separate?
5. How can the inclusion of a date line and credit line improve the credibility of a news article?

### **CHECK PROGRESS:**

- What are some examples of hard news stories?
- What are some examples of soft news stories?
- How can you determine if a news story is hard or soft news?
- What information should be included in a date line?
- Why is it important to include a credit line in a news article?
- What are some best practices for writing a clear and informative date line and credit line?
- Why is it important for journalists to maintain transparency and accountability in their reporting?
- How can the inclusion of a date line and credit line help to establish the credibility of a news article?

### **REFERENCE**

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- ❖ Writing News for Broadcast by Edward Bliss, Jr. and James L. Hoyt
- ❖ The Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law
- ❖ The Art of Feature Writing: From Newspaper Features and Magazine Arti  
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## LESSON NO. 3

### ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF A REPORTER

#### OBJECTIVE:

- Defines the role of a reporter and explain its importance in journalism
- Explains the ethical principles that guide reporters, such as accuracy, fairness, and impartiality
- Discuss the importance of fact-checking and source verification in reporting
- Outlines the process of gathering information for a news story, including conducting interviews and doing research
- Explains how to write a news story that is clear, concise, and engaging
- Discuss the role of social media and digital tools in modern journalism, and the implications for reporters
- Explains how to navigate ethical dilemmas that may arise in reporting, such as conflicts of interest or dealing with sensitive information
- Provide examples of high-quality reporting that demonstrate the responsibilities and impact of good journalism.

#### INTRODUCTION:

Welcome to the chapter on the role and responsibilities of a reporter. Journalism plays a crucial role in our society, providing information that helps people make informed decisions and holding those in power accountable. At the heart of this process are reporters, who are responsible for gathering and sharing news stories with the public.

In this chapter, we will explore the important role of reporters in journalism, as well as their specific responsibilities in the news-gathering process. We will discuss the ethical principles that guide reporters, and the process of conducting interviews and doing research to gather information for a news story. We will also examine the importance of clear, accurate, and engaging writing, as well as the impact of social media and digital tools on modern journalism.

Finally, we will discuss some of the ethical dilemmas that reporters may encounter, and provide examples of high-quality reporting that demonstrate the responsibilities and impact of good journalism. By the end of this chapter, you will have a better understanding of the role and responsibilities of a reporter, and the vital role that journalism plays in our society.

### **REPORTER:**

The role of a reporter is to serve as the eyes and ears of a news organization, and while there are no specific qualifications required for the job, aspiring reporters should formally train themselves in order to fulfil their responsibilities with confidence, courage, and competence. To excel in the role, a reporter should be well-read, knowledgeable about their beat, and have a wide network of contacts. They should also possess research skills, excellent communication abilities, and the ability to build relationships with people from all walks of life. To succeed, a reporter must be able to perceive, calculate, predict, and plan their actions appropriately in anticipation of news events. Good news reporting is the result of a sense of responsibility towards oneself, the organization, society, and humanity. It is the reporter's responsibility to write conscientiously and carefully, using their pen to build a positive image of themselves and their i

nstitution. A reporter's purpose is not to be a social worker or a preacher, but to draw attention to issues affecting society. It is important for reporters to be alert, curious, in good health, and possess stamina to pursue difficult assignments. Finally, a reporter should be sociable and have a sense of responsibility towards the profession and the news organization

### **QUALITIES OF A REPORTER:**

To excel in journalism, it is important to possess the right attitude towards the vocation, including intelligence, initiative, industry, general competence, objectivity, and accuracy. The ideal reporter should possess natural curiosity, uncertainty, childlike enjoyment, enthusiasm, and passion for the work. They should have a sharp news sense and should not let their own prejudices or interests interfere with their sub-editing. A good reporter should be able to create exciting stories by having a good news sense and getting the facts clear and in sequence in their mind or on their copy pad. Additionally, they should have the ability to make quick and accurate decisions based on their judgment

- **Calmness:** Never be overexcited when major stories break. Your calm nerves are important in objectively assessing the news and the priority it deserves.
- **A Dense Skin:** An ability to keep from getting upset or offended by the things other people say and do (Criticism).
- **Clarity:** A reporter should have clarity of mind and expression. A person who is confused himself cannot tell a story to others
- **Objectivity:** Reporter and sub-editor should aim at objectivity while dealing with a story. They should not allow their personal bias or ideas to creep into a story.

• **Speed:** In today's world speed matters everywhere. A person who cannot work fast cannot be a good reporter. He should think fast, decide fast and write or type fast for he has to meet deadlines or may have to go to another assignment.

• **Punctuality:** It is always better to be punctual and then wait than reach late and ask others—a rival may misinform you or hide some important information

• **Farsightedness:** An intelligent envisioning of the future helps newsmen in general. The quality helps them in identifying processes and people who will be important in future

• **Mobility:** A reporter should be mobile. He should enjoy moving around and should not hesitate travelling distances to get stories when required

• **A journalist** should have a healthy scepticism. This means checking and rechecking information which is very important because every story is based on facts and evidence

• Ability to establish contacts and develop sources.

• **Ability to Cope** with Pressure from outside and within the News Organisation. • **Knowledge for news** • **Language expertise**

• **Intelligence and courage**

• **Handling media equipment**

• **Outgoing nature**

• **Team spirit**

• **A good reporter must be able to analyse and interpret information**

• **Creative**

- Perseverance –

Not giving up when struggling to find out information in the face of bureaucratic inertia, subterfuge or outright opposition

- Good at Communicative skills

• Good General Knowledge: A good journalist is one who knows something about everything. They are well-

informed news junkies especially in the area of politics, current affairs and law.

- Capable to work with others and in irregular hours

#### **SOME CORE QUALITIES IN DETAILS:**

##### **A NOSE FOR NEWS:**

The reporter is the most important functionary of a newspaper, as far as news operations are concerned. So, one must know what constitutes news in order to be able to gather news

A reporter's job of discovering the news has been simplified in one way and rendered difficult in another sense, in this age of information. While there are the usual press notes on which news reports can be based, there are other sources of information on a variety of news events. The range of sources stretches from official spokespersons and press conferences to unidentified members of the public and the regular sources which one meets on the beat.

But quite often, most of the material before a news reporter may just be publicity matter or advertisements in disguise. Therefore, as a reporter, you must check the material and squeeze the news that would interest your reader. When you are overwhelmed by an ocean of facts, you can always rely on third readers' interest for guidance. Here is

where your ability to select the right information and present it to the reader comes to your help. Besides, most of the time you will cover routine matters such as press conferences and press notes that are hardly exciting. At least you may have to begin at quite a low level like covering local matter. Later you may be given the opportunity to cover major national issues.

Fourth most part you may find yourself reporting the speeches, declarations and announcements by V.I.P.s, persons in authority, politicians and political parties. Occasionally, you may get an exciting newsbreak. But your routine reporting should not prevent you from looking for something unusual that may lurk under the ordinary occurrence. You have to be a keen observer so as to discover unusual and exciting material even in routine stuff. A sharp sense of observation may also help you to gather amusing sidelights of interest to your readers. Your alertness will help you to discover contradictions and problems while you are on your daily beat. This can be the Outgoing basis for a Nature exciting news story even where apparently there was none.

#### **OUTGOING NATURE:**

Professional journalists are never armchair writers. Introverts normally make poor reporters. Reporters have to move about meeting people, making their acquaintance and winning their confidence. This would help them to establish contacts, which in turn helps in writing well-

investigated reports. This is the era of investigative reporting and readers are keenly interested to know what is going on behind the scenes. To get that kind of stories, you have no alternative but to be outgoing. You have to develop an affable temperament and an easy-going nature.

#### **ABILITY TO ESTABLISH CONTACTS AND DEVELOP SOURCES:**

An outgoing nature is the basic quality to establish contact and develop sources. During the course of your duty, you may meet several people who may help you in gathering information. You must have the ability to win the confidence and respect of those who may be potential sources of news. During the course of your regular duties, people may voluntarily offer you information. Alternately, this might not be the case if when you are working on an investigative story. People may hesitate to talk on sensitive matters. They may like to reveal yet are afraid to in case it was to affect them adversely. Such people may be government officials whom you may meet while investigating matters ranging from inefficiency to corruption. They could be informers of the underworld, if you are doing an in-depth crime investigation. What may be at stake for them could be their jobs or their lives. It may be quite difficult to win their trust. In such situations, you must be able to assure your sources that they will remain protected and their identities kept secret if they so desire.

While you are establishing contact, there may be some among them who may want to plant information on you to serve their vested interests. Such information may consist of half-truths and even lies. So, you must have other independent contacts through whom you can verify the information.

Remember, even the most ordinary source at times can become very valuable, providing important leads and a wealth of information. A couple of years ago a newspaper carried a story about a footpath hawker who once was a wrestler of international repute, thus throwing light on the neglect of the sportsmen in the country. You must make it a point, therefore, to pay attention to your sources howsoever 'ordinary' they may seem by appearance.

Remember, the classic case of the Watergate scandal: The scandal that shook the United States and the Nixon presidency was not exposed by any ace newsmen, but by ordinary local reporters acting on a tip from an ordinary source.

What matters is the alertness and ability to pursue your sources to get the right lead. Take the case of the securities scam. The entire expose began with a source contacting Ms. Sucheta Dalal of the Times of India, Bombay, with an unconfirmed report about some activities in the State Bank of India. Ms Dalal, Assistant Business Editor of the paper, followed the lead provided by the source and got the story confirmed from reliable contacts bringing to light the stock scam concerning stock broker Harshad Mehta and others involving a staggering Rs. 6,000 crores.

#### **ABILITY TO BE AN UNPREJUDICED OBSERVER:**

The reporter must be an unprejudiced observer of events, one who presents the facts to the reader in a balanced, objective manner. Now, objectivity is a much-debated topic. It has been said that reporters mix comment with fact and so their reports are quite subjective. While reporters may have their own views on the subject of coverage, they should not allow personal opinions at any place in the copy. One must be able to throw light on unclear aspects if any, of the news event. At the same time, the news reporter must endeavour to write a report which is only a statement of facts. An observation or viewpoint, might occasionally creep in and one must be able to strip it in straight news items.

How do you maintain balance and objectivity in your coverage? The first and foremost thing to do is to source your copy properly to assure the reader that what you are passing on as news, is not your opinion or some publicity matter in disguise. The sources



must be quoted except when they want to remain anonymous. Even when you are not able to quote the sources, you must ensure that the story is balanced, by giving adequate coverage to all the sides of the subject. You should always ensure that the information you are presenting is true. You can do this by counter checking.

Remember, what may appear fair to one group will amount to bias for another. So, always ensure that you give both sides of the picture.

But, remaining an unprejudiced observer does not mean adopting what is known in American journalistic parlance as "man from the Mars" stance, i.e, seeing each event afresh, unconnected to any previous expectations or future possibilities and passing them on untouched by interpretation.

In an increasingly complex world, this would not amount to objectivity or fairness. In many cases, it would simply mean an irresponsible attitude, a refusal to make the reader understand the event in its proper context and realise its significance. In many cases, you not only report the events but interpret them for the reader. But remember, interpretation does not mean backdoor editorialising. It is not an excuse for colouring the story with your personal opinions.

Commented [A1]:

### **CLARITY OF EXPRESSION**

As a reporter, you may cover several complex and specialised subjects, such as science and technology, law and economics. Your command over the language must be such that you can explain even the most complicated issues in simple terms to any general reader. In addition to specialised subjects such as science and technology, even government press notes are written in complicated language, burying the news point. You must be able to simplify it and bring out the news point

### **TEAM SPIRIT**

Except for routine coverages which can be handled by one person, many investigative stories have to be handled by a team. The Bofors investigative stories in the Indian Express and other papers were based on reports from Geneva and Stockholm, besides, New Delhi. The securities scam investigations by the Times of India involved, besides Sucheta Dalal, one more correspondent, R. Srinivasan, who posed as an investor and went to the State Bank officers in Bombay to get confirmation about the goings on in the bank

If you see investigative stories in the Statesman, you will find that they are always attributed to "The Statesman Insight Team." You must be able to work as a member of such a team. Here, you must pool your talents, sources and contacts into the team and work under a leader. In the course of time, you may rise to head such a team. Working under a team discipline will certainly be of help to you later.

#### **ABILITY TO COPE WITH PRESSURE FROM OUTSIDE AND WITHIN THE NEWS ORIGINATOR:**

With investigative journalism seeking to bring out scandals and exposures, there is bound to be pressure on journalists to keep someone's wrong doings hidden from public view. This 'someone' is usually a person with considerable clout. The 'pressure' on journalists is exerted in the hope of preventing exposure. The concerned journalist may also be bribed with attractive favours in return for silence on the matter

As a newsperson you may provide helpful or harmful exposure to persons holding important positions in your beat. Since many of them need publicity to perform their functions, they seek you out to provide them with the required exposure. They are on the lookout for a minimum of harmful and the maximum of helpful publicity. If they consider it necessary, they may use their power and influence to pressurise you for this.

The pressure could be used to make you change the news or "kill a story. This constitutes censorship. Pressure could also be applied with the hope of inducing journalists to volunteer the change or omission which is then equal to self-censorship.

While groups like the government and the advertisers could indirectly pressurise you through your news organisation, direct pressure could also come from the government and political parties. In case you are doing stories on something which could lead to harmful exposure for someone, they could take recourse to a range of legal and illegal options, including legal action, threats and violence to pressurise you

There are three ways of coping with pressure: fighting it, giving in, and anticipating the pressure and taking preventive measures. The first one is the most noble of the three options and history is full of shining examples of this category. During the British rule in India, many papers decided to close down, rather than submit to censorship and government pressure. The father of the Nation, Mahatama Gandhi, exemplified this spirit when he wrote during the Quit India Movement: "It is better not to issue newspaper than to issue them under a feeling of suppression." Even during the 1975-77 internal emergency, journals like Mainstream closed down rather than submit to government censorship. But the heroic option is not always feasible.

