



MASTER OF ARTS
MASS
COMMUNICATION
AND JOURNALISM
CENTRE FOR OPEN AND
DISTANCE LEARNING
(CODL)



MMC 104 : REPORTING AND EDITING

BLOCK I

CENTRE FOR OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING
TEZPUR UNIVERSITY (A CENTRAL UNIVERSITY)
TEZPUR, ASSAM - 784028
INDIA

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To grow to be a leading centre for human resource development through distance, open and universal learning system.

Mission

To provide quality higher education at door step through barrier-less, flexible and open learning mode in conformity with national priority and societal need.

Objective

- **To offer degree, diploma, certificate level programme of study through distance learning in various emerging subjects across the disciplines.**
- **To offer job oriented and vocational programmes in flexible terms in the line of the national and regional level demand of manpower.**
- **To offer various programmes under lifelong learning contributing to the local and regional level requirements and as per the need of the society at large.**
- **To undertake various research and academic activities for furtherance of distance education in the region.**
- **To contribute to conserve and promote cultural heritage, literature, traditional knowledge and environment conducting short programmes, workshops, seminars and research in interdisciplinary field.**

MMC 104: REPORTING AND EDITING



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MMC-104: REPORTING AND EDITING

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BLOCK I

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COURSE INTRODUCTION

A learner pursuing a programme related to media and communication should not only know the true meaning of reporting and editing but also understand the proper way of presenting a story to the masses. This course therefore is designed to give a holistic view of what goes behind preparing the different types of news reports and what are the basic ethics and principles that a journalist should keep in mind while preparing them.

The course is divided into four Modules, each consisting of multiple units. This has been done to discuss the prime issues more elaborately and to ensure learner friendliness.

Module I of this course is named **Introduction to Journalism**. As the name suggests, this module contains the basic concepts of **News, News Writing, Reporting** and **Editing**, thus introducing the learners to the categories of work that constitutes journalism. The four units of this module shall give learners a clear idea about news and its structure, the different kinds of reporting, background research, newsroom set up, deadlines, responsibilities of reporting and editing desks etc.

Module II of this course is titled **Various Aspects of Journalism**. This module consists of four units. The first unit of this module is about **Photo-Journalism** and the techniques associated with good journalistic photography and caption writing. This unit shall also introduce learners with the different kinds of cameras. The second unit is prepared to give learners a clear concept of **Freedom of Expression** and Indian Constitutional Provisions associated with it. The third unit, **Background Research** will help the learners in understanding the importance of proper background study in journalism. **Editorial Writing**, the last unit of this module, is designed to make learners understand what editorial writing is and how important is the role that editors play, not only in the newsrooms but also in the society

Module III, Opinion Writing gives a detailed account of how and in what situations journalists can present their opinions. The first unit of

this module, **Writing of Reviews** shall explain the meaning and importance of writing opinions in form of reviews of films and dramas. The next unit, **Features**, differentiates features from articles and familiarises learners with the different forms feature writing. The third and last unit of this module, **Opinion in Journalism** describes the different types of opinion columns in newspapers and guides the learners on how and why opinion pieces should be written for the media.

The last module, **Module IV** titled **Types of Journalism** introduces learners to different types of media outlets and describes how each of these media has a distinct style of journalism. This module consists of three units- **TV Journalism, Radio Journalism** and **Online Journalism**. Each unit shall guide learners on how to prepare content for respective media.

For the convenience of the learners, this course has been divided into two blocks. **Block I** consists of **Module I & II** and **Block II** consists of **Module III & IV**.

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MODULE I: INTRODUCTION TO JOURNALISM

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UNIT 1: NEWS

UNIT STRUCTURE

- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2. Objectives
- 1.3 Concept
- 1.4 Definition
- 1.5 News Value
- 1.6 Objectivity And Authenticity
- 1.7 Types Of News
- 1.8 News Sense
- 1.9 Sources Of News
- 1.10 Cultivation Of Sources
- 1.11 Summing Up
- 1.12 Questions
- 1.13 Suggested Readings

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The relevance of journalism in respect to other professions has undergone a dramatic change in recent times. It has become a very powerful medium if not the prime medium in disseminating information about the world's affairs. The progress of a civilization is measured by the advancement of learning which is provided by the art of printing. As of now, the art of printing is slowly being replaced by the boom in digital media and technology. Nonetheless the significance and importance of news remains the same. Thus it can be rightly said that civilization has entered its latest phase with the development of printing, an important evidence of which is

the growth of journalism. The growth of news can be described as another sort of enlightenment in the era of learning, unlearning and re-learning. With citizen journalism, the masses have been made aware of their powers and that public opinion is powerful and one of the mightiest forces of civilization which can bring clashes and downfall of powerful regimes. The world of today has changed tremendously and it is no wonder has changed the profession of journalism, opening vast avenues for careers of diversified field. This unit will therefore help the learner to prepare for the multiple branches of professional journalism; each one of which is fruitful in its own way.

1.2 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this unit is to enable the learner to-

- Have a clear understanding of the term ‘news’
- Know its nuances and dimensions
- Learn news value(s)
- Understand the need of objectivity and authenticity of news
- Get familiar with the sources of news and their cultivation

1.3 CONCEPT

News is a piece of information of an event or occurrence that has recently happened or is likely to happen in the near future. News is something new, that has just happened and we know about it for the first time. News is factual - it means that in that short piece of news item, we are learning about many facts. It is very wide like people telling us about an event, presenting a picture in our minds where we can imagine the scene and empathize with the characters involved in the news story. News is also relevant to the readers and affects them. News is always unusual and thus out of the ordinary. For example - the murder being committed in a city would be fitted in only a couple of paragraphs on an inside page of a local newspaper but in a quiet rural area it would probably be the lead - the main story on the front page.

The full text of a news story need not be about a recent event. Very often the first paragraph contains the facts that make an old story news again. An event that happened months ago may also be news provided it has recently been disclosed to the news readers and it is all new for them.

Interest and importance are not similar when it comes to news stories because the most important news story is not always the most interesting or compelling one, for example: in page 1 of the newspaper there are two news stories: a) the school authority has announced the building of a new gymnasium for the school b) the school athletic director has been charged of sexual harassment by one of the school's coaches. Which one would be more important for you? Which one would be more interesting and will have a greater impact on you. This example illustrates the conflict between interest and importance regarding news value.

1.4 DEFINITION

News has been defined by various writers, editors and journalists in various ways. The famous definition by the city editor of the New York Sun is a well-known one. He states that “when a dog bites a man that is not news; but when a man bites a dog, that is news”. This is shown to point out of the unusualness of events that makes news. The basis for all news is facts and it is the responsibility of a journalist to make the facts interesting to audiences. A story would be written somewhat differently for a school newspaper than for a city paper.

News, therefore is a piece of information which is new to the audience. It can be about an incident, an accident a calamity, an announcement by the government, celebrity, politicians and so on. It can be a local, regional state, national and international event that affects the audience and is of interest to them. The main motive in us while reading news stories is to get information. Therefore, news can also be defined as something which is new, factual, informative, interesting and important.

The following example will help the reader to understand the definition of news better-

A newspaper publishes or may be a news channel (Radio or TV) broadcasts that the President of the party in power at the Union Government or at the State or the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament had played golf yesterday.

Now, you played golf yesterday too. But the city newspaper has a picture of the leader of the Congress party but there is no picture of you even though you got a hole-in-one on the ninth, and the reportedly rarely breaks 100 on 18 holes. Why wasn't your achievement reported? The difference has to do with what news is and what isn't. The president made it into the news and you didn't because he is the president and is a well-known personality. That is called prominence – one of the many aspects of the definition of what news is all about.

The following points shall give you a better understanding about the concept and definition of news-

a) Though the basis of all news is facts, yet all facts which are universal and usual are not news. Ex: The sun rises in the east and sets in the west is not news.

b) News can also be the opinion made by a prominent person who holds considerable recognition and status in society. Ex: celebrities from any field including films, entertainment, politicians, sports star, religious leaders, etc.

c) News is mainly about people - what they say and do

d) News doesn't need to be always a recent event, sometimes even a follow up of an event can make it to being a news story. Events which had never come to the forefront, which were never known to people earlier can also make it as news

e) What is important news to one public may not be so for another. Ex. the death of a prominent leader in North Korea will have little

significance for people of India until and unless he had some connection or significant policies related to our country.

f) News has the tendency to get perished very fast. Today's news may no longer be deemed as news tomorrow.

Few definitions

1. News is a first rough draft of history. - **Philip L. Graham**
— *American publisher, 1915-1963*
2. Journalism consists largely in saying Lord Jones died to people who never knew Lord Jones was alive.- **G.K. Chesterton**
— *British writer, 1874-1936*
3. What you see is news, what you know is background, what you feel is opinion. - **Lester Markel**
— *American journalist, 1894-1977*
4. When a dog bites a man that is not news, but when a man bites a dog that is news. - **Charles Anderson Dana**
— *American journalist, 1819-1897* (The phrase was coined by Alfred Harmsworth (1865–1922), a British newspaper magnate, but is also attributed to New York Sun editor **John B. Bogart and Dana**)
5. No news is good news. - **Ludovic Halevy**
— *French author, 1834-1908*

1.5 NEWS VALUE

News value refers to the worthiness of a news story. News value depends on the community of readers or the target audience. It also depends on the place from where it is being reported and published. In a state governed by dictatorship, no news against the government will be published. But in democratic states, reporters have more liberty to report true facts, even if those go against the government in order to bring the wrongs of the government into light. However, while reporting, the journalist should be extremely careful with words which should not be offensive or derogatory in nature.

News stories must satisfy one or more of the following requirements if they are to be selected in terms of their news value:

a) **Accuracy:** News always has to be accurate else it loses its credibility and the readers will stop relying on that particular newspaper or television channel which publishes inaccurate news stories. Journalists should cross-check the facts and information of every news item. Spellings of peoples' names and figures of data and facts should be checked properly and verified. Rumours and gossips should be kept away from getting inserted into a news story. Any opinion of an individual or a prominent person should be duly attributed and quoted. The journalists should not make up facts and cook up stories on their own. Every fact and figure should be quoted accordingly, acknowledged referring to the source.

b) **Balance:** News reporting is also about being balanced. In case of any controversy, both the sides of the story should be presented. For example: when reporting a workers' strike, both the authorities, as well as the workers' views and narration of their resorting to strike, must be taken into account. If one side of the story is presented then the news report will be biased and will present only a partial view to the readers. This, in turn, might create more chaos instead of solving the issue.

c) **Objectivity:** A reporter should be objective in writing news. Facts and individual opinions must not be mixed up and should not slant on any side.

d) **Clarity:** News report should be written in clear and simple language. Difficult words should be avoided in news stories as they are read by all classes of a society. Keeping in mind with the ordinary peoples' ability to understand and read the meaning, the words should be kept as simple as possible. Complex and ambiguous sentences should be avoided. Each paragraph can have three to four short and crisp sentences.

e) **Impact:** Impact usually refers to the way the news story will influence people's lives in some way or the other. For example, news about a broken bridge that needs immediate repair by the public works department will help the people to avert a tragedy by not taking the road to the bridge and also drawing attention to the concerned authority who needs to take up their work seriously.

Elements of news :

Apart from the news value, we also have elements of news which make a report a news item. They are:

- i. Immediacy or timeliness
- ii. Proximity or nearness
- iii. Consequence
- iv. Prominence
- v. Drama
- vi. Unusualness
- vii. Conflict
- viii. Sex
- ix. Emotions and instincts
- x. Progress
- xi. Celebrity

1.6 OBJECTIVITY AND AUTHENTICITY

News must be accurate. Factual accuracy refers to every sentence, name, age, address, date of birth and quotes etc. are verifiable facts. It is very easy to distort the importance of a particular fact. That makes the usage of neutral language very important. Journalists should not take any particular side while reporting, rather present all the major relevant facts and figures as they are. A reporter should never put down personal views while writing a news item; only an impartial writing should form the basis of the news story. News must be presented by taking into account the opinions, views and statements of not only the aggrieved party but also those who have caused it. In other words, all sides related or concerned to any event or happening.

News is considered balanced when the news story informs the readers of all the important details of an event in a proper manner including its source. Balance and completeness don't mean reporting every minute detail. Instead, it combines the selection of the most significant details as a result of informed judgement of the reporter. The purpose of balance is to enable the readers to have a fair understanding of the entire event and not necessarily of every minute detail.

The “inverted pyramid” style or the presentation of facts in order of importance holds true when it comes to objectivity in news reports. This style presents facts in a descending order from most important to least important facts. The topmost significant facts are given in the first paragraph which is also known as the lead of a story, gradually moving towards lesser facts in the second and subsequent paragraphs.

Thus we can sum up that the objectivity in news relates to these five major principles-

- a) Use of neutral language
- b) The inclusion of all the relevant sides of a story

- c) Presentation of facts in order of importance
- d) Accuracy
- e) Balance

Authenticity in news is the presentation of facts in a true manner. The truth of the events should not be manipulated in any way. Truth and accuracy are the pillars of journalism and a journalist should keep this in mind while presenting news. If it shies away from it, readers will not only be misinformed and misdirected but they will lose trust in that particular newspaper or TV / Radio channel which had published or broadcast such inaccurate data. A lot of news these days are reported to be fake ones which make the common people confused whether to believe in any particular news. Such a situation would not have arisen had the people responsible behind presenting the news reports were careful in taking extra care and cross-checking the information before publishing it.

ASSESS YOUR PROGRESS

1. What is your understanding of the term 'news'?

2. What are the elements that make a news story?

3. What is inverted pyramid style in news?

1.7 TYPES OF NEWS

News can broadly be divided into two types-

- a) **Hard news:** This type of news holds significance and is of prime importance to a large number of audiences about timely events which have

just occurred or are likely to happen in politics, education, foreign affairs, religion, the legal system, financial markets and so on. Example: the death of 100 people due to earthquake tremor that struck Japan is a hard news.

b) **Soft news:** It is of somewhat lesser immediacy than hard news because while it is also quite important, some amount of delay in its publication or broadcasting will not lead to any harm in its news value. However, it can't be indefinitely delayed of course. It includes human interest stories that have emotive appeal and feature stories that quite often relate to hard news.

ACTIVITY

1. List five major news stories featured in the front page of two different newspapers or Radio or TV news channels' bulletins for five days consecutively. Why according to you they were featured on page 1 of the newspapers.
2. Analyze any news story in a daily newspaper. Identify an opinion inside the news story. Is the opinion expressed by the reporter who wrote the story or did the reporter attribute it to someone else.

1.8 NEWS SENSE

Every moment something or the other keeps happening and it becomes a difficult task for a reporter to choose one story out of the multiple events surrounding it. With so much of information available, a journalist has to single out what is news and worth reporting and what is not. A reporter while writing a news story has to look at the news elements mentioned above - immediacy, nearness or proximity, impact, prominence, unusualness, conflict, sex, emotion, drama and progress.

Students interested in the field of journalism should develop a nose for news. They should develop a curiosity about people, what they do and what

makes them act in such a way. They should harness the ability to recognize a newsworthy event. A newspaper only has a limited space. Therefore only the most important stories have to be chosen to be published in that limited space.

1.9 SOURCES OF NEWS

A good story is identifiable from a better one by the quality of sources the journalist uses. In gathering information, it is always advisable to use the most reliable sources. But it is not always possible for a reporter to use the best sources and one has to settle in for less. But less should not mean inferior, insufficient or unreliable.

