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REPORTING FOR PRINT MEDIA

M.A. Journalism and Mass Communication

Semester – I, Paper-II

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FOREWORD

Since its establishment in 1976, Acharya Nagarjuna University has been forging ahead in the path of progress and dynamism, offering a variety of courses and research contributions. I am extremely happy that by gaining 'A' grade from the NAAC in the year 2016, Acharya Nagarjuna University is offering educational opportunities at the UG, PG levels apart from research degrees to students from over 443 affiliated colleges spread over the two districts of Guntur and Prakasam.

The University has also started the Centre for Distance Education in 2003-04 with the aim of taking higher education to the door step of all the sectors of the society. The centre will be a great help to those who cannot join in colleges, those who cannot afford the exorbitant fees as regular students, and even to housewives desirous of pursuing higher studies. Acharya Nagarjuna University has started offering B.A., and B.Com courses at the Degree level and M.A., M.Com., M.Sc., M.B.A., and L.L.M., courses at the PG level from the academic year 2003-2004 onwards.

To facilitate easier understanding by students studying through the distance mode, these self-instruction materials have been prepared by eminent and experienced teachers. The lessons have been drafted with great care and expertise in the stipulated time by these teachers. Constructive ideas and scholarly suggestions are welcome from students and teachers involved respectively. Such ideas will be incorporated for the greater efficacy of this distance mode of education. For clarification of doubts and feedback, weekly classes and contact classes will be arranged at the UG and PG levels respectively.

It is my aim that students getting higher education through the Centre for Distance Education should improve their qualification, have better employment opportunities and in turn be part of country's progress. It is my fond desire that in the years to come, the Centre for Distance Education will go from strength to strength in the form of new courses and by catering to larger number of people. My congratulations to all the Directors, Academic Coordinators, Editors and Lesson-writers of the Centre who have helped in these endeavors.

Prof. P. Raja Sekhar

Vice-Chancellor
Acharya Nagarjuna University

M.A. (Journalism and Mass Communication)
SEMESTER – I, PAPER – 2

4
REPORTING FOR PRINT MEDIA

Unit 1: Historical background of writing- Elements of language –Language as a tool of writing- Translation – Meaning, types and principles of translation and types in translation.

Unit 2: Definition of News – values – sources – Duties of reporter – ethical aspects - Structure of news story, Introduction to lead, Kinds of leads, Language in newspapers.

Unit 3: Kinds of reporting- Press Conference-Interpretative-Investigative-Opinion, Interviewing techniques-Uses of photographs-Human interest stories - Reporting Special events - Investigative reporting, Mofussil reporting..

Unit 4 : Reviews – Definitions – Scope –Types of reviews – Books –films – Music and Theatre – TV programmes – performing arts – contemporary trends in reviews.

Unit 5: Editorial writing – Types of editorials – Features- Feature writing –Column writing – Writing creative middles.

Suggested reading :

1. Emery, Adult & Ages: Reporting and writing the News
2. John Hohenbrg : The professional journalist
3. Ralph S. Izard: Reporting the citizen's news
4. M.V. Kamath : Professional journalism
5. George A Hough: News writing: Kanishka publishers
6. Daniel R.Williamson, Feature writing for news papers: Hastings house publishers, Newyork
7. Brian R Hollowal: Technical writing Basics.

REPORTING FOR PRINT MEDIA

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Lesson- 1

REPORTING AND FEATURE JOURNALISM- AN OVERVIEW

OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson, the reader should be able to gain an overview of Reporting and Feature Journalism

Key objectives of this lesson are:

- To define and understand News and dwell upon the News Values
- To comprehend the Inverted Pyramid style of writing a News Report
- To analyze the sources of News, language as a tool of writing,
- To get an idea on the Ethics of News Profession

STRUCTURE

- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 What is News
- 1.3 News Values
- 1.4 Inverted pyramid: The lead and the body
- 1.5 Sources of news
- 1.6 Summary
- 1.7 Glossary
- 1.8 Self-Assessment Questions
- 1.9 Suggested Readings

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of journalism is to disseminate information to the public through different channels of communication such as newspapers, magazines, radio, television, and others. Hence, journalists engage themselves in newsgathering, fact finding, and reporting. Since information plays an important role in society, the citizen is well informed by the newspapers by covering all aspects of life. More over, democracy is further strengthened by making citizens know the world through newspapers. Thus, journalists report news happenings around the world. It is strongly believed that people cannot govern themselves without information. No matter what changes- social, economic, political or other in the future, there will always exist a full-time function to find out what is going on and to transmit that information to others, together with a proper explanation of its significance.

The onset of new technology and the increasing population in the world have expanded the people's curiosity to know the world and various facets of life. For this purpose, the journalists or newspapers have to make concerted efforts to provide news to the various segments of population. A newspaper is read by different sections of the population, the newspapers are bound to provide different types of information to the people or readers of newspapers. It doesn't matter what the medium of distribution of the news is or whether the reporters use pen, pencil or some electronic machinery to report events. But one thing is

certain, it is going to take better professionals to report and edit news of the world and we need specialists in a multitude of fields. Therefore acquiring the skills necessary for success as a news reporter is the first step that anyone can take in the field of journalism

1.2 WHAT IS NEWS

News is defined in various ways. However, a popular definition of news is given by W L Rivers. According to Rivers "a news item is any information that deals with people, events, objects and places that should interest a significant number of people and it should happen within a day". Now, news is viewed from this point, it can be inferred that any information about people, events, objects and places, one can come across news about these people in the newspapers everyday. For example, a new building for a school is opened by the district collector; it is information that interests a significant number of people. If a film star visits a place, it is information that many people look forward to learning about it. Therefore, one can find umpteen examples from the newspapers everyday. However, many scholars attempted to define news as an account of an event and not the event itself. For them, a death, a birth, giving a speech, attending a meeting, committing a crime is considered news. When a news reporter gives an account of the event, it becomes news item in the newspaper.

Nose for news

In reporting it is popularly said that a news reporter must have a nose for news. This means that a news reporter must have the ability to recognize the news events or must be able to conceive a news because a newspaper requires as many news items as possible because a newspaper needs to fill the news pages and must be delivered to the readers who await the arrival of newspaper early in the morning. Thus, the 'nose for news' involves

1. The ability to recognize that the information can be made of interest to readers.
2. The ability to recognize clues which may be very casual but which may lead to the discovery of important news.
3. The ability to recognize the relative importance of a number of facts concerning the same general subject, and
4. The ability to recognize the possibility of other news related to the particular information at hand.

1.3 NEWS VALUES

However, a news reporter cannot report all the news events that he comes across everyday. The news events must fulfill certain criteria which are known as news values. Now, the question arises that what can become news? Everyday, a newspaper reader reads the newspaper, and he/she does not like to read the old news that has happened in the last week or two days before. Normally, a newspaper reader has the curiosity to read something new or he/she wants to learn some new issue that has happened within a timeframe of 24 hours. Because, the television provides news to the people instantly as compared to the newspaper, the news reporter must strive to provide the potential news that is worthy of reporting. Since thousands of news events in a society occur in a day, the news reporter selects some of them to give to the newspaper reader. Therefore, he/she adopts a criterion to identify a new event. In the determination of news, journalists use different criteria keeping in view the target audience. Prominently news values are used as a yardstick to determine the nature of

newspaper. Broadly, newspapers are classified as broad sheets and tabloids, and broad sheets are considered to be elite, serious and thought-provoking in terms of contents, while tabloids focus on non-serious and flimsy issues. For instance, tabloid focuses on sex, scandal and surprises to attract the reader's attention. Moreover, journalist's news values are the bedrock of the profession on which the credibility and character of a news paper rely upon to establish a relationship with the readers. In a study done by Masterton in 1998 about news values in 69 countries, he found six major news values were universally accepted:

- Consequence (importance, strength of effect)
- Proximity (geographic and cultural)
- Conflict
- Human interest (stories about ordinary people)
- Novelty (unusual or bizarre events, and
- Prominence (events involving prominent people).

These news values are interdependent. For example, conflict and prominence go together in presenting news. A clash of opinion between two prominent personalities in a city, state or a nation obtains wide coverage in the media channels because conflict in consonance with prominence secure more space in the newspaper columns. However, in another study done by Harcup and O'Neill in 2001 found that ten news values obtain importance in the present day newspapers. They are:

- Reference to the power elite (individuals, organisations and nations)
- Reference to celebrity
- Entertainment (sex, human interest, drama)
- Surprise
- Good news (rescues, personal triumph)
- Bad news (Eg tragedy, accident)
- Magnitude
- Relevance (cultural proximity, political importance)
- Follow up stories
- The newspaper's agenda

Because newspaper is not like another product to sell on the basis of price, newspaper quality is judged on the quality of news content. Newspaper never makes an attempt to lose the base of readership. The readers' needs are fulfilled by the supply of news while being accountable to the public. The theoretical view is that social responsibility is an ethical issue for a newspaper. In relation to its role as a public educator, newspapers have certain news values in reporting or selecting an event before being transmitted to the public. In India, the press is dominated by certain news values in the post-Independent India. Of course, every press system in the world can adopt different set news values keeping in view the country's priorities or the newspaper's readership profile.

How to write news

Journalists work on facts and report facts. An event is reported when it is newsworthy and is judged on the basis of “news values” discussed earlier. While preparing a news report, there are few principles, a reporter follows to carry out his work effectively.

A news report needs to be

1. Truthful
2. Factual
3. Accurate
4. Objective
5. Current
6. Concise
7. Balanced

1.4 INVERTED PYRAMID: THE LEAD AND THE BODY

A news report is written in an inverted pyramid style (See Figure). The first paragraph of a news report is known as intro or lead which summarizes the whole event. It is the first paragraph of a news item. Opening paragraphs of the major news stories often look very simple and effortless. This is achieved through the application of an accepted basic formula called as the *inverted pyramid*.

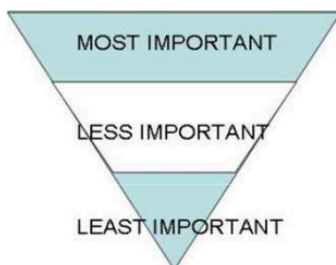


Figure: Inverted pyramid

Inverted pyramid is the traditional form of news writing and it is in this form that majority of the news stories are written. The first part or the opening paragraph will contain concise resume of the story as a whole or may be the most important fact of the story the reporter wants to convey to the readers. The second most important fact comes second, the third most important fact third place and so on. Thus straight news in the inverted pyramid form can be said to be made up of three elements.

1. The lead
2. Amplification of the lead
3. Other details in the order of importance.

The first paragraph which is called as *the lead* contains the gist or skeleton outline of the entire story in a minimum of words up to 25. Sometimes this type of lead is called the *summary lead* or a *straight lead*. Leads are of different types. Other than summary lead, there are *simple statement lead*, *question lead*, *Narrative lead* and so on.

The Five W's and the H

A news report should contain 5 Ws and one H. The summary lead mentioned above tries to answer six basic questions: who what, when, where, why and how. While gathering information for reporting, the reporter keeps a checklist of **Five Ws and one H** as his formula for getting the "full" story on something. This checklist can be further explained as

Who is it about? The interest in the *who* comes from the kind of person involved or from the number of persons involved

What happened? The *what* comes into picture when the circumstance would be significant no matter who the person involved

Why did it happen? *Why* comes into the picture when cause rather than the result becomes the feature of the story.