Remember, running a newspaper is a business, apart from being a service. Thousands depend on it for a living. You are in it as a professional, seeking to earn your daily bread. So, few expect you to be a hero or a missionary. If you give in to pressure which you cannot fight on your own and if your news organisation does not back, you, the consequences could be disastrous for you as a professional journalist. The 'reporters who generally brave powerful pressures are those who have the full support of their organisations or their professional colleagues backing them unitedly. But, still, you must have

the strength of character to fight pressures that come in the form of inducements like lavish gifts, favours, etc. to influence your reporting.

Preventive measures to fight pressure could be legal steps, like seeking a court stay on any law or ordinance that could affect the freedom of the press. In case you feel threatened by some physical violence, you can always seek security from law and order authorities. The journalists of the "Punjab Kesari" group of newspapers, who have taken a courageous antiterrorist stand in Punjab, work under extremely tight security. The group has lost two of its owners to terrorist bullets, but has not given in to pressures

#### **RESPONSIBILITIES OF A REPORTER:**

The reporting profession is unlike any other profession. At times, some slight carelessness in doing one's duty, can cause incalculable harmful repercussions, both for the news organisation and society. A slight laziness in checking or cross-checking certain facts could endanger the credibility of the news organization, proving to be a major block in the way of advancement of the reporter's career.

#### **RESPONSIBILITY TOWARDS THE NEWS ORGANISATION:**

A reporter has been likened to a soldier on the field. Even as the quality of the soldier on field determines to a large extent the quality of an army, so your abilities and the way you discharge your duties as a reporter go a long way in determining the quality and reputation of your news organisation.

#### **RESPONSIBILITY TOWARDS THE SOURCES:**

Remember, your sources are sacred. Your credibility in their eyes could be a major factor in your performance as a newsperson. There are sources with whom you will have to take great pains to establish your credibility to make them open up towards you. Yo

you will have to assure them that no harm will come to them, and if they so desire, you must keep their identity a secret. There have been instances in the United States of America and some other countries where reporters have defied court orders and gone to jail rather than reveal the sources. In 1960, an American magazine – goorter alerted his editors that the ruler of a Middle East country was receiving large amounts of money from several governments for his personal use. But the reporter held back the story till 1977 as he felt that its publication would compromise his source. The matter became news only when the American Intelligence Agency (CIA) files, made available to the press in 1977, contained the same information.

You may well ask whether the responsibility of protecting the sources is absolute. A situation could arise when the information given by a contact who wanted to remain unidentified could lead to a major inquiry of a court case. You may be ordered by the court to reveal who your contact is, for giving witness before the court. What would you do in such a case? Should you commit contempt of court or violate your commitment to the confidentiality of your source? If you reveal the source who wanted to remain anonymous, you could lose your credibility among your contacts who may hesitate to volunteer information in future. Such extreme cases have to be dealt with, on their individual merits. It is sufficient to say that under normal conditions, you have a commitment to protect your sources.

#### **RESPONSIBILITY TOWARDS THE READER AND SOCIETY:**

"Good faith with the reader is the foundation of all good journalism worthy of the name", says the code of ethics of the American Society of Newspaper Editors. As a news reporter, you have a duty to provide accurate, unbiased and objective information to the

the reader. Every effort must be made to ensure that the news is accurate, free from prejudices and that all sides of the news event are presented fairly.

To maintain your credibility with the reader you have a duty not to accept things or favours or pursue any activity that might compromise your integrity.

However, in these days, publicity seekers including those in private business, organise press conferences and conduct tours with attractive gifts and other incentives. While private firms depend mainly on advertising for publicity, they sometimes want their activities to be carried as news items since news carries greater credibility than advertisements.

News reports are written by newsmen who are supposed to be independent and objective. While in these days of corporate and business journalism,

#### **DEALING WITH CORPORATE NEWS:**

Business and corporate journalism is a field where you have to exercise a tremendous sense of responsibility. With the proliferation of big companies. Including multi nationals and their role in the liberalisation of the Indian economy, their activities form a major subject of public interest. But it is a subject that must be handled with utmost care. On the one hand, you risk becoming a publicity agent for corporate houses and on the other. you may be risking people's investments and reputations. Remember, anything you write for a news organization could have its impact in terms of money and reputation

Opinions about the newspaper industry have ranged from it being a mere business to an instrument of social change. Even if it is to be considered a mere business, it is deeply involved in matters of public interest. Everything you write could have its repercussions in the society. Even under normal circumstances, you have to exercise great care about what you write.

#### **REPORTING COMMUNAL CONFLICTS:**

You have to be particularly careful when reporting in a communally sensitive country like India. This is because there are a host of religious and social diversities and several linguistic groups. It would be unbecoming to be partisan to a particular faith, linguistic or social group. As a reporter you will have to wield your pen with due respect for everyone

What may be considered correct by one group may be held wrong by another. Take the example of the Ramjanambhoomi Babri Masjid dispute at Ayodhya. Two concerned communities have a conflicting stand about the disputed structure. If you have been following the controversy in the papers, you would have found that the disputed structure is referred to neither as Ramjanambhoomi nor as Babri Masjid. It is referred either as the "Disputed site" or as the "controversial structure", or simply as the "Ramjanambhoomi-Babri Masjid site".

Apart from the Ayodhya dispute, the communal tension in the country has been aggravated by the Punjab and Kashmir problems. News organisations are extremely careful about reporting events of a communal nature.

Take the killings in Punjab, for instance. When members of a particular community are singled out for massacre, the papers do not mention the name of the community.

A similar procedure is followed when reporting communal riots. The step is taken to prevent any further tension from developing between the communities if they are to be identified in the news reports. For this reason, places of worship affected in riots are not referred to, by name.

#### **FUNCTIONS OF A REPORTER:**

Reporters are people that no media organisation can do without. A reporter's job is therefore a very important one. The followings are the most common functions of a reporter:

- To Gather news
- To observe
- Finding the Angle (the right one)
- To make news reports
- To be an Active listener as well as a Person
- Covering events (e.g., International Film festival in Goa, PM visits Rangpur and hold a meeting)
- Go to Press Conference (A major source of news is the press conference. Leaders of political parties hold press conferences regularly. Ministers also hold press conferences to announce various programmes and policies of the government. Business houses arrange press conferences to launch their new products)
- Interviewing: Interviewing people connected with an event or incident is a very common practice used by reporters to get details
- To make quick decision
- To investigate information and report
- Watchdog of a Society • To be socially responsible
- To maintain professional secrecy: A journalist respects the right of secrecy of every person and he may not publish news about someone's private life, unless they are transparent and relevant to the public interest



- To have time management
- Attribution and Protection of Sources
- Ethical considerations and respect for 'off the record statements'
- Follow Press laws, Ethics and Code of Conduct: Press freedom is a word that is commonly used. By this, we mean the right to publish news without any restriction or control. But this does not mean that anything about anybody can be published. There are certain rules of conduct or principles of morality which we have to follow while reporting.

**SUMMARY:**

The chapter on the role and responsibilities of a reporter discusses the various duties and expectations of journalists who work to gather information and communicate it to the public through various media channels. Some key points covered in the chapter include:

- The role of a reporter is to gather information about events, people, and issues, and to communicate that information to the public through newspapers, television, radio, and online platforms.
- Reporters must maintain accuracy, objectivity, and fairness in their reporting, and avoid biases or personal opinions that could influence their work.
- In addition to reporting on breaking news, reporters may also conduct investigative journalism, feature writing, or opinion pieces on various topics
- Reporters must also ensure that they respect the privacy and dignity of the people they interview or report on, and avoid sensationalism or inflammatory language that could cause harm.

Overall, the chapter emphasizes the importance of responsible and ethical reporting, and the critical role that journalists play in informing and engaging the public.

**SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS:**

1. What is the role of a reporter in journalism, and why is it important?
2. What are some of the ethical principles that guide reporters, and how do they apply to news-gathering and reporting?
3. What are some of the key steps in the process of gathering information for a news story, and why is each step important?
4. How can reporters navigate ethical dilemmas that may arise in the course of their reporting, such as conflicts of interest or the use of anonymous sources?
5. What are some of the ways in which social media and digital tools have changed the landscape of modern journalism, and what are some of the implications for reporters?

These questions can help you assess your understanding of the key concepts and ideas in this chapter, and identify areas where you may need to review or deepen your understanding

**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS:**

1. What is the role of a reporter in journalism, and why is it important?
2. What are some of the ethical principles that guide reporters, and how do they apply to news-gathering and reporting?
3. Describe the process of gathering information for a news story, including the importance of conducting interviews and doing research.
4. What are some of the key elements of clear, accurate, and engaging news writing, and why are they important?
5. How have social media and digital tools impacted modern journalism, and what are some of the implications for reporters?
6. Provide an example of a high-quality news story that demonstrates the responsibilities and impact of good journalism.
7. What are some of the ethical dilemmas that reporters may encounter, and how can they navigate them while upholding journalistic standards?
8. Describe the responsibilities of different types of reporters, such as investigative reporters or beat reporters.

These check progress questions can help you assess your understanding of the key concepts and ideas in this chapter, and evaluate your ability to apply them in practice.

## REFERENCES

- "The Elements of Journalism: What News people Should Know and the Public Should Expect" by Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel - This book provides a comprehensive overview of the principles and practices of journalism, including the responsibilities of reporters, the role of news media in society, and the importance of ethical standards.
- "Reporting: Writings from The New Yorker" edited by David Remnick - This collection of essays and articles from The New Yorker showcases some of the best writing and reporting in modern journalism, and offers insights into the craft and art of storytelling.
- "The Journalist and the Murderer" by Janet Malcolm - This provocative book explores the complex relationship between journalists and their subjects, and raises important questions about the ethics and responsibilities of reporting.
- "The Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law" by The Associated Press - This stylebook is widely used as a reference guide for journalists, providing guidelines and rules for grammar, usage, and style in news writing.
- "The Art of Fact: A Historical Anthology of Literary Journalism" edited by Kevin Kerrane and Ben Yagoda - This anthology showcases the work of some of the greatest literary journalists of the 20th century, and offers insights into the history and evolution of the genre.

## **LESSON NO.4**

### **REPORTING: WORKING ON A BEAT**

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

- This chapter defines and explain the various types of reporting in journalism: The chapter should aim to provide a comprehensive explanation of the different types of reporting, such as news reporting, investigative reporting, feature writing, sports reporting, and editorial writing, among others.
- It describes the characteristics of each type of reporting: The chapter will provide an overview of the specific characteristics and requirements of each type of reporting, such as the need for accuracy, objectivity, and clarity in news reporting, and the importance of narrative and storytelling in feature writing.
- It will discuss the role and significance of each type of reporting in journalism: The chapter will aim to explain the relevance and importance of each type of reporting in the field of journalism, such as how investigative reporting can expose corruption and hold people in power accountable, and how feature writing can provide a deeper understanding of complex issues and human experiences.
- It will highlight examples of effective reporting in each type: The chapter will provide examples of successful reporting in each type, to illustrate how the different types of reporting can be used to produce high-quality journalism and inform and engage audiences.
- It will encourage critical thinking about the strengths and limitations of each type of reporting: The chapter will aim to foster critical thinking about the different types of reporting, including their strengths and limitations, and to encourage readers to

consider which types of reporting might be most appropriate for different topics or situations.

- It will provide practical guidance for aspiring journalists: The chapter will aim to provide practical guidance for aspiring journalists on how to approach each type of reporting, including tips on research, interviewing, writing, and ethical considerations.

### **INTRODUCTION:**

Journalism is a vital component of modern society that plays a critical role in providing information to the public. Reporting is an essential element of journalism, and it refers to the process of gathering and presenting information in a journalistic context. The types of reporting in journalism can vary significantly, depending on the nature of the story, the medium, and the intended audience. In this chapter, we will explore the different types of reporting in journalism and examine their purposes, techniques, and applications. Reporting on a beat involves covering a specific topic or area of interest, such as politics, sports, business, or education. As a beat reporter, you're responsible for staying up-to-date with the latest news and developments in your area, developing sources, and producing content that informs and engages your audience. We will delve into the various approaches used in news reporting, such as investigative, feature, opinion, and breaking news, among others. We will also explore the importance of accuracy, fairness, and ethics in journalistic reporting, as well as the challenges that reporters face in their work. Whether you are a professional journalist or a student of journalism, understanding the different types of reporting is essential for effective communication and storytelling. By the end of this chapter, you will have a better understanding of the various types of reporting in journalism and their impact on the media landscape.

### **TYPES OF REPORTING:**

Reporting is not a child's play. It is a herculean task. It is hard nut to crack. It demands high degree of amicability and extrovert Ness. It is basically a continuous ongoing process of collecting, digging, deriving, excavating, probing facts from the concerned beats on the strength of personal contacts and reaches of a reporter. And here deadline is to a reporter what headline is to a sub-editor. Reporters are the eyes and ears of media and has to follow and re-follow an uphill task and finally submit the story before it is dead, i.e., "To submit the story before the deadline, else the story is dead". Again, in the previous lesson, we have comprehensively discussed political reporting, economic reporting, crime reporting and science reporting. In this lesson, we will systematically discuss sports reporting, cultural reporting, legislature reporting, disaster reporting and accident reporting one by one.