There are two types of sources of news:

a) **Primary** - Primary source refers to those sources which are prime witnesses to an event or are the creators of an original work. They are the first-hand sources which a reporter can use. Example: A speeding truck lost its balance, killing two people and injuring four civilians. The reporter while covering the news report can go and talk to the injured civilians taking into account the happening of the entire incident which can be attributed as primary sources. Another example would be that of if the reporter himself had witnessed the accident which happened in front of his eyes. That too can be called as a primary source. In this case, it will be the reporter himself.

b) **Secondary** - Secondary source is the kind who has some knowledge but didn't get it through personal involvement or is a published work that cites the words of others.

Example : a reporter needs to file a report on the recent hurricane damage in southern India. Under such circumstances one has very less time in hand. What one can do is get plenty of facts on previous hurricanes that had damaged that same part of land and also get the latest information from internet databases.

The quality of both these sources is worth considering. Credibility and degree of involvement of eyewitnesses are needed to be taken care of. Are they the most credible sources available? There are many ways to categorize and rank the potential credibility and for this the reporter has to use one's own judgement at disposal.

In addition to this classification, there can be another two types of sources - Official and Personal.

An Official source means persons in their capacities as leaders or office bearers of political parties, social organizations, NGOs, officials of civil, police, defence establishments, public sector undertakings, companies, trusts etc. who are authorized to address the press, either as a spokesperson or Public Relations or Communication official of the organization, association etc. They are invariably expected to send a press release or press communique to the news organizations whenever anything important occurs or are about to happen. Persons in this position ideally should be available any time of the day or night for answering queries from the media persons.

So, usually there is no possibility of missing a news item from these sources when the situation is normal.

However, at times of crisis these official sources may not be of much help other than giving you the routine information which is already known by the media fraternity or public.

Hence, Personal sources are those which would give you information or at least provide you with adequate and necessary tips when a problem emerges with any organization.

For example, suppose there is a break down of law-and-order situation in a place. Now, as it is the failure of the civil and police administration in keeping order properly, when approached for information, it is most likely that those sources would be tight-lipped about it and reveal very little. Or may be there is a major accident involving aeroplanes, trains, floods or other natural disasters etc. when the senior officials concerned would not like to speak to the media citing many excuses. Here comes the Personal

sources very handy because at these times of crisis they are the ones who would be willing to divulge inside information.

Thus cultivating such sources are very crucial for a journalist. Many a times the Official sources may also be Personal sources but not always.

So, apart from one's Official sources, a journalist must always develop Personal sources. But, in textbooks, there may not be any reference to these two categories of sources as such.

1.10 CULTIVATION OF SOURCES

While cultivating sources one must always look into newer avenues and not get stuck to the same source. To cover different aspects of the same story, developing sources with different people with varied background becomes necessary.

Here are some of the ways through which one can cultivate sources:

- **Talking to people with different background:** While covering a news report for a government organization, say, for example, your circle of sources should be wider than the senior officials of that government organization. You can also talk to other people who are directly or indirectly involved with that organization and can give you information not available with or not disclosed by the government officials of that organization.
- **Identifying people who have access to important sources:** One of the important attributes of cultivating sources is to develop a rapport with people who control or has access to important sources. For example, not everyone is allowed to get information on any legal record of the government. If the journalist can develop friendly relations with the magistrate or someone with similar or higher rank, one can find easy access to collecting such information. Building good relations with such sources are essential to write a good news story.

- **Go wandering without any specific intention in mind:** It is always easy when the mind is let loose and is allowed to think free. And it could be nothing more than taking some time off for travelling. One can always take a trip without having any particular story in mind. Meeting new people, talking to strangers no wonder helps a lot in not only cultivating sources but also in making a good news story different from the rest.
- **Knowing where the records are:** Records of government or non-government institutions are sometimes kept public, at times confidential and some in totally inaccessible position. This might, in turn, create difficulty for a journalist while digging up a news story which is very sensitive. If a journalist asks for the records frequently, showing keen interest whether or not one is using the information found on the records, at least lets the source know about the journalist's interest. Developing a friendly relationship with such sources can help a lot better in getting inaccessible information, thus building a strong news story.
- **Talking to experts:** It is one of the important ways by which a journalist can develop a good news story. Experts on related fields are a major source of cultivating a good news report. Once you develop a rapport with them, they will be eager to share the latest invention or the newest ideas or development of any government policy to you.

STOP AND READ

1. News is a piece of information which is new to the audience. It can be about an incident, an accident, a calamity, an announcement by the government, celebrity, politicians and so on. It can be local, regional state, national and international that affects the audience and is of interest to them.
2. News is considered balanced when the news story informs the readers of all the important details of the event or the news story in a proper manner and in relation to its source. The purpose of balance is to enable the readers to have a fair understanding of the entire event.

1.11 SUMMING UP

This Unit started with a clear conceptual idea on news so that you get a fair idea about what news is all about. We then discussed the various definitions given by noted scholars and academicians on news. We tried defining news as something which is new, factual, informative, interesting and important. We described news value and how a journalist should consider it while writing a news story and also the elements required in developing it.

Next major point that we covered is about the objectivity and authenticity in writing a news story. We also discussed about the accuracy, truthfulness and lack of bias on the part of the reporter. After that, we moved on to different types of news - hard and soft news and their differences. We also focussed on developing a nose for news, news sense and cultivating new sources. We believe this unit has enabled you to know and understand what news actually is and how it differs from other genres of writing.

ACTIVITY

Take five daily newspapers of five days a row and examine the front pages of them daily. Try to find out the news elements in the stories published in these pages.

1.12 QUESTIONS

1. Define news. How is it different from other forms of writing?
2. What are the differences between hard and soft news?
3. How do you cultivate sources from which a news report can be acquired?
4. What do you mean by news value? Discuss the news values in detail.

1.13 SUGGESTED READINGS

Bill Kovach, T. R. (2014). *The Elements of Journalism: What Newspeople Should Know and the Public Should Expect*. Three Rivers Press.

Srivastava KM, Editing, (1987).. Sterling Publishers.

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Tom E. Rolnicki, C. D. (1950). *Scholastic Journalism*. Oxford: Blackwell.

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UNIT 2: NEWS WRITING

UNIT STRUCTURE

2.1 Introduction

2.2 Objectives

2.3 Principles Of News Writing

2.4 News Story And News Structure

2.5 Headlines

2.5.1 Importance of Headlines

2.5.2 Types of Headlines

2.6 Features

2.6.1 Characteristics of Features

2.6.2 Characteristics of Feature Writers

2.6.3 Classification of Features

2.7 Summing Up

2.8 Questions

2.9 Suggested Readings

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Writing the news story is an important step in the dissemination process after collection of information. At the very beginning, journalists try figuring out what is news and what is not. The next step starts with the journalist gathering all the necessary information required for writing the story. After fact finding and collection of data, the journalist organizes the notes and writes the 'introduction' of the story or the lead which is the critical part of the story. After the lead, the body and the conclusion are written which then takes the form of a fully-structured news story and not just a paragraph synopsis of an event.

2.2 OBJECTIVES

The objective of this unit is to enable you to:

- Learn the art and style of writing a news story
- Apply necessary and relevant principles while writing a news story
- Know how to develop the structure of a news story
- Learn the craft of creating proper headlines
- Hone the skill of writing a feature story

2.3 PRINCIPLES OF NEWS WRITING

There is no strict rule as such that needs to be followed while writing a news report. However, certain things if followed properly can actually guide the journalist in writing and structuring a news story in an effective and proper manner. This, on the other hand, will help by requiring lesser amount of editing on the part of the copy editors and less amount of data and information to be removed from the news story.

At the very first stage, a journalist needs to find a relevant topic or an idea upon which the news story can be written. If observed properly, the journalist will find plenty of events happening all around the society and the world. Out of the many events, one has to select a particular one and develop a story. While choosing the story or the topic of the event, one's personal choice, agenda of the news organization, interest of the readers, popularity of the topic etc should be the deciding factors upon which the selection of the story is based.

After the selection of the topic or the story, the journalist now has to make efforts to collect as many facts and figures and detailed information on the story as possible. After all the information are gathered the journalist now has to decide which are the most important facts and information so as to structure and write the lead of the news story. The 5 W's and 1 H discussed in the next section will help you to understand how a news story is structured.

The next most important task of the journalist is to make the story interesting and appealing for the readers. While a good headline grabs the attention of the readers, good language, proper start and smooth flow from one paragraph to another without any digression and discontinuity retains the attention.

These are some of the useful ways by which a news story can be written but with experience, a journalist develops own book of rules and a distinctive personal style of writing news stories.

2.4 NEWS STORY AND NEWS STRUCTURE

Writing the lead is the first step in writing a news item in the proper ‘inverted pyramid’ structure. The Lead of a story is the opening paragraph which contains the most crucial details of the story. The inverted pyramid form presents facts and information in descending order, from the most important to the least important one. The topmost significant and crucial information based on news values and as selected by the news reporter is given in the opening followed by a first and subsequent paragraphs.

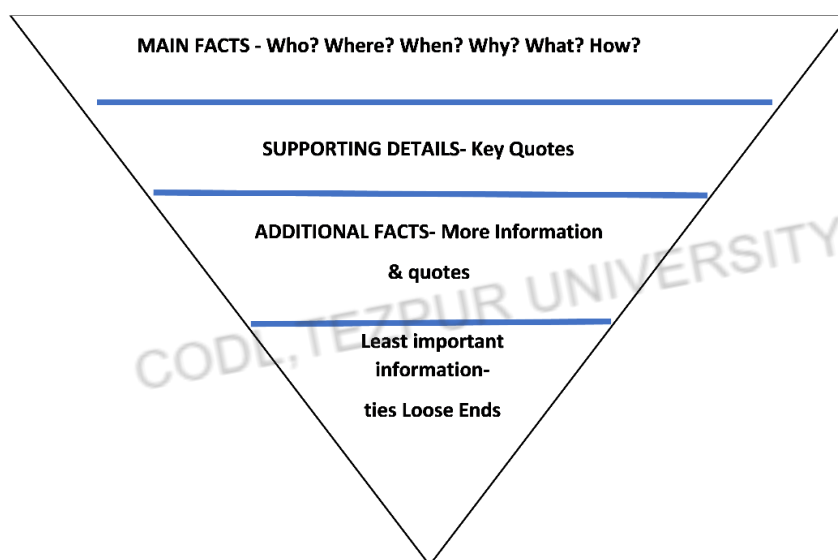


Fig: Inverted Pyramid structure of news writing.

The succeeding paragraphs are a follow up of the lead explaining and making it specific. The five W's (what, who, where, when, why) and 1 H

(how) are answered in the lead itself and sometimes in the second paragraph if the lead becomes too long. Hard news stories often have a two paragraph lead.

Just before and after writing the news story the journalist has to study all the notes carefully to see that the story is not in parts and is read as a whole. As the journalist organizes the notes, one can actually mark numbers in order of importance - 1, 2, 3, etc. – opposite the information found out to indicate the increasing and decreasing order of importance, for own convenience.

The 5Ws and 1H should answer these questions:

- **WHO is it about?**
- **WHAT happened?**
- **WHEN did it take place?**
- **WHERE did it take place?**
- **WHY did it take place?**
- **HOW did it take place?**

Fig: 5Ws and 1H

The Lead of a story is written with the intention of engaging the readers and generate their interest in the story. With so many sources of information – newspapers, magazines, TV, radio and the internet – readers simply are not willing to read beyond the first paragraph or even the first sentence of a story unless it grabs their interest. A good lead does just that. It gives readers the most important information in a clear, concise and interesting manner. It also establishes the voice and direction of an article.

The reporters usually try to obtain facts from multiple sources and while doing so they should cross check them. Subsequent paragraphs after the lead and body of the story of various lengths expand the story with more details. Different kinds of people related to a story provide explanations and give their opinions. Inclusion of these opinions give a touch of human interest which attracts the attention of the readers. The last paragraph has

the least important facts and can be easily removed from the story, if needed. This is the characteristic of the inverted pyramid form of news writing.

The reporter normally uses personal judgement in prioritizing the facts from the most important to the least important. Subsequently, in the editing stage, the copy editor determines among other things if the information is presented in a logical sequence with a proper structure. If the latter considers that proper structure is not followed, the lead, the body and the conclusion may be rewritten for better emphasis and to highlight the most important part of the story. Writers in their beginning stage may take the help of the editors for guidance in writing or framing a story with proper emphasis and order.

Paragraphs in a news report should be short. One paragraph should only contain one main fact. And a person's opinions and explanation in a paragraph. If there is another significant fact or another person's comments to support the story, it should take the form of a new paragraph. Most of the paragraphs in a news story have a few sentences – about three or four.

To avoid monotony, the number of sentences in each paragraph should vary from one another. For better emphasis, you can write a series of single sentences to put more stress on the point but generally, this is not done. The structure is secondary to content but is still very important.

Since newspapers columns are narrow in width, paragraphs with more than four sentences look long and complicated for the readers and may discourage them from reading from beginning till the end even though the news story may be really interesting.

Paragraphs and sentences should follow each other smoothly and continually. It is through the smooth flow that the news story can have a coherence, which means logical consistency. Only if a story is written with proper consistency, it allows the reader to follow it making the development easy. Proper cohesiveness in a news story makes it stick together

Tips for Writing a good Lead

1. **The Five W's and 1 H:** Before writing a lead, decide which aspect of the story – who, what, when, where, why, how – is the most important. You should emphasize those aspects in your lead. Wait to explain less important aspects until the second or third sentence.
2. **Specificity:** Though you summarise essential information in a lead, try to be as specific as possible. If your lead is too broad, it won't be interesting.
3. **Brevity:** Readers want to know why the story matters to them and they won't wait long for the answer. A lead should be concise, often written in one sentence, sometimes two. Generally, it should consist of 25-30 words and should rarely cross 40.
4. **Active sentences:** Strong verbs will make your lead lively and interesting. Passive constructions, on the other hand, can sound dull and leave out important information, such as the person or thing that caused the action. Incomplete reporting is often a source of passive leads.
5. **Audience and context:** Take into account what your reader already knows. Remember that in today's media culture, most readers become aware of breaking news as it happens. If you're writing for a print publication the next day, your lead should do more than merely repeat yesterday's news.

The coherence of a news story can be achieved through the following ways:

- Joining of sentences and paragraphs together through the use of pronouns and demonstrative adjectives
- Repetition of a keyword from the preceding paragraph or sentence
- Using a synonym to refer to a keyword in the preceding paragraph
- Elaboration of details in logical sequence or order of importance
- Special words and phrases can be used to tie paragraphs together and develop continuity in a story. These are called transitional words and they

reflect the sequence of thought and help the reader move from paragraph to paragraph.

2.5 HEADLINES

While reading a news story, the first thing that is noticed by a reader is the headline. If the headline is catchy we proceed to read the story and if it doesn't interest us we skip reading the story. Majority of the readers are scanners, in the sense that they scan the page looking for that one specific word or phrase that touches them or their lives or tends to make them laugh and attracts their attention. If they find an interesting headline, they will stop and begin to read the news article. The headline is the writing given in large font on the top of any news story is what catches the readers' interest and seeks their attention. An unclear, poorly-written headline diminishes the readers' interest and makes them look into other parts of the newspaper. A well-written, clear and concise headline tempts a reader to read the news story.