Where did it take place? In advance stories like games, important meetings and special events, *Where* must be very definite.

When did it take place? The importance of *When* is similar to that of *Where*.

How did it happen? How details to *How* the event occurred.

It is not necessary that the lead has to contain answers to all the six questions.

Amplification of the lead is normally the second paragraph which tries to complete whatever factors are omitted in the lead. Once the lead is sufficiently supported, subsequent paragraphs elaborate upon various other aspects of the lead supplying additional details in the order of their importance as the reporter judged them. The subsequent paragraphs and sentences which follow later restate the fact of the lead so as to make them more definite is called the *body*. The construction of the *body* of the story generally depends on the form of the lead. It is what holds the reader's attention. In the body, the reporter takes the reader carefully from one paragraph to the other. The *body* is written in such a way that if the story length is terminated by the subeditor at any point, the story will be still effective and complete. This happens when there is a constraint in the space available for the story in the newspaper.

The inverted pyramid form has several implications.

1. It can facilitate reading
2. It satisfies curiosity
3. It facilitates makeup
4. It facilitate headline writing

One has to bear in mind that the most important step in communication is obtaining something worthwhile to communicate and telling the information in shorter words, sentences and paragraphs with clarity. No matter what writing style is used, there is no substitute for good reporting. Even though news reporters have a daily busy schedule, they put in a regular full day's work in and out of remarkably quiet and orderly newsrooms. They spent their entire working day on 'beats' at press conferences, police stations, court rooms, industries and so on. The growing complexity of the news is augmenting the trend towards many semiautonomous departments: business and finance, real estate, travel, fashion, literary, art and so on.

Attribution

A major convention of news stories is the use of attribution. Attribution simply means telling the readers where the information in a story comes from. Attribution is important because it establishes the news reporter's credibility. Readers are more likely to believe that the publication is trying to be accurate in its reporting if they know clearly the source of the information. News reports in which the information is properly attributed reflect the professionalism of the publication and its reporters. Another reason for attributing information in a story is to allow the reader to assess the information by assessing its source. Some sources are more credible than others. By telling the reader where information comes from, the news reporter is letting the reader make up his mind whether the information can be believed. Beginning news writers sometimes have trouble with attribution because it can occasionally be awkward to work into a sentence. In most cases, however, the attribution can be included in a natural or unobtrusive way.

1.5 SOURCES OF NEWS

For a reporter, news comprises all current activities of general human interest, and the best news is that interests most readers. Some of the news stories are predictable. For example, when Assembly is in session or when a cricket match is in progress, there is definite news emerging out of the event. However, there are accidents, disasters, deaths and crime which are unpredictable. Thus there are definite sources of news like secretariat, office of police commissioner, high court and district courts, stock exchange etc. becoming definite sources of news. Unpredictable news events are to be covered as and when they happen. However, a senior reporter uses his experience, judgment and intuition to analyze a situation while planning his daily job.

News features

Most of the news events can be presented in two ways: as news or as news features. The news journalist focuses on the subject of the event whereas writer of the news feature will focus on the color excitement and relevance of the event. We have discussed about news. Now let us see what a news feature is all about. A news feature is an article which finds its impact outside or beyond the realm of the straight news story's basic and unvarnished who-what-where-when-why and how. Its strength lies in its imagination. While doing this, it will never depart from the truth but present the truth in such a way that it strikes people's curiosity, sympathy, skepticism, humor, consternation and amazement. Features never attempt to persuade; they inform and entertain. At the same time, feature differs from short story in that it is factual and not fictional. But feature writers use the same techniques so as to make features "read like a short story". A feature writer must gather information, consider it, develop ideas about facts and then begin to write. News features are so diverse that it is difficult to classify them. However, profiles (writing about a personality, but something more than a personality sketch), human interest stories (which involve readers emotionally, stimulating or depressing them, angering or amusing them, awakening sympathy or distaste), seasonal stories (which observe an important day or holiday etc. today the reader wants more features for him which provides the dimension, the depth, perspective, completeness and honesty. Features can bring vitality to newspapers. Preparation of news features requires time as it requires energy and imagination. Certain principles, if followed can develop better features.

1. Be careful with grammar, spelling and punctuation as features attempt something a prolific writer normally does.
2. In-depth research is absolutely essential as the feature requires lot of information much more than he or she may use
3. Try to include memorable phrases.
4. It requires lot of descriptions taking the story to an altogether different level.
5. Illustrations and anecdotes add to the visualization of the context which is essential.
6. Dig deep for specifics to enliven the writing than generalizing
7. Editorializing the subject can be avoided unless you are an authority
8. Tone of a feature may keep on wandering till all the details and information are assimilated and planned before starting to write
9. Rewriting of the draft is essential to give effectiveness

Language as a tool of writing

Writing for mass media requires a distinctive style. Such a style will bring life and color into news copy. In general, the language strives for simplicity, clarity, vividness, directness and brevity. As news items cater to a wide range of readership where their background differs in education and social background. It should be easily understandable and grammatically right. The following principles are to be kept in mind

1. Unnecessary words including verb forms, adjectives etc. should be avoided
2. Improper adjectives should be avoided
3. Use simple words
4. Use proper tense, mostly past tense is employed in news reporting
5. Active voice is found to be more effective than passive voice.
6. Avoid passing judgment, give only an objective view
7. Short and simple sentences and paragraphs are better than long and complex ones. In short, the words and sentences should facilitate easy reading.

Ethics of news profession

Even though there are no commonly accepted written rules that reporters carry around with them, they do observe certain basic rules of conduct. They exist in the minds of responsible journalists. Reportorial ethics to brief says to cover the news fairly, thoroughly and accurately, to report it as truthfully as possible, to explain what it means, to protect sources whenever necessary and to respect confidences if they are freely offered and willingly accepted

1.6 SUMMARY

News Reporting involves describing an event that is newsworthy. In this Chapter, we have discussed important concepts encompassing definition of News, its paradigms, sources of News, how to prepare a news report, news principles and values, a reporter should follow to carry out his work effectively. A basic introduction to Feature Writing is put forth along with an interpretation of the style of writing required.

1.7 GLOSSARY

- **Information:** (1) : knowledge obtained from investigation, study, or instruction. (2) : intelligence, news. (3) : facts, data
- **News:** News is newly received or noteworthy information, especially about recent events usually a broadcast or published report not previously known to someone..
- **Newspaper:** A newspaper is a publication printed on paper and issued regularly, usually once a day or once a week. It gives information and opinions about current events and news. Newspapers usually have many topics. They usually include political events, crime, business, sports, and weather news.
- **Journalism** The activity or profession of writing for newspapers, magazines, or news websites or preparing news to be broadcast.
- **News Feature** A news feature is a kind of story that focuses on a hard news topic. It combines a feature writing style with hard news reporting.

1.8 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

- 1) What constitutes News and What are sources of News?
- 2) Explain the Inverted Pyramid Model for writing a News Report.
- 3) Explain Feature Writing and dwell upon the principles of writing style involved.

1.9 SUGGESTED READINGS

- 1) Mencher, M., & Shilton, W. P. (1997). *News reporting and writing*. Madison, WI: Brown & Benchmark Publishers.
- 2) Pape, S., & Featherstone, S. (2006). *Feature writing: A practical introduction*. Sage.
- 149 Pottker, H. (2003). News and its communicative quality: the inverted pyramid—when and why did it appear?. *Journalism Studies*, 4(4), 501-511.

Lesson – 2

REPORTING: AN INTRODUCTION

4 OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson, the student will be familiar with

- Definition of News
- Components of the news

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- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Definition of News
- 2.3 Components of News
- 2.4 News Values
- 2.5 Summary
- 2.6 Glossary
- 2.7 Self-Assessment Questions
- 2.8 Suggested Readings

2.1 INTRODUCTION

²⁰ The beginning of newspapers is an often-dramatic chapter of the human experience going back to some five centuries. In Renaissance Europe handwritten newsletters circulated privately among merchants, passing information about everything from wars and economic conditions to social customs and "human interest" features. The first printed forerunners of the newspaper appeared in Germany in the late 1400's in the form of news pamphlets or broadsides, often highly sensationalized in content. Some of the most famous of these reports were the atrocities against Germans in Transylvania perpetrated by a sadistic *veovod* named Vlad Tsepes Drakul, who became the Count Dracula of later folklore.

In the English-speaking world, the earliest predecessors of the newspaper were *corantos*, small news pamphlets produced only when some event worthy of notice occurred. The first successively published title was *The Weekly Newes* of 1622. It was followed in the 1640's and 1650's by a plethora of different titles in the similar *newsbook* format. The first true newspaper in English was the *London Gazette* of 1666. For a generation it was the only officially sanctioned newspaper, though many periodical titles were in print by the century's end.

For centuries, civilizations used print media to spread news and information to the masses. The Roman *Acta Diurna*, appearing around 59 B.C, was the earliest recorded "newspaper". Julius Caesar, wanted to inform the public about important social and political happenings, ordered ensuing events posted in major cities. Written on large white boards and displayed in popular places like the Baths, the *Acta* kept citizens informed about government scandals, military campaigns, trials and executions. In 8th century in China, the first newspapers appeared as hand-written newssheets are known as papyrus in Beijing.

The printing press, invented by Johann Gutenberg in 1447, ushered in the era of the modern newspaper. Gutenberg's machine enabled the free exchange of ideas and the spread of knowledge – themes that would define Renaissance Europe. During this era, newsletters supplied news relevant to trade and commerce. Manuscript newsheets were being circulated in German cities by the late 15th century. These pamphlets were highly sensationalized. The news for example, one reported on the abuse that Germans in Transylvania were suffering at the hands of Vlad TsepesDrakul, also known as Count Dracula. In 1556 the Venetian government published *Notizie scritte*, for which readers paid a small coin, or “gazetta”.

In the first half of the 17th century, newspapers began to appear as regular and frequent publications. The first modern newspapers were products of western European countries like Germany (publishing *Avisa Relation oder Zeitung* in 1609), France (*Gazette* in 1631), Belgium (*Nieuwe Tijdingen* in 1616) and England (the *London Gazette*, founded in 1665, is still published as a court journal). These periodicals consisted mainly of news items from Europe, and occasionally included information from America or Asia. They rarely covered domestic issues; instead English papers reported on French military blunders while French papers covered the latest British royal scandal.

Newspaper content began to shift toward more local issues in the latter half of the 17th century. Still, censorship was widespread and newspapers were rarely permitted to discuss events that might incite citizens to opposition. Newspaper headlines did announce the beheading of Charles I at the end of the English Civil War, although Oliver Cromwell tried to suppress all news books on the eve of the execution. In 1766, Sweden was the first country to pass a law protecting press freedom.

The invention of the telegraph in 1844 transformed print media. Now information could be transferred within minutes, allowing for more timely, relevant reporting. Newspapers were appearing in societies around the world. Japan's first daily newspaper, *Yokohama Mainichi Shimbun*, appeared in 1870 (although printing by movable type was introduced in Japan in the late 16th century). By the middle of the 19th century newspapers were becoming primary means of disseminating and receiving information. Between 1890 and 1920, the period known as the “golden age” of print media, media barons such as William Randolph Hearst, and Joseph Pulitzer in the USA and Lord Northcliffe in the UK built huge publishing empires. These men had enormous influence within the media industry, and gained notoriety for the ways in which they wielded power.