### **SPORTS REPORTING:**

This reporting is one of the most demanding segments of journalism. It relates to the news gathering and writing relating to games and sports. It may be an indoor game like chess, table tennis, carom, badminton, etc. And it may be an outdoor game like hockey, football, cricket, volley ball, etc. Earlier sports were getting only half page coverage. But presently it is getting almost two-page space in many of the English dailies. This is one of the most popular types of news specially among youth. A study reveals that the percentage of boys as compared to girls reading/listening/viewing/using sports news is even more. Sports news and activities get a respectable and remarkable coverage these days, especially due to its popularity, prevalence and prominence. Whatever may be the category of media, sports news is omnipotent and omnipresent. As far as newspapers are concerned, the coverage of sport moved from half-page to one full page and its challenging trend is that today there are several newspapers (especially English as stated earlier also) which are giving at least two-page space to sports

news. We have an independent sport daily published from USA called 'The National'. But we in India don't have a trend of sports dailies unlike economic dailies. However, we have countless number of sports magazines Like '*Sports World*', '*Sports Today*', '*Sports Week*', '*Sports Star*', '*Sport and Pastime*', '*Wisden Asia Cricket*', '*Bhartiya Kusti Patrika*', '*Cricket Today*', '*A Guide to Tennis Lover*', '*Golf Digest India*', '*Sports Business*', '*ESPN The Magazine La Polo International*', '*Slam: A Great Basketball*', '*Runner World*', '*World Soccer*', '*Khel Jagat*', '*Cricket Samrat*', '*Sports Zone*' And '*Khel Today*'. Digital media are not lagging behind as far as sports news is concerned. Sports news covers both indoor and outdoor games including sports controversies, debates, corruption, etc. Indoor games like Table Tennis, Badminton, Wrestling, Carom, Chess, etc. are very famous. Whereas outdoor games like cricket, football, hockey, Kabaddi, Kho-Kho, etc. are the regular trends and features. Over excessive coverage to the game cricket despite not being our national game, has always remained a debatable issue as far as media analysis vis-à-vis sports news is concerned.

This type of reporting does not follow the established 'Inverted Pyramid Rule'. This is because victory becomes the main lead. Scores are the second most important part. But it goes at the end. The narration of say for example 'India winning the toss, started to bat first'. Then it's commentary in the sequence of batting order becomes the middle of the story. Here is a kind of break of 'inverted pyramid style'. The language and the style of writing a sports news is also quite different from general writing of a news report.

Thus, sports reporting is different in structure, style and presentation. And a sports reporter must be acquainted with these aspects. He must be aware of different structure, style and presentation of sports news. Moreover, he should have been keen interest in games and sports. He cannot be in university or college level player in all the games and sports. But he must have devotions in understanding the basics of the games and sports which he is covering.



## **CULTURAL REPORTING:**

This type of reporting includes cultural functions of schools, colleges, universities, and other academic institutions or cultural events taking place in any government, semi-government, and non-government organisations. Sometimes villagers for their own entertainment perform some recreational activities, which comes under the jurisdiction of cultural reporting. It covers festivals, Independence Day, Republic Day, obituaries and anniversaries of great men, etc. Generally, the obituaries and anniversaries of great towering personalities are celebrated at many places which are followed by cultural events.

A reporter while covering cultural events of any kind must have keen interest in such events. But he should not get lost in cultural events in the process of entertainment and recreation. He should not dance on the stage as sometimes the audience also joins the stage dancing in extreme circumstances. As a serious journalist towards his duties and responsibilities, he must note down all the activities, specialities of different activities. He must be keen in collecting a few most newsy, entertaining and attractive pictures of the event. At the eve, he must meet the cultural secretary, check, cross-check and multi-check correct names of the participants, chief guest, important persons on the dias. He should be pre-acquainted with such programmes and must join such programmes as a reporter with homework.

During the event, he should be alert and keep an eye on anything special which comes in between. Again, the language and style of a cultural reporting becomes a little bit different. He must be acquainted with specific words often used during the cultural programmes, events, gatherings, etc. He may break the traditional 'inverted pyramid style' if he thinks it should be written or presented in a creative style. He may use his freedom of expression, style, language and structure. Say for example, if the cultural reporter thinks that the event should be written in the form of featured news. He may combine a few elements of feature

writing like entertainment, recreation, jokes, liveliness, etc. Or if he thinks that writing a news feature is more suitable than featured news, he may do so. Again, he may mix his views at the end, if it gives some extra life to the story. A news analysis or interpretative reporting or a backgrounder is generally avoided in cultural reporting.

Cultural reporting is generally assigned to cub reporters who are inexperienced, new to the field or trainee reporter. In that case, he must consult his senior in the office before using any sort of extra liberty. It is not his discretion to make it a featured news or news feature. But he can question his immediate chief (whom he is answerable), should we make it a news feature? Should we make it a featured news story to make it livelier and more entertaining? Or should we mix our views also? If yes, then in what way? In the beginning as a cap intro? Or at the end without influencing the objectivity of the news story, especially when your senior prevents or the policy of the newspaper does not allow which your senior is already well acquainted with.

Thus, a cultural reporter, especially when he is cub, inexperienced, new, trainee, he must study the event, come with the homework, note down all the relevant points, check, cross-check with the organization about the facts and figures and must consult his senior before taking any liberty of use of extra creativity or innovation. But in journalism, the deadline of a story is the most vital in which sometimes he is not in a position to consult his senior. Then he should play a safe game and follow the basic standard principles of reporting already prescribed. Despite being neophyte, he must try to smell the policy and style sheet of his newspaper. For that the easiest method is to go back, and read the old newspapers seriously, say at least of a month or so. Despite the fact that cultural reporting is not so risky like political reporting, yet on very rare occasion it makes a controversy. For example, in one of the recent events when Lord Krishna spoke some modern dialogue about romance, it made a big controversy by the readers. It was reported by a cub reporter.

Hence, in some of the sensitive issues like God, religion, susceptibility, superstition, orthodoxy, conservativeness of the audience, etc. The cultural reporter must keep an eye on and do the required extra effort following the golden rules and murphy laws of reporting.

### **LEGISLATURE REPORTING:**

It is a very important issue and generally incorporates some controversies. This type of reporting relates to legislative activities and is mostly covered by senior reporters/ correspondent, special correspondent, chief of the bureau, etc. A reporter must know the rules, regulations and procedures of legislature assembly, since members of the legislative assembly are the law maker of the state.

The rules, regulations and procedures of legislative assembly are almost similar to that of parliament. During inter-session periods, there are conferences of presiding officers of all the houses which are presided over by the speaker of the assembly. This makes rules, regulations and procedures of the assembly more or less uniform. This type of reporting is, therefore, considered to be an important and significant feature of parliamentary democracy. Here, the Vidhan Sabha and the Vidhan Parishad are called legislature. Legislative literally means that which legislates or frames laws. It seriously involves reporting the routine proceedings of these bodies. This task of reporting generally incorporates a variety of activities of a legislature. This also includes the complexities of a legislature and debates on subject of public importance. For example, if a state government wants to bring, a new press bill, the government will take it to the legislature for comprehensive debates and discussion. The state government may initiate a public debate first and then may bring it to the assembly step by step. That is to say that legislative reporters despite being senior and experienced persons must have some knowledge of quick noting or shorthand. It often involves jotting down extremely copious notes of speeches made by ministers and members in both the house of

legislature. The exact words or quotes from the mouth of the chief minister or ministers or members must be noted for credibility specially in crucial sensitive issues. Here, the knowledge of noting down or short hand is considered to be very important because the reporter is not allowed to record the proceedings electronically either with his mobile or with extra tape recorder. Here, it is important to mention that the Indian constitution provides a bicameral legislative assembly and the council, i.e., the Vidhan Sabha and the Vidhan Parishad. As per the law, the assembly in the state is equivalent to that of the Lok Sabha and the council is equivalent to that of the Rajya Sabha. In India, there are a few states which have the Vidhan Sabha, but not the Vidhan Parishad. Conclusively, other than the basics of skilled and advanced reporting, a reporter must be fully acquainted with the right privileges, immunities and amenities bestowed on the honourable members of both the houses. Without this a legislative reporter can't work smoothly and confidently, however senior or experienced he may be

#### **DISASTER REPORTING:**

This type of reporting is executed by professionally expert reporters who minutely and meticulously examine community disaster mitigation and preparedness, providing disaster warnings, whenever possible, writing new stories on disasters, and facilitating community disaster recovery and resilience.

Here, examining community disaster mitigation and preparedness includes the watchdog function and planning approach of disaster reporter. Again they (reporter) facilitate community disaster recovery and resilience by dint of fostering community dialogue called 'form', building connections and help develop community narratives. As we all know that there may be nature-made disaster as well as man-made disaster. Both these types of disaster pose a significant risk to the human health and well-being of the people. Disaster reporting

has to constantly and continuously communicate all such aspects as communication is an essential aspect of disaster mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery.

Thus, disaster reporters have a vital role to play in protecting the lives of the people and reducing the severe damages and intolerable harms.

### **ACCIDENT REPORTING:**

This is again treated as skilled and advanced reporting. This type of reporting prescribes methods and practices for reporting, inquiring, digging, probing, and investigating accidents that can be read and understood by all stakeholders including managers, supervisors and employees.

As we all know that sometimes accidents become unavoidable due to human or system error. Even animals and birds also cause accidents. In road accidents, cows, buffalos, oxes, dogs, and donkeys all play vital role. In the night, these animals disturb the highway driving in the dark. These animals start running on the highway and their turns are uncertain. They are also in sleepy and semi-sleepy moods, especially in the night and their behaviours are uncertain. Some drivers are also drunk, and sleepy in the night leading to severe accidents.

Further, this type of reporting identifies any unsafe conditions, acts or procedures which may have caused injuries and harms to the worker and prevent others from being injured in the same manner.

Thus, accident reporting is a continuous process of organized and systematic facts collections and analysis relating to an accident which led to the loss and damage of the property, time or health of the sufferers and sometimes even loss of our precious lives. Since it is a systematic,

scientific, evaluative and academic analysis of the facts, hence it should be handled with extreme care. That is to say that reporting expertise of senior and experienced journalists is required here to mitigate the heavy public loss.

### **TRAVELOGUE REPORTING:**

travelogue is an individual's account of journey to another city, town or place. It may be written report with factual details. It may also be a narrative story about personal impressions and experiences supported by images. Since it is reported like an essay, so it is often called travelogue writing instead of travelogue reporting. Hence, we may consider it as descriptive or narrative form of reporting.

A travelogue highlights the living style, culture, civilization and heritage prevailing the place of travel. While reporting the intro or lead of a travelogue, you may provide some background about the place or city or town you are writing about and also describe your travelling conditions. Introduce the rare information's or eventual facts you want to convey to your reader based on the recordings and notes you have jotted down during your travel of the place.

Travel in itself is a very big education. It is basically an experience that leads to an extreme form of learning. Travelogues are also very instrumental in perceiving the people of a place and their pursuits, their philosophy of life and their concerns, their lifestyles, plans, pleasures and sorrows.

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Travel reporting is a genre which is becoming increasingly popular. There are a variety of travelogue. It can be in the form of an article or a feature or a book, or a blog, or a diary or a journal or a podcast or a lecture or a narrated slide show or in virtually every written or spoken form of creation. There are number of examples of travelogues online in the form of "travel blogs". But all such travel blogs cannot be described as travelogues in true sense. This is mainly because of the fact that some of the reporters or writers are less concerned with giving personal accounts of their own experiences traveling than capturing internet search traffic by providing tips, suggestions, guidelines, experiences and observations about travel.

**A traveling for entertainment and recreation must follow certain important tips:**

1. The city or the town or the place chosen for travel must be in accordance with the weather condition.
2. The place must be in accordance with my budget.
3. The stay place or hotel or guest house must be suitable and again in accordance with the budget.
4. The food and water must be suitable or adjustable else it can cause many health-related issues leading to the sabotage of the entire travel plan.
5. There must be safety and security at the place of visit.

While reporting travel and tourism, generally there are some issues relating to above five points. And in the news report such issues should not be mixed despite the fact that the travel was full of pleasure, entertainment, recreation, education, experience, cultural exchange and exposure, purchases of useful and relevant items, gifts for friends, relatives and neighbours. Thus, the purpose of a travel reporting is to justify the purpose of the tour and the money that was spent. If the tour has been completed with minimum time, minimum energy, minimum

cost, minimum resources then it will be described as effective tour or travel or trip. And this must be incorporated in the travel reporting with the fullest description and narration. Finally, this type of report should be completed with a brief summary of overall experience, including reasons why others would wish to visit the location of narration.

### **OBITUARY REPORTING:**

It is a news story or news feature or sometimes even news article about recently deceased person. Though obituary reporting tries and tends to focus on the positive aspects of the subjects' life including the major achievements, awards and contributions. In the words of Nigel Farndale, the Obituaries Editor of "The Times", "Obituaries should be life affirming rather than gloomy but they should also be opinionated, leaving the reader with a strong sense of whether the subject lived a good life or bad; whether they were right or wrong in the heading of their public affairs.

Now a glaring question arises as to how to report an obituary. Again, like travel reporting, it is a description or narration of a news events. First of all, this type of report must announce the death with date, time, place, reason of death and who are left behind the person and his major responsibilities. Second, it must recount the ins and outs of their life with descriptive approach. Third, it must include the deep relations and liabilities towards the surviving family members. Fourth, the obituary reporter may add a special message or poem. Fifth, the reporter must choose a suitable obituary picture or any other visual depiction. Last but not the least important is that it must include the comprehensive details about the funeral or the memorial.