2.5.1 IMPORTANCE OF HEADLINES

The following points mentioned here will make it clear to you as to why headlines are important for any news story:

- It names or summarizes the important facts of the story. The headlines make it easier for the readers to glance quickly and give them an option to select and read out of many stories.
- It is a window to the main story and attracts the readers to it.
- It gives a brief of the entire story and enables the reader to relate and at least make a surmise what the news story is or will be all about prior to reading the story.
- It also communicates the mood of the news story. It gives the readers a sense of the story's tone. Headlines of a feature differ from that of a news story. While a feature allows a writer to play with words, a news reporter often has to keep the headlines straight and clear so that the ordinary readers can make out what the headline wants to convey.

- It also conveys the relative importance of a story. The usual guideline is that larger the letter type font the more important is the story. The role of the headline is to help the readers decide which story is more important than the other.
- The KISS formula should be followed as far as possible while writing a headline. That is – Keep It Short and Simple. There can be more than one explanation of this formula also though the main principle remains the same.

Headlines have to fit into a specific slot in a newspaper or news magazine.. That becomes one of the greatest challenges in writing a proper headline for a news story. The larger the letters, the fewer are the words that can fit inside a news story. Software like Page maker and Quarkxpress help the headline writer to see instantly if the headline fits in the given space area. If it doesn't, the editor tries to add or subtract information and sometimes also look for alternate words to convey the same meaning in fewer words.

2.5.2 TYPES OF HEADLINES

a) **There are two types of headlines in terms of content-**

- i) Teller
- ii) Teaser

The Teller headline: The Teller headline gains the reader's attention by clearly and concisely summarizing the story. It is a straightforward one which is brief and to the point. Example: Union boycotts war.

The Teaser headline: The Teaser headline is mostly attractive in nature and arouses curiosity by giving only subtle hints about the story. This kind of headline usually has a play of words and intrigue readers enough to stop and take a glance at the story. But to make the readers actually read the story starting from the lead the teaser should be accompanied by a teller

headline as a secondary headline. Example: The future is way behind schedule.

b) **Headlines are also identified by appearance-** certain kinds of headlines have certain content qualities.

- A **one-line headline** is basically a single, unbroken sentence. Typically the one line headline is a teller.

Example: 5 Jawans martyred in attack on CRPF camp in J&K

- A **two-line headline** is one sentence broken into two lines; each line is counted separately. A gap of white space is avoidable at best at the end of one line of a two-line headline.

Example: After last New Year's Eve, 15,000 Bengaluru cops look to get it right tonight.

- A **three-line headline** is often a teller headline. It consists of a single sentence broken into three lines. Each line counts separately.

Example: Irish dancers

win first place

at talent show

- A **deck** is a secondary headline that is positioned under the main headline and is a teller. The deck can go under another teller headline. The deck always adds information and is helpful in explaining complex stories.

Example: Clinton Urges Support for Egypt's Reform Process

The Secretary of State threw her weight behind the effort led by Vice President Omar Suleiman

- The **hammer** is a short phrase or even a single word that is set in a point size larger than the headline underneath.

Example: Reign and Rain

Five inches of pouring rain doesn't dampen festivities

- A **tripod** is a combination of a large word or phrase followed by a two-line headline set in type half the size. Both lines of the second part neatly equal the height of the larger, opening words.

Example: Meriting recognition:

12 seniors awarded as high achievers
in PSAT test

- The **jump** headline accompanies the part of a story that continues on a different page. Many newspapers use just one keyword from the previous page's headline as a continuation to the story from the preceding page.

Example: Obama's night (continued from front page)

<p style="text-align: center;">ASSESS YOUR PROGRESS</p> <p>Why are headlines important?</p> <hr/> <hr/>

2.6 FEATURES

A feature is an explanatory and descriptive piece of writing wherein the writer expresses personal opinion. You have already learnt that a news reporter cannot express one's opinions in a news report. This is the most striking characteristic which distinguishes a feature from a news story. Though features are extensively written about people and places the best features are usually about people describing what they are really like. Features are subjective and personal but they are also based on facts and not imaginative as some may think. Dianee Doubtfire elaborates this point in her book *Creative Writing* stating that - 'an article is not fiction although it might contain semi-fictitious anecdotes or imaginary dialogue to illustrate certain points'. It is a factual piece conveying relevant information.

2.6.1 CHARACTERISTICS OF A FEATURE-

- **It immediately identifies and relates with the reader** - A feature usually covers topics which are of interest to the readers. More often the topics are informal and can range from travelling to cooking exquisite dishes or any human interest activity.
- **It makes a point**- Feature stories are written with a purpose. The feature writer has to see why the reader will choose to read one's feature over other write-ups. A reader has to invest a certain amount of time in reading an article and the feature writer has to ensure that his writing is worthy to be read.
- **It arouses interest among the readers**- The structure of a feature is well-organized and makes a valid point. It may cover a serious or an ordinary topic but even the serious topic is written and added with humour, drama, suspense, irony etc that make a piece of writing come alive. Features try to show events in motion describing the happenings as if they are happening in real.
- **They are unperishable**- Feature stories need not be new and latest. A topic which is considerably older can be turned into a feature provided the writer has the creativity to arouse and generate interest among the readers. Features can be held for days, weeks and months before being put into print.

2.6.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD FEATURE WRITER-

- **A nose for good stories**- Having a keen sense of a good story makes a feature writer successful as a storyteller. Just like news reporters have a nose for news similarly a feature writer should know topics that can really make a great feature story.
- **Perseverance**- Perseverance is a key element in any budding feature writer. A feature may not be perfectly written in one go. A good feature writer must possess the perseverance to rewrite and restructure it until attaining the desired level of perfection. No matter how good a feature may be, a beginner often has to face rejections. But one should never give

up because of the various disappointments but keep on working hard. Many times a good feature might get rejected due to want of space or perhaps it ceased to be topical. Working on it and re-doing it makes it likely to get published.

- **Originality and creativity-** Feature writers should not indulge in any kind of plagiarism. Features are the creative output of the writers. While some writers get inspiration from other feature writers' writings, some others take their inspiration from the people they meet. Whatever be the source of inspiration, the work must be authentic and original and not copied from someone else.

2.6.3 CLASSIFICATION OF FEATURES

The different kinds of features are:

- **Bright or Brite-** It is a kind of human interest feature. It is considered to be of lesser importance and has the touch of humour in it that makes it attractive for readers to read.
- **News feature or sidebar-** It is a kind of feature that is carried along with the main news story. A news story on a flood devastation can have an interview with the flood-affected victims as sidebars or as a background story as to what caused such a devastation and the rescue measures being taken.
- **Human interest-** Such kinds of features take into account the human angle by arousing the readers' feelings and emotions. Example - features dealing with people being abused victimized, people getting into trouble, or people battling against life-threatening illness or falling into bad times.
- **Personality sketch or profile-** A sketch is the type of feature that gives only one perspective and aspect of a celebrated personality while a profile provides a detailed and comprehensive picture of the individual.

- **Personal experience feature-** in this kind of feature, the writer shares own personal feelings and views on any topic or any event or any kind of experience. For example A feature about the writer's bungee jumping experience.
- **Interview feature-** This kind of feature is related with interviews being taken by the writer with any celebrity or an ordinary person with extraordinary quality or feat. This kind of feature is usually written in a question-answer format.
- **Travel feature-** It is a type of feature usually seen as a supplement with a newspaper. Writers loving to travel and wander in diverse lands pen down their experiences in the form of travelogue also known as travel features in a shorter form. For example A feature about the writer's visit to Europe.
- **Seasonal feature-** It serves as a teaser or a curtain raiser of various festivals being celebrated by different communities and people in a diverse land like India. It tells in detail about the rituals being performed, the historical significance and also the popularity of the festival.
- **Service feature or utility feature-** This kind of feature is gradually increasing in popularity due to latest boom in technology. It covers a wide array of things – right from technological innovation to usage of latest electronic gadgets.

ACTIVITY

Read a feature story published in any newspaper and identify its type. Would you consider writing it differently ? How and why ?

2.7 SUMMING UP

In this unit we have learnt about the principles of writing a news story, the 5 W's and 1 H, the structure of inverted pyramid that needs to be followed, from the most important to the least important facts, the structure of a news story, the lead, the body and the end. We have also discussed the style and

the types of headlines and how it affects the reading sensibility of the readers reading any news story. We then turned over to the art of feature writing which is different from writing a news story. While learning all these, you have to keep in mind that there is no direct rule to harness the ability to write a perfect news story or a feature for that matter. With plenty of hard work and dedication and cultivating the skills, one can actually become a successful journalist or a feature writer with time.

2.8 QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the basic steps in writing a proper news story.
2. What do you mean by a feature? How is it different from a news story ?
3. What are the different kinds of features?
4. Give two examples for the different types of headline.

2.9 SUGGESTED READINGS

Boynton, R. (2007). *The New New Journalism: Conversations with America's Best Nonfiction Writers on Their Craft*. Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group.

Jonathan Gray, L. B. (2012). *The Data Journalism Handbook*. O'Reilly Media.

Rao, N.. (2009). *Feature Writing*. PHI Learning Private Limited, New Delhi,.

Wolfe, T. (1990). *The New Journalism*. Pan MacMillan.

UNIT 3: REPORTING

UNIT STRUCTURE

- 3.1 Objectives
- 3.2 Introduction
- 3.3 Concept
- 3.4 Different types of Reporting
 - 3.4.1 Investigative Reporting
 - 3.4.2 Interpretative Reporting
- 3.5 Background research
- 3.6 Summing up
- 3.7 Suggested Readings
- 3.8 Probable Questions

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous units, you have learned about the concept of news and the structure of a news report. In this unit, you shall be introduced to reporting, which is the appropriate way of collecting and presenting facts in a news story. Reporting is the core of journalism. The reporter gathers information that ultimately takes the shape of a news item and is printed in a newspaper or newsmagazine or broadcast in a TV or radio news channel as the case may be. Be it print, electronic or multimedia a news reporter should be well-grounded in knowing the basic structure and the different genres of news reporting. This unit will let the learners know more about the various types of news reporting and also how to develop and gain first hand research experience before actually going out for the news coverage.

3.2 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this unit are to enable the learners to

- a) Understand the concept of reporting
- b) Know about various types of reporting
- c) Build a formidable background research habit for report writing

3.3 CONCEPT OF REPORTING

Reporting refers to the presentation of facts and information about a certain event, activity or their development to the audience of any form of mass media - be it television, newspaper or magazine or internet.

So many things are happening every second all over the world which may or may not be directly related to us. To bring the happenings of these events from around the world to the doorstep of people is a tremendous task and news reporting does precisely that. Reporting is a highly-responsible task because it not only involves the dissemination of crucial information but also information which will be taken as true and accurate by the readers. It is therefore very important that only the truth is reported.

Reporting can also be identified as the transfer of knowledge and information when it can be used as a source of empowerment. News information in this sense can be seen as a resource for the audience to enable them to knowledgeably participate in public debate and decision making, not simply as reading a news item to keep an audience intact.

The orientation of news is different and is dependent on which media it is placed for example a news item in TV might be really very interesting to look at but the same news reported in a newspaper may not look that interesting. So it depends on which media the news report is based on.

In reporting the journalist must also go through the process of selection of news very carefully. Selective perception and selective exposures are of paramount importance when it comes to the process of selection of news. A reporter should keep these two concepts in mind while selecting a news item and should not let his own bias come in the way of fair reporting. A reporter has to be meticulous while choosing a news story out of many.

A journalist must be able to choose a news item craving for attention among so many issues worthy of being selected in the media. This initial selection is based upon the journalist's sense of nose for news and is crucial in making it popular and attractive among the readers.

On the job training and grounding under a senior journalist in a news organization is essential for new journalists for it trains them and prepares one well to go in search of news stories and collect independently on one's own. With years of experience, a reporter gradually develops that sense or what is popularly called as nose for news and can make out which news stories will have relevance and priority out of so many events.

In journalism as a whole one important aspect that should be remembered is that it is a job that requires a high amount of team spirit. This is so because one has to work in groups for presenting a good news item to the readers or audience.

The responsibilities of the reporter therefore include -

1. Selection of a proper news story out of the enormous amount of events happening worldwide,
2. Collection of all the important and crucial information about the issue,
3. Writing down the report in a simple, precise and concise way and presenting it to the editorial desk.

It might look quite easy while reading the steps and duties of a journalist but the real challenge comes only after one goes to the field and tries collecting report. Reporting also depends on one's capacity to get to the depth of a matter. One of the most important aspects of a reporter's responsibility is to check that the news story which would go in print is exactly the same as has happened without mixing any personal opinion, hatred or grudge and prejudice so that it doesn't take some other shape.

The editorial and the reporting personnel should work harmoniously as a team and only then the output can be of a perfect quality. Both these departments should have perfect coordination and work in a balanced manner. The coordination of both the editor and the news reporter is important because a good news report can only be presented with adequate focus. The risk of diluting the significance of the report decreases only

when they work in coordination. If they work together collectively the readers can expect to read quality news reports and benefit out of them.

We have already mentioned above that if the reporter and the editor know each other's job only then the readers can expect a good news item. Therefore it is equally important that the reporter is ready also to carry out the role and function of an editor. Many a times what we see nowadays is that a reporter, usually in electronic media, has to perform the role of an anchor, reporter and also that of an editor. Such multi-tasking has become a day-to-day feature of a news reporter. Only when a reporter know the job of the other side (i.e. of the editor and the anchor) will one shall be able to carry out the job and perform it perfectly. Whenever the need or the situation arises the reporter should be ready to carry out the role of an editor. Therefore, a person interested in making a career out of journalism should be well prepared for such multi-tasking responsibility off and on and do it in an efficient manner.

The job of a reporter is getting challenging day by day and the line of demarcation between a reporter and an editor is becoming thinner due to the invasion of latest technology. It is always appreciated that a reporter should use a proper style of writing, presenting the facts and figures accurately. But at times say for example in times of emergency like disasters, conflict or accident, it might not be possible for the reporter to make good usage of words as the reporter's mind is engulfed in looking after the minute details and relevant information. It is here that the editing part becomes necessary. Because after submitting the reports the editor makes necessary corrections and finally gets it ready for printing or broadcasting.

Refining the language and presenting the news item so that it becomes suitable for reading is one of the main functions of the news editor and the editorial team. But the basic content of the news item should not be altered and must remain the same. Sometimes this proves to be a hurdle because refining other's written news story without altering its meaning becomes

tedious because the editor has not witnessed the event or experienced it. Therefore one finds it hard to imagine the reporter's point of view.

The function of news is to inform the public in brief about all important news events. So it becomes necessary for newspaper editors to provide the public with intricate details of all news events and happenings in order to continue to prosper.

3.4 TYPES OF REPORTING

3.4.1 INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING

Investigative reporting is a form in which reporters need to play the role of investigators and dig deep to find out facts about a news story. Such stories often uncover public matters that are otherwise concealed, either deliberately or accidentally.

Some hold that investigative journalism involves in-depth reporting in public interest, while others regard the entire concept of investigative journalism as an extension of what good journalism should really be. Most investigations start with a hunch or a tip that something or someone deserves more attention and a close look. If a preliminary search bears out that expectation, a serious investigation begins. When enough information has been uncovered to prove or modify the reporter's initial hunch, it's time to analyze, organize and write the story.

As the term denotes it is the kind of reporting which means investigating into a certain happening or development, something out of the way that may be happening gradually or all of a sudden in the society. The idea of investigative reporting in a democracy is considered as a public service because investigative reporting allows the journalists to see public agents and civil servants involved in corruption as betraying what is good in society: the responsibility to the public authority they represent.