Newspapers also played a role as disseminators of revolutionary propaganda. *Iskra* (The Spark), published by Lenin in 1900, is one notable example. On June 21, 1925, *Thanh Nien* made its debut in Vietnam, introducing Marxism to the country and providing information on the revolution's strategic policies.

Broadcast radio exploded onto the media scene in the 1920's. Newspapers were forced to re-evaluate their role as society's primary information providers. Like the new media technologies of today, the development of a low cost, alternative information such as radio would topple the newspaper industry. To respond to this new competition, editors revamped the paper's format and content in order to broaden their appeal, and stories were expanded to provide more in depth coverage.

No sooner had newspapers adapted to radio than they were forced to re-evaluate themselves in light of a new and more powerful medium: television. Between 1940 and 1990, newspaper circulation in America dropped from one newspaper for every two adults to one for every three adults. Despite this sharp decline, television's omnipresence did not render the newspaper obsolete. Some newspapers, like *The USA Today*, responded to the technological advancements by using color and by utilizing the “short, quick and to the point” stories that are usually featured on television.

The technological revolution of today is creating new challenges and opportunities for traditional media. Never before has so much information been so accessible to so many. By the end of the 1990s, some 700 had web sites; today there are thousands. The amount and immediacy of information on the Internet is unparalleled, but it has not signaled the end of the newspaper's relevance. Newspapers in print remain a popular and powerful medium for the reporting and analysis of events that shape our lives. It is estimated that one billion people in the world read a newspaper every day.

2.2 DEFINITION OF NEWS

What is news? News is what you did not know. People listen to Radio and read newspapers and watch Television to get the latest update of what is happening around the world. Any unusual happening, falls under the purview of news. Without information one may not be able to relate with the society. News is reporting of facts. News is anything out of the ordinary. News is what newspaperman makes it. An essential feature of news is that it is new. News is a relative thing. The unusual thing will always interest people and therefore anything unusual is news. News values are determined by public interest. News values differ from person to person and from society to society. Anything, which is strange or disgusting, is news. There are no rigid rules, which define news. News is what we did not know. News is unpredictable. News implies that something is new, and different. This is one of the main reasons why newspapers write more about railway delays or road accidents because on time arrivals and safe travels are the expected norm. A truthful comprehensive intelligent account of the day's event in a context, which gives meaning, is news.

News can be about

- A new product
- An important new contract
- A senior appointment of a minister
- Improved results
- Major investment
- A major campaign
- Research findings
- An acquisition or merger of a company
- A major success, perhaps fund-raising for a charity.

Not all these will have equal weight. The general interest will depend on the importance of a new product or a new contract. Newspapers which are regional or local will find news in their area to be more relevant. Ultimately the appeal to the reader is what matters. A new office desk will be of interest to the specialized periodicals unless it has some features, which make it dramatically different from anything, which has gone before. For example, a new car from a leading manufacturer might have some general news interest, but unless it is extra – special, any special coverage will have to wait in the regular automobile columns. A newspaper has a standard format for each issue. A news story which is published one day stands no chance of being published the other day. Delayed information will not be news.

There are two main divisions of news:

1. Actualities
2. Talking points

The first is the news in the narrowest and best sense like natural calamities, accidents, crime, strikes and political happenings. The second is getting at the topic, which people are discussing and developing them or stimulating. Who is to decide what news is? The journalist or the public? While ultimately it is the reader who will judge and be the final arbiter, the

newspapers themselves must find the answer. Those who find answers succeed and those who do not fail to survive.

News may be defined as any information about significant recent happening that is of interest to him/her. News may be defined as anything that interests a large number of people. News is a relative term and its definition is dependent on the size of the community and the periodicity of the publication.

A newspaper story in a modern society has to meet the requirements of everyday life as lived by a reader. It relies on the elements of novelty, directness, pace, variety and it tries to convey its information in the form of keeping pace with times. It aims to state its facts quickly and clearly.

Thus, the news is of two kinds: Hard news and soft news.

Hard news is events centered on five W's and H. The main task of the newspaper is to provide information to the reader; and therefore the major thrust of a daily newspaper is on hard news.

Soft News: It provides for analysis, background interpretation. As a mere reporting of events does not satisfy a serious reader, who prefers an exhaustive in-depth analysis of the event. Hence, a soft news has no time-frame of 24 hours, it can be published any time when sufficient space is available.

Example for Hard news

Saif Ali Khan held gets bail

Mumbai: Bollywood actor Saif Ali Khan was arrested on Wednesday after being charged with assaulting an NRI business at a restaurant of a luxury hotel on Tuesday. He was latter released on bail. The businessman suffered fracture on the nose after being punched by Khan.

Source: *The Hindu*, February 23, 2012

Example for soft news

Italy is wrong on sea law

KRA Narasiah

The shooting of Indian fisherman by Italian marines abroad the Enrica Lexie brings to the fore the need to understand the Law of the Sea as understood by seafaring nations in general and India in particular. It is true that Article 97 of the United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), as quoted by the Italian authorities, states that "No arrest or detention of the ship, even as a measure of investigation, shall be ordered by any authorities other than those of the flag state".

Source: *The Hindu*, February 23, 2012

2.3 COMPONENTS OF NEWS

Though there is no unanimity on news judgment among newspapers they follow a similar principle to determine the news worthiness of a number of events from which they make a selection daily. News values help journalist decide what the readers/audience should be interested in. The separation of events into 'news' and not 'news' is a function of news values. The determinants of news values are:

Timeliness, proximity, conflict, prominence, consequence, and human interest are some of the important components of the news.

Timeliness

Timeliness is a common to all news stories. News must be timely and fresh. Stale news will not interest people. The more recent its occurrence the more worthy it is. Any event will not be considered news without the element of timeliness. Events which are more than a day and day and half old will not be considered as news. An event which occurred last year is not news. While reporting for print media journalists look for fresh leads to build their story with some background information. With the arrival of latest technology news is transmitted at a higher speed and the stress is to present the story up-to-date as much possible before going to the press or on the air.

News must be timely and fresh. Stale news will not arouse interest among the people. The more recent occurrence is worthy as news grows old quickly.

A major scam that has happened one year ago, is discovered and reported afresh becomes news. Journalists stress upon current information – stories occurring today, not several days or weeks ago and try to report it ahead of their counterparts. The print media journalists have certain advantages compared to the electronic media. Even for old news item they look for fresh information around to build a story.

Proximity

News events that occur at home or within the newspaper's territory will be of greater interest than similar events happened outside that area. People are interested in the things that happen in their vicinity. They look for accounts of events with which they are familiar. People show more interest in what happens in their vicinity than what happens in a far-off place and its immediate impact on them. Nearness the origin of news, the more is its impact. The closer an event is to home, the more news worthy it becomes.

People evince more interest on what happens in their vicinity than what happens in a far-off place and its immediate impact on them. The closer an event is to home, the more news worthy it becomes. Murders are important news stories locally. Sometimes they may attract the national attention. Proximity may be psychological. Two individuals who share same characteristics or an interest may want to know about each other thousands of miles separate them. An Indian American mother may sympathize with the problems of a mother in a distant country. Students in an Indian American college may be interested to know about the students elsewhere.

In a particular incident where 45 people were killed in a major fire accident and five people killed under similar circumstances in a place, nearer to us, is sure to have more impact on us. A major disaster or an accident in Andhra Pradesh arouses more interest than a similar event occurring in some other state.

Conflict

Conflicts of interest between personalities, individuals or nations become important news value in the modern days. Daily newspapers focus on conflict between political parties or heads of state or ministers in a cabinet. More so, conflicts, which are a part of life, make for good news.

Prominence

Some people are newsworthy than other. News of prominent people makes news. News concerning important persons and celebrities is news. The news-worthiness increases if prominent people are involved in news. News about public figures makes for news. Today newspapers abound in news stories about elite people, however, inconsequential they may be. Usually these stories come under the category of politics and conflict but gain prominence because of involvement of famous person. It is only the names that make the news; there is no other news point in them at all.

Information concerning important persons and celebrities is news. The news-worthiness increases if prominent people are involved in news. News about public figures makes for news.

Human interest:

Human interest stories concern men and women in situations which might confront anyone else. People will be interested in these stories, as they have relevance to their lives. For example, stories on taxation, prices, health. The interest of these stories lay on how people would relate them to their own experience. Human interest stories are about unusual things happening to ordinary people. Example: Human interest stories are about interesting things happening to people. Human interest stories have an element of conflict. Human interest items have personal appeal though it may not possess any of the other elements of news values: timeliness, proximity, prominence, consequence and so on.

Tragedy, triumph, oddities, stories involving kids and animals all make for good human-interest stories. They are interesting stories about people and infinite variety makes for wider-readership. Though these stories do not strictly come under the purview of news, they are worth-telling. A fatigued mind after a day's work loves to read them.

Eg: Woman giving birth to quadruplets.

To sustain the interest of the people it is very important to follow the issues and update the news regularly. A good news story needs a follow-up.

Consequence

A reader's interest is aroused in a large measure in an event or occurrence as it affects him. A storm that leaves behind a trail of destruction will get a better coverage and attracts the readers. Such stories have a consequence even after weeks or months of their occurrence.

Things that interest the reader include

1. Unusual events.
2. Mysterious and the unknown.
3. Prominent people and things.
4. Whatever people are talking about.
5. Statements by persons in authority.
6. New ideas- anything that is likely to be new to the general reader.
7. All events that affect the reader's life.
8. Trends or continuing events that grasp the imagination of the reader over a period of time.
9. Conflict between man and man; between man and nature, man and woman.
10. Natural phenomena; violence, calamities and disaster.
11. Topics of health.
12. The environment.

News is any printable story, which in the opinion of the editor, will interest the reader. A story will interest the reader, if it concerns him directly or it makes an interesting reading. To be newsworthy a story must be of interest to a large number of readers. It should be a story of something that has happened recently and is being told for the first time. News has an

element of proximity about it. The element of proximity places special emphasis on stories of local interest and current events.

2.4 NEWS VALUES

News values differ from country to country. News values vary from developed to developing countries. In advanced countries sensitive news may be reported, it is highly suicidal in an underdeveloped country. One must keep in mind the sensitive nature of people while reporting such developments. Journalists must follow ethics and observe restraint and strictly follow the guidelines and ensure that journalism is constructive and not destructive. The news values are based on the political, cultural and social motivations, which influence those who select information. News is the timely report of events, facts, and opinions that interests a significant number of people. The concept of news varies with people and places. What is news to one may not be news to another. What is news in a literate society may be considered as information in a low literacy or a developing country. News reports should be balanced, accurate, objective and clear. A news story which is published one day stands no chance of being published the other day. Further, five important aspects must be understood to write news report. Normally, they are accuracy, balance, clarity, impact and style.

Accuracy

The news item loses its credibility in the absence of accuracy. It is the basis for any news item. Check the facts and figures and the names of individuals and how they are spelt. Rumours have no place in a news report. As a reporter, you have a lot of power. What you write can influence decisions, help form public opinions of people and contribute to the general attitude of your readers. Get a fact wrong, misspell a name or omit a vital piece of information but do not distort the truth and misinform the public, by doing so you damage the credibility of the organization. Without credibility, a newspaper is finished. Guard it carefully. Thus Joseph Pulitzer emphasized on accuracy, accuracy, accuracy.