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**Intro or lead** or first paragraph should include:

1. On (day, date), (full name of deceased) of (city of residence) passed away at the age of... years
2. The family of (full name of deceased) is saddened to announce his/ her passing
3. It is with deep sorrow and much love that we mourn the passing of 'x'.
4. It is with profound sadness that the family of 'x' announce his/ her peaceful passing on (day, date) at the age of .... years.

**The second paragraph** should include the followings:

1. He/ She will be lovingly remembered by his/ her husband, children, grandchildren and other relatives.
2. He/ She will be dearly missed by her friends at the .... (Name of the group/ organization)

**The third and fourth** paragraph will be optional depending upon the situation and circumstances of the deceased.

**The fifth paragraph** will include the following:

1. A visitation/ prayer service will be held at (time), on (day, date) at the location and address of funeral home.

2. A memorial service will be held at a later date.

The sixth and seventh paragraph will be optional depending upon the situations and circumstances of the deceased.

The following is a sample of fictitious example of obituary reporting:

It is with extremely great sadness that the family of Ajmer Singh Asthana announces his sudden passing away on Monday, 24th October, 2022 at the age of 66.

Asthana will be lovingly remembered by her wife of 60 years, Mrs. Sheetal Asthana, children, Bikku and Kikku, grandchildren, Rinku and Dinku and many other family members and friends.

A prayer service will be held on 26th October, 2022 at 10:00 a.m. at Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyay Religious centre, Khagodia (Bihar).

#### **CONFERENCE REPORTING:**

Such reporting is news of inauguration, technical sessions and valedictory. It also includes a critical analysis based on so many papers presented by various experts.

As we all know that a conference is based on comprehensive discussions, deliberations and exchange of views. It may vary from regional to national and national to international. It is generally reported in following manner:

First, a list of names, positions and organisations of all attendees.

Second, pay attention and note down every point and issue in details.

Third, observe the conference agenda and record whether there is any derivation from the agenda.

Fourth, write the report in an audience friendly language, style, format and structure.

For example, follow inverted pyramid style as far as it is possible. Also follow 5 Ws and one H. Then look at 7 Cs technique. And finally follow the golden rules and murphy laws (explained in earlier lesson) to the best possible extent.

Fifth, write the report with the fullest possible objectivity so that it may not appear biased or one-sided.

Thus maintain the ultimate thumb rule of reporting, i.e., factuality, accuracy, balance, fairness, reliability, authenticity, validity etc

#### **SEMINAR REPORTING:**

A seminar is a gathering or meeting of intellectuals of same or related subject. They interact, discuss deliberate and present their comprehensive ideas. It is relatively smaller than conferences. It sometimes also takes the shape of a workshop where exercises and assignments are also done. A seminar may be disciplinary or interdisciplinary, but a conference may be multi-disciplinary and transdisciplinary in nature. Though seminar and workshop are also minutely different, yet sometimes they are put together called Seminar-cum-workshop. A seminar is less formal and is a form of an audience institution or offered by a commercial or professional organisation.

Seminar reporting is very similar to conference reporting. But as explained, a seminar is minute, meticulous, having smaller thematic jurisdiction. Its reporting technique also follows the similar techniques of that of a conference reporting.

Hence, its reporting takes care of the following steps:

First, a list of all participants, paper presenters, chairpersons and co-chairpersons of technical sessions, key note speaker, chief guest, presiding officer, etc. is prepared.

Second, know the theme and sub- themes of all the technical sessions.

Third, collect most of the hand-outs, attend sessions and note down points and issues in detail.

Fourth, write the report.....

And at the end, factuality, accuracy, balance, objectivity, fairness, reliability, authenticity, validity etc. must be taken care here also like any other form of reporting.

#### **HUMAN INTEREST STORIES:**

Human interest reporting is popularly known as human interest stories. It includes human interest news, human interest feature, human interest news feature and human interest featured news.

Human interest stories are those in which man is directly involved in the interesting event.

For example, somebody eating glass, somebody eating snakes or irons, bee hub in the beard of a saint etc.

Such events can be presented in the form of hard news or in the form of a soft news or news feature or featured news or news analysis or backgrounder as far as human interests are concerned.

Earlier interpretation and opinion were areas reserved for editorial columns. But now interpretation has become an integral part of reporter's duty. He not only collects and reports the facts, but also adds

explanation or interpretation wherever necessary. Here views or comments or interpretation are mixed based on the available news. This is a welcome step. But if it is other way round, then it is a curse.

In human interest stories, human interest is the prime content. They deal with ordinary persons in extra-ordinary circumstances. They touch the heart and the soul of the audience and appeal to his emotions. When human interest stories are written in the form of a news feature, then its news value content is lower as compared to hard news. Backgrounders, situations and story describing 'how' of an event come in this category of features. When Charles Sobhraj and David Hall were arrested in Goa, the following news feature issued by PTI was carried by several newspapers (Shrivastav: 2000):

#### **AS DRAMATIC AS THE ESCAPE**

MUMBAI, April 7(PTI): 'Is this the way, you treat innocent foreigners?' Was how the ace criminal Charles Sobhraj reacted when the special squad of the Bombay police closed in on him and associate David Hall at the 'O Coqueiro' restaurant and bar at Purvorium.....

The above example is only the headline and the lead of the story. Here also the human being 'Charles Sobhraj' is the directly involved and is the main content. Hence, it is a human-interest story which can be categorised as news feature

Similarly in the featured news category of human-interest stories, the hard news content with the news value is higher than that of a news feature.

Now let us give one more example of human-interest story in the form of an anniversary feature. These who specialise in anniversary feature are called 'Calendar journalists'. That is to say that even this type of feature can have a human-interest angle, which can be exemplified with the following human interest news story published in the "Indian Express".

## **WILL HER DREAMS DIE YOUNG**

**By Vichitra Sharma**

NEW DELHI, March 7: Freedom, equality, justice is words 'Kunni' does not understand. Her quest in the life is to break loose from the shackles of economic drudgery.

"Yes, I too have dreams. Lots of dreams", she says face lighting up. Just a fleeting glimpse of sheer joy in the midst of poverty, humiliation, dirt and starvation.

"Dreams for my children, for myself and my husband." There is a long pause. "But there is no day or night for us. It's an endless span of anxiety and despondence.

The above is just a part of the story to better understand human interest story. The same story was published by 'The Times of India' with a different heading: "Horror of Poverty Keeps Her Haunting".

Again, human interest stories may be written in the form of light or entertaining features which may or may not have a news peg. They are meant for entertainment. Middles appearing in several daily papers are examples of this kind of feature.

Further, human interest stories also deal with personalities which are relevant, significant or interesting. Such features should be high in human interest content. Obituaries also come under this category.

Thus, human interest reporting is quite different from other news story and a rare combination of news, feature, article, featured news, news feature, news analysis, backgrounder, situations, story describing 'how', etc.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTING:**

This type of reporting is one of the fastest emerging areas of journalism and mass communication. This is mainly because environmental issues like natural distortion, noise pollution, water pollution, air pollution, ozone hole etc are one of the most challenging issues of society today. As a result, the environment is coming up as an independent beat and separate area of reporting. This type of reporting mainly pertains to the preparation, presentation and communication related to an organization's interaction with the natural environment. This is the most commonly related to self-reporting by organization despite the fact that reporting about other organisation by government agencies and several other independent entities, non-governmental bodies and pressure groups turns out to be a significant pressure for environmental accountability.

There are mainly three types of environmental reporting: (1) Internal Executive Reporting, (2) Public Sustainability Reporting and (3) Shareholder Environmental Reporting.

(1) Internal Executive Reporting: This offers a general view of environmental outputs. It gives a superficial picture of what the business compliance situation is and alerts all of them to the emerging environmental issues.

(2) Public Sustainability Reporting: This is fast becoming status quo for big and small business and is a great way of showering off all the hard work your company is putting into being seriously more environmentally responsible. This type of reporting gets presented to the public which identifies corporate sustainability goals and not just what has been achieved so far.

(3) Shareholder Environmental Reporting: In this type of reporting, shareholders and other key decision makers are primarily interested which may be different from the factual data collected by the regulators. Shareholders are generally not interested in getting the exact

quantity of greenhouse gas emissions which the processes released this year as compared to last year.

The main purpose of this type of reporting is that they can make informed decisions about natural resource management and set environmental policy. Moreover, this reporting helps us in understanding whether policy initiatives or environmental management approaches are efficient and effective over the period of time.

While writing environmental report, the basic principles of reporting as discussed earlier are followed as this is not treated as purely science or semi-science reporting.

#### **HEALTH REPORTING:**

It relates to a variety curable and chronic diseases. This area of reporting is not as simple as it appears to be. It is a complex, cumbersome and complicated beat to cover. It needs a judicious balance of subject knowledge, research and sensitivity. When you are covering health news, you will be disseminating

information which will not just affect the general public but also medical professionals and even the government. As we all know that health is a very important and relevant part of government policy making and policy makers often depend on information, they receive from professional media persons.

Since health reporting is a very sensitive issue, so it should be handled with fullest care.

There is a huge chunk of health-related information in the public domain. But all of them are not reliable and credible. A lot of eventual facts may be speculative and erroneous. Hence, it becomes the bounden duty of a health reporter to be minute, meticulous, sensitive, objective and fair. Health reporting are of various types which are as follows

- (1) Business-oriented health reporting
- (2) Consumer health-related reporting



- (3) Corruption, paid news and unethical health reporting
- (4) Disease outbreaks related reporting
- (5) Drugs and disease related reporting
- (6) Health influencing reporting
- (7) Health infrastructure related health reporting
- (8) Health policy related reporting
- (9) Public and community health reporting

Thus, health reporting is so vital, sensitive, speculated and challenging that it should be handled with utmost care. It should not be taken casually or lightly. Generally, for a cub reporter, things will appear extremely complex and complicated to comprehend.

Hence, it is extremely difficult or almost impossible for a health reporter to convert the raw information into an easily understandable message without the knowledge of ins and outs of the sensitivity of the issue. Such reports should be written in crystal clear language and style so that a common reader should easily grasp and comfortably understand the health news.

The reporter must be very well aware of health procedures, terms and terminologies. In such sensitive matters, the reporter must check, cross-check and multi-check before finally submitting the story. All other styles, structures, rules, regulations, steps, etc. (as discussed comprehensively in previous lessons) must also be strictly followed for health reporting in addition to the precautionary measures discussed above

### **INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING:**

Almost every news requires some investigation in an absolute sense. But when we talk of investigative reporting in a specific sense, it involves some major government development or big business or multinational company or corporation or some prominent political party or politician or some mafia king or other gangs indulged in illegal activities on large scale

influencing the government. In this type of reporting, the journalist deeply investigates a single issue of social interest. It is a master detective angle which requires a lot of preparation and planning. In such reporting, the journalist tries to dive deep into the facts, digs, excavates, probes and unveil matters that are concealed either intentionally by someone in a position of power, or inadvertently, behind a chaotic mass of situations and circumstances. It analyses and exposes all important, useful and relevant facts to the public.

Media professor Steve Weinberg defines investigative as "Reporting through one's own initiative and work product, matters of importance to readers, viewers or listeners. Noted journalist Arun Shourie defines it as "When someone somewhere is trying to hide something that is news. All other things are advertisements."

Media theorist Hugo De Burgh defines it, "An investigative journalist is a man or woman whose profession is to discover the truth and to identify lapses from it in whatever media may be available. The act of doing this generally is called investigative journalism and is distinct from apparently similar work done by police, lawyers, auditors and regulatory bodies, not legally founded and closely connected to publicity."

Hence, primarily investigative reporting is exposing corruption in the field of politics or economy or society or education or religion or sports etc. Hence it requires courage, confidence, patience, perseverance, a sense of justice and commitment to the higher values of life. It is a long assignment and may take months or even more to get a story. It tells how powerful people promote nepotism, how the government conspires, how ministers grab and squander funds, how the high ranked officials deny promotions of the meritorious juniors, and above all how people suppress important facts.

Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein were two cub reporters of the Washington Post in the USA. They exposed the US President Richard Nixon in "Watergate Scandal". It is considered

to be one of the biggest scandals of the world. This scandal stemmed from then US President's continuous efforts to cover up its involvement in the 17th June, 1972 break-in of the Democratic National Committee headquarters at Washington, D.C. As a result, an impeachment process against the US President Nixon started. The Nixon White House tapes exposed him that he conspired to conceal the activities and later tried to use federal officials to deflect the investigation. And ultimately President Nixon was impeached and had to quit his office, thanks to the initiatives by two cub reporters. In this process, 69 officials were indicted and 48 officials who were top officials of US President Nixon's administration were convicted.

Yet another Indian example of scandals of Tihar Central Jail. Aswini Sarin was a reporter, when Arun Shourie was the executive editor of The Indian Express, in which the newspaper pulled off a smart journalistic coup which exposed a sordid flesh trade. He smelled some deep corruption in the jail after interacting with some released women prisoners, who hinted him that "If go inside the jail, then only you can understand and feel the entire problems." Then Ashwin committed a crime, bought a young girl called Kamla with pre-understand and got himself arrested in the Tihar Central jail. He investigated and started the process. Arun Shourie and Ashwani Sarin worked secretly and neither the employer of Indian Express Ramnath Goenka nor the wife of Aswani called Uma knew what was cooking in the Press. Arun Shourie was of the view that the Express wants to fight it out till the last, and this was the main motive behind the story. Shourie realised that since the matter was so sensitive that a straight story would not have the necessary impact. Hence, a deep investigation was needed. Shourie opined, "We will ask the court if law can be broken for a legitimate investigation and afterwards approach the court with a request to initiate steps to mitigate the evil laid bare by the investigation and thereby enlarge the scope of citizen rights.