Some of the definitions on investigative journalism by renowned editors and journalist are:

“The type of journalism which thrives on exclusive stories through digging [up] information from government, non-governmental organisations and the private sector to do stories in public interest.” *Benedict Tembo, Executive Member of Press Association of Zambia.*

"It is in-depth fact-finding of various matters that occur in our society day after day; it is a type of journalism whereby a journalist dwells inside the society [and tries] to reveal the hidden truth for the purpose of informing and exposing all necessary matters as required by the communities."

Richard Mgamba, Journalist, The Nation, Tanzania

“Investigative journalism would be going well beyond the obvious facts of a story, digging ... for facts that would normally be kept hidden from the public domain.”

Dumisane Ndlela, former news editor Financial Gazette, Zimbabwe

“Investigative journalism ... does not only report something new; it must educate, expose and uncover secrets.”

Mpho Moagi, Senior Producer, Special Assignment, South Africa

"Investigative journalism is the proactive pursuit of a complete picture of important developments in a community and society in the public interest, as opposed to a narrow focus on incidental scandal or exposure... The pursuit needs to be proactive to counter the problem of waiting for tip-offs from informers with grievances or agendas."

Evelyn Groenink, Coordinator Forum for African Investigative Journalism, South Africa

In investigative journalism, an investigation is carried out by the journalists by strictly adhering to the use of journalistic standards, principles and

professional skills to bring to light the activities of the corrupted and the evil doings of bureaucrats. However, investigative journalism requires more than just going out in search of a news story, seeking out sources, asking questions and reporting the story. There is an important organisational aspect to the whole system – where an organisation is putting money, time, effort, person, power and resources beyond the normal and routine activities of the newspaper environment.

The 2G and 3G scams in the Ministry of Communication of Government of India, corrupt practices during the Commonwealth Games held in Delhi in 2010, the numerous financial scams of the 1990s involving the big time share broker Harshad Mehta (late), the findings of the Tehelka sting operation, and the cash for questions deal of a few MPs etc. are all examples of investigative reporting.

Dr Howard Barrell, former *Mail & Guardian* editor, who also taught journalism in the United Kingdom defines investigative journalism as:

“Reporting undisclosed facts which, as a matter of public interest, one believes to belong in the public sphere and the uncovering of such facts involves concerted investigation by one or more journalists in a newspaper”.

By using the word ‘concerted’, Barrell indicates that a particular type of skill is required in a journalist while doing investigative reporting: a higher degree of application is required to uncover information involving journalistic enterprise and initiative. This usually involves a particular, long-term, in-depth look using investigative methods to excavate information that some people would rather have buried. Going beyond the daily routine implies in-depth inquiry into a subject or person; it involves going beyond the superficial reporting work that most journalists can claim to be involved in.

Investigative journalism involves obtaining of hard facts and situational evidence from sources which may be from newspapers, human beings to electronic media to substantiate and fall back on its hidden claims. Even after, obtaining such proof it does not necessarily qualify a story as 'investigative'.

Opinions also hold that real investigative journalism is the result of a reporter's own skill of unearthing hidden facts for the benefit of greater good of the society. And that a distinction should be made between stories unearthed as a result of genuine investigation and those that got 'discovered' as a result of someone else's work and research.

Truth-seeking and fact-finding involve investigating issues and events of reasonable importance beyond the normal standards of reporting to get to the core of the issue – usually to prove a suspect of corruption, booking the guilty to charge and also to bring it to the public's attention. This kind of exposure is usually done with the aim of exciting the public to recognise the wrongdoing of the corrupt people and trying to bring in a positive change. It is for this reason that investigative reporting is known as the journalism of 'outrage'. It is through the impact of this kind of journalism that the role of the media as a watchdog comes to limelight. It makes politicians resign, fraudsters imprisoned, public policy to be changed and altered, and conditions improved. It is perhaps due to this last goal that investigative journalism could be argued to lack the 'objectivity' of daily reporting, which often merely represents the facts.

3.4.2 INTERPRETATIVE REPORTING

In Interpretative reporting the reporter not only uses the facts gathered from the sources but also the skills of his own knowledge while interpreting a specific news story one has covered. One can cite the examples of the news reports during the time of an election, a conflict between two communities or groups, and environmental degradation like the recent high rates of

pollution in Delhi and so on. If we take the example of news reports on election we can find how columnists, academicians and resource persons offer their views based on their previous knowledge and experience and making the readers aware of the different aspects of the political air of the election time. In fact, it is through such news the people get a view on whom to choose and elect as their leader.

Interpretative reporting, as the term denotes joins facts with interpretation. It goes deeper and provides an insight into a specific news story, adding in depth analysis and forecasting future effects. It thus gives a holistic approach towards understanding an issue with which the specific news story is related to. It is the interpretative reporter's task to give the information along with an interpretation of its significance. In doing so the reporter uses personal knowledge and experience to give the readers an idea of the background of an event and explain the consequences it could add to. Sometimes, a reporter in order to provide the required amount of knowledge on the news topic also has to rely on the subject matter specialists while writing the report.

The previous units have elaborated on how reporters and reports should remain free from any bias or personal opinion and prejudice. But again interpretative reporting talks about providing opinions by a news reporter on certain specific issues which hold tremendous importance to the society at large. The opinions provided by the reporters in this kind of interpretative news reports are mainly knowledge-based opinions and not just mere personal opinions.

Any opinion given in a particular interpretative news story is either knowledge-based or has to be attributed to a source. It thus depends on how judiciously a reporter can use and apply the skills of collecting facts and at the same time applying his knowledge previously learnt on to that collection of facts or news story. At the same time, the media has to play

the role of a leader to lead the society when it faces conflicting situations mainly in times of war, natural disasters or during the time of an election. So, herein lies the significance of interpretative news reporting.

3.5 BACKGROUND RESEARCH

Background research is of prime importance not only when covering a news story but also when conducting interviews and attending press conferences. A news report looks very simple when it is presented before the readers. But only a journalist and an editor know the huge effort and time devoted to publishing that single piece of news story.

The first steps that a reporter or a journalist has to follow while covering a news story includes the collection of adequate and accurate information and data related to the news story and also attributing sources if any. It is done in order to provide the readers with more of knowledge on that particular topic.

For example, a famine has occurred in Bengal recently. The reporter in order to provide a comprehensive view on the latest famine can refer back to the earlier famines that struck in the 1970s, the huge effect it had on the people, the misery and the hunger that followed. In such stories, background research is of considerable importance.

In case of covering a press conference, the reporter has to do prior research on the topic that would be spoken of in that press conference. If the speaker is speaking about that particular organization and its remarkable achievement, a historically-based research is important for the reporter so that queries, if any, can be raised at that press conference. Background research holds special importance when it comes to conducting profile interviews or taking interviews of famous personalities. Gathering and analysing information about interview topics and subjects is an important first-hand tool in interview preparation. The information provides ideas for questioning the interviewee and helps in informing the public one's opinions and qualities. When preparing to interview an individual, the

reporter has to gather specific information about that person by looking at his personality profile.

For example, if a reporter has to interview a sports person, he has to go through the records he has covered in that particular sports which will be quite different while doing an interview with a prominent scientist. Based on the personality the background research conducted will differ. Requesting in advance a copy of the interview subject's curriculum vitae or bio data, particularly if interviewing about professional opinions, experiences, or endeavours is the best way to conduct background research. If plenty of work or related information is available about the interviewee, the reporter or the journalist should read as much of the work as possible prior to the interview. Or, at the very least, be familiar with the titles and topics.

ASSESS YOUR PROGRESS

Why is background research important in journalism?

3.6 SUMMING UP

This unit focusses extensively on the concept of reporting and its characteristics. It also discusses at length about interpretative and investigative reporting with proper examples meant for the learners to understand and have clarity. The role and the duties of a reporter have been properly highlighted. It also talks about the need for background research while covering a report. Thus the basic tools required for reporting by a journalist has been elaborated in this unit.

3.7 QUESTIONS

1. What is reporting? What are its characteristics?
2. Distinguish between interpretative and investigative reporting.
3. Why is background research important for reporting?

3.8 SUGGESTED READINGS

Agarwal, V.B. (2009). *Handbook of Journalism and Mass Communication*.
Concept

Jayapalan, N. (2001) *Journalism*. Atlantic Publishers and Distributors.

Agarwal, V.B. (2006) *Essentials of practical journalism*. Concept
Publishing Company

CODL, TEZPUR UNIVERSITY

UNIT 4: EDITING

UNIT STRUCTURE

- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Objectives
- 4.3 Concept
- 4.4 Newsroom set up in a news media
- 4.5 Deadline
- 4.6 Layout
- 4.7 Responsibilities of Reporting & Editing desks
- 4.8 Summing up
- 4.9 Suggested Readings
- 4.10 Probable Questions

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Editing, just like reporting is an important part of the entire business of journalism. In print media editing is done mostly in the form of changing, improving language including words and restructuring sentences and phrases whenever and wherever deemed to be necessary . Photos are also well edited before it is finally laid down in the newspaper. While reporting brings in the raw materials needed to build a story, editing, actually helps in the presentation of the news report in its refined form by making it readable with proper and well-organized structure of facts and figures. Thus, editing is as much as important as reporting. Because it organizes facts and figures gathered by the journalists. This unit shall give you the understanding of the constituents of editing a news report and the responsibility of an editor in a newsroom.

4.1 OBJECTIVES

After completion of this unit, you shall be able to-

- Know about the concept of editing – its necessity and importance

- Describe the organizational in a typical newsroom
- Define the roles and responsibilities of every journalist in the newsroom

4.3 CONCEPT OF EDITING

Editing is the process or technique by which a news item is presented to the readers or audience by refining those news items prepared by the reporters or those received from freelancers and news agencies throughout the world. Gathering facts information on a particular event is an important task while preparing a news story. But equally important is refining the news elements included in that news story without distorting the facts. It is thus the prime responsibility of the news editors to eliminate unnecessary data at the same time keeping in mind the relevant facts and information which need to be included for the readers.

While editing, extreme care has to be taken of cross-checking the correctness of the facts and figures given in the news story, grammar, language. Be it in the print or electronic media, one requires a great amount of skills and years of experience to fulfil this responsibility of working as an editor knowing what to refine and include in a news item. The process of editing might seem to be an easy task but only the people who do it know how tedious it is and that extreme caution should be taken while deleting unnecessary data.

The task of an editor includes several other assignments which include re-confirming facts and figures in a news item supplied by the news organization's own reporters or agencies or any other sources, check its language, punctuation, writing a good and catchy headlines, sub-headlines, deciding upon the news item's place in the overall layout of the newspaper or magazine etc. The editors are also responsible for the design structure and layout by giving it a very creative and profession look.

Further, it is not only that the editing persons have to concern themselves only about news items. They are also responsible for the overall look of the newspaper or magazine by giving it a creative and attractive layout at the

end of the day. News is something which is unpredictable and most of the time the editors have to be ready for the last moment disruptions which might occur.

For example, when the prints were almost ready by 9 pm when a major disaster shook the entire nation, it is the task of the editor to ensure that the news on disaster goes for print by including it as a major news story.

Once all the reports are received in the editing office, the editorial personnel concerned with various sections, cells or divisions get down to their work. The first step is the sorting or selection of items. The selected news items are then considered for further editing.

Most of the news items require some amount of editing. Firstly, in order to fit into the specified space and secondly, to shape it to the style of the newspaper.

First of all – the reporter who has filed it has already selected it out of so many events, happenings in his or her field.

Secondly, in every section or cell or beat, for example in the sports beat, there may be different stories or reports like ongoing Olympics, national level sports or games, individual sportspersons excelling in something, news about the government trying to develop sports infrastructure etc.

Similarly, in another section or beat, for example – politics, there may be so many news items like the selection of a new prime minister by an alliance, or a minister by the chief minister or prime minister due to resignation or death of another minister, one party withdrawing support from the government etc.

The senior divisional or sectional editorial personnel will decide which of these news items are actually of a publishable quality. Then the next step is to arrange them in a list based on their importance – the most important one obviously on the top of the list.

After this comes another significant step. That is, to edit these selected news items observing various rules and regulations of the organization as well as the general principles of editing. This exercise includes re-verification of the facts and figures given in the news items, rewriting them

if needed, changing the orientation of the news item itself by reorganizing the points taken up by the reporter, thinking of a good and catchy headline to go with the item etc.

Same is the case with photo editing.

Finally, arranging all the news items into a nice, attractive layout is also the responsibility of the editors. This requires special skills as there is no hard and fast rule or formula for doing this.

The sub-editor assigned to edit the news item first reads the story. Ideally, a news item should be read at least more than once to become familiar with it as well as understand the same. Even when a news item has to be re-written, the writer's tone or angle of writing should be respected by the editor.

4.4 NEWSROOM / NEWSDESK SET UP

The newsroom set up is composed of a hierarchical structure with the editor being the head of the organization followed by an executive editor who oversees the duties performed by colleagues below his rank. It is followed by the news editor who oversees the overall news to be published. Then comes the deputy editor, assistant editor, chief sub-editor, senior sub-editor, Sub-editor, Trainee sub-editor, Features or articles editor, Sports editor, Editor of cultural pages, Photo editor, Chief Reporter, Senior Correspondents, Correspondents, Freelancers etc.

However, one should note that this structure is only a model one to be followed by a typical news organization. So different news organizations including channels may have their own separate arrangement or system of hierarchy best suited to their individual requirements, interests and taste of their readership. Thus, it may not be exactly the same for any news organization and would be somewhat different in each one of them.

No fixed rule is there in terms of the number of editors that needs to be employed by the news organization. The employability issue depends upon the need of the news organization which again depends on the newspaper's area of operations, number of readers over a specific area etc.

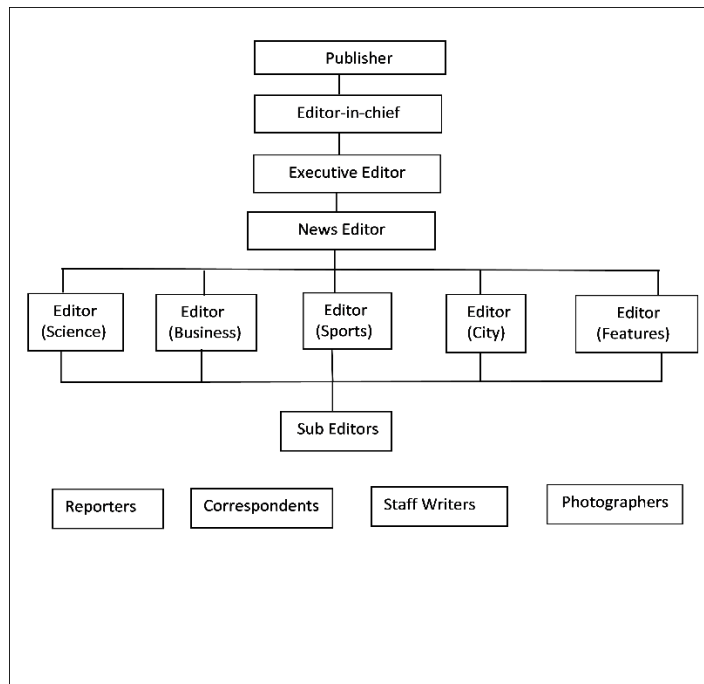


Fig: Typical hierarchical set up of a newsroom

4.5 RESPONSIBILITIES OF REPORTING & EDITING DESKS

The task of an editor is to supervise the overall activities of the news organization in print or electronic media alike. The editor is responsible for any legal complicity or controversy which may arise out of the news items even though he or she may not exactly be aware of each and every news item being printed in the daily newspaper or broadcast in the TV or Radio news channel.