Balance

A right balance should be maintained in news items while reporting politically sensitive stories. When reporting on strikes for instance include the version of the management and that of the workers. If the news story is on a strike, go to the spot to have first hand information. The story must be balanced and free from prejudices. Do not club too much of news which has no relevance to your reader. Communally sensitive news should be handled carefully. A reporter should tell the actual story without indulging in sensationalism.

Clarity

The introductory sentences should be short and crisp and it must be in active voice. The ideal length of a paragraph may be four or five lines with short sentences to facilitate easy understanding. News items with statistical information and technical terms would confuse the ordinary reader. Hence, do not club too much of technical information in your reports. Newspaper writing is not academic writing. We don't use big words and long sentences to show our readers how smart we are. Newspaper readers are pressed for time. You have to give them the news quickly, concisely and without a lot of extra words or information, they don't need. Every story competes for a reader's attention ... against other stories, against the TV in the background, against every distraction you can think of. With every story you write, ask yourself: What is the news here? Why should my readers care? What does this mean to them? Your lead, and then the rest of your story, should spring from those questions. Then, ask yourself (and the people around you), "What questions will the reader have that I need to answer?" Jot them down, and be sure none are left unanswered.

Write short: short sentences, short paragraphs, short stories. Use simple language. Think hard about every word you use. Is it necessary? Is there a more clear, concise way to say this? Read your story aloud. It sounds dumb, but you'll spot places that don't sound right and might trip up the reader.

Impact

Always consider the likely impact on the news report on the society. Will it bring about a change for the better? A reporter should develop 'nose for news', particularly news that would make an impact on the society.

A report on the inadequate safety standards in film theatres may bring to the notice of the authorities and help them initiate action, which would help in preventing major fire accidents and loss of human lives.

Style

Good news writing is an art, and good journalists play a very vital role in society. They can entertain, inspire, anger and educate. News stories don't have to follow the old, worn-out, inverted pyramid format. Sure, you'll still use it sometimes, particularly for important, breaking news on deadline. But look for opportunities to avoid label format into something more interesting. Never forget, though, that your prime objective is to tell people what they need to know -- not to show them how much talent is hidden in you.

First five paragraphs

All the work of producing a news story is futile if the story does not engage the reader immediately. Experts have identified four key elements that should be present in the first five paragraphs of any news story (not necessarily in any particular order). They are:

News content

The newest information: the basic facts of who, what, when, where, why and how which form the most relevant information, must be provided. Example. Accident.

Impact

Try to analyze the impact of death of a person in an accident. Tell readers what the news changes about their lives and, maybe, what they should do.

Context

The general perspective that frames the background of the news. It addresses the relationship of things around the news. Context helps readers understand whether something is normal or surprising.

Emotion

The human dimension. The heart-rending tales that are witnessed at the site of the accident will make the story connect itself to the readers.

2.5 SUMMARY

In this Chapter we have pondered over the types, divisions of News to articulate its definition. Further we have discussed the components of News such as Timelines, Proximity, Prominence, Human interest, Consequences etc along with an involved discussion on the five important aspects to write news report namely accuracy, balance, clarity, impact and style.

2.6 GLOSSARY

- **Newsworthy:** Interesting enough to the general public to warrant reporting. Timeliness Immediate, current information and events are newsworthy because they have just recently occurred. It's news because it's "new." Proximity Local information and events are newsworthy because they affect the people in our community and region. We care more about things that happen "close to home"
- **News Story:** A news story is a written or recorded (or, occasionally, live) article or interview that informs the public about current events, concerns, or ideas.
- **News Values:** News values are "criteria that influence the selection and presentation of events as published news".
- **Research Findings:** The principal outcomes of a research project; what the project suggested, revealed or indicated. This usually refers to the totality of outcomes, rather than the conclusions or recommendations drawn from them.

2.7 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

- 1) Define News. Distinguish between Hard and Soft News.
- 2) Explain the components of News in detail
- 3) What are News Values and explain their variability across countries.
- 4) Write about the origin of News and News Papers.

2.8 SUGGESTED READINGS

- 1) Bednarek, M. (2016). Voices and values in the news: News media talk, news values and attribution. *Discourse, Context & Media*, 11, 27-37.
 - 2) Reinemann, C., Stanyer, J., Scherr, S., & Legnante, G. (2012). Hard and soft news: A review of concepts, operationalizations and key findings. *Journalism*, 13(2), 221-239.
 - 3) Stephens, M. (2007). *A history of news*. Oxford University Press.
- Harcup, T., & O'Neill, D. (2001). What is news? Galtung and Ruge revisited. *Journalism studies*, 2(2), 261-280.

Lesson – 3

NEWS SOURCES

OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson, student will be familiar with

- Sources of news
- How to cultivate sources

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3.1 Introduction

3.2 Hierarchy

3.3 Summary

3.4 Glossary

3.5 Self-Assessment Questions

3.6 Suggested Readings

3.1 INTRODUCTION

News sources are highly sacrosanct for a reporter. A news source gives information or a tip of information will take the reporter to the heights in his/her career. A reporter must cultivate vast, varied, and highly-placed contacts. Press conferences, press release, seminars, monitoring of Radio and Television are the major source of news for the reporter. Highly-placed people in government and private sector are source of exclusive information for the reporter. Sometimes a reporter may get information from the most unlikely source.

Source may be quoted in case of general stories. In critical stories the reporter has to protect the identity of the source. To ensure truthfulness, it is advisable to keep copies of documents and audiotapes to prove your story. A reporter must not reveal the identity of the source, which is the cardinal principle of journalism. Different sources of news can include

1. News Agencies. (PTI, UNI)
2. Staff Reporter – Special correspondent
3. Stringers (Part-time correspondents)
4. Monitoring
5. Press conference
6. Press Release
7. Interview
8. Special stories

The primary sources of news for newspapers are news agencies. Newspapers receive news from both domestic and foreign news agencies. Major news agencies employ correspondents in major cities at home and abroad. The stories filed by the correspondents are edited and processed and sent to the subscribers. Major news agencies have tie-up with international news agencies for supply of news, photographs, and features.

141 Press Trust of India (PTI)

PTI is India's largest news agency. It is a non-profit sharing cooperative owned by the country's newspapers. All major newspapers and TV channels in India and abroad receive PTI services. PTI has over hundred bureau and foreign correspondents in all major cities in India and abroad. PTI has special arrangement with the Associated Press (AP) and Agence France Presse (AFP) for distribution of news and photo service in India. PTI exchanges news with 100 news agencies as a part of bilateral and multi-lateral arrangement, including Non-Aligned News Agencies Pool and the Organization of Asia-Pacific News Agencies. It has launched the Hindi language news service 'Bhasha', which puts out about 40,000 words and full-segmented services upto 100,000 words per day. PTI has a staff of 1,600, which includes 400 journalists, 300 stringers and 35 part-time correspondents.

United News of India (104)

Launched in 1961, UNI provides coverage of all major events in India and abroad in areas of politics, economics, business, sports, entertainment, and stock markets. UNI serves more than 1000 subscribers in more than 100 locations, which include newspapers, radio, television government, and non-governmental organization in India and abroad. It has bureaus in all major cities manned by 375 journalists and 250 correspondents. UNI has a tie-up with Reuters and 104A to distribute foreign news to Indian newspapers. It has also exchange arrangement with Xinhua (China), UNB (Bangladesh), Gulf News Agency (Bahrain), WAM (United Arab Emirates), KUNA (Kuwait News Agency). UNI services are available in three languages English, Hindi and Urdu. A Hindi service 'UNIVARTA' was launched in 1982 and Urdu services in 1992. It is the first news agency to introduce financial and photo-service.

3.2 HIERARCHY

A newspaper has its own correspondents or staff reporters to file stories. Broadly they can be categorized as: Trainee reporter, staff reporter, senior reporter, special correspondent and Bureau Chief.

Staff reporter

He is a paid employee of a newspaper. He attends press conferences as per the directives of his bureau chief. Staff reporters are given special beat. They also file special stories regularly, for which they get a byline. Byline is the name of the person who has written the story, which appears at the end of the story or above dateline. There will be staff reporters for sports, business and general desks.

Special correspondents

They are the most powerful people of a newspaper with vast and varied contacts. Special correspondents do not do day-to-day general reporting. They are equal to Assistant editors.

Contributors

Contributors are not regular employees of a newspaper. They are paid according to their services. Newspapers appoint contributors in district headquarters and in places from where they are published.

Stringers

Stringers are not full-time journalists. They contribute articles and news items occasionally to a newspaper. They will be paid for their contribution centimeter-wise.

Vernacular dailies appoint stringers to cover news in mofussil areas.

Monitoring

Every newspaper and television has monitoring cells. There are special slow speed news bulletins for small and medium-sized newspapers that cannot subscribe to news agencies.

Small and medium newspapers follow the news bulletins on major national and international networks.

Press release

Many different kinds of written material make news stories. The most obvious ones are the press releases. These are documents usually written by press officers within an organization specifically with the intention of getting the information reported in the press. Press release is news in absentia. News sent to a newspaper in the absence of a journalist. Press release and a press note are the same. The public relations officer writes a press note. PRO's are also called liaison officer. He is a government journalist and should possess journalistic skills. The main purpose of sending a press note is to inform the public about the activities of the organization and build a positive image among the public. It is an image building exercise. Press release is an unpaid publicity. While a press release the following points are to be kept in mind, by the staff reporter.

It should be sent on a letterhead.

- The emblem of the organization should be printed.
- The name of the organization and date.

Public Relations Officer (PRO)

The Public Relations Officer (PRO) is the journalist of an organization. He should write in a journalistic style. The text of the speech should be written in a summary. The PRO should check the news value of the item. It should be in an inverted pyramid form. A catchy headline should be given. Finally it should go with a plea. It should be followed by a request or phone call to the bureau chief.

How to make news out of a press release from the journalistic point of view?

1. He should go through the entire press release, check the press release, whether it is authentic or not. Check the authority so that the received press release is genuine.
2. Read the entire press release thoroughly.
3. Search for news value.
4. Select the important item with newsworthiness and search for the embargo, if any.
5. Finally check the item before you send to the desk for publication.

There are two types of press releases:-

- General press release: They are immediately sent after press conference.
- Embargo: They indicate the date of the press release.

Press communiqué

Various government ministries issue them. It is one of the main sources of news. They cannot be edited like a regular press release. They are very brief. Normally, they sent by Prime ministers office or governor's office.

Hand-out

It is supplied by a company at the time of press conference. They give additional information. They are also known as backgrounder. It is supplementary news.

Press conference

On frequent occasions at which ministers or leading figures in the world of industry, science, sports, and entertainment inform the newspapers of the latest development. It is generally left to the PRO to decide whether he will make it 'free for all' conference or a gathering limited to specialists. Generally a minister prefers to meet experts because he realizes the knowledge and sensible questions will be posed to him after his pronouncement. One type of interview prevalent in democratic countries like India is the one where questions are submitted in advance in press conferences addressed by visiting dignitaries. When he replies, he would

indicate, whether he could be quoted or not. If he makes an important statement ²³ he will issue copies at the close of the conference.