Yet another investigation was carried out by Indian Express under the leadership of Arun Shourie. And that is "Bhagalpur blinding case". This time Arun Shourie assigned this task to another reporter from Bihar called 'Arun Sinha' who laid bare the horror of Bhagalpur blindings, which led to the PIL and flared up like a fire. It is important to mention here that most of the reporters feel that it is not worth exploring a severely dangerous situation to come out with such stories. But both Ashwani Sarin and Arun Sinha did get cash awards for their initiatives and received a lot of public applause.

Yet another example of investigative reporting of cement factory scandal by then Chief Minister of Maharashtra Mr Abdul Rahman Antulay. This was also initiated by Arun Shourie and his team from the Indian Express. Antulay had to battle a prolonged court case following the famous cement factory scandal that ultimately led to his exit from such a coveted post and also marked the decline of his political career in Maharashtra.

There are many such latest examples of investigative reporting like "Farmer oppose land acquisition for project" (By B.S. Malik, The Tribune, Chandigarh), "He finds abuse of Power" (By Saurabh Malik, The Tribune, Chandigarh), "Mining contractor being favoured: Kiran" (By Arun Sharma, The Tribune,

Chandigarh), forest officials put onus on other departments (By Surender Dhiman, The Tribune, Chandigarh) and nailing the Aravalli lie (By Neha Dixit, Tehelka, 21 March, 2009).

#### **INTERPRETATIVE REPORTING:**

This type of reporting is based on insight, hindsight and foresight. Here the reporters give the readers the background of the events, the inner layer of the story and describe the probability of the consequences. This type of a reporting requires a reporter to go beyond the routine and surficial fundamentals of events and provide a more in-depth report.

Lester Markel, Editor of The Sunday New York Times defines interpretative reporting as " It is reporting news depth with care, news refreshed with background materials to make it comprehensive and meaningful. It is objective judgement based on background knowledge of a situation or appraisal of an event which are essential part of news

William Turner Catledge, Editor of The New York Times defines it as, "it is giving the reading public accurate information as fully as the importance of any story dictates".

Brant Houson, Executive Director of Investigative Reporters and Editors defined it as "it goes beyond the basic facts of an event or topic to provide context, analysis and possible consequences".

Curtis D. MacDongall in his pioneering book 'Interpretative Reporting' writes that when the first world war broke out, most of the people of the United States were taken aback. Their surprise knew no bounds. They were not in a position to explain its causes. This led to the variation in the trend and style of reporting. As a result, when the second world war took place in 1939, a large number of people in the United States expected it or at least knew it was likely to take place.

In India also, the frequency of interpretative reporting has gone up tremendously especially after the advent of television channels and social/digital media. An interpretative reporter must not be confined to his own discipline. Instead of being disciplinary in nature, he should be interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, and trans-disciplinary. Hence, he should be very well acquainted with social sciences

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He must realise that such reporting is not an isolated incident, but an inevitable link to a chain of events. He should not be rigid, orthodox, conservative, superstitious, biased, or stereotype and should not adversely affect his intelligent perception and professional capability.

### **DEVELOPMENT REPORTING:**

Development is a continuous process of qualitative and quantitative change in a positive direction. And development reporting is that which not only highlights as to how much development has taken place, but also persuades and motivates the government to participate in developmental activities. This type of reporting involves writing about programmes and policies and the resulting economic change. It is a type of reporting and writing on topics related to the process of economic development (Steele, 2009, p. 401).

If we look at it in a broader perspective and wider spectrum, it not only includes economic growth or economic development. Other than economic development, it also includes social, political, educational, cultural, religious, spiritual, scientific, technological and environmental, etc. That is to say that it keeps an eye on overall growth in a balanced way. And such issues like economy, politics, society, education, culture, religion, spiritualism, science, technology, environment, etc are deeply interrelated, inter-linked, inter-connected, and inter-woven.

Thus, this type of reporting should bring about overall awareness among readers, listeners, viewers, users, and audience of even traditional and alternative media.

The concept of development is changing with the changing time. It also has different meaning in different countries. It is differently taken by people of different backgrounds. It is well said

“what is the sauce for the goose may not be the sauce for the gander”. What is food for the cat, may not be the food for the rat

What was development in 60's may not be the same in this new millennium. In 60's , growth in agriculture was considered the only factor for development, while the same concept shifted from agriculture to industry. Then industrial development was emphasized. But in the new millennium, a lot of industries have largely polluted out environment and ecological system. Hence, experts now emphasize on controlling environmental pollution and ecological balances

In this way, the concept of sustainable development emerged among journalists and media persons including reporters. This type of development talks of a development which is long-lasting and stable and cares for the future generations. This includes health, education, art, literature, culture, social relations, family integration, rural re-orientation, and upliftment.

Thus, a reporter has to minutely and meticulously understand all these issues, aspects, problems, their possible remedies, prospects and write story accordingly. Hence, reporting development is hard, difficult and challenging task. More so because this type of reporting gets very little space in almost all the media.

#### **FOLLOW UP:**

A follow-up is not required in a routine or generalized kind of a news item. There is a concept in journalism that a good reporter should follow a story till a solution comes or an action is executed also called "impact journalism".

When the problem is serious, stable, long-lasting, and authorities are continuously turning a deaf ear, then follow-up is urgently required. Basically, a follow-up is to provide additional, missing, hidden, unexplored (earlier), amended additional or supplementary information.

When a complete picture is created by the reporter, then even for the authorities, it becomes

convenient to execute. In most cases, the authorities take action, when the problem is presented in a systematic, evaluative, comparative, objective and reliable manner. Thus, it is repeatedly reported if the event is unresolved, serious and unexpected.

### **SUMMARY:**

Types of reporting in journalism refer to the various approaches that journalists use to report news stories. Here is a brief summary of the types of reporting covered in the chapter:

- **Breaking news:** This type of reporting involves covering an event as it is happening, often providing updates in real-time.
- **Spot news:** Spot news reporting is similar to breaking news but covers a broader range of stories, including crime, accidents, and disasters.
- **Investigative reporting:** Investigative journalism involves in-depth research and reporting to uncover information about a specific topic or issue.
- **Feature writing:** Feature writing focuses on storytelling and providing context and background information to a news story.
- **Specialized reporting:** Specialized reporting covers specific fields such as sports, business, or science, and requires specialized knowledge and skills.
- **Multimedia reporting:** Multimedia reporting uses a range of media, such as text, photos, video, and audio, to tell a story and engage readers.
- **Citizen journalism:** Citizen journalism involves individuals reporting on events and sharing their experiences through social media and other platforms.

The chapter emphasizes the importance of accuracy, impartiality, and ethics in reporting and highlights the need for reporters to be adaptable, skilled, and knowledgeable to succeed in the fast-paced field of journalism



**KEY WORDS:**

Investigative reporting

Feature writing

Specialized reporting (sports, business, science)

Multimedia reporting

Citizen journalism

Accuracy

Impartiality

Ethics

**SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTION:**

- What are the different types of reporting in journalism?
- How does news reporting differ from feature reporting?
- What are the key characteristics of investigative reporting?
- How do opinion pieces differ from news articles?
- What is the purpose of review reporting?
- How does broadcast reporting differ from print reporting?
- How does citizen journalism differ from traditional journalism?
- What are the ethical considerations journalists must keep in mind while reporting?
- How can journalists balance the need for accuracy with the need for speed?
- What are some of the challenges facing journalists in the digital age when it comes to reporting?

## CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. What are the different types of reporting in journalism? Provide brief explanations for each.
2. How does news reporting differ from feature reporting? Give examples of each.
3. What are the key characteristics of investigative reporting? Explain why this type of reporting is important.
4. How do opinion pieces differ from news articles? Give examples of each.
5. What is the purpose of review reporting? Give an example of a review article.
6. How does broadcast reporting differ from print reporting? Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each medium.
7. What is citizen journalism, and how does it differ from traditional journalism? Give examples of citizen journalism in action.
8. What are some ethical considerations that journalists must keep in mind while reporting? Give examples of situations where ethical dilemmas may arise.
9. How can journalists balance the need for accuracy with the need for speed in their reporting? Discuss some strategies for ensuring accuracy in a fast-paced news environment.
10. What are some of the challenges facing journalists in the digital age when it comes to reporting? Discuss how technology has changed the way news is reported and consumed.

## REFERENCES

- "The Elements of Journalism: What News people Should Know and the Public Should Expect" by Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel - This book discusses the principles of good journalism and the importance of different types of reporting, including investigative reporting, interpretive reporting, and explanatory reporting.
- "The Investigative Reporter's Handbook: A Guide to Documents, Databases, and Techniques" by Brant Houston - This book is focused specifically on investigative reporting and provides practical guidance on how to conduct in-depth research and interviews, and how to organize and present findings.
- "Writing for Story: Craft Secrets of Dramatic Nonfiction" by Jon Franklin - This book offers insights into the craft of narrative nonfiction writing, which is a type of reporting that involves telling a story through real-life characters and events.
- "Data Journalism Handbook" edited by Jonathan Gray, Liliana Bounegru, and Lucy Chambers - This book explores the emerging field of data journalism, which involves using data analysis and visualization tools to uncover stories and trends in large data sets.
- "Broadcast News Writing, Reporting, and Producing" by Ted White - This book focuses on the techniques of broadcast journalism, including news writing, reporting, and producing for television and radio.

## **CHAPTER NO. 5**

### **TYPES OF WRITING**

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

- Introducing the different forms of writing in journalism: The chapter will aim to provide an overview of the various types of writing that are commonly used in journalism, such as news reporting, feature writing, opinion pieces, investigative journalism, and more.
- Exploring the purpose and characteristics of each type: The chapter will delve into the specific goals and features of each type of writing, including the tone, style, and structure commonly used in each.
- Analysing examples of different types of writing: The chapter will provide examples of each type of writing to help readers understand how they are used in practice and to identify the key elements that make each type effective.
- Providing tips for improving writing skills: The chapter will offer advice and tips for writers looking to improve their skills in different types of writing, such as how to write a compelling news story or how to craft a persuasive opinion piece.
- Highlighting the importance of ethics in journalism: The chapter will emphasize the importance of ethical considerations in all types of journalism writing, such as accuracy, fairness, and transparency, and discuss how these principles apply to each type of writing.

## **INTRODUCTION:**

Journalism is a field that encompasses a wide range of writing styles and formats. From hard-hitting investigative reports to human interest features, from opinion pieces to news briefs, journalists use different types of writing to inform, engage, and persuade their audiences.

Understanding the different types of writing in journalism is essential for aspiring journalists, as it allows them to develop the skills necessary to succeed in this field. In this chapter, we will explore the various types of writing in journalism, their purposes, characteristics, and audiences. We will examine examples of each type of writing, highlighting what makes them effective and how they are used in practice. We will also provide tips for improving writing skills in each category and discuss the importance of ethics in journalism. Whether you are just starting your journalism career or looking to expand your writing repertoire, this chapter will provide a valuable foundation for understanding and mastering the different types of writing in journalism.

## **NEWS STORY:**

A news story in journalism is a written or spoken report of an event, issue, or topic of interest to the general public. The goal of a news story is to inform readers or viewers about what happened, when it happened, where it happened, who was involved, and why it matters.

News stories can cover a wide range of topics, from breaking news events such as natural disasters, political scandals, and terrorist attacks to feature stories about interesting people, places, or events. Journalists who cover news stories work for newspapers, TV stations, radio stations, and online news outlets, and they typically follow a specific set of guidelines and practices to ensure their reporting is accurate, fair, and balanced.

When a journalist writes a news story, they typically start by gathering information about the topic. This may involve conducting interviews with witnesses, experts, and officials, reviewing documents or other materials related to the story, and researching the topic online or in print sources.

Once the journalist has gathered enough information, they will typically organize it into a clear and coherent narrative that follows a logical structure. This may involve starting with the most important details, such as who was involved and what happened, and then providing additional context and analysis to help readers or viewers understand why the story matters.

Throughout the reporting process, journalists must adhere to ethical standards and principles of accuracy, fairness, and impartiality. They must verify all information they receive, seek out multiple sources, and strive to provide a balanced and unbiased account of the story. They must also respect the privacy and dignity of the people they interview or write about, and avoid sensationalizing or exaggerating the facts of the story.

In conclusion, a news story in journalism is an important way for people to stay informed about current events and issues that affect their lives. By following strict guidelines and practices, journalists can ensure that their reporting is accurate, fair, and trustworthy, and help to uphold the important role of the free press in society.

### **THE STRUCTURE OF A NEWS STORY**

All the news stories are structured in an anti-pyramid style so that the major details of the story can be emphatically presented in the beginning and the successive part goes with minor details of lesser importance. It helps the reader to just know the crux of the story in the beginning itself so that he can save the time if he is running short of time

### **HEADLINE**

The headline should be simple and direct sentence. It is written in simple present and active voice capable of being understood easily.

## **LEAD**

Lead refers to the first paragraph of a news story. The lead provides the substance of the news story. The most important part of the story is included in the Lead paragraph

A lead could be written in many ways taking in to account which part of the story is very newsworthy. In news where the prime minister dies, the important part is 'who' dies. So, the Lead paragraph becomes a who Lead. In the same way, there are many Leads like who lead, what lead, when lead, where lead, why lead and how lead (these five Ws and one H are the basic elements of a news story) a news story is supposed to answer or satisfy all the five Ws and one H.

## **DIFFERENT TYPES OF LEADS**

Leads can be further classified as follows

1. Summary Lead: as it has been already discussed, these leads give the summary or the substance of the news. It is a conventional type of writing lead paragraphs.
2. Anecdotal Lead: anecdotes are interesting stories that attract the readers and compel to read further to the successive paragraphs. Some leads start with attractive anecdotes
3. Question Lead: some Leads start with some questions which provoke or puzzle the readers.
4. Question Lead: some Leads start with some questions which provoke or puzzle the readers.