The job of an editor is normally assigned to a person of long years of experience in public affairs who can guide the team of colleagues well starting from the Executive editor to the trainee. The overall objective of the editor should be making the media outlet hugely popular and successful in the long and short run. Usually, editors not only have long years of experience but also relevant one in that area so that the newspaper not only gets a wider circulation but a greater readership as well. It is the major responsibility of the news editor in general.

An Executive Editor is the actual person who oversees most of the day-to-day functioning and activities of any news organization. In the true sense, this person represents the editor and lays out the duties to the other staff and colleagues who follow his or her instructions accordingly. Even though the editor is expected to provide overall general leadership to the entire team of reporters and editorial personnel it is the executive editor who actually looks after the everyday routine jobs of the news organizations.

The task of a News Editor is to see that no important news of the day gets missed out. Even though the task of looking out for important news is assigned to journalists in a news organization, yet it is of particular importance for the news editor to look after it. In case a reporter misses out on important events and facts it is the duty of the news editor to find it, correct it and later on add it. Normally a news editor is also a person who has long years of experience in journalism and has a considerable number of sources in the field.

Deputy and Assistant Editors are senior journalists with plenty of experience and assigned with the overall responsibility of a particular desk and put in charge of a specific page or division.

For example – as the head of the business section, culture section, features, women's issues, children's issues, rural issues, science and technology, finance, etc.

The Sports Editor is the one who is in charge of all the news items related to sports. Usually, such a person is hired as a sports editor who finds it interesting to report and edit sports news items.

Chief sub-editor is also a mid-level person in the news organization mostly with long years of experience and holds a senior position in terms of work experience. They are put in charge of the desk for a specific shift. The duty of this position is to direct the junior sub-editors in the job of choosing the most important news in terms of relevance and priority for the news organization.

Senior sub-editors and Sub-editors carry out an important task in the news organization yet they have no authority or power like the editor or the managing editor. It is the sub-editors who perform the task of practically editing the news items, features, checking for typographical or grammatical mistakes, factual errors and authenticity under the watchful eyes of the senior editorial personnel in the news organization.

A sub-editor works at the lowest rank of the entire editorial set up. But in reality, they are the torchbearers as they carry out a major portion of the preliminary work of editing news reports from all relevant angles before passing it on to the senior personnel for further polishing.

Sometimes a news organization may also hire trainee sub-editors for working under a sub-editor. Usually most of the time, a trainee is hired as an intern to gather knowledge about the professional world before stepping into it. Things taught in classrooms are made to learn in such a setting where they can work under a senior and experienced sub-editor by working under them.

The job of a photo editor is to see that no photo is published without naming and crediting the source. The photo editor is also responsible for monitoring and coordinating the different photographs in a newspaper which is adjudged worthy for publication. In short, the photo editor does the job of what an editor does for the news reports. He is responsible for the publication of all the photographs in a newspaper, be it editing, cropping or refining it in colours to make it distinct and check that it is not blurred.

Sometimes words like copy editor are used and are popular in today's times. Copy editors are similar to sub-editors and so are their nature of responsibilities.

Resident Editors are those editors who head the regional edition of a newspaper located at a different place than the original or main office from where it is published or broadcast.

ASSESS YOUR PROGRESS

What are the duties of various journalists including reporters and editorial persons at different levels in a news organizational set up?

4.6 DEADLINE

Deadline, as the term suggests, is the restriction of time given for filing of a news item to a newspaper or news bulletin for smooth and timely publication or broadcasting of the same.

For example- a newspaper needs time for editing, printing, packaging, transporting and its delivery to the doorsteps of the people. It becomes all the more time consuming and difficult if the location of the newspaper is in a remote area. It is for this reason that filing of news has to be stopped by a certain point of time at night so that these steps can be done successfully and on time. This time restriction may be different for all news organizations. Punctuality is the key to it. The same restriction of timeline is followed in news bulletins on TV and Radio. Each news bulletin is restricted to a fixed set of time after which no more news is accepted for editing. This is called deadline.

4.7 PAGE LAYOUT

In this age of capitalism, every product is up for sale and each of them vies with the in competition to make itself saleable. The competition is high and therefore attraction is a key component in luring customers to buy that product. The more attractive it is, the higher are the chances of its getting sold. Newspaper too is a part of this stiff competition and to make it itself saleable it has to ensure that it is not only attractive but well-designed in frames and fonts. Content alone doesn't become the single criteria of a newspaper being sold nowadays. Due to huge profit market orientation, the media organizations too have become like any other capitalist organization

whose sole motive is to earn maximum benefits. It is because of this reason that creating an attractive page design becomes highly important for any newspaper.

The layout can be compared to the face and the overall look of the newspaper page. It is a kind of a model showing the placement of all the elements of the final product, designed to attract the readers and acquire a position in the market. The page layout design actually gives the newspaper a polished and refined look and therefore can be called its personality profile. Therefore, it is considered to be one of the most significant processes in newspaper production. Be it a newspaper or magazine, all media publications give high importance to this aspect. In fact, many publication houses, particularly

the popular ones, have a separate art department where experts and art designers make up the pages with the help of sub-editors. Page designers in these newspapers are not only highly paid but they also have a very high reputation.

The layout preparation of a newspaper involves placing news items and pictures at the correct places where the eye of the reader catches attention and making it easier to read and view. Putting up the pictures at the rightful places is an art in itself and requires a high degree of aesthetics thereby adding value and credibility to the news and making it intact and purposeful for the readers.

Impact of a picture can be created by choosing the correct picture, without any trace of blurriness, the right way of cropping, proper cutting and rightful placement within a page.

Some newspaper publications even house picture editors at a senior level. The process of layout also involves appropriate headline fonts and style, typography, placing of advertisements and not just restricted to pictures and news items. The layout artist is also responsible for the placement of advertisements. The positions of the advertisements are decided well in advance by the advertising department.

The layout of every single page is different from one another. The first page in newspaper has a different layout including flag, ear panels (small boxes on the upper corners on the front page of a newspaper), and anchor story (news story usually of feature type carried at the bottom middle position of the front page of newspapers) apart from the weather report, brief news capsules etc.. These features are not to be found in inside pages. An editorial page will feature items like editorial, letters to the editor and few articles. This shows how layouts differ from page to page.

People who love reading always choose those fonts and texts soothing for their eyes, which makes reading seem pleasant and comfortable rather than cluttered text here and there. A well-structured, well organized and a well-executed layout is also a sign of good, precise and carefully-designed content inside.

Another important aspect of page layout is the keeping up on white space which allows the eyes to breathe while reading the news content. If too many words are crammed up together it gives the entire newspaper a very clumsy look thereby increasing the chance of not being read. No one likes to read a carelessly-crammed text which lacks some amount of open space.

A well-balanced design with all the important news elements with colour and variety soothes the eyes and invites the readers to read. Many designers while designing a newspaper layout ignores this aspect in their attempt to fill the news page with more and more news stories which result in a fully packed up page reducing its chances of being read by the readers.

Newspaper design can also be static or dynamic.

A static layout design is one where the newspaper doesn't change its page design every now and then. Whereas a dynamic layout design is one where the newspaper keeps on experimenting with its design skills and changes its characteristics quite often. There are pros and cons for both these kinds of page layout designs.

A static design establishes itself as a tagline of a newspaper and also helps a regular reader of that newspaper to find out where to look for what in that

newspaper. Yet at times they become too tiring and monotonous for the readers with the same repeated design.

On the other hand, dynamic design infuses an element of surprise as it is changed every now and then. But this too at times can become confusing as the reader has to keep on searching where to look for that particular news item or editorial, puzzles or crosswords because of its unpredictability.

4.8 SUMMING UP

In this unit, we have learnt how the editing process takes place stage by stage and how at every stage refines each of the news items in an organized manner. We have also learnt the organizational set up of a newsroom and the roles and responsibilities of each of the persons in reporting and editing desks from executive editors to photo and sports editors. The importance of deadlines and page layout have been discussed at length and how each of them helps in submitting news articles at the notified time without much delay.

4.9 QUESTIONS

- a) What is editing and why is it important in journalism ?
- b) Discuss the hierarchical structure of a newsroom setup.
- c) Discuss the roles and responsibilities of reporting and editing desks.

4.9 SUGGESTED READINGS

Kobre, Kenneth. (2001). *Photojournalism: The Professionals' Approach*. Focal Press.

Chapnik, Howard. (2001). *Truth Needs No Ally : Inside Photojournalism*. University of Missouri Press

Cartier-Bresson, Henri. (2003). *The Man, the Image & the World: A Retrospective*. Thames and Hudson

MODULE II: VARIOUS ASPECTS OF JOURNALISM

CODL, TEZPUR UNIVERSITY

UNIT 5: PHOTO JOURNALISM

UNIT STRUCTURE

5.1 Introduction

5.2 Objectives

5.3 Importance Of Photographs For Print Media

5.4 Concept Of Photo-Editing

5.5 Techniques For Good Journalistic Photography

5.6 Preparing Photo Features On Various Subjects

5.7 Introduction To Different Types Of Camera

5.8 Summing Up

5.9 Questions

5.10 Suggested Readings

5.1 INTRODUCTION

You must remember that in the examinations at school and college levels many a time a student is asked to draw a diagram of a machine or a system while explaining it. This is because a diagram or a picture explains the answer much more conveniently and effectively than what can be achieved by a few hundred words.

Similarly, it is a common saying in mass communication that a 'picture speaks a thousand words'. In other words, it means that a single picture is capable of conveying the meaning and expression of several hundreds or thousands of words with much fewer efforts.

In mass communication most of the times pictures are presented as a supporting content to a news story, but at certain times in print media

publications, they tell a news by themselves without the support of the words. So we can say that in a news story or a feature, photographs should be able to supplement news items. Also, if a photograph is added to a news item it adds to the effectiveness of the item. Most of the photographs enhance and even sustain the readers' interest in the story.

5.2 OBJECTIVES

After completion of this unit, you shall be able to -

- a) Understand visual communication through the use of photographs in print media
- b) Learn the concept of photo editing
- c) Know the ways of putting in captions and also techniques for good photo-journalism
- d) Get familiar with different types of camera for use in photography

5.3 IMPORTANCE OF PHOTOGRAPHS FOR PRINT MEDIA

As we are all familiar with photographs in mass media, especially in the print media we already know its importance in the media. A well-clicked and properly-edited photograph enhances the appeal of news items to a great extent. There is something very interesting in the case of photographs, which is true also for photojournalism as well. That is, like journalists it is also expected from the photojournalists that they would be able to provide us with the most accurate pictures of an event or happening with the minimum gap of time – whenever the newspaper is published or the bulletin is broadcast on the TV / Radio channel. Besides, without a good photograph, the newspaper or magazine or the electronic media news bulletins would look very dull and drab, failing to enthuse the readers or the audiences towards the media.

When an incident or event takes place or an unnatural event happens like a disaster, the facts and figures may be collected by the journalists even later

on from other sources including the government agencies or fellow journalists in various newspapers or news channels. But, in the case of photojournalism, this is not so because an event cannot be repeated for the sake of a photograph. Hence the photojournalist should try the best to reach the spot of the event as soon as possible after it takes place. For scheduled events, the photojournalist must try one's best to reach the place well before the appointed time.

5.4 CONCEPT OF PHOTO-EDITING

You may be surprised to learn that photographs can be edited and that they do need editing before publishing or broadcast in the media. Photo editing means the very important task of making a photograph suitable for publication, keeping intact its basic qualities by all manners. This is nothing but improving the contents of a photograph to properly highlight all its relevant aspects so that it can appeal to readers in an effective way. You may well remember that in the unit on News it was instructed that a journalist should try to gather each and every information, facts and figures related to an event, happening etc. which may be directly or indirectly related to the event. This is because one never knows which of this information may prove necessary and important later on when preparing the story. Similarly, when a photojournalist goes to the spot for collecting photographs one should take several photographs of the event so that even if one of them is defective, there is an alternative to bank upon at times of crisis.

Nowadays, photo editing has become quite a convenient and easy task as there are several software available which can do the job online on the instructions from the journalists whenever necessary.

In a newspaper or magazine of repute, usually, there are several photojournalists who bring in photographs of important events and assignments taking place every passing day. In the evening or at the time

when the photographs are to be selected for printing, the chief of the photo division and senior editors select them after a detailed consultation.

Once the selection has been done, the time for editing them comes up for improving and smoothening the rough edges for making them match the news items and the newspaper's general make up or layout design as a whole. Editing a photograph in journalistic parlance includes the following aspects ---

Crop or cropping – this means removing the unwanted portions of a photograph if felt necessary.

Re-sizing – changing the size of the photograph to fit into the exact space available for the purpose.

Enhancing the photograph's image – this means refining the colour, contrast etc. for improving its image.

Right at this point, an important aspect should be kept in mind by every photojournalist, especially the upcoming journalists. That is, editing a photograph does not entail doctoring or changing the basic characteristics of the photographic facts in the item to be printed or broadcast from journalistic purposes.

This is mentioned here because there are plenty of such examples which can also be termed as manipulation of photos by persons concerned, which may include journalists, for various purposes.

Let us discuss such an example. You may well remember that a few years back there was an intense Israeli bombing of Palestinian places. One photograph of the bombing was published by several reputed newspapers across the world. This was supplied by the globally-reputed news agency Reuters. However, after one or two days of publication of this specific photograph, several bloggers had passed the word around that it was not real and was a fake one.

As the complaint found its way to Reuters finally they enquired into the matter and found to their utter surprise that the photograph was actually 'doctored' by the photojournalist who had clicked it. The photograph as such was not fake. It was actually taken from the battlefield. But the contents were edited to a considerable amount for enhancing its appeal. More surprising than this was that the photojournalist there admitted to the practice saying this was a normal activity resorted to by a many of the photojournalists and the average rate of doctoring was about 30 % of a photograph. Reuters was embarrassed to a big extent by the issue and the job contract of that photojournalist was terminated immediately after the fiasco.

One should always stay away from such practices which are nothing but 'misleading' unsuspecting readers and it is equivalent to cheating the readers or audiences.

A photograph is required to be lively, encouraging, appealing, effective and speaking many things. This is because it is not simply an instrument of showing the readers something but also an important tool for gaining insight into the life of human beings and the society as a whole.

Like a journalist, a photojournalist also must be alert every moment of the 24 hours of the day as anything may happen at any moment of the day or night. More so at times of crisis either from natural disasters or war-like situations.

Photojournalism poses a big challenge of getting a good photograph from a spot as much near to the event as possible. In the process, there might be threats to the photojournalist. This is also a part of the game that one must know how to keep oneself safe from all these threats and yet get the best out of the situation.

Further, like journalism, photojournalism must strictly adhere to the aspects of timeliness, objectivity, to the point among others and be able to express

whatever it wanted to reflect without requiring too many photographs to tell a simple story.

Photojournalism allows ample scope for expressing one's creativity to the fullest by taking photographs which are full of life, expressive and may convey meanings properly even without the support of the written words.

Besides, the effectiveness of a photograph also depends upon the placement of it in the overall layout of the newspaper or magazine. That is because the layout of a page in any newspaper or magazine should be prepared in such a way that everything is balanced in a manner which is smooth looking for the eyes.