They are generally attended by staff-reporters. When all of them are engaged, contributors will be asked to attend. Press meet is organized by a host (organizer). "Meet the press", is organized by journalists, and usually attended by staff- reporters and senior journalists.

Embargo

An embargo is also a news item given to the media before an event takes place. But the media should publish it only after the event is over. For example, President of India addresses the nation on January 25 on the eve of the Republic day every year. Newspapers receives the copy of the address on January 25th morning But the news appears only on January 26th morning by the time event is over. Embargo on a news item is more relevant in the case of evening newspapers.

3.3 SUMMARY

In this Chapter, we have discussed the various News Sources and means to cultivate them. Initially understanding the primary sources of News that are News Agencies like Press Trust of India, United News of India, the Chapter talks about Press Releases and Press Conferences. Further a detailed picture of the hierarchical structure of the correspondents or staff reporters to file stories. Categorized as Trainee reporter, staff reporter, senior reporter, special correspondent and Bureau Chief is put forth.

3.4 GLOSSARY

- **Press:** ⁷⁶ The word press is used as a noun to collectively refer to all the newspapers, TV programs, radio shows, and other means of communication that make up the news media. The people who work for organizations that produce these communications are also referred to as the press
- **News Agency:** ⁵⁴ News agency, also called press agency, press association, wire service, or news service, organization that gathers, writes, and distributes news from around a nation or the world to newspapers, periodicals, radio and television broadcasters, government agencies, and other users. Press Release: A state of confused and noisy disturbance.
- **Reporter** ¹⁶³ a person who reports, especially one ⁷² employed to report news or conduct interviews for the press or broadcasting media. The difference between Journalist and a Reporter is reporter's job is to relay the story to the public but the Journalist's job is to research new stories. Journalists work for newspapers, magazines, and many more written editorials. Reporters report the news on television, radio, or any other mass media.

⁴ 3.5 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

- 1) Write about the different sources of News.
- 2) How are News Agencies the primary sources of News. Explain with an example.
- 3) Explain the categorization of Newspaper Correspondents.

3.6 SUGGESTED READINGS

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Lesson – 4

REPORTING SPEECH

4 OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson, student will be familiar with

- Types of programmes
- Important elements of speech
- How to report speech

STRUCTURE

- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Types of programmes
- 4.3 Important elements of speech
- 4.4 How to report speech
- 4.5 Summary
- 4.5 Glossary
- 4.6 Self-Assessment Questions
- 4.7 Suggested Readings

4.1 INTRODUCTION

A good number of news stories in any edition of a newspaper are drawn from speeches. Most stories in newspapers are based on the spoken or written word. Whether the story is drawn from a press meet, an interview, a public speech or an important meeting, there is one element common in all. That is the treatment of quotations.

4.2 TYPES OF PROGRAMMES

It is impossible for any newspaper to give adequate coverage to any sizable proportion of the total number of groups seeking publicity. Those considered the most newsworthy are the following types:

1. Those which take an active part in local, state or national political, legal or governmental affairs.
2. Those interested in controversial issues or engaged in extra ordinary tactics.
3. Those which have programs including widely know speakers, musicians, artists and so forth.
4. Those with large nationwide memberships which elaborate conventions.

In small city dailies, almost any new event is newsworthy.

4.3 IMPORTANT ELEMENTS OF SPEECH

¹ In obtaining information for a story about speech to be given, the reporter must pay special attention to the following:

1. Adequate identification of the speaker
2. The occasion for the speech
3. The exact time and place
4. The exact title of the speech
5. The audience

4.4 HOW TO REPORT ¹SPEECH

Identification of the speaker in the lead may not be lengthy, but the body of the story should contain those facts about the man which indicate that he is qualified to discuss his subject. The opinions of other persons may be obtained and quoted to emphasize the speaker's ability, but the reporter himself should not say that "he is well qualified" or "is an authority on his subject". It is better to give an adequate account of the speaker's experience and let it speak for itself.

It is difficult to specify as to what part of the speech the story should begin, generally the emphasis is on what is said in the speech. ¹⁰⁷ Speech stories should be treated as straight news stories for effective narration, and the lead should contain the most important feature of the speech. Even in a bad speech, the reporter should look for the theme on which to build the story. But it is not necessary to start the story with an emphasis on the theme. Unusual quotes, wild or exuberant responses of the audience or the characteristic traits of the speaker may sometimes be more attractive and can form the lead of the speech story. For example, speeches given during elections.

Speaker

The speaker should be introduced in the opening paragraph and more details about him may be included in the body of the story. The readers demand to know who the speaker is, what are his credentials to speak and why his statements are worth quoting.

Audience

The audience should be described accurately in terms of numbers and did they represent a particular section of the profession, etc. It is not possible for the reporter to give names of all those present and that information may not be interesting to the reader. But, if prominent persons are among the audience, their names are worth mentioning.

Audience reaction is important feature of a speech story. How did the audience respond to the speech? Wild cheers or planned disturbances are common in public speeches. They have to be recorded in the story.

Speech

The speech is the most important part of the speech story. "What did the speaker say?" is foremost in the minds of reader. If the contents of the speech are of little interest to the reader, then the story itself may become dull and insipid. If the reporter thinks that a certain part of the speech calls for interpretation, he can do so but without editorializing the story. He should interpret the speech only to make it easier for the reader to follow and not to express his opinion.

No reporter is expected to take down the entire speech and it is not necessary either. At the same time, he has to be attentive to the speech throughout, not to miss anything important that is newsworthy. He should make a note of everything **but** he thinks is relevant, worth quoting in the story. But, care should be taken to place only **the speaker's exact words within quotation marks**. The reporter is also expected to be choosy about direct quotation. Unimportant and routine statements may not be of interest to the reader, and need not be quoted. They can be summarized into a couple of paragraphs. However, a speech story which lacks a direction is drab and dreary.

Body

The **body of the speech story** is generally a combination of **direct** and indirect **quotations** and summaries of the speech. It is designed in the "quote – summaries style. The reporter should be careful to attribute all the statements to the speaker; to distinguish clearly between what is said by the speaker and what is narrated by the reporter.

In the age of public relation, there is little suspense in a speech for the reporter. Advance copies of the text are frequently available to the media before the event, particularly when the speaker happens to be an important person from the government, industry and other professions. News media receive copies in advance. The reporters need to follow the script and make notes only when the speaker veers away from it. Fast changing events might force last minute changes. Not all speakers have prepared texts; some do not need a text.

Not everything said must be written down or taped. Most of jokes, anecdotes speakers frequently used to warm up audience can be skipped. The main thing to look at is news. What does he say is new, startling, and controversial? In other wise routine speech, the prime minister announced he would run for the second term, and an easy one for the media. A wise reporter must do his homework by obtaining background on the issue to be discussed and he will know when the speaker makes the news.

If the address is made in a large, crowded hall, try to get as close as you can to the podium. This helps you to hear the speaker better and pose a question before the speaker leaves the venue. Ask any question that enables you to write a clear understandable story. There may be inconsistencies in his speech. You may ask him to respond to the statements made by his opponents.

In following the story, the lead is likely to capture reader interest because it hits on a vital current issue in the nation and, of course, because of the speaker himself. But also observe the writer lead off with a solid statement supported by a direct quote. Observe as well how the story shifts smoothly to other **matters** discussed the speaker after the main idea has been developed. The lead must attract **the reader to read the story**. It must create **the** desired interest **in** the reader **to** read the story.

During the course of his lengthy speech, the speaker may toss a sentence that may create a sensation **but** it would be pointless to mention, if it finds no mention in the rest of his speech.

Summary

After Hickey's bold attempt not only to setup a printing press in India but also to fight for freedom of press against the government, many newspapers started sprouting across India. Journalism in India began its journey from Bengal presidency, slowly moved to Madras presidency and then spread to Bombay presidency. Though these newspapers began with modest missions and not-so-far-sighted visions, journalism played a huge role in Indian freedom movement. In next lesson, we shall discuss about the role of journalism in Indian freedom movement.

4.5 SUMMARY

In this Chapter, the different types of programmes considered newsworthy are analyzed. Further the Chapter evolves into conceptualizing the elements of Speech and discussing the essentials of how to report speech, through a detailed understanding of its structure.

4.6 GLOSSARY

- **Speech:** Speech, language refer to the means of communication used by people. Speech is the expression of ideas and thoughts by means of articulate vocal sounds, or the faculty of thus expressing ideas and thoughts. Speech, address, oration, harangue are terms for a communication to an audience.
- **Speaker:** a person who gives a speech at a public event
- **Audience:** the assembled spectators or listeners at a public event
- **Speech Story:** The writing of a speech story resembles another news story in many aspects. The most important fact, the climax of the story, goes in the lead. This usually means that the most important thing the speaker said goes in the lead. Occasionally, the most important fact may be something unusual — audience reaction, for instance — if generally, what the speaker said, either in quote or summary, is the feature. Reporters covering speech stories face a daunting challenge: zeroing in on the most newsworthy elements when confronted on deadline with a torrent of words.

4.7 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

- 1) List out the important elements of speech.
- 2) Explain on how to report speech.
- 3) How to build effective speech stories?

4.8 SUGGESTED READINGS

- 1) Matsushita, K. (2020). Reporting quotable yet untranslatable speech: Observations of shifting practices by Japanese newspapers from Obama to Trump. *AILA Review*, 33(1), 157-175.
- Itule, B. D., Anderson, D., & Simon, J. (2006). *News writing and reporting for today's media*. Simon, James..

Lesson – 5

EDUCATIONAL NEWS REPORTING

4 OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson, the student will be familiar with

- 10 Tips to cover education
- Sources of educational news

STRUCTURE

- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 Tips to cover education
- 5.3 Example for educational news item
- 4 5.4 Summary
- 5.5 Glossary
- 5.6 Self-Assessment Questions
- 5.7 Suggested Readings

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Educational institutions continue to grow as important sources of news and newspapers are making efforts not only to record facts and figures on enrollment, percentage of pass, fee structure etc., but also to delve deep into the problems faced by the adolescent society, the various forces acting on it and their ultimate effect on learning process and knowledge. Some of these areas get wider coverage in newspapers than the actual good work done in schools, colleges and research institutions.

Campus violence, declining standards, strained teacher-student relationship the overall moral, social and ethical values in educational institutions form an integral part of education today. Education news is a major beat for all the major and local newspapers.

The educational infrastructure has improved considerable with the increase in the budgetary allocation for education. The growth has problems like funding and educational philosophy. Educational reporters can no longer fulfill their function by merely covering board meetings and writing about meritorious students. There is a growing awareness in the media that education cannot be separated from the main stream of the society. For small communities and medium newspapers, the educational beat includes schools. For big newspapers, the beat may be divided among two or three staff reporters dealing with schools, colleges and universities. The main sources for educational news include teachers, principals, officials, university presidents, union leaders, students etc. The reporter whether writing a regular news item or an in-depth article must make it a point to write in a simple language to drive home the point.

THE HINDU
EDUCATIONPLUS
 YOUR WINDOW TO COURSES AND CAREERS
 CHENNAI-MONDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2010

A good course gets better

Experts share their views on current trends and the demand for CAs, even as students gear up for the IPCC and final examinations being held this November.