5. Quotation Lead: Lead can begin with a quotation. And the subsequent paragraphs will be the demonstration and substantiation of that quote in putting it in relation to a particular event.

The essential components of a News story are

1. Date Line: A date line includes the name of the place of the incident, the date on which the story occurred.
2. By-Line: The by line consists of the name of the reporter
3. Credit Line: The name of the person or agency providing the photos. It could be News agency, supplying news.

## **FEATURES**

What is a feature? The briefest answer is: 'anything that is not news'. However, simply and crisply stated, a feature article is also a type of journalistic writing that 'entertains and informs.' Described precisely and in other words, a feature article is a piece written with a view to elaborate about an exclusive or a particular characteristic distinct, special, marked, specific designated information or details of an issue, knowledge or guidance on a given event or a happening, subject or a place. It is not a news story. Currently, since the print media, particularly the daily newspapers, news magazines, and newsletters carrying news reports are experiencing tough times due to declining circulation, and huge financial downturn, feature articles and feature stories are getting increased attention for attracting higher readerships and beefing up their presence in the marketplace. This is particularly so because features are written in simple, casual, and popular language, and are easily digested by the reader. These writings are of lasting value with a longer shelf life and are not perishable like a news item. Also, more readers want to read features because these are hugely instrumental in informing them on issues, they are ignorant about and places they will



never visit. As stated by Sharon Wheeler, a noted British journalism teacher, who adds further that 'they (readers) want to be given an insight into a famous person's life and what makes them tick...want to be outraged when a miscarriage of justice is revealed...a complicated issue to be broken down into layperson's terms...want an armchair view of the gig we couldn't attend.' This is exactly what today's features in newspapers and news magazines are expected to achieve. But the news stories can't.

A Feature story is a piece of news item written with a particular intention. So, it can be rather subjective as the writer enjoys more freedom to insert his or her personal views in it, in contrast to a news story where only objective facts are meant to be passed to the audience. In an ordinary news story, the reader can never pass on any special comments of his own as it is not permitted. His duty is to inform an event as such as it really happened. But, in feature writing, personal comments on a particular topic are entertained, along with anecdotes, quotations etc added to it so as to highlight the views of writer. The intention could be to inform, or entertain or both, i.e., infotainment (information + entertainment). In feature writing, the topic need not necessarily be on a current issue. It could be of any general topic of interest. So, the factor of updating needed for news story never comes here

#### **KINDS/TYPES/FORMS/CATEGORIES OF FEATURES:**

Actually, there are no rigidly set up kinds or categories of features. However, eight categories of features have been recognized by many western- particularly British and American- professional journalists and noted journalism academicians.

These include:

**News Features:** Such features originate from and are based on important news happenings, involving VIPs or notorious criminals or influential personalities. The Indian Express, Delhi, specializes in such features - its recent news features on noted criminal, Yasin Bhatkhal and

his associates, who are now in prison; Uttarakhand floods that caused huge damage to lives and property; jailing of Bihar's former chief minister, other state politicians and former IAS officers in the aftermath of the recent Supreme Court judgment on convicted politicians are some examples.

**Special Event Features:** India holding Commonwealth Games, Delhi University organizing Annual Session of the 90th Indian Science Congress, India hosting the UNESCO Annual Meet or Delhi being the venue of Commonwealth Heads of Government Conference (CHOGM) etc. would all be deemed as special events. Everything connected with these events would form excellent theme for a feature.

**Personality Feature:** Doing a personal profile of the United Nations General Secretary, Ban ki-Moon, visiting India for the first time after his appointment; or writing about the former US President's wife, Michelle Obama's, journey to the American White House could be good subjects under this head

**Interview Feature:** Talking to maestro singer Lata Mangeshkar, after she was awarded the Bharat Ratna about her life story, and her life-long achievements as a musician: tracing her early career years can be an ideal topic for an interview feature. Also, stories like speaking to the 70-year-old Japanese who scaled the Mount Everest without oxygen would also be an excellent idea for such a story

**How-to Features:** Such features are written for guiding users on how to operate or handle sensitive, costly equipment, doing hazardous experiments or executing dangerous jobs. The purpose is to instruct the user step –by- step, operation by operation, for performing the activity, or accomplishing a tedious job expected from the gadget or equipment. This helps the user to avoid accidents.

**Background Features:** Doing a report on an incident that may be connected with an old, historical or ancient event. When the Clock Tower in Delhi's Chandani Chowk fell down several years ago, many newspapers wrote detailed pieces on its background. Similarly, when the Indian Science Congress holds its annual session readers would like to learn about its history, functions, achievements, etc. These tit-bits can form highly readable background features.

**Investigative Features:** Investigating the criminal career of the Bhatkhal brothers and their associates can be an investigative feature. Probing the causes of communal flare-ups in different part of the country would be good subjects for investigative features.

**Colour Features:** These features are generally written on the subjects of which the authors have deep knowledge and thorough understanding, besides adequate command of the language. Often, these topics tend to be light, more descriptive, with frequent creative play on the words, capturing the moods of a special occasion such as a fair, holiday season with happiness and mirth flirting all around.

**Adventure Features:** Remember the young Kolkata girl, Bachandri Pal, the first Indian woman to have climbed the Mount Everest. Hers was a unique feat, and that formed a subject for an adventure feature. In this category also included are first time travels to tough, highly hazardous, frightening regions of Asia, Africa, Antarctica, etc.

**Opinion Features:** Such pieces are usually based on expertise or research and with the single aim of expressing personal views on a crucial subject. That person's findings should, however, weigh heavily in the concerned circles. Historian Irfan Habib on Nehru-Jinnah connections, India's former foreign Secretary's view on Sino-Indian border dispute, or US role in the Middle East, or Chinese activities in the South-East Asia, US's former Secretary of

State advocating a permanent membership for India in the UN Security Council come under this category

**Human Interest Features:** A young boy who lost both his hands in a rail accident, and paints beautiful sceneries with a paint brush tucked under his teeth, or the brush held in his feet or a high school passout government clerk winning Rs. 5-crore in the television shows “Kaun Banega Crorepati” show would be most readable feature stories.

**Development Features:** As you would have understood, development communication is an integral part of modern-day media research and education. Development stories from remote, far-flung areas could present fascinating account and be interesting feature reflecting the progress ordinary people there have made.

#### **STRUCTURE OF A FEATURE:**

- **Headline:** Headline often decides whether the feature has to be read or not. So, it should be as catchy that the reader should tend to start reading. Though the content is very fine, an unattractive headline may deter the reading
- **The introduction:** The introduction should be so persuasive that the reader should be motivated to enter in to the body of the story and move further.
- **The body:** The body of the feature should reflect the details of the story. Different kinds of views on a particular issue or topic could be represented without losing the underlying and unifying rhythm and tempo of the story.
- **Conclusion:** The conclusion usually takes a definite perspective and a standpoint on a topic and tries to convince its audience by the detailed descriptions and analysis made by the writer

While writing feature stories, it is important for the writer to understand which kind of audience he or she is going to address. The feature should be prepared in accordance with the taste of the audience. For instance, a feature on Dalits in India may not necessarily satisfy the interest of scientists or doctors, who are generally interested in features related to recent developments in medical system. The writer is supposed to bear in mind his intention of what he wants to do, such as to persuade, motivate, warn, entertain, inform, instruct, analyse etc.

### **ARTICLE WRITING**

Articles appear on the editorial page of a newspaper. Unlike Features, it is a seriously written document with scholarly approach. The topic is presented after the detailed study and deliberations on the topic. The writer thoroughly and comprehensively reflects upon the various aspects of the topic with the support of deep knowledge on it. Articles try to educate and inform rather than to entertain. The conclusion is also added in the end in a sober style. So, an article is expected to be written with sense of credibility and accuracy after extensive research in to the topic. The article contains the element of analysing and judging a current situation as well as the prediction of the future based on the analysis of the situation in question.

### **STRUCTURE OF AN ARTICLE**

An article consists of headline, introduction, body and conclusion

**HEADLINE:** The headline should be catchy for the reader

**INTRODUCTION:** the Introduction is also called the Lead paragraph. As its very name suggests, it leads the reader to take a decision on whether to move

**BODY:** The Body of the article comprehensively analyses and discusses the topic in great detail

**CONCLUSION:** The conclusion of the article can be a summing up of the analysis or a Prediction of the future of the topic, in terms of its significance

### **EDITORIAL WRITING**

Editorial can be called the conscience of a newspaper or the mirror of its opinions. It can also be called the voice of a newspaper. It is a well- studied and carefully structured composition in a sober style with a serious approach on a significant issue. It provides the newspaper to present its policies, views, perspectives and stand points regarding many burning current issues. It should be very objective, unbiased, expertise and logical point of view. It tries to influence public opinion so as to make its readers to subscribe to its own perspective. It informs as well as calls in to action.

Editorials can be broadly classified as interpretative editorials (enriching the dimension of the readers' knowledge by interpreting various aspects of an event), Action-oriented editorials (calling for an action from the part of public or officials due to the seriousness of an issue) Critical editorial (strongly criticising something) and Humorous editorial (adding to the humorous perspective to an issue)

### **THE STRUCTURE OF AN EDITORIAL**

An editorial consists of a headline, an introduction of the topic, a body of serious critical analysis and a powerful conclusion.

### **MIDDLES**

As the very term itself suggests, middles come in the middle of an editorial page. That is, it is positioned below the article and above the Letters to the Editor. To put in another word, they occupy the centre of an editorial page. Contrary to the tone of article, middle is presented in a humorous and satirical tone at major political and social developments. As a satirical piece of

writing, they try to expose the hypocrisy of politicians or the drawback of highly appreciated projects and ridicule the stake holders of main stream political and social spheres.

Unlike the satires which are meant for the humiliation of those who are targeted, Middles are not meant for deriving entertainment alone. Instead, they direct the attention of readers to serious issues by provoking them to think. But, for this purpose, they are employing the humorous side of the topic. Nevertheless, they do not apply any scholarly treatment with serious tone and style as articles are preoccupied with.

#### **OP-ED PIECES:**

As the very name indicates, Op-ed is the abbreviation of opposite the editorial page. Unlike editorial, it is written by someone who is not part of the News paper's editorial Board. The Op-ed page is a light piece, compared to the editorial.

#### **DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ARTICLE AND FEATURE STORY:**

News articles and feature stories may employ creative storytelling. The news article informs us briefly with the basic facts and figures. The feature story discovers the situations of the frame in detail.

A news reporter lays out an article by carving it with facts and figures. The feature writer adopts a more scientific way of enquiry by spending more time on how and why of any matter or event.

Both the styles of writing are good. Where news articles consist with 5Ws and 1 H, feature stories are more creative with a leading intro. They justify the story with quotes and pictures and a catchy headline.

a news article and a feature article are two different kinds of content. But plenty of writers confuse them. And that's a no-no.

Both news articles and feature articles are standard fare in magazines, newspapers, newsletters, and yes, blogs. But you don't want to deliver a full-fledged feature when your client, an editor, or a publication asks for a news story. And vice versa.

So, here's the gist:

- A news story reports the facts about an event.
- A feature story explains the significance of an event. It offers analysis.

And here's a bit more.

### **TIMING**

- A news article is time-sensitive and of immediate interest. Think election results, an accident, a robbery report, a product launch, a court verdict, a medical report release, a set of basketball game scores.
- A feature article can be published at any point. Its content is often evergreen or at least lasting.

### **CONTENT**



- A news story gives you the quick-and-dirty about the topic. It reports the facts: who, what, where, when, why, and how. And a news story is written in a straightforward, concise reporting style.
- A feature article is a human-interest story about a person, event, or place. Rather than simply summarizing the subject, a feature article highlights one aspect or significance of the story. This kind of content gives you the chance to go in-depth on a story or at least one angle of that story. Its less formal style may take an odd twist or heart-warming angle at the end.

## **STRUCTURE**

- A news story is structured in the inverted pyramid format with key facts at the beginning of the article. This way the reader can get basic information in the first sentence or two.
- A feature story allows the subject matter to determine its format, whether in a standard outline form (such as a list, sequence, or comparison) or one of the seven main story formats. As for the subject matter? Features cover endless topics from profiles to narratives, interviews, essays, exposes, how-to's, columns, and reviews.

## **LENGTH**

- News articles are short, averaging 100–400 words depending upon the type of news and where it is placed in the publication. They are meant to be digested quickly.

- Feature articles are longer and dig more deeply into the topic. Length varies for each publication, but a typical feature word count runs between 1,000–2,000 words.

The best way to know if you're writing the one you planned? If your reader has time to digest only the first sentence or two — yet she still understands the gist of the story — then you've got a legit news story. But if she needs to stick around until the end to get your key takeaway, then rest assured ... you've written a feature.

#### **TYPES OF ARTICLES:**

The type of article used in news reporting depends on the story, topic and intended audience, and journalists often use a combination of different types of articles to provide comprehensive coverage. By understanding the different types of articles, readers can better understand the purpose and perspective of the news they consume.

#### **NEWS ARTICLES:**

News articles are the most common type of article in journalism. They are written in a straightforward, objective style and report on recent events, issues or developments. News articles typically follow the inverted pyramid structure, with the most important information at the beginning and additional details following in descending order of importance. News articles are designed to provide readers with the most up-to-date information on a particular topic, and often include quotes from experts or eyewitnesses to provide additional context.