Again, if a photograph is edited badly and presented in a squeezed manner that would also cause a major loss in its meaning and effect for the readers.

Similarly, as far as possible a photograph should never be printed in a way where it is broken into two parts by the mid-fold of the newspaper or between two pages of a magazine. This would disturb the smooth flow of the vision of the reader to the photograph.

From the discussions here it can be said that like journalism and other forms of mass communication photojournalism also entails a great responsibility on all the persons involved with the business of presenting a photograph to the masses to inform about something important. So because as we all know a newspaper or magazine or a news channel reaches out to millions of people across the world with a potential for influencing the people with its appeal.

While professional associations of photojournalists have their own codes of conduct like any other profession including journalism, a great deal depends upon the quotient of self-regulation by them. Specially in today's world when clicking and editing a photograph has become so convenient.

Further, it can be seen that over the last few years the concept of citizen journalism has been growing in acceptance among all societies in the world.

Here, the question of self-regulation and filtering of photographs is posing a big concern as the majority of the citizen journalists are not trained journalists and may not be strictly adhering to the set norms and regulations.

From the point of using your skills effectively, photojournalism can be termed both as an art and a science at the same time. This is because photojournalists are creating something artistic using scientific tools and technology. A lot depends on the creativity of the photojournalist as he or she is the one who must know which point in the entire frame is to be selected and highlighted, which to be discarded among so many different contents in a photo frame. Besides, a proper coordination and compatibility with the journalist is a must if the photographs are expected to be supporting and thereby enhancing the effects of the news items. This is needed if the photographs are published as part of the news items.

It needs to be kept in mind here that like a news item, a feature or a column among others, photographs can also have a headline in addition to the caption and cut line. While you are already aware of what a headline is, a caption is the short description of a photograph given below it for informing the masses about the event or happening. On the other hand, words or descriptions which appear under a caption are together termed as a cut line in a photograph.

ASSESS YOUR PROGRESS

Why is photojournalism both an art and a science?

5.5 TECHNIQUES FOR GOOD JOURNALISTIC PHOTOGRAPHY

Photojournalism is an activity which combines technical, artistic and scientific acumen of the photojournalist for producing a good quality product to be presented to the readers through the print medium. Like the

profession of journalism, a photojournalist has to be active and tactful for clicking a good photograph. For example, it is a very basic requirement that the camera or more than one camera should be accessible to him or her at any moment of time of the day or night. This is irrespective of whether one is on official assignment or not as something interesting can happen any time without notice.

Secondly, like a journalist, the photojournalist must also develop a sharp acumen for spotting the unusual in a crowd or anywhere at any moment of time and make it a point of clicking a photograph whenever the opportunity appears.

A photojournalist must also have an imaginative mind to anticipate what may happen after a specific event or an unscheduled event takes place.

Again, once a photojournalist becomes experienced, one should be able to compose the subjects or components of a certain photograph in such a way that there is hardly any need for it to be edited at all. Otherwise, there is a lot of possibility that important and relevant contents or portions of the photograph may be deleted while editing it. Or it may also happen that the most relevant portion was not included at all.

Besides, a photojournalist must also keep in mind the restrictions, regulations, conventions etc. prevailing at many places while taking a photograph. For example – a place containing sensitive establishments from the Defence point of view or other security issues may not allow photographs to be taken. Similarly, a celebrity (maybe a film star, sports icon, prominent political leader, business magnate etc.) as an individual person may not want to be photographed anywhere and everywhere in public. Such restrictions, regulations and conventions should be respected while carrying out one's official duties as a photojournalist.

Let us look at a few examples from real life world in this regard. You may well remember the peculiar situation that arose when a section of the print media in the United Kingdom was desperately pursuing the girlfriend of

Prince William in England day in and day out. This had caused a considerable amount of difficulties not only for the lady but also to her entire family as a whole.

Another incident was experienced by this author during his stint in The Assam Tribune, Guwahati. A journalist from a prominent local English newspaper had written and published about some Defence installations on the Arunachal Pradesh border with China following a visit to the border outposts beyond Tawang. This had caused a major embarrassment for his newspaper as well as the Defence authorities. Of course, the journalist in question was taken there in a group of other journalists on a tour programme organized by the Press Information Bureau's (P.I.B.), Defence wing. Either the journalist was not briefed properly or maybe he himself had decided to go ahead with it as it was an exclusive news for him. It needs to be mentioned here that the PIB is an agency of the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting of the Union Government of India dedicated to the dissemination of information to the masses through the media.

A few years ago another interesting thing happened which has some connection to this issue in question. That is – the prime minister of the country called a press conference at his official residence in New Delhi where a good number of photojournalists were also present. While waiting for the prime minister on the lawns of the residence the journalists saw several peacocks dancing and moving around in a merry mood. Seeing such a beautiful scene the photojournalists started to take photographs of the dancing peacocks to be published as offbeat photographs in the next day's newspaper. However, the security personnel and other officials of the prime minister present at the residence came up and politely requested them not to take photographs and also not to publish those which were already taken. The officials reasoned that though there was no official regulation about it yet it was a well-respected tradition as well as a convention that photographs of the residence were usually not clicked as a respect to privacy. The point was well taken and it should also be a pointer to all

aspiring and practising photojournalists that such traditions should be respected.

This author had also seen that in one of the famous beaches of Chennai city, monuments in memory of several leaders of the state have been erected on the sands. And there are placards in most of them asking people not to click photos of them. So these things should be kept in mind while doing one's duties.

This incident in the prime minister's residence also presents the 'offbeat' angle to the whole issue. That is, like a journalist a photojournalist should also be ready at any moment for capturing anything important happening without any warning or hint.

Further, on the question of ethical aspects relating to photojournalism, in addition to not tampering with a photograph for publication in the newspapers or magazines, one should also not download photographs from amongst all those available in the different sources of the internet and pass it on as their own photographs. This is nothing but plagiarism.

5.6 PREPARING PHOTO FEATURES ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

Photojournalism can be termed as the visual reporting of newsworthy events, by capturing and publication of still images and is commonly known as press photography. It has been in existence since the inception of photograph in the 1830s. News photographs are seen as socially-constructed as any other news reports and are seen as transparent windows on the world capturing the reality through the photographer's lens. Historically, verbal reporting of news stories have prevailed over the representation of news with images serving as a prop and as an aid to these textual news stories. But with the passing of time and technology gripping the world of news reporting, things have changed and now not only news items but also features are supplemented with visual narratives of photographs. These photographs act as powerful images in conveying deeper meaning to its audience about the reality of society in a pleasing form.

In photo features, the photos do the narrative of telling the onlookers about the entire story - be it a documentary, travel stories or a biopic. Photo features are eyes through which a photojournalist tells an entire story with the help of visual images rather than texts. It is one of the unusual but entertaining means of communicating meaning to the audience. In order to do a photo feature, a photojournalist not only has to explore new areas that would arouse interest among the readers but it should also be innovative.

Photo feature can range from a host of topics like rare exotic food delicacies to travel and tourist spots to featuring limelight on little-known topics of famous personalities. It can also focus on social issues like child abuse, female foeticide and other societal ills that lurking in the society. Before doing a feature on any issue or topic background research on that concerned idea is a must so that the photojournalist knows exactly what types of images would go onto the feature write up.

5.7 INTRODUCTION TO DIFFERENT TYPES OF CAMERA

While there are different types of cameras available in the market, the single-lens reflex or more widely known as the SLR camera is highly popular among all sections of people including the photojournalists alike. The website – www.photography.com refers to this camera as one that uses a rotating mirror (maybe a pentaprism or a pentamirror) that reflects the image which comes through the lens onto a focusing screen. From the mirror's reflection, the images then appear in the camera's eyepiece. The image only reaches the film after the focal plane shutter opens (when the photographer takes the shot).

Produced in 1935, different models flourished throughout the World War II era that included improvements in the viewfinder's orientation and the camera's internal mirrors. Since the 1970s amateur and professional photographers alike have been using SLR cameras.

Over the years as photographic technology has improved fast, retailers produced SLR cameras that are equipped with highly-improved lenses,

filters and microcomputers. Today, advanced technology and demand have made digital SLR cameras easily affordable and available to anyone interested in photography. As a result, the vocation has become a convenient pastime for many people as the cameras are becoming highly user-friendly, more so for the photojournalists.

This author believes that one of the most important advantages of digital cameras and developed technology has been that much more photographs can be clicked and kept in storage inside the cameras for future usage and all of them can be viewed without printing them. So, the photojournalist can choose which picture is to be actually printed and which to be rejected.

Besides, in the earlier years photographs had to be printed in negative and positive before they could be published. But nowadays a photograph can be directly downloaded into the computer from the camera or if needed transmitted to the computer from a far-off place through internet. While digital SLR cameras give the photographer the advantage of viewing the scene without parallax distortion (apparent movement of fixed objects when the photographer changes position), they do prevent the photographer from seeing his shot at the moment the picture is taken (www.photography.com)

Aperture is an important term in photojournalism that refers to the lens diaphragm on a camera that controls the amount of light that touches the film when the shutter opens. Aspect Ratio is a measurement of a photograph's width to height. Commonly, 35 mm film measures 36:24, creating an aspect ratio of 3:2.

5.8 SUMMING UP

In this unit, we have learnt the concept of photo editing and also the need for photographs in print media. We have learnt how photography enhances the visual capacity of the readers and tempts them to read the news story. The techniques of good journalistic photography and the ways of getting a better photograph have been discussed in detail. We have also how to prepare a photo feature and the way it comprises an important part of any

magazine or newspaper in contemporary times. A photo feature speaks a thousand words in a different style very much apart from the usual features or news items. And while covering these pictures, the handling of cameras is an essential part. Also, in order to operate the cameras, a theoretical know how of various type of cameras is valuable. This has been discussed in the last part of this unit.

5.9 QUESTIONS

- a) What is photojournalism ? Highlight the main points required for good journalistic photography.
- b) Discuss the role of photographs in any news report?
- c) What are the various types of digital cameras used in photojournalism?

5.10 SUGGESTED READINGS

Kobre, Kenneth. (2001). *Photojournalism: The Professionals' Approach*.

Focal Press

Chapnik, Howard. (2001). *Truth Needs No Ally : Inside Photojournalism*.

University of Missouri Press.

Cartier-Bresson, Henri. (2003). *The Man, the Image & the World: A*

Retrospective . Thames & Hudson

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UNIT 6: FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

UNIT STRUCTURE

- 6.1 Introduction
- 6.2 Objectives
- 6.3 Concept and importance
- 6.4 Implementation of freedom of expression in practice
- 6.5 Summing Up
- 6.6 Questions
- 6.7 Suggested Readings

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Freedom of expression is an important provision guaranteed to Indian citizens by the country's Constitution. It is fundamental for the development of sustainable knowledge societies, by forming a sound democracy and good governance. Freedom is an important concept but so is responsibility. In a country which is highly-diversified like ours, the role of the media becomes much crucial. It not only expresses the voice and concerns of the people but it also has to shoulder the responsibility of fighting away societal evils like casteism and communalism apart from economic ills like poverty.

6.2 OBJECTIVES

The objectives behind designing this unit are-

- a) To enable the learners to know how freedom of expression is related to journalistic practices
- b) To let the readers know about the fundamental provisions laid down by the Constitution of India in safeguarding it and also the restrictions around it from being misused
- c) To allow the readers to know the differences between the actual practice of freedom of expression in contemporary time and in theory

6.3 CONCEPT AND IMPORTANCE

The concept is included in the Constitution of India where the article 19 (i) (a) states that the constitution guarantees every citizen freedom of expression which includes:

- a) The right to lay what sentiments one pleases before the public
- b) The right to receive information and ideas from others through any lawful medium.

It is through these provisions laid down in the Constitution that gives editors and journalists the right to publish news or any piece of information and to express their opinion on public affairs. At the same time, it also gives the public the right to receive information of which the United Nations Charter of Human Rights speaks in a vocal manner. These are the fundamental human rights.

The freedom of the press finds its premise on the same fundamental rights and implies the right to print, publish, comment and criticize without any hindrance either from the state or any public authority. It includes the right not to publish or comment as well. Just like the way that no right can be absolute so also the right to freedom of expression too has reasonable restrictions. This can be seen in the article 19(2) that holds reasonable restrictions on the freedom of the press. This is generally done so that no media can exercise authoritative power once freedom is granted without any restriction. Public interest has to be safeguarded, so does private interest, and the right to privacy.

Public interest is safeguarded by article 19(2) which lays down reasonable limitations to the freedom of expression in matters affecting:

- a) sovereignty and integrity of the state
- b) security of the state
- c) friendly relations with foreign countries
- d) public order

- e) decency or morality
- f) contempt of court
- g) defamation and
- h) incitement to an offence

Constitutional provisions for freedom of expression and practice –

The fundamental objective of journalism is to serve the people with news, generating views, holding comments and elucidating information on matters of public interest in a fair, accurate, unbiased, sober and decent manner. To this end, the Press is expected to conduct itself in keeping with certain norms of professionalism recognized on a universal basis across the world. The norms enunciated below and other specific guidelines appended thereafter, when applied with due discernment and adaptation to the varying circumstance of each case, will help the journalist to self-regulate one's conduct.

1. Accuracy and Fairness

- i) The Press shall eschew publication of inaccurate, baseless, graceless, misleading or distorted material. All sides of the core issue or subject should be reported. Unjustified rumours and surmises should not be set forth as facts.
- ii) It is incumbent for newspapers to play a positive role in response to rumours affecting the credibility of financial institutions having public interface.
- iii) While it is the duty of the press to expose the wrongdoings that come to their notice, such reports need to be backed by irrefutable facts and pieces of evidence.

2. Pre-Publication Verification

- i) On receipt of a report or article of public interest and benefit containing adverse comments or references against a citizen or any organization, the editor should check with due care and attention its factual accuracy apart

from other authentic sources - with the person or the organisation concerned to elicit the person's or body's version, comments or reaction and publish the same alongside with due correction in the report where necessary. In the event of lack or absence of a response, a footnote to that effect may be appended to the report.

ii) Publication of news such as those pertaining to cancellation of examinations or withdrawal of candidates from elections should be avoided without proper verification and cross-checking.

iii) A document, which forms a basis of a news report, should be preserved at least for six months.