MEERA SRINIVASAN

From the time when only students took the open school and final-level Chartered Accountancy examinations, the highly valued and respected professional course has come a long way today.

Currently in the Common Proficiency Test (CPT), integrated Professional Competency Course (PCC) - a six-month, full-time, residential format, the course which has different requirements at different levels, continues to have its traditional image of being rigorous and demanding, however there is the dull air that for those who are not interested in the field, it is not all that difficult.

According to K. Srinivasan, chartered accountant and former chairman of the ICAI of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI), the course now involves a lot of interactive training in several compartments, ranging from IT to communication and skills, it is mandatory for students to take these modules.

"There was a notion that while CAs had sound knowledge of accounts, they were not so good as MBAs when it came to communication skills or packaging their skills effectively. But now, because of the modules on each aspect, we are seeing them who clear the examination professionally at a very high order," says Mr. Srinivasan, who is the course director at his firm.

IN DEMAND: Though challenging, Chartered Accountancy opens up a range of career opportunities. At a coaching centre in Chennai. PHOTO: S.B. RAJAGANESAN

According to him, there is a great demand for qualified CAs. "There is a government estimate that says we need about 8 lakh CAs. We are not anywhere close to getting there. So, there is a lot of scope and opportunities for each."

Vinay Kumar, director, Board of Studies, ICAI, agrees. With the economy and particularly the services sector growing at a fast pace, the demand for accounting professionals is only bound to go up, he notes.

"It is not just CAs who will be in demand but also those accounting professionals who form the second group."

With the option of taking the Accounting Technician Course (ATC), now available for those who have cleared group one examinations - comprising the subjects Accounting, Law, Ethics and Communication - of the IPCC, a whole new layer of accounting professionals has been created. "They also have several opportunities in the industry today," Mr. Kumar says.

The entry to the course is restrictive and segments only need to take the respective-type CPT. "It is only the ones that is a little uncomfortable and challenging but those who are determined can easily crack it," he adds.

Commenting on the difficulty level and the not-very-high pass percentage across examinations, he says that the professional standards expected for the nation are very high and therefore, for those who entered it, it is not too much of a difficulty. "It might seem difficult, but it is definitely not," Mr. Srinivasan emphasises.

He adds that students can secure multiple publications and completion of past year questions papers.

"A student who is prepared to put in the effort this course warrants can be assured of securing a job that would pay off well in the long run," he says.

Log on to www.thehindu.com/education

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An education page

Source: *The Hindu*

5.2 TIPS TO COVER EDUCATION

Education stories occur in several forms, ranging from a single-incident story to a multi feature report. While most of them are written as straight news stories with an emphasis on the most striking feature of the development, a few can be treated as features and human interest stories. Not all reporters can effectively cover education. The reporter should be through with the overall education system with special knowledge of the local educational scene. The reporter should be aware of the basics including different schemes of education, the different kinds of educational institutions in town, and the overall teaching standards, lack of facilities, enrollment figures, fee structure, donation and capitation fees etc.

The lead points up the fact that education stories – as in any form of writing - can be informative. A reporter must try different approaches to a story so long as they are accurate and clear. Reporters need to be able to assess the quality of schools quickly, but with care, much as a home inspector determines whether a house stands on a solid foundation and is free of dry rot. Reporters need to gauge whether students are orderly and engaged in their work, teachers are focused on teaching, and administrators articulate clear goals. They should know how to spot signs of school quality, such as the merits of student work posted on hallway and classroom walls. They also must know when, where and how to check their subjective judgments against more objective measures such as test scores, attendance, teacher turnover and other indicators that reflect school value. News reports on school quality can profoundly affect the reputation of schools, so it is of course crucial that reporters get it right.

16 Perhaps more than many beats, education writers need to have a wide variety of sources available to them to cover the broad range of topics and constituencies that fall within their beat's expansive borders. They should, for example, be able to quickly call on students, parents, teachers, professors, administrators, board members, business and political leaders and ordinary people in the community to comment on topics as diverse as methods of teaching math or the reasons college tuition outpaces inflation. Reporters also need to be able to find expert sources, often quickly, on a vast range of topics that affect schools and universities, such as school law, construction, finance, textbooks or governance. Schools are political organizations as well as learning institutions. School board members, teacher unions and administrators all engage in political tugs and pulls for control and power. Therefore, reporters need to be skillful in detecting when school initiatives are launched more for political rather than educational ends.

The educational reporter should keep a keen watch on the following areas

- Opening and closing dates of schools, colleges
- Enrollment – figures, comparisons and trends
- Changes in curricula, new courses, new departments
- Dates of examinations, changes, postponement, results of examination
- Meetings of the university syndicate, the senate, academic council, board of studies, board of examiners etc.
- Convocations – graduation ceremonies, individual honours, speakers

For smooth functioning of an educational institute, an interactive student-teacher relationship is essential. The reporter should locate the absence of such an atmosphere and highlight the demerits among teachers and administrators. Besides, parents to some extent are responsible for the progress or deterioration of their children's education and discipline.

The reporter should also look for major stories in teacher strikes, campus violence, and crime in schools, colleges and universities. Most of the stories are written as straight news stories with emphasis on the most striking feature of the development, a few can be written as features and human interest stories.

Research in various fields is a good source of news which the newspapers cannot ignore. The information is so specialized that it is very difficult for the common man to comprehend, if the reporter wants to interpret the new knowledge in a language the layman understands. Science and research cannot be handled effectively by the reporter unless he has a sound background of the subject. Reporting a research project and giving the public an understanding explanation of research is more difficult than covering routine assignment. The reporter faces three challenges – the researcher, the research project and the accurate and understandable interpretation of the project. Interpreting a research project is an exciting task. Generally, average reader is not attracted by high-sounding basic research projects; they are only eager to know of what use they are for them which makes the job of the reporter more challenging. 36 As most researchers are unwilling to speak to the media, as they suspect as reporter will create confusion in the minds of the readers. Secondly, they prefer to announce their finding thoroughly scholarly journals. Research stories are handled in many ways. Projects with practical value are generally treated as straight news stories, while those with less utilitarian use may be treated as features in order to achieve better presentation.

5.3 EXAMPLE FOR EDUCATIONAL NEWS ITEM

UNIVERSITY ROUNDUP

Need for documentation in varsities stressed

There is a flood of information in the universities these days with departments publishing reports of seminars and workshops and this should be stored systematically and documented properly for future use, observed Shabahat Husain, Librarian, Aligarh Muslim University.

He expressed these views at the inaugural session of four-day national workshop being organised by the Central Library, Maulana Azad National Urdu University (MANUU). Prof. Shabahat Husain said there were many software available to systematically store and gather the material and 'DSpace' is one prominent software among them, which could be useful and fruitful.

He felt that apart from this MANUU can avail the services of institutional depository from other universities. He also stressed the need of preparing bibliography. Huge amount of informative material is available on Internet, which can be translated in to any language. Prof. Khalid Saeed in his presidential remarks said that the university will look into Prof. Shabahat Husain's advice so that different centres of MANUU could form a committee to gather related information and recommend its translation. He said University's Centre for Urdu Language, Literature and Culture has written letters to different libraries asking them to provide digital information. B. Ravi Kumar of University of Hyderabad spoke on theme of the workshop.

He said 'DSpace' is also in use in foreign countries. Amina Kishore, Dean School of Language, Linguistics & Indology and Director I/c Central Library; Abbas Khan, Librarian I/c, MANUU Central Library and others spoke.

IFHE

Martin Hall, Vice-Chancellor and Michael Lurie, Head of International Partnerships and Student Information Directorate of Salford University, Britain, visited IFHE, Hyderabad campus and interacted with the IFHE representatives for possible collaboration.

The IFHE Vice-Chancellor J. Mahender Reddy extended collaboration offer to Prof. Hall in terms of visiting scholars, faculty exchange and student exchange programmes.

He stressed the need of such exchange programs pointing out that scholars could benefit by understanding the research being carried out at other institutions apart from having an opportunity of their own research being critically examined by foreign academicians.

Prof. Hall showed keen interest in faculty and student exchange and observed that it would benefit mutually. The Vice-Chancellors also discussed importance of joint programmes for faculty development to enhance quality of curriculum offered and ensuring delivery of quality education.

Prof. Hall opined that growing demand for higher education in India coupled with the growth of Indian economy would require around a million PhDs against a current one lakh.

Mr. Michael Lurie expressed interest on collaborating with IFHE in the arenas of Science and Technology and exchange of PhD scholars.

He was keen on BBA students exchange program where in IFHE BBA students can spend a year at Salford and vice versa.

R. Ravikanth Reddy,

in Hyderabad

Andhra University

A Rs. 2-crore building of Andhra Bank School of Business, funded by Andhra Bank was inaugurated on the campus of Andhra University recently.

This is part of a MoU the bank and Andhra University have entered into in the past due to the initiative taken up by the Department of Commerce and Management Studies of AU to help the students, researchers and the industry. GITAM University

GITAM University will host the Andhra Pradesh Science Congress From November 14 to 16, president of AP Academy of Sciences and Distinguished Scientist of NGRI D Vijaya Prasad announced here recently. Prof. Subramanyam while expressing his happiness over selecting GITAM as the host of the Science Congress, assured that the university would make all efforts to make the conference a success.

G. NARASIMHA RAO,

in Visakhapatnam

Source: *The Hindu*

5.4 SUMMARY

Education stories occur in several forms, ranging from a single-incident story to a multi feature report. In this Chapter, the sources of Educational News have been covered, along with details on how to build an Educational News Item emphasized with the help of examples.

5.5 GLOSSARY

- **Educational News:** a page in a newspaper devoted to news relating to education or teaching.
- **Research Stories:** Research based news stories & highlights in science, engineering, technology & humanities
- **Campus Newspaper** ¹⁰⁰ A school news paper can act as an integral to improve the quality of education in your institution. School newspaper provides a platform for students to express their ideas and creativity. It helps to develop their critical thinking skills.

5.6 ⁴ SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

- 1) What are the various sources of Educational News.
- 2) Explain in detail on how to build an Educational News Item with an example.
- 3) Write a brief note about the different types of news stories that can come under an Educational News.

5.7 SUGGESTED READINGS

- 1) ¹⁶¹ Shine, K. (2018). Reporting education: How can we do it better?. *Asia Pacific Media Educator*, 28(2), 223-236.
- ¹³² Liu, S. H. (2014). Effects of educational news stories on the beliefs of Taiwanese teacher education students. *Asia-Pacific Social Science Review*, 14(2), 80-93.

Lesson – 6

SCIENCE REPORTING

OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson, the student will be familiar with

- Writing Science news
- How to write a science story
- The Newspaper's Responsibility
- Major Fields of Interest
- Science and Technology: Impact of Social attitude
- Ethics in Science Reporting

STRUCTURE

- 6.1 Introduction
- 6.2 Writing science news
- 6.3 Elements of interest
- 6.4 Science and Technology: Impact on social attitude
- 6.5 Ethics in science writing
- 6.6 Summary
- 6.7 Glossary
- 6.8 Self-Assessment Questions
- 6.9 Suggested Readings

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Science reveals the laws of the nature to human beings. Technology involves the application of science to innovate and manufacture new products and services. One cannot miss influence of science and technology on society and the environment. Technology has changed the lifestyles of man. Even before the atom bomb and Sputniks newspapers have awakened to their social responsibility as regards science. By assigning to scientific news, men with sufficient training to talk the language of those whom they must interview, newspapers have broken down much of the reluctance of inventors, medical men and theoretical scientists to give information to the press. Whatever the hesitancy to cooperate remains results from several factors; fear of being considered a publicity seeker, fear of revealing the nature of an experiment before absolute proof has been obtained, a feeling that one's fellow scientist deserves to hear of a news scientific fact or theory of the first time at a learned gathering, fear of being misquoted, doubt of the reporter's ability to translate a technical matter into popular terms, fear that improper emphasis will be given to sensational, unimportant aspects of a news item.