#### **FEATURE ARTICLES:**

Feature articles are longer and more in-depth than news articles. They often focus on a particular person, place or event and provide background, context and analysis to help readers better understand the topic. Feature articles are often written in a narrative style and may include personal anecdotes, quotes and descriptions to help bring the story to life. They may also provide a historical perspective or explore the human-interest angle of a story.

#### **OPINION ARTICLES:**

Opinion articles, also known as editorial or commentary pieces, express the author's point of view on a particular issue or topic. They are typically written in a persuasive or argumentative style and aim to sway readers to a particular viewpoint. Opinion articles may include personal anecdotes, research, statistics and quotes to support the author's argument. They are designed to spark discussion and debate, and may also provide a call to action for readers.

#### **REVIEW ARTICLES:**

Review articles are written to evaluate and critique a particular book, film, play, or other form of art or entertainment. They often provide an overview of the work, analyze its strengths and weaknesses, and offer a recommendation to readers. Review articles may also include interviews with the artist or creator and background information on the work. They are designed to help readers make informed decisions about what to read, watch or listen to.

#### **INVESTIGATIVE ARTICLES:**

Investigative articles are in-depth reports that aim to uncover and expose wrongdoing, corruption or other issues that may be hidden from the public. They often involve extensive research, interviews and analysis to provide a comprehensive look at a particular issue or situation. Investigative articles may take months or even years to produce, but can have a

significant impact on society and public policy. They are designed to hold those in power accountable and shed light on issues that may have been ignored or overlooked.

### **HUMAN INTEREST ARTICLES:**

Human interest articles focus on a particular person, group or situation that is unique or compelling. They often tell a story that connects emotionally with readers and can be uplifting, inspiring or heart-warming. Human interest articles may include personal interviews, photographs and other multimedia elements to help readers connect with the subject. They are designed to provide a personal connection to a story and show the human side of a particular issue or situation.

### **SUMMARY:**

- This chapter provides an overview of the different types of writing in journalism, including news reporting, feature writing, opinion writing, investigative journalism, and news briefs. Each type of writing has a specific purpose and audience, and requires a different set of skills and techniques to be effective.
- News reporting is focused on providing objective information about current events and is typically written in a clear and concise style. Feature writing, on the other hand, is more focused on human interest stories and requires a more descriptive and engaging writing style. Opinion writing seeks to persuade the audience to take a specific action or adopt a particular point of view, and investigative journalism involves a rigorous and thorough investigation process to uncover important information.

- In addition to exploring the different types of writing in journalism, this chapter also emphasizes the importance of ethics in journalism. Journalists must prioritize accuracy, fairness, and transparency in their writing, and avoid sensationalism, bias, and misinformation.

Overall, this chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the different types of writing in journalism and the skills required to be an effective journalist.

**KEYWORDS:**

Journalism

News reporting

Feature writing

Opinion writing

Investigative journalism

News briefs

Objective

Descriptive

Persuasion

Ethics

Accuracy

Fairness

Transparency

Sensationalism

Bias

Misinformation.

### SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS:

1. What are the different types of writing in journalism?
2. What is the purpose of news reporting?
3. How is feature writing different from news reporting?
4. What is the goal of opinion writing?
5. What are some key elements of investigative journalism?
6. How do you write a compelling news story?
7. How do you craft an effective opinion piece?
8. What ethical considerations are important to keep in mind when writing in journalism?
9. What is the intended audience for a news brief?
10. How does writing for online media differ from writing for print media?

### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS:

1. What is the primary goal of news reporting?
  - a) To persuade the audience to take a specific action
  - b) To inform the audience about current events
  - c) To entertain the audience with interesting stories
  - d) To criticize the actions of public figures
2. How is feature writing different from news reporting?
  - a) Feature writing is more focused on human interest stories
  - b) Feature writing is always written in first-person perspective
  - c) Feature writing is more objective than news reporting
  - d) Feature writing is only used in online media
3. What is the purpose of opinion writing?
  - a) To provide objective facts and information
  - b) To entertain the audience with interesting stories
  - c) To persuade the audience to take a specific action
  - d) To inform the audience about current events

4. What are some key elements of investigative journalism?
  - a) Sensationalism and exaggeration
  - b) Unsubstantiated rumors and speculation
  - c) A thorough and rigorous investigation process
  - d) Unethical or illegal behavior
  
5. How do you write a compelling news story?
  - a) By including your personal opinions and biases
  - b) By focusing on sensational or emotional elements
  - c) By providing clear, objective facts and information
  - d) By using complex and technical language
  
6. What ethical considerations are important to keep in mind when writing in journalism?
  - a) Accuracy, fairness, and transparency
  - b) Sensationalism and exaggeration
  - c) Personal opinions and biases
  - d) Entertainment value over factual accuracy
  
7. What is the intended audience for a news brief?
  - a) Specialized groups or organizations
  - b) The general public
  - c) Only journalists and other media professionals
  - d) Government officials and policymakers
  
8. How does writing for online media differ from writing for print media?
  - a) Online media allows for more in-depth and complex writing
  - b) Print media is more interactive and multimedia-focused
  - c) Online media has a shorter attention span and requires more concise writing
  - d) Print media is only used for long-form journalism
  
9. What is the goal of headline writing?
  - a) To provide a summary of the article's content
  - b) To mislead or deceive the audience
  - c) To use clickbait to generate more traffic
  - d) To promote personal opinions and biases

10. What is the difference between a news feature and a human-interest feature?
- a) A news feature is more objective than a human-interest feature
  - b) A news feature focuses on current events, while a human-interest feature is more personal
  - c) A news feature is always written in first-person perspective
  - d) A human-interest feature is more focused on hard-hitting facts and information.

**ANSWERS OF THESE QUESTIONS:**

- b) To inform the audience about current events
- a) Feature writing is more focused on human interest stories
- c) To persuade the audience to take a specific action
- c) A thorough and rigorous investigation process
- c) By providing clear, objective facts and information
- a) Accuracy, fairness, and transparency
- b) The general public
- c) Online media has a shorter attention span and requires more concise writing
- a) To provide a summary of the article's content
- b) A news feature focuses on current events, while a human-interest feature is more personal.



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## **CHAPTER NO. 6**

### **CHALLENGES IN REPORTING**

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

- After reading this chapter you will understand the challenges faced by journalists in selecting and curating online content in the digital age, including the abundance of information, fake news, and disinformation.
- You will explore the trends in online content selection and consumption, including the role of social media, algorithms, and personalized content in shaping the news industry.
- You will highlight the importance of maintaining high standards of accuracy, fairness, and ethics in journalism, particularly in the face of online challenges.
- You will examine the tools and techniques used by journalists to verify and curate online content, including fact-checking, source verification, and data analysis.
- You will emphasize the significance of diverse perspectives and sources in journalism, and the role of online content selection in shaping public opinion and discourse.
- You will the end of this chapter, readers will have gained insight into the challenges and trends associated with online content selection in journalism, as well as the tools and principles necessary for maintaining high standards of journalistic ethics and accuracy in the digital age.

#### **INTRODUCITON:**

As the digital revolution continues to transform the media landscape, online journalism has become a critical component of the news industry. With the abundance of information available on the internet, selecting and curating online content has become a challenging task for journalists. The rise of fake news and misinformation has also made it more crucial than ever for journalists to maintain high standards of accuracy, fairness, and ethics in their reporting.

This chapter will delve into the challenges and trends associated with selecting online content in journalism. We will examine the role of social media in shaping the news industry and explore the tools and techniques used by journalists to curate and verify online content. Additionally, we will discuss the impact of algorithms and personalized content on the distribution of news and the importance of maintaining diverse perspectives in journalism.

Through this chapter, readers will gain a deeper understanding of the complexities of online content selection in the digital age and the importance of upholding journalistic principles in the face of rapidly evolving technology and media landscapes.

### **CHALLENGES IN REPORTING:**

Reporting is an important part of journalism, as it is the way in which news is communicated to the public. However, reporting can be challenging, and journalists often face a number of obstacles and difficulties in the process. In this chapter, we will discuss some of the challenges that journalists face when reporting.

**Access to Information:** One of the biggest challenges that journalists face is getting access to information. Governments, corporations, and other organizations often limit access to information that they believe could be damaging to their interests. This can make it difficult for journalists to get the facts they need to report accurately.

**Censorship:** In some countries, censorship is a major challenge for journalists.

Governments may restrict what can be reported, and journalists who try to report on sensitive topics may face harassment, imprisonment, or other forms of persecution.

**Safety:** Reporting can be dangerous, particularly in conflict zones or areas where criminal organizations hold sway. Journalists may be targeted for violence or intimidation, and some have been killed while on the job. Ensuring the safety of journalists is a critical issue for the media industry.

**Verification:** In today's digital age, misinformation and fake news are prevalent.

Journalists must be careful to verify the information they receive and report only what is true. This can be challenging, as sources may not always be reliable, and the pressure to be first with a story can lead to errors.

**Time Constraints:** In the fast-paced world of journalism, time is always a factor.

Journalists must work quickly to report on breaking news, often with limited resources and under tight deadlines. This can make it difficult to verify information, conduct in-depth research, or give stories the attention they deserve.

**Bias:** Journalists must strive to remain impartial and report the facts objectively.

However, personal biases and editorial pressures can influence the way stories are reported. Ensuring balanced reporting can be a challenge, particularly when dealing with controversial or divisive issues.

**Language Barriers:** In today's globalized world, journalists may need to report on stories from other countries or cultures. Language barriers can make it difficult to get accurate information or to report on stories in a culturally sensitive way.

In conclusion, reporting is an essential part of the media industry, but it is not without its challenges. Journalists must contend with issues of access to information, censorship, safety, verification, time constraints, bias, and language barriers, among others. Despite these challenges, journalists play a critical role in providing the public with accurate and timely information, and their work is essential to a functioning democracy.

#### **NEW TRENDS AND TECHNOLOGY IN REPORTING:**

The field of reporting has undergone significant changes in recent years due to the emergence of new technologies and trends. Here are some of the challenges, trends, and technologies that are shaping the future of reporting:

**Data Journalism:** Data journalism involves using data analysis to generate news stories and insights. With the rise of big data, this field has become increasingly important in reporting. Journalists need to have strong data analysis skills and use specialized tools such as Excel, Python, and R to gather, clean, and analyze data.

**Citizen Journalism:** Citizen journalism involves members of the public reporting on events or issues they witness using smartphones, social media, or other digital platforms. This trend has democratized reporting and allowed for more diverse voices to be heard. However, it also presents challenges around verifying sources and ensuring accuracy.

**Virtual Reality:** Virtual reality (VR) technology is being used in reporting to create immersive experiences that allow audiences to better understand complex stories. This technology can transport viewers to the scene of a story and provide a 360-degree

view of the environment. However, the cost and complexity of creating VR content remain a challenge.

**Artificial Intelligence (AI):** AI is being used in reporting to automate tasks such as fact-checking and language translation. It can also be used to analyze large amounts of data and identify patterns and trends. However, there are concerns around the accuracy and bias of AI-generated content.

**Social Media:** Social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook have become important sources of news and information for many people. Journalists need to be able to use social media effectively to identify and verify sources, as well as engage with audiences.

**Mobile Reporting:** With the rise of smartphones, journalists can now report from the field using mobile devices. This allows for more immediate reporting and the ability to capture multimedia content such as photos and videos. However, mobile reporting also presents challenges around data security and connectivity.

**Collaborative Journalism:** Collaborative journalism involves journalists and news organizations working together to report on a story. This can involve sharing resources, data, and expertise to produce more comprehensive and accurate reporting.

**Solutions Journalism:** Solutions journalism focuses on reporting not just on problems but also on potential solutions. This approach aims to empower audiences and encourage positive change by highlighting successful strategies and initiatives.

**Multimedia Reporting:** Multimedia reporting involves using a variety of mediums to tell a story, such as photos, videos, podcasts, and interactive graphics. This approach allows for a more engaging and immersive experience for audiences.

**Community Engagement:** Community engagement involves actively involving the audience in the reporting process. This can include soliciting feedback and story ideas from the community, as well as hosting events and forums to encourage dialogue.

**Personalization:** Personalization involves tailoring news content to the specific interests and preferences of individual readers or viewers. This approach uses algorithms to curate content and provide personalized recommendations.

**Fact-Checking:** Fact-checking involves verifying the accuracy and credibility of news stories. With the rise of misinformation and fake news, fact-checking has become increasingly important in maintaining the credibility of news organizations.

**Audience-Centric Reporting:** Audience-centric reporting involves prioritizing the needs and interests of the audience when reporting on a story. This approach involves using audience research and data analytics to better understand what topics and formats are most appealing to the audience.

**Mobile Journalism:** Mobile journalism (also known as "mojo") involves using mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets to report, edit, and share news content. This approach is becoming increasingly popular as mobile devices become more powerful and sophisticated.

**Live Reporting:** Live reporting involves reporting events as they happen, often using social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook to provide real-time updates. This approach allows journalists to quickly disseminate breaking news and engage with audiences in real time.

**Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools:** AI tools such as machine learning and natural language processing are becoming more widely used in reporting. These tools can help journalists automate tasks such as transcription, translation, and content curation.

**Automated Journalism:** Automated journalism involves using algorithms to generate news stories. While still in its early stages, this approach has the potential to increase the speed and efficiency of news production, although it raises concerns about the role of journalists in the news production process.

**Non-Traditional News Sources:** Non-traditional news sources such as social media influencers, bloggers, and podcasts are becoming increasingly important in the news ecosystem. These sources offer alternative perspectives and voices that are not typically found in traditional news outlets.

#### **SELECTION OF ONLINE CONTENT:**

Selection of online content can be a daunting task, with the vast amount of information available on the internet. However, it is crucial to carefully evaluate and choose the content you consume online as it can impact your knowledge, perspective, and worldview.