3. Caution against defamatory writings

i) Newspapers should not publish anything which is manifestly defamatory or libellous against any individual or organisation unless, after due care and verification, there is sufficient reason/evidence to believe that it is true and its publication will be for public good.

ii) Truth is no defence for publishing derogatory, scurrilous and defamatory material against a private citizen where no public interest is involved.

iii) No personal remarks which may be considered or construed to be derogatory in nature against a dead person should be published except in rare cases of public interest, as the dead person cannot possibly contradict or deny those remarks.

iv) The Press has a duty, discretion and right to serve the public interest by drawing the readers' attention to citizens of doubtful antecedents and of questionable character. But as responsible journalists, they should observe due restraint and caution in hazarding their own opinion or conclusion in branding these persons as 'cheats' or 'killers' etc. The cardinal principle being that the guilt of a person should be established by proof of facts alleged and not by proof of the bad character of the accused. In the zest to

expose, the Press should not exceed the limits of ethical caution and fair comment.

v) The Press shall not rely on objectionable past behaviour of a citizen to provide the background for adverse comments with reference to the fresh action of that person. If public good requires such references, the Press should make pre-publication inquiries from the authorities concerned about the follow-up action, if any. Where the impugned publication is manifestly injurious to the reputation of the complainant, the onus shall be on the respondent to show that it was true or to establish that it constituted fair comment made in good faith and for the public good.

vi) Newspapers cannot claim privilege or licence to malign a person or body claiming special protection or immunity on the plea of having published the item as a satire under special columns such as 'gossip', 'parody', etc.

vii) Publication of defamatory news by one newspaper does not give licence to others to publish news reproducing or repeating the same. The fact of publication of a similar report by another publication does not bestow the status of accuracy on the charges.

viii) It is necessary that the Press do realize its responsibilities to the society due to the unique position enjoyed by it in being able to interact directly with the citizenry. And also utilize its advantageous position for the betterment of the society and the advancement of the country rather than indulging in giving credence to rumours and sensationalism. It is further necessary that the Press, particularly the small-scale local Press, learn to appreciate the clear distinction between matters of 'public interest' and 'those in public interest'. While gossip and social dealings may be found to be of interest by the public they serve no public purpose or interest and the Press should scrupulously avoid wasting its precious space on such matters.

ix) Insertion of out-of-context, uncalled for and irrelevant statements likely to malign a person or an organisation must be eschewed. Even while a newspaper has the liberty or even duty to report political developments, that reporting may not be with angularity. Freedom of Press does not give licence to a newspaper to malign a political leader or mar his future political prospects by publishing fake and defamatory writings.

xi) It must be remembered by the Press that the freedom of speech and expression enshrined in the democratic set up and enjoyed by the Fourth Estate also casts on it a major responsibility. The newspapers are not expected to use it as a tool by itself for creating evidence and later using it to make false propaganda in its own journal.

xii) The Press deserves accolades for bringing to light the inducements offered to influence their reporting and such exposure will not amount to defamation *locus standi*. In cases involving personal allegations or criticism, only the person concerned enjoying the *locus standi* can move the plaint or claim the right to reply. However, a representative organisation of persons attached to an organisation or a sect or group has the *locus standi* to move complaints against a publication directly criticising the conduct of a leader.

xiii) As a custodian of public interest, the Press has a right to highlight cases of corruption and irregularities in public bodies. But such material should be based on irrefutable evidence and published only after due inquiries and verification from the source concerned. That too, after obtaining the version of the person or authority being commented upon. Newspapers should refrain from barbed, stinging and pungent language and ironical or satirical style of comment. The attempt of the press should be to so shake up the institutions to improve their working, not to destroy them or the public confidence in their working or demoralize the workforce. A corresponding duty, of course, devolves on them to ensure that in doing so they present a fair and balanced reporting, not at all influenced by any

extraneous consideration. The Press as a custodian of public interest and a protector of its rights is also expected to bring correct information to its notice so that it is able to properly judge those to whom it has entrusted the responsibility of running the country.

(xiv) The media and the authorities are two very important pillars of our democracy and for the government to function successfully in public interest a Press as responsible as watchful is an essential pre-requisite.

6.4 IMPLEMENTATION OF FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION IN PRACTICE

Freedom of Speech is one of the key fundamental rights enshrined in Part III of the Constitution. It is included in Article 19(1)(a) along with other areas of freedom. Immediately following this, Article 19(2) outlines "reasonable restrictions" on the rights conferred in Article 19(1) (a). Rights mentioned in Article 19 are the only major fundamental rights in the Constitution which come with strings attached to them.

Article 19(2) allows the state to make laws that restrict freedom of speech so long as they impose reasonable restrictions in the *"interests of the sovereignty and integrity of India, the security of the state, friendly relations with foreign states, public order, decency or morality or in relation to contempt of court, defamation or incitement to an offence."*

This Article as originally enacted, wasn't quite so broad in its scope as it currently stands (see above).

The original Article 19(2) provided, *"Nothing in sub clause (a) of Clause (1) shall affect the operation of any existing law in so far as it relates to, or prevents the State from making any law relating to libel, slander, defamation, contempt of court or any matter which offends against decency or morality or which undermines the security of, or tends to overthrow the state..."*

As a result the Supreme Court of India while dealing with one of the earliest cases concerning the right to Freedom of Speech in the case

of *Romesh Thappar versus State of Madras AIR 1950, 124 SC*, held that public order considerations can not be justified under the security of state ground under Article 19(2). And therefore struck down a ban by the then Madras government prohibiting Romesh Thappar's Bombay-based journal from entering the state. Thappar's journal had been banned under the Madras Maintenance of Public Order Act, 1949. The court held that the law was drafted in a broad manner and allowed for action to be taken even when there was no imminent threat of public danger. The court struck down the ban and as a result, Jawaharlal Nehru felt there was an urgent need to update Article 19(2). The journal was 'Cross Roads' (English).

The Preamble to the Constitution First Amendment Act, 1951 therefore reads:

"During the last fifteen months of the working of the Constitution, certain difficulties have been brought to light by judicial decisions and pronouncements especially in regard to the chapter on fundamental rights. The citizen's right to freedom of speech and expression guaranteed by article 19(1)(a) has been held by some courts to be so comprehensive as not to render a person culpable even if he advocates murder and other crimes of violence. In other countries with written constitutions, freedom of speech and of the press is not regarded as debarring the State from punishing or preventing abuse of this freedom."

Thus the First Amendment Act amended the Constitution to bring in the "reasonable restrictions" as we know them today and also had the dual purpose of providing validity to laws that may have been void under the previous Article 19(1)(a) and 19(2). Instead it held them up to the new standard, in effect, saving many such laws from being struck down by the courts.

When the then President Rajendra Prasad granted his assent to that amendment, he in effect re-introduced a situation in India where freedom of speech was restored to an almost pre-Constitution like status, where considerations of necessity would often override the freedom of the individual to express themselves.

The phrases added, "Public Order" and "Interests of Security of the State" were words of almost near colonial import and may have reflected the nature of the times. The process of unification of the states was going on and there were various movements in the country calling for secession from the Union. Laws had to be enacted to take steps to prevent that from occurring.

However, if one looks beyond that veil of necessity, what one can see is a framework of administration that was operated by British civil servants was now replaced by one that was merely operated by the Indian civil servants. The overall structure of administration would continue to remain the same post as well as prior to the Constitution. There would also remain a dichotomy between the government and those governed, rather than a representative democracy as outlined in the Preamble.

As opposed to the original phrases that were there which did not have the term public order and only allowed a restriction in case someone "undermined the security of or attempted to overthrow the State".

Post this amendment, the government's powers in relation to speech in the interests of public order and security became much broader in scope and in fact the Supreme Court in the *Kedar Nath versus State of Bihar 1962 AIR 955, SC* saved sedition, as an offence, from being struck down as violating the right to free speech on the ground that public order and national security were reasonable restrictions under Article 19(2).

6.5 SUMMING UP

In this unit, we have learnt how freedom of expression holds the very basis of journalism and it is through this article enumerated in the Constitution of India that gives the journalist the power to write news reports. It is through this provision that newspaper agencies find their existence in society. The Constitution has also laid down certain provisions that not only allows freedom of expression but also reasonable restrictions under Article 19(2) in order to make the press use this freedom in a more responsible manner.

Further, the unit through examples in news articles tries to mark the difference of this freedom of expression as laid down in the Constitution and what actually happens when this freedom is used in the real sense of the term. This has been deliberately done to enable the readers to realize how the freedom of expression as a truth doesn't work everywhere.

6.6 QUESTIONS

1. How are freedom of speech and expression intricately related to journalism ?
2. What are the reasonable restrictions as laid down in Article 19 (2) of the Constitution of India? Discuss each one of them in details.
3. How is freedom of speech and expression implemented in actual practice? Discuss it through the use of recent examples in media.

6.7 SUGGESTED READINGS

Chandrachud, Abhinav. (2017). *Republic of Rhetoric : Free Speech and the Constitution of India*. Penguin Random House India

Bhatia, Gautam. (2016) *Offend, Shock or Disturb : Free Speech Under the Indian Constitution*. Oxford University Press

Thiruvengadam, K, Arun. (2017). *The Constitution of India : A Contextual Analysis (Constitutional Systems of the World)*. Hart Publishing India

UNIT 7: BACKGROUND RESEARCH

UNIT STRUCTURE

- 7.1 Introduction
- 7.2 Objectives
- 7.3 Background Research
- 7.4 Importance of background research
- 7.5 Background research as a source for journalism
- 7.6 Summing up
- 7.6 Questions
- 7.7 Suggested Readings

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Earlier in the unit 3, we have discussed about background research in brief. By now you are aware of the importance of this aspect in journalism. Research is important for any discipline of study and its significance can never be undermined. To understand an issue in depth, background research is very crucial. It acts as a tool for developing formidable knowledge and also in producing an effective amount of knowledge. It helps the journalist in knowing information prior to going on the field for news report coverage. It is also of crucial importance in case of conducting interviews, debates and discussions.

7.2 OBJECTIVES

This unit has been prepared with the following objectives -

- To let the learners know the meaning and concept of background research
- To make them grasp the importance of background research
- To enable them to learn how background research can act as a source of journalism

7.3 BACKGROUND RESEARCH

Background research in journalism refers to digging up of information beforehand to get an extra edge while writing a news story or conducting an interview with a prominent personality. It is - knowing things previously unknown to the journalist and making it known to the readers while covering the news report. It is obvious that research shares much in common with journalism, as basic approach of hunting for reality by journalists is similar to that of researchers..

The emphasis on observation and in-depth interviewing to gather information, the journalist's approach to interpretation, and the importance of perspective in explanation - all are principal foundations of traditional journalism as well as qualitative methods of research. Common to both the journalist and the qualitative researcher is the concern with current phenomena and the action of individuals.

With the circulation of more and more fake information, it can be sometimes difficult to determine which story is accurate and which not. With the advent of instant messaging apps and social media, journalists sometimes fall prey to the huge circulation of fake stories. In order to avoid this, background research becomes essential. A reporter should only trust credible sources like news agency reports, books and reports by trusted authors, government data, prime witnesses etc.

7.4 IMPORTANCE OF BACKGROUND RESEARCH

You have seen that preparation and presentation of a news item, an article, a feature on any topic or issue or aspect of life and the society seems to be simple enough from the readers' point of view. But only the journalists and people involved in these activities know about the challenges they have to face while preparing a good story with proper research.

Now, when a journalist is assigned a specific task for reporting on an issue – whether it is a natural disaster, a political event, an economic crisis or a social phenomenon etc., one has to go through a few steps. These include – collection of adequate authentic information – the first and foremost and

sacred activity, if it is a major happening try to ascertain whether similar events have occurred in the past. If yes, how frequently, trying to know the cause of the events as to how they occurred or happened from personnel of responsible government or autonomous organizations so that the readers and audiences can be given a comprehensive idea about the entire issue.

Then again, if a background research is made prior to attending a press conference or an interview with a celebrity etc. questions regarding past issues can also be raised if it is found that the person is making statements that contradict his organization's earlier stand.

Let me give you an example. Once the head of a prominent public sector undertaking (service sector) of Government of India was making very glowing statements about his organization's Guwahati centre's achievements about cleanliness at a press conference held in Tinsukia. However, just at that point, a journalist reminded him about an incident in which the then Central Government minister concerned for that sector had made very adverse remarks in public against the head about the dismal status of cleanliness in the Guwahati office. This was even published in the newspapers. When the journalist wanted to know what was being done in this regard, the head of the organization was in an embarrassing situation as he did not expect this question and was initially at a loss as to what to say. Only a background study or research could have helped the journalist to raise that question.

Hence, background research is a highly important aspect of journalism and even for the entertainment programmes.

7.5 BACKGROUND RESEARCH AS A SOURCE OF JOURNALISM

Noted German journalists Machill and Beiler stated that the increased self-referentiality in journalism and the google-ization of research is a matter of concern to journalism. The journalist duo sampled 235 journalists from 34 media organizations in Germany which included various categories of newspapers, television stations and also online media. They observed each journalist for about eight hours. This exercise produced nearly 2000 hours

of activity where journalists actually were involved in doing research. The observers found that an average journalist spent nearly half of one's work doing research. Half of that time was spent finding news topics, assessing the relevance of news and so on. Very little time was spent cross-checking research. Only 0.6 per cent was spent cross-checking a source. About 29.3 per cent of the time spent in research by journalists was spent finding additional information.

They also highlighted Richard Sambrook (former Director of the BBC's Global News division) opinion wherein the person believed that journalism must change in the era of audience-generated content. Journalists must be open to what their audience bring to the media. Transparency about news selection and the editing process was as important as journalism itself in retaining public trust. Sambrook argues for a deeper and more analytical form of journalism: "The journalists' role is now to concentrate harder on how, when and where we can add value through our strengths of analysis, context, background and range."

The internet is a much-known source for doing all types of background research and stores an enormous amount of information. But to get the exact information a journalist requires is something extremely difficult to find out. For example, if one were searching for a needle in a haystack, where would one search and what tools would one use? For a basic search one might use one's sensory organs of eyes and touch and while rummaging through the haystack might either see the needle or get pricked by it. In case one is lucky and has an idea of where in the haystack the needle could be, it might be easier for him to search in a few minutes or perhaps hours. But if one has no idea where the needle was lost the search could take days, months or maybe it will never end.

The case would be totally different if one had a powerful magnet, a metal detector or a portable X-ray machine in helping to find out the needle from the haystack. The search would have been complicated but the chances of

finding out the needle would be very high. A specialist or an expert's suggestion would further enable the chances of finding out the needle.

Same can be said of searching for information online. The better your tools are, the more information on specialist knowledge one can gather the faster and more rewarding the search will be.

For budding and aspiring journalists who wish to take this profession in the 21st century, there is one significant clear aspect. That is - this profession is constantly changing and is being transformed. With the rapid boom in technology, we now have 24 hours news channels catering to the various information needs of the audience, where breaking news is reported round-the-clock and latest events can be viewed and listened to almost instantaneously as they happen. Various sources disseminate social and political opinion to individuals who choose not only their means of delivery of information but also the very nature of the type of information they receive. But the extraordinary shift is not the astonishing pace of delivery or the capability of the individuals in the selection of the news they receive. But it is associated with the network of technologies that allow individuals to interact with people worldwide, more specifically to interact with those who provide the news.

People use newspapers, letters to the editor column, websites, list serves, talk radio, talk television and a host of other tools to connect with news media on a regular basis and they do it every day. The increasing accessibility to information, the speed by which it is delivered and the audiences' more active role in information exchange have created a new platform for journalism. Information is available in abundance in today's world that is so digitally-interconnected. Thus, it has become too complex for journalists to find new ways to provide analytical context for the ongoing rush to present information and also to learn and innovate information in a way that is not generalised or passive but individualized and dynamic.

Nowadays information is so abundant and the world interconnected in such a way that journalists must not only find new ways to provide analytical

context for the growing onrush of information. They must also learn to present the information in a manner that is not generalized or passive but is individualized and dynamic. The ways in which journalism is practised are in transition and it is not a surprise but a challenge in real. The challenge is to bridge the gaps and the holes for people that mere access to and mediated interaction with information and news can not achieve. To fill up that gap and to survive in the current media environment, journalists will need to connect audience and readers' personal interests and common concerns and the larger issues that people face and come across every passing day. In order to address this issue, journalists need special training beyond traditional journalistic skills.