6.2 WRITING SCIENCE NEWS

Whatever writers, editors and scientists gather, a continuing debate is over **the best way to prepare for a science writing career**. For most **of the** science press, it **is** a routine assignment they grew to spend most of their time writing about science. Several of the best science writers had little or no formal science training but drew upon their reading, study and contacts with scientists. The increasing complexity of science makes it more difficult for journalists to acquire the broad knowledge needed by private study alone. The effective way to develop skills and facility was to cover large national and scientific or medical meetings besides interacting with experienced science writers. Formal academic training may suit those with the time and opportunity. Science writer must conduct an outside reading program. No one can expect to know all fields of science, but a general knowledge of most fields is required on a science beat. Science writers are not specialist in a narrow sense of the word. In one week he may interview a biologist, cover a medical meeting, discuss both policy and technical developments in the space program, turn out a piece on astronomy, attend a physicist's press conference, research an article on atomic energy and perhaps explain the meteorological aspects of a heat wave or a cold snap.

Brush up your knowledge of science

A science reporter must have the basic knowledge of science and scientific vocabulary. He must possess basic knowledge in science. A sound knowledge in vocabulary is a must. A budding science reporter should go through the science books of **high school and college** to brush up his knowledge. He must develop curiosity to know the latest **in the field of science and technology**. Read popular books **and** journals to develop science communication awareness. Observe happenings in the field of science with a scientific temper.

Writing of scientific reports involves three stages.

1. Thorough research.
2. Complete grasp of the subject.
3. Writing in a simple style.

Scientific institutions make exaggerated claims about latest scientific discovery. Verify the claims. The safe way is to check facts with the source. Go through the journals and the reference books at the scientific institutions and leading library. Check facts from other source of information, this will enhance your credibility.

Checking facts through reference

A reporter should have a list of scientific and technologist personnel with him to verify scientific facts and principles. Develop a good rapport with the scientific community. To get more credible information about the latest scientific developments interview an eminent person. Have a list of scientists with you. Be sure that his area of **193** is appropriate to the theme of your story. Take an appointment with him and note down **the questions and answers** carefully. **The** answers from the **questions can be** incorporated in the main story. While writing a story, translate the scientific jargon into the common language. Maintaining a glossary of scientific terms comes in handy to a reporter for future reference, as most of the newspapers offices don't have libraries.

A reporter must have the curiosity to know the latest happenings in the field of science. Government departments are a source of news in addition to various scientific establishments and universities. The up gradation of technology in industries and computerization in government offices are a source of news to the reporter. Policy announcement by the ministries are not the only source of news. Epidemics, poor water management, non-

conventional energy are all good source of news. To get at the root of the problem talk to the right people and develop a keen sense of observation.

Events and news relating to the particular subject is a source of news. A reporter by talking to the concerned expert can find solution to these problems. A science reporter should not only identify the problems but also find answers. He should develop a keen sense of observation.

India has the largest manpower in science and technology. With the changed economic scenario, the R & D laboratories are a major source of news. The departments of science and technology and a large number of institutions, laboratories under the control of central government ministries are a good source of information. Information pooled from these institutions becomes a flood of news for the reporter.

A science reporter must possess thorough knowledge about outstanding scientists. He must be aware of their previous achievements and the present area of study. He must have biographical knowledge about eminent scientists in India and abroad. A reporter must have thorough understanding of the environment as stories about pollution dominate the pages of the daily newspapers and electronic media. Think about environment from the angle of human development, and the fast changing environs will be evident to you.

Write your news reports in a simple form and do not clutter your copy with too many facts. One can write about urban decay and the technological advancements that had lead to the environmental degradation. The rapid growth in population has lead to further deterioration in the quality of life. Indiscriminate felling of trees leads to deforestation; construction of big dams to extend irrigation facilities to parched lands displaces people from their habitation. Rapid industrialization is essential for the eradication of poverty. One should strike a balance between the two and protect the environment for the survival of mankind. Science can play a significant role by calling for balanced development and strike a balance between environment and human welfare.

How to write a story

A well written science article conveys useful information to affect the course of scientific research. This comes with experience, judgment, organization, and clarity in writing. When a reporter sits down to write his story, he has accumulated before him a literary part of the kit. If he has done his home work well, this kit contains more pieces than he will use. The kit will include great many facts, some documents, specific details about the researcher and his project and history of the work. Likely his notes will contain several anecdotes about the subject; he will quote from his interviews with the principal investigator, may be enough for an extended section of question and –answer. The store of quotes may be augmented by interviews with other researchers, transcriptions from his tapes recorder. All this remains merely so much assembled material, until he answers this question: What does it mean? He has no story, only the pieces of one. He looks at the pieces and says: what does it mean.

This helps eliminate extraneous details. It cuts his story down to size. It enables him to assign priorities to major and minor themes, angles and direction the story may take. From this question flow all other questions that will be answered in the story.

The writer will need to plan for his story, whether he is writing a short news story or a fully feature article, a newspaper story of television – radio report. Determining the points of major significance, meaning and impact in a subject helps him form his story plan.

The newspaper's responsibility

In the stories of sufferers from virulent diseases who have been given pathetic false hope because of premature announcements of new cures, of lives and fortunes which have been lost because of misplaced confidence in inventions, and of persecution and injustice resulting from unscientific superstition is implied the social responsibility of the news paper as regards scientific news. Likewise, for that matter, is implied the duty that the reputable scientist has

not only to maintain proper caution himself but to discipline his fellows as well. What scientists deplore is reporting which they consider “shallow, inept and totally lacking in scope and understanding.”

Major fields of interest

The present scenario is that environment and pollution have become major problems of the world. A science reporter can communicate the destruction of the nature to the common people and some of them may nurture the idea and implement it in their life.

Energy and the environment. For the rest of this century the most significant journalistic assignment probably increasingly will be what already is known as the Survival Story – how to provide enough energy for the ever-growing human race without degrading the planet to the point where it is uninhabitable. There will be incidents: oil slicks, leakages of radioactive and other dangerous material, controversial oil and gas pipelines, community protests against construction of energy power production plants, air pollution including degradation of the ozone layer, forest fire prevention, legislation to regulate strip mining, rules for fishing and hunting to protect endangered species – mammal, marine, bird and plant. Such stories are covered objectively as spot news. However, editors are rapidly realizing that the total picture is broader than any single event and one of the most demanding and challenging journalistic specialties of the immediate future is bound to be this.

The obstacles for success for environmental programs are moneyed interests- oil companies, gun manufacturers and others. They plead the needs of the public for their services and insist they must not be hampered in their services for raw material, even when they are exploitive. There is no denying that the demand for more power and gadgets has increased and that today's luxuries usually become tomorrow's necessities.

Weather. Weather news is interesting even in when there are no hurricanes, floods or droughts. Since man lived in caves his everyday life was dependent to a large extent upon the behavior of the five elements of nature: the machine or power age has not reduced man's dependency in this respect. In fact, in many aspects of life, it has increased the dependency, as delicate machines may require certain atmospheric conditions for proper operation.

6.3 ELEMENTS OF INTEREST

It is not necessary to read a newspaper to know that it is abnormally hot or cold or that there has been a thunderstorm, but the reader does expect his newspaper to supply authentic statistics about the weather, the wide-spread consequence of any unusual climate condition and predictions as to a change in the situation. To meet the reader demand, newspapers print weather reports and forecasts daily. If the weather becomes unusual in any way, a full-length news story is written.

When the weather become extreme, the reporter should seek information including the following:

A. Statistics and explanation

1. Maximum and minimum temperatures of the day
2. Hourly reading
3. Comparison with other days during the season
4. Comparison with all-time records for the same date, month and season
5. Humidity, wind velocity
6. Official description of nature of phenomenon
7. Casualties
8. Heat prostrations
9. Freezing

10. Lightning
11. Tornadoes, cyclone and hurricanes
12. Floods

B. Injuries and deaths of which the weather was a contributing cause.

1. Drowning
2. Spoiled food
3. Accident from slippery pavement, snow, wind etc.
4. Fires
5. Heart diseases from heat exhaustion

C. Property damage

1. Telephone and telegraph wires
2. Bridges and highways, pavements buckling
3. Farm buildings and animals
4. Automobiles, buses and other public conveyances

D. Interference with ordinary life

1. Railroads
2. Bus lines and street cars
3. Private automobiles

E. Communication

1. Mail service
2. Telephone
3. Telegraph
4. Cable
5. Stoppage of good and other supplies

F. Public utilities

1. Water supply
2. Fuel shortage

G. Method of seeking relief

1. Increased demand of water supply

H. Method of handling situation

1. Police activity
2. Red Cross and other relief agencies
3. Public warning of driving, diet etc.

I. Freaks

1. Narrow escapes
2. Unusual incidents
3. Undamaged property surrounded by desolation

6.4 SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY: IMPACT ON SOCIAL ATTITUDE

Science and technology has brought about rapid transformation in human lives. In a scientific age and a major theory or discovery in any branch of science may have tremendous effect upon man's way of living and his manner of thinking. High quality production and consumption are taken as yardstick for development. This has lead to intense competition among nations for the acquisition of goods and services. This has resulted in social distortions and conflicts.

Reports on the impact of technology on the society increase awareness among people and helps policy- makers to take remedial measures. A reporter must keep abreast of the changes taking place in the field of science and technology in a highly globalized village. While reporting on specific developments in science and technology one can give social implication of its application within a timeframe, which would make the readers to ponder.

Science deals with the laws of nature. Science reporting calls for greater precision to register in the minds of the people. A science reporter is required to define difficult and uncommon ideas and the relevant background material.

Even science reporting follows the same pattern of a regular reporting. The paragraphs should be short with not more than fifty words. There should be smooth transition from paragraph to paragraph or else the reader may abandon the story. A science report must have an intro followed by important news and lesser one as we go down. It is different from general news item, in the sense; the lead doesn't contain the five W's and H. A science reporter requires good language to get his message across clearly.

While writing science reports avoid exaggeration. Don't take the readers for a ride. Sensationalism and exaggeration affects the credibility of the reporter and the publication. As reporters are hard -pressed for time be disciplined in structuring and construction of your reports. A science reporter must be a voracious reader. He must read articles written by eminent people and professors. Examine your reports with those published in other publications; this would discipline your reporting.

To sum up a science reporter should learn to be precise. He has to upgrade and update his knowledge about the subject and reporting skills. An average reader must be able to understand what you write. Therefore your priority must be to use language that is easily understood by everyone.