Here are some factors to consider when selecting online content:

**Credibility:** The internet is full of misinformation, so it's essential to verify the credibility of the content before consuming it. Look for sources that are reputable, such as academic institutions, government organizations, and news outlets with a track record of accurate reporting. Check for references, citations, and sources used in the content to evaluate the accuracy and legitimacy of the information.



**Relevance:** Ensure that the content you consume is relevant to your interests, needs, or goals. Avoid getting distracted by clickbait titles and sensational headlines that may not be relevant to your needs. Instead, use specific keywords and search terms to narrow down your search to the most relevant content.

**Diversity:** Exposure to diverse perspectives and opinions can broaden your worldview and enhance your critical thinking skills. Seek out content from different sources, including those with opposing views to challenge your biases and assumptions. Be mindful of echo chambers and filter bubbles that can limit your exposure to new ideas and information.

**Timeliness:** Some online content may be time-sensitive, such as news articles and social media updates. Ensure that the content is up-to-date and relevant to the current situation. Be wary of outdated information that may be misleading or inaccurate.

**Accessibility:** Consider the accessibility of the content, including language, format, and device compatibility. Look for content that is easy to understand and navigate, especially if it's technical or complex. Consider using tools such as translation software or text-to-speech technology to overcome language and accessibility barriers.

In conclusion, selecting online content requires careful evaluation and consideration of various factors such as credibility, relevance, diversity, timeliness, and accessibility. By being mindful of these factors, you can make informed decisions about the content you consume and avoid misinformation, disinformation, and propaganda.

**NEWS GATHERING AN INTRODUCTION:**

News is the most important editorial content for the editorial department of a daily newspaper. In a newspaper, views are secondary. Reviews, previews and interviews are even tertiary. Most of the pages of the paper are covered by news. Only one or two pages are there for views.

News is gathered by many segments. Even readers collect news from different sources of media. More so if the reader is interested in journalism or that reader is a student of journalism doing the assignments of news gathering of yesterday events or weekly events at international, national, regional and local level.

From professional point of views news is also collected by the desk despite the fact that the news haunting is not the primary job of a news desk. The main task of a news desk is to make the best presentation of the news submitted by the reportorial staffs.

On the other hand, reportorial staffs consisting of reporters and correspondents have to primarily gather the news for their organisation using different methods and techniques.

#### **NEWS GATHERING:**

This activity is an important method and technique which is executed by both professionals, semi-professionals and non-professionals. When it is carried out by readers interested in journalism or students of journalism executing some assignments, it is generally described as non-professional or semi-professional activities. But when it is performed by newsman, it is called professional activities. We all know that news section is divided into two parts in the editorial department of a daily newspaper: one is news room for editorial staffs and the other is reporters' room for reportorial staff.

News room people have to mainly edit, give headlines, sub-heads and intro and polish the stories to make it worth-reading. But being news persons, editorial staffs also

gather news as and when extremely required. Reportorial staffs are primarily responsible for news gathering and, in this process, they use various news gathering methods and techniques which will we comprehensively discussed in this lesson.

#### **NEWS GATHERING BY READERS:**

Readers are not called a professional news hunter. But those who are active and interested readers, they may execute the activities of news gathering time and again in a non-professional, semi-professional and even professional manner as and when required. More so in this modern era, when the citizen journalism has reached from peak to pinnacle. Other kinds of active readers are those who are journalism students, performing such assignments of news gathering. That means only those readers who are interested in journalism and those who are in the process of becoming journalists do perform such activities. When such readers gain more experience and maturity, they may apply the methods and techniques of news gathering in a professional manner. In this fast-growing era of citizen journalism, it is not possible for any newspaper organisation to reach every point and spot to gather news. Therefore, such news organisations request even the interested readers to collect some burning and public interest news with photographs from their locality. And such news organisations sometimes publish the citizen story with by lines or give some prize to them. In this way, newspaper organisations also create their own stringers for their own future requirements making a continuous line of action for news gathering. Readers generally gather news from different mass media like newspapers, radio, television and internet. Sometimes such serious readers walk down to a public library and they easily note down the international, national, regional and local news. They also keep apps of different news. Moreover, they get the news on Google news. Sometimes newspaper clippings are also sent through WhatsApp by such groups and

is also put on Facebook or Twitter. In this way, an active reader collects news from newspaper, digital media, social media like Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, WhatsApp, Google, mobile apps, television and radio by using these in a sincere manner. They also check the factuality of a news on Google News, pictures on Google image and visuals on Google video. In this way such readers learn to check even the fake news. These days even FM channels of radio has also become an important source of news gathering for readers.

#### **NEWS GATHERING BY DESK:**

Sources of news are innumerable. If one has nose for news, he can get it while walking on the streets or even casually talking to the people. Sometimes news automatically comes to the newspaper office without any effort just because it is a newspaper. Source can be hard or weak. A source is said to be hard when the facts of a news come from the horse's mouth. On the state government policies, for example, the Chief Minister or other ministers, top officials of the concerned ministries of departments, etc are the hard sources. But they cannot be treated to be hard enough regarding matters that do not fall within the purview of their own functioning. Press releases and briefings by spokesperson are equally hard.

#### **INTERNATIONAL NEWS AGENCIES:**

Moreover, desk persons get news from international news agencies like Reuter, AP, AFP, TASS, etc. Such agencies directly send the various social, economic, political, educational, cultural, religious and spiritual news of the world directly to the desk. Such stories are written by the professionals. So, these don't require much effort while editing. Such stories are painlessly edited.

#### **NATIONAL NEWS AGENCIES:**

Further, there are several national news agencies like Press Trust of India (PTI), United News of India (UNI), Bhasha, Univarta, ANI, etc. which provide national news of all varieties to the desk. Again, such stories are painlessly edited since these are prepared by professionally trained journalists. Here PTI and UNI are English news agencies while Bhasha and Univarta are Hindi news agencies which largely covers the Hindi belt.

#### **REPORTERS / CORRESPONDENTS:**

Desk of an editorial department of a daily newspaper gets major news items from there on reporters and correspondents. Here the chief reporter plays an active role. What stories did the paper miss? What stories were covered adequately? Where did the rival newspaper score over his? He is accountable to all these. Similarly senior reporters and reporters from different beats are responsible for satisfactorily covering their concern beats. The chief of the bureau, special correspondents, principal correspondents, correspondents, etc. are all responsible for covering their respective areas and reporting to the desk accordingly. Even foreign correspondent who is generally very senior in rank takes care of the news of all varieties of the country where he or she has been posted. Other than that, there are column-wise paid stringers who take care of news of their area and send news directly to the desk. The editorial staffs generally take a lot of pains in editing the copies of cub reporters and stringers since they are not so trained nor are they so experienced.

#### **MONITORING:**

There are proper provisions for radio, television, internet, telephones, etc. Sometimes, when there are some confusions about the news stories, its incompleteness, its non-availability or its lop-sidedness, then the desk people definitely take some help from

the available media. If something news is repeatedly getting released in the radio bulletin, but there is no mention of such news by the own correspondents or reporters including the news agencies then the radio bulletins help and give a clue. For even better stories, the news editor may contact their own correspondents and reporters. In this way, other media are minutely and meticulously monitored.

So, in this case of television channels, since most of the work of the news room is executed by the sub editorial desk, the Deputy news editor (DNE) or the News editor (NE) or both go to the TV room for some chit-chat or relaxation over a cup of tea. Meanwhile, when they view some breaking news over TV channels, then they compare the stories of their own correspondents and reporters including their own subscribed news agencies. If they feel that some relevant portions of the event are missing in the copies, then they ask and re-ask their own field staff to follow up.

So is the case with Internet. And sometimes that editorial staff uses all the available media and derive certain conclusions and compare their own copies. Other than DNE or NE, sub editors sometimes also use radio, TV, internet, especially when they come an hour before their duty time. Then that sub editor may draw the attention of the DNE or NE or his chief sub editor about the news. In fact, all the editorial staff keep on enriching their knowledge about events with the help of other newspapers, radio, television, internet, etc. and directly or indirectly help the desk and the reportorial staff.

#### **NEWS GATHERING BY REPORTORIAL STAFF:**

Reportorial staff consists of own reporters and own correspondents. Even own subscribed news agencies are treated as reporters with well-edited copies as these copies are screened by the agency desk. Yet it is further screened by the news desk of

the newspaper. Reportorial staff are the major source of news. They are the most reliable and authentic source. There is no need for check, cross-check and multi-check. These staff adopt several methods and techniques for news gathering like press release, press conference, spot visit, interview, symposium, official reports, etc.

#### **PRESS RELEASE:**

Reportorial staffs get a lot of press releases. Press release, press note, press statement or press hand out or simply hand out are the same thing. It is also called news release. It is a statement on behalf of the government, political parties, institutions or even an individual given to the press. It is released by Press Information Bureau (PIB), State Public Relations Departments, District Public Relations Departments and several other registered bodies. When it comes from unregistered or unauthorized bodies, it is need to be checked, cross-checked and multi-checked.

#### **PRESS CONFERENCE:**

Press release is a one-way communication. When such events which need discussions, dialogues or two-way communications between the press and the authority, then a press conference is organised by the authority.

It is a formal conference of newsmen invited by a dignitary in which after initial announcement, he answers questions of the pressmen. It is also called news conference or news briefing or press briefing or simply briefing. That is to say that press briefing is similar to press conference in which pressmen are told something and they can ask questions. The briefing is done by spokesman who is authorised to make a statement and answers questions on behalf of a dignitary, department or party.

A minister holds a press conference, while a spokesman of the minister's secretariat briefs the press. A political party president addresses a press conference while a party

general secretary briefs the press. Hence, there is a hairline difference between press conference and briefing, but press conference sounds more formal, while briefing is less formal. Thus, press conference is an old and important method and technique of news gathering.

#### **SPOT REPORTING:**

Spot visit of the concerned beat is treated as very authentic method and technique of news gathering. In the modern journalism, this tendency is having its natural death especially due to lack of time. But it needs to be revived.

#### **INTERVIEW:**

It is yet another important method and technique of news gathering. When dignitaries are properly interviewed by reportorial staff, it makes a very good story. This is mainly because it is based on interpersonal communication where continuous interactions and frequent feedbacks are possible. Due to these traits, it sometimes creates not only an in-depth story, but interesting too. Sometimes even news agencies reporters/correspondent's creed stories based on interview which are happily and enthusiastically published by newspapers and magazines. Hence, formal interviews, informal interviews, structured interviews, unstructured interviews, in-depth interviews have recently emerged as tool of reporting a news or even writing a feature.

#### **SYMPOSIUM:**

News gathering is also executed with the method and technique of symposium.

Basically, a symposium is a type of interview in which one question is asked to so many people of different varieties and accordingly a story is compiled. For example, when union or state budget is released, the journalist ask only one question: "How is the budget?". And he asks this question to so many people like farmers, salaried class,



businessman, housewives and so on and compiles a lovely story in the form of budget reactions. And sometimes such stories become very effective with attractive headlines like "Union budget: a Monalisa's smile" or "Pranab ke budget se holi ke rang mein bhang".

#### **OFFICIAL REPORTS:**

Such reports published by government or semi-government bodies serve as important tool of news gathering. A campus reporter may get a lot of important news informations with the help of annual report or minutes of executive councils or academic councils or courts or planning boards

Thus, news gathering methods and techniques are very wide, broad and extensive.

Right from readers to desk and from desk to reportorial staff, it is a complete cycle of news gathering for the effective production of newspaper with standard news contents, elegant photographs, fascinating cartoons, superb animations, juicy scandals and so on.

#### **SUMMARY:**

This chapter explores the impact of the digital age on the news industry and the challenges faced by journalists in selecting and curating online content. The abundance of information, the rise of fake news and disinformation, and the influence of social media are among the major challenges faced by journalists in online content selection.

The chapter also highlights the importance of maintaining high standards of accuracy, fairness, and ethics in journalism, particularly in the face of online challenges.

Journalists use various tools and techniques, such as fact-checking, source verification, and data analysis, to verify and curate online content.

The impact of algorithms and personalized content on the distribution of news and public discourse is also examined. The chapter emphasizes the significance of diverse perspectives and sources in journalism, and the role of online content selection in shaping public opinion and discourse.

Overall, this chapter aims to provide readers with a deeper understanding of the complexities of online content selection in the digital age, as well as the tools and principles necessary for maintaining high standards of journalistic ethics and accuracy in the face of rapidly evolving technology and media landscapes.

**KEY WORDS:**

Online content, Journalism, Challenges, Trends, Selection, Digital age, Fake news, Disinformation, social media, Algorithms, Personalized content, Accuracy, Fairness, Ethics, Fact-checking, Source verification, Data analysis, Diverse perspectives, public opinion, Discourse.

**SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS:**

1. How does social media impact the distribution of news and the selection of online content, and what are the implications for journalistic ethics and standards?
2. What tools and techniques do journalists use to verify and curate online content, and how effective are these methods in ensuring accuracy and credibility?

3. How do algorithms and personalized content influence the selection and consumption of online news, and what are the potential consequences for public discourse and opinion?
4. What are the ethical considerations involved in online content selection, particularly in the context of fake news, disinformation, and propaganda?
5. How can journalists ensure that they maintain diverse perspectives and sources in their reporting, and what role does online content selection play in shaping public opinion and discourse?
6. What are the emerging trends in online content selection and consumption, and how can journalists stay ahead of these developments to maintain relevance and credibility in the digital age?
7. How can individuals as news consumers become more discerning about the online content they consume, and what steps can they take to avoid falling prey to fake news and disinformation?

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