Guiding journalists in meeting these new challenges will actually help in resolving the complaints which have been directed towards journalism over time. Both historically and also recently news media are usually accused of ignoring public interests and issues relevant for society and allowing manipulation by politicians, special interest groups and corporate houses' vying for space always. One of the most common accusations pointed towards news media organizations is that mainstream journalism functions to highlight events over issues. And then sensationalize those events thereby in the process missing stories important to individuals' larger interests.

Though can't be summarily rejected, many of these complaints actually ring true and they emanate not from low commitment on the part of news organizations. But they actually developed from various diverse and complex issues. Nevertheless, journalists trained to know effective methods in order to report grassroot problems which are most of the times overlooked in the media frenzy environment and in applying the methods in an interactive digital media environment.

The problems stated above can be quite challenging. Yet, the abundance of news information and direct feedback on it has the capacity and also the power to open up many opportunities as well as rectify some of the problems of the past.

The relationship between the journalist and the qualitative researcher has always been compatible. In the article titled *Connected Research: The Chicago School Precedent*, the authors Kathryn Campbell and Lewis Friedland describe how during the initial days qualitative researchers drew heavily on journalistic practices.

An example can also be cited of Robert Park, noted sociologist. Park, as a part of an experimental study took his students to the streets to discover common concerns shared by the public and to report a representative picture of the groups among which they shared interaction. He later on transformed the University of Chicago into a Centre that had the base for participant observer fieldwork and also helped to originate qualitative methodology. Interestingly Park himself was a former journalist apart from being a sociologist. The Chicago scholars were quite familiar with the journalistic model of investigation.

But if we try taking a comparative review in the press, similarities between qualitative social scientists and journalists are almost non-existent. Again, if we look more closely into it we will find that both qualitative researchers and journalists go into the field as open-minded observers. But journalism traditions require an interpretation of open-mindedness that can position the journalist as "a passive and innocent witness".

In-depth reporting too can be categorized as a kind of qualitative research and it results from categorizing and analysing a wide range of different opinions. It is similar to qualitative research and in the journalist's work a medium for framing opposing or conflicting views which is better termed as balanced news stories.

A critical aspect in the practice of modern journalism has been the search for objective facts. However, the similarities between journalism and qualitative research for most of the times have not been duly recognized in journalism education.

Presently the existing need is the requirement of specialized skills and craftsmanship to discover unreported common problems and context of use. And then report them in a way that will actually enable the individuals to

connect to larger networks. As such, some journalists are actually trying to apply the knowledge of qualitative social science research methods to produce verifiable and accurate reports which seek to accentuate this endeavour. There are no rules as such but all qualitative research are based on induction examination of collected data.

7.5 SUMMING UP

In this unit, we have learnt about the need for background research as a means of digging up past stories and presenting it with relevant issues in recent times. It also acts as an important source before going for field reporting so as to enable the journalist to know what kind of things to look out for and from which angle to write the story. Doing a previous research before actually heading for news coverage is an essential part for any news item as it helps the reporter in avoiding wastage of time by asking people what had happened about an issue or an event in the past. This unit enables the reader to know the importance and source of background research in journalism in depth.

7.6 QUESTIONS

- 1) What is background research ?
- 2) How can we relate background research with journalism?
- 3) Is background research also relevant for other areas of mass communication ? How ?

7.7 SUGGESTED READINGS

George, A. *News Writing*. Kanishka Publishers and Distributors, New Delhi

Rangaswamy, P. *Basic Journalism*. MacMillan India Ltd, New Delhi

Agarwal, VB, Gupta VB. *Handbook of journalism and mass communication*. Concept, Delhi.

Jayapalan, N. *Journalism*. Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, New Delhi.

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UNIT 8: EDITORIAL WRITING

UNIT STRUCTURE

- 8.1 Introduction
- 8.2 Objectives
- 8.3 Editorial Page And Op-Ed Page
- 8.4 Issues, Topics Covered On These Two Pages
- 8.5 Editor As Leader Of The Society
- 8.6 Styles Of Writing Editorial
- 8.7 Types Of Editorials
- 8.8 Summing Up
- 8.9 Questions
- 8.10 Suggested Readings

8.1 INTRODUCTION

Editorials reflect the views and opinions of a newspaper organization. The editors express their opinion on any issue of importance and matter of interest to the society in the editorial page. A newspaper is incomplete without the editorial section. Here, not only the editor expresses views but also looks at a particular issue from a critical viewpoint. The editor's opinion in the editorial section becomes the viewpoint of the entire newspaper organization and its policies. This unit will introduce you to the editorial page and get you familiarised with the various styles of writing editorials.

8.2 OBJECTIVES

After the completion of this unit you will be able to

- a) Get an insight into the ways editorial and op-ed pages are designed and structured
- b) Understand the issues that these pages cover and how they are covered
- c) Know the various styles of editorial write-ups

8.3 EDITORIAL PAGE AND OP-ED PAGE

The Editorial page is the ‘heart’ of a newspaper or a magazine anywhere across the world. It reflects the editorials which are nothing but the newspapers’ and magazines’ stand on important issues of the day in the society. This stand actually reflects the principles and standards that the specific newspaper or magazine actually subscribes to and would like to propagate through its existence.

While this page necessarily includes editorials, serious analytical articles, letters to the editor, many a time some newspapers also include columns in it only to increase the weight of the page in the real sense of the term.

On some rare occasions, you may be surprised to find editorial written by the editor or a senior editorial person in the newspaper or by a prominent intellectual or accomplished person in one’s own field, It bears the signature of the writer prominently displayed on the front page of the newspaper. This is done to highlight and create awareness about some very important issues or events among the readers.

For example, a newspaper may publish a ‘signed editorial’ on the front page on the occasion of the death of Bhupen Hazarika. It may be about some specific issues regarding the void created by the demise of this great personality and what can be done to make his memories immortal in the days to come. Or during a time when an active debate may be going on about whether we should go for more and more power production from nuclear plants or from other sources etc.

Another notable example is the Supreme Court of India’s judgment in September, 2018 regarding the Article 377 and also the court verdict regarding recognition of the ‘third gender’ aspects are highly important issues which qualify well for debates and discussions in the Editorial and Op-Ed pages of any newspaper. .

The Op-Ed page

The Op-Ed (Opposite Editorial) page does not publish editorial as it is already published in the Editorial page. Loosely, this is a page devoted to articles, columns and other kinds of write-ups which may not necessarily be reflecting the stand of the newspaper or magazine publishing house. In a way, we can say that Editorial and Op-Ed pages publish points and counterpoints of the same issue. In other words, if the Editorial page expresses opinions about a certain issue, the Op-Ed page is expected to express views opposite to or not exactly conforming to those in the Editorial page. The idea is to facilitate a diversity of opinions to be presented to the public so that masses can pick up the points relevant to them or those which they feel are justified by all counts. This serves the purpose of impartiality of the media to a great extent as this practice presents opinions from both the sides of the coin, not from only one side which may be dubbed as partiality.

Of course, it is not that every newspaper or magazine publishes an Op-Ed page. But a majority of them have started doing so nowadays to allow the readers the benefit of a different viewpoint on various issues confronting the society every moment.

8.4 ISSUES, TOPICS COVERED IN EDITORIAL AND OP-ED PAGES

Judging from the enormous commitments and responsibilities of the media to the society in which it exists there can be no end to the topics and issues to be covered on these two pages. It will suffice to say that anything and everything under the sun is highly important for sufficient coverage if it is relevant for the society at any given point of time.

For example - these may range very widely between a disproportionate increase in the number of vehicles in the urban areas of the country against a decreasing amount of road space to whether our country should possess nuclear weapons or not among many other important issues.

Or it may include issues like how to handle the advances from our neighbouring countries about the secessionist movements inside the country or how to maintain a regional hegemony in the continent against potential threats and advances from powerful neighbours. Or even how to protect our maritime borders from foreign powers or pirates targeting out merchant navy ships in the high seas around us, recognition of the third gender issue, same-sex marriage etc. what not.

While there is no end to the topics and themes which are relevant to be covered on these two pages, authors of opinions in any of these pages should always keep in mind one important aspect. That is – being able to predict a future course of any phenomenon or development in the society which would ultimately lead to some major changes in the status of the society or the nation as a whole.

Simply speaking, the opinion authors should be able to forecast the future end result of a certain current development.

For example, we all know that urbanization has been growing by leaps and bounds in ours as well as many countries across the world. Experts in the field should be able to study this phenomenon adequately and be able to predict what would be the situation in about two decades or half a century's time if the current trend continued to grow at the present rate. Or, depending upon the current developments in every field of life and society, what would be the status of the society in about half a century's time.

In short, there is no limiting factor for topics and issues which merit coverage on the Editorial and Op-Ed pages of a newspaper at all. Something which may even be indirectly or remotely relevant may also be taken up for creating awareness among the public.

It has already been mentioned that 'media is an informal university' where any and everything under the sun concerning the society should be discussed. Hence, on any such issue there definitely would be views 'for', 'against' and 'neutral' ones. Thus, on any relevant issue of the society the

Op Ed page is expected to provide adequate justification while opposing the views expressed in the Editorial page or otherwise. This is expected to lead towards a meaningful and inclusive dialogue exercise for the issues to be resolved in the near and distant future.

For example, expanding the scope of fundamental Rights, Directive Principles of State Policy of our Constitution, lowering or increasing of age of marriage for young persons, limiting the number of children per family etc. The topmost criterion is - any issue considered to be important and related to the society's well-being.

8.5 EDITOR AS LEADER OF THE SOCIETY

From the discussions so far and after studying the different units of journalism under this course curriculum you must have come to know that the Editor is the leader of the entire team of journalists and other staff in any newspaper or magazine anywhere across the world. The Editor is the person who has to inspire, guide and lead every person on the team together towards a new horizon and thereby make a deep impact on the masses through that specific media.

An editor has to play two important roles in this capacity as the leader of the team.

First of all the editors must be able to present to the readers an all-encompassing, comprehensive, self-sufficient newspaper or magazine which carries all the important ingredients or contents like – relevant news items, opinions of burning current topics and issues, interests of the people reflected properly in its treatment of the issues etc.

The editor must be able to gauge the mood and requirements of the public and influence them properly in adopting certain principles and practices which would be beneficial for the masses in the end.

In a similar way and because of factors mentioned above, the editor is not simply an employee of a news organization or a publishing house. A highly

able and competent editor is also a national asset towards whom the masses are looking forward to guidance and leadership both at normal time as well as in crisis situations alike in the society.

The media – particularly the news media have to come to the rescue of the readers and the society in times of crisis by offering proper leadership, advice and opinions about what to do and how to take even a single step under such circumstances. This is why in many societies the media – specially news media don the mantle of leadership for leading the masses from the front towards a better situation in the long run.

We have also mentioned at the outset that as a carrier of any kind of message there is no parallel to mass media – particularly the news media – newspapers, magazines and electronic media channels. Thus, this avenue must be exploited to the optimum level for reaching out to the masses in any society across the world for leading the people towards a better future.

Hence, the editor is also termed as the leader of the society as a whole which is not saying much.

At this point, there is a need for discussing the special relationship between media and the masses. This is because this relationship is essential for a successful growth of a society and media.

In an ideal condition, the relationship between the masses and the media should be highly-cordial, constructive, complementary and beneficial. Media should be able to inculcate good habits among the readers by way of its contents including news and opinions. This is because the influence of media on the people is immense and beyond our imagination which had even moved Napoleon to remark “A pen is mightier than a sword.”

On the other hand, the readers should also be empowered, alerted and made conscious of their rights, duties and responsibilities so that whenever the media tend to falter in their duties it must be reminded of its real goals. Without such a kind of cordial and effective relationship, the masses would

be deprived of good practices of life because of media's failure to carry out its duties properly.

We have already mentioned that media is an informal university. It is such an educational institution where one does not need any formal qualification to gain entry. And also to enjoy its contents (except of course for the print media obviously) and become a 'thinking person'. Media is an 'open source' knowledge database the benefits from which can be shared by anyone who cares to do so. The only condition is that it should be available at the place of that person's living – whether it is print media or electronic media or today's highly popular social media

8.6 STYLES OF WRITING EDITORIAL

Editorials are meant to voice out public opinion, promote critical thinking and persuade readers to take action on an issue. In short, an editorial is an opinionated news story. Editorials usually cover the following aspects - introduction, body and conclusion like a usual news story, objective explanation of an event or issue, a timely news angle, opinions from opposing viewpoint that directly confronts the same issue the writer is dealing with or writing on.

An editorial features the opinions of the writer delivered in a professional manner. It gives alternative solutions to the problems or issues being criticized. Everyone can write about a problem, but a good editorial should take a pro-active approach to make the situation better by using constructive criticism and giving solutions.

Writing an editorial requires a such a topic that would generate interest among the readers. It has to have an objective standpoint or view with background research being properly done. The opinion should be briefly stated without digressing from the facts. It not only states the opposing views with facts and figures but also rejects it if found necessary through the use of facts, details, figures, quotations.

8.7 TYPES OF EDITORIALS

1. **Explanatory/ Interpretative:** These types of editorials cover a sensitive or controversial subject. It aims at explaining the meaning or significance of a situation or news event, raising awareness about the issue and bringing into limelight the topics that need to be properly addressed.
2. **Critical:** These kinds of editorial have a critical component to it. They not only constructively criticize actions, decisions or situations but also try providing solutions to the problems being referred to.
3. **Persuasive:** This type of editorials persuade the readers to take a standpoint from the editor's point of view whereby the solution to a problem is already provided in the editorial. Political endorsements are certain examples of this kind of editorials. Here the readers are encouraged to take a specific positive action on the solution and opinion suggested by the editors in the editorial piece.
4. **Appreciatory:** As the term suggests this kinds of editorials try to praise people or organizations or institutions which have done a commendable job in their related field. They are not as common as the above-mentioned editorials. Editorials of appreciation, tribute or commendation appreciate and give recognition to a person's exceptional and praiseworthy actions.
5. **Entertainment:** Under this category, we have two types of editorials - one touching on the humorous aspect on any light topic giving it a comical presentation. And the other one consists of satirical nature wherein a serious issue is treated with satirical contempt thus making a mockery of the particular issue which holds serious significance. It might be done to bring into light the corrupt practices of the government or to highlight the sorry affairs of malpractices seen amongst bureaucrats and politicians.

8.8 SUMMING UP

In this unit, we have learnt the differences between an Op-Ed and Editorial pages they differ from each other. Each of them covers a wide range of contemporary issues that the society faces from environmental degradation to political upheavals etc. They might not necessarily be hard news but

holds equal relevance and prominence. It also describes the role of the editor as the leader of the society and how this person should act in a responsible manner for making a positive change in society. This unit also describes the various types of editorials that a newspaper includes in its editorial columns.

8.9 QUESTIONS

- a) Point out the differences between Editorial and Op-Ed pages.
- b) What are the different types of editorials?
- c) Discuss the role of the editor as the leader of the society

8.10 SUGGESTED READINGS

Sloan, W. David, Cheryl S. Wray, C. & Joanne Sloan. (1997). *Great Editorials: Masterpieces of Opinion Writing*. Northport, AL: Vision Press.

Rystrom, Kenneth. (1994). *The Why, Who, and How of the Editorial Page*. New York: Random House.

Ryan, Buck, Michael O'Connell & Leland B. Ryan. (2001). *The Editor's Toolbox*. Ames : Iowa State University Press.

Rivers, William L. (1987). *Writing Opinion, Editorials*. Ames : Iowa State University Press

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