6.5 ETHICS IN SCIENCE WRITING

There is a need for Science writers to defend the guarantees of freedom of the press to gather and to publish the facts. In 1960, in the United States, The National Association of Science Writers in 1960 approved two resolutions to check unethical practices in science writing. They are:

- Science writer shall take all necessary measures to insure that information he purveys to the public in accurate, truthful and impartial.
- He should not for any remuneration by a commercial service, commercial product, or a commercial organization. Such activity shall be considered prejudicial to the best interest of his association.
- Science writer, like all reporters, should not misquote, misstate or mislead; their reputation as writer and reporter is at stake
- They must not raise false hopes through new medical treatments unless several authorities agree

- Science reporters should desist from becoming publicity agents for drug manufactures.
- Sensationalized attack on doctors and drug makers for the sake of publication sale will result in the loss of objectivity
- In the field of “miracle cures” writers must remain wary of “secret” ingredients that researchers and inventors refuse to disclose. The ethical code of scientists and doctors require them to submit complete data on such treatments to their colleagues for examination. No ingredients can be withheld for the medical and scientific literature.

6.6 SUMMARY

In this Chapter, we have seen how Science News Reporting is done, what are the elements involved, pre-requisites for a science reporter, responsibilities, and ethics in Science Reporting and how to build the News Item and what are the reliable and authentic sources of Science News and its validation.

6.7 GLOSSARY

- **Science and Technology:** Science encompasses the systematic study of the structure and behaviour of the physical and natural world through observation and experiment, and technology is the application of scientific knowledge for practical purposes.
- **Scientist:** a person who is studying or has expert knowledge of one or more of the natural or physical sciences.
- **Science Writing:** The purpose of science writing is to accurately communicate observations and analyses and their importance in a way that will convey a sense of context to the reader and possibly allow for repeatable experiments.
- **Scientific Temper:** Scientific attitude is the desire to know and understand, questioning to all statements, search for data and their meaning, search for verification, and consideration of consequences

6.8 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

- 1) Explain how Science News Reporting is done
- 2) What are pre-requisites, roles and responsibilities of a Science Reporter?
- 3) Write a brief note on the sources of Science News.

6.9 SUGGESTED READINGS

- 1) Kriehbaum, H. (1956). What's right with science news reporting?. *Science*, 123(3200), 707-709.
- 2) Tichenor, P. J., Olien, C. N., Harrison, A., & Donohue, G. (1970). Mass communication systems and communication accuracy in science news reporting. *Journalism Quarterly*, 47(4), 673-683.

Molitor, F. (1993). Accuracy in science news reporting by newspapers: the case of aspirin for the prevention of heart attacks. *Health Communication*, 5(3), 209-224..

Lesson – 7

CRIME REPORTING

4 OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson, the student will be familiar with

- 11 • What constitutes crime?
- How to write crime news
- A Fair Trial vs. Free Press

4 STRUCTURE

7.1 Introduction

7.2 What constitutes crime?

7.3 Different types of crime news

11 7.4 How to write crime stories

7.5 A Fair Trial vs. Free Press

4 7.6 Summary

7.7 Glossary

7.8 Self-Assessment Questions

7.9 Suggested Readings

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Crime has become an integral part of civilized life. It has grown in several folds in the recent times, both in its incidence as well as in its variety. For larceny to murder from bribery to embezzlement, from terrorism to genocide has raised its ugly head in to the vicinity of all parts of the world. Critics of newspapers feel that crime news gets more space than really necessary in news columns, but this reaction cannot be justified. Crime news is not mere information as it encompasses a wide range of white collar crime, including bribery, embezzlement. Crime news constitutes a major chunk of the news for national and local dailies. Any action, which constitutes violation of the law, is crime news. Newspapers devote special column for criminal news. They have a good readership. Crime news is a specialized beat entrusted to a cub reporter. It is a good training ground for up and coming journalists to hone their skills. Crime is a part of our daily life and a rich source of news, which no newspaper can ignore. Police stations are the main source of crime news. To overcome the criticism that Indian newspapers give undue importance to crime news, newspapers have broadened the coverage and shifted their focus to white-collar crimes. Crime news is not confined to any particular beat; crime news is emerging from other beats as well.

7.2 ¹WHAT CONSTITUTES CRIME?

A breach of the law may be either a felony or a misdemeanor. Felony ¹ is a serious offense, such as murder, whereas a misdemeanor is a minor offense such as breaking the speed law. Felonies are punishable by death or imprisonment, whereas a misdemeanor usually results in a fine of confinement in a local jail. A capital crime is one punishable by death; an infamous crime is one punishable by a prison sentence

7.3 DIFFERENT TYPES OF CRIME NEWS

Crime news appearing in the newspapers can be broadly classified into seven types.

¹1. Against the person

- Simple assault: threatening, doubling the fist, etc
- Aggravated assault: threat violent enough to cause flight
- Battery: actually striking a person or a rider's horse, spitting on another
- False imprisonment: liberty unlawfully restrained by any one
- Kidnapping: stealing away a person
- Rape: ¹Unlawful carnal knowledge of woman forcibly detained; statutory rape occurs when girl is minor even though she consents
- Maiming: ¹killing when the victim dies within a year and a day
- Matricide: killing one's mother
- Patricide: killing one's father
- Fratricide: Killing one's brother or sister
- Uxoricide: killing one's wife or husband
- Justified: in self-defense or in line of duty
- Felonious: either murder or manslaughter
- Manslaughter

Man slaughter can be

- ¹1. Voluntary: intentional in the heat of passion or as the result of extreme provocation
2. Involuntary: unintentional but with the criminal negligence

- Murder

Murder can be

- ¹1. First degree: with expressed malice and premeditation
 2. second degree : with no premeditation but with the intent to kill or inflict injury regardless of outcome
- Abortion : interfering with pregnancy except as permitted by Law

1 2. Against habitation

- Burglary: entering another's dwelling with intent to commit a felony therein; often extended to include any building
- Arson: malicious burning of another's real estate

3. Against property

- Larceny: taking and converting to use with felonious intent the property of another
- Embezzlement: larceny by means of a breach of confidence
- Robbery: larceny with intimidation or violence against the person
- False pretenses: Confidence game, impostures, swindles
- Receiving stolen goods: for sale or concealment; recipient called "fence."
- Forgery: altering or falsely marking a piece of writing for private profit or deception of another
- Malicious mischief: killing animals, mutilating or defacing property
- Extortion: blackmailing; obtaining illegal compensation to do or not to do any act.

4. Against morality and decency

- Adultery: sexual relations between unmarried persons
- Bigamy: second marriage without dissolving the first
- Incest: sexual relations between persons so closely related that they are forbidden to marry
- Miscegenation: marriage between races forbidden to intermarry
- Seduction: inducing an unmarried girl to engage in sexual relations by false promises or deception.
- Prostitution: promiscuous indulgence in sexual relations by women for profit.
- Sodomy: homosexual relations between men.
- Obscenity: anything offensive to one's sense of chastity.
- Indecency: anything outrageously disgusting.
- Contributing to delinquency of a minor: encouraging or permitting any waywardness in youths.

1 5. Against the public peace

- Breach of the peace: disorderly conduct and a variety of nuisances
- Affray: fighting in public places to the terror of the public.
- Rout: unlawful assembly that begins to move.
- Riot: unlawful assembly or rout that becomes tumultuous or violent.
- Disturbance of public assembly: interference with legal meetings
- Disorderly conduct
- Forcible entry and detaining: illegal seizure or holding of property.
- Defamation: libel if written, slander if spoken.
- Concealed weapons (May be listed as disorderly conduct.)

- Gaming: playing games of money or games of chance

6. Against justice and authority

- Treason: breach of allegiance to country; giving enemy aid.
- Perjury: false testimony under oath in judicial proceedings
- Bribery: attempt to influence public officials in his duties.
- Embracery: attempt to influence a juror.
- Counterfeiting: making false money which is passed as genuine.
- Misconduct in office: extortion, breach of trust, neglect, etc.
- Obstructing justice: resisting arrest, refusing to aid arresting officer.
- Obstructing punishment: escape; prison breach.
- Compounding a felony: agreeing not to prosecute felon or assisting him in evading justice.
- Exciting litigation: stirring up lawsuits for profit; barratry; maintenance
- Election laws: fraud or illegal interference with voting.
- Conspiracy: planning or plotting to commit crime.
- Contempt: improper respect for court.

7. Against public safety, health and comfort.

- Nuisances: annoyances
- Traffic regulations
- Food and drugs act
- Health regulation
- Safety laws for common carriers; use of explosives. etc.

Fire, homicide, accidents are the common crime news observed in day-to-day life.

Fire

During fire accidents the reporter must get the facts right. He should tell the readers about the fire fighting operations. He must take the views of the affected people, and the police authorities. The loss of human life and property must be highlighted in the lead.

Example

A major fire accident in a multi- storied building in Delhi on Monday morning caused extensive damage. According to preliminary investigation, fire broke- out in the kitchen of second floor of the building. The fire soon spread to the entire building. The fire fighting force had to battle for five hours to put out the fire. Property worth lakhs of rupees was gutted in the accident. Police suspect short -circuit as the cause of the accident.

Homicide

While reporting on dowry deaths, the reporter must get his facts right. Instead of relying on the police version, he must talk to the parents of the victims and neighbors, which would give a fresh insight, and throw light on the incident. Instead of relying on police information, reporters must search for clues and dig deep which may lead some interesting information.

Accidents

News regarding road accidents are reported on the basis of information provide by the police. Most of the crime news in Indian newspapers is not authentic but a police version. The spokesman or the public relations officer supplies crime news.

Example

Sixteen Australian tourists were killed in a road accident in the wee hours of yesterday, sixteen kilometers from Chennai. The car in which the tourists were traveling collided with a lorry. Police has registered a case. The driver of the bus is absconding.

7.4 HOW TO WRITE CRIME STORIES

¹ In reporting trials of long duration, the reporter bases every new lead on the most important new development since his last preceding story. Factors to consider are

Does some new testimony or other evidence contradict or supplement some preceding evidence?

1. Do the questions asked by defense counsel on cross – examination portend what the constructive defense case will be?
2. Is any of the evidence surprising; that is, has been unreported in connection with either the crime itself or the trial?
3. How do the versions of what happened as presented by both sides coincide or differ?
4. Is there consistency of purpose in the types of objections raised by counsel and in the judge's rulings on them? Is the defense laying the ground for possible future appeal?

Seeking answers to these and similar questions involves an interpretative approach to the assignment. Much of the reporting "on deadline" however, is likely to be strictly factual. Often testimony can be presented in Q and A (question and answer) form if there is space; otherwise, it can be summarized briefly or the important parts quoted. The courtroom, scene, including the attitudes of principals, witnesses, relatives, friends and spectators, is newsworthy, especially if there are any disturbances. In capital cases, the way the defendant acts when the verdict is announced is of interest.

Example:

Four held for Looting Bank

⁴⁵ Lucknow: Four persons of a gang, allegedly involved in looting banks, were arrested on Friday from Allahabad district, police said here. Acting on a tip off, the special task force of the state police arrested Kaushlesh Tiwari, Yogendra Kumar alias Sonu, Dayakant Mishra and Sanjay Kol, from Mal Godam colony in Shahgang area of Allahabad, they said. A pistol and fake identity cards were recovered from their possession, police said, adding that the accused were also involved in a number of crimes in Chhatisgarh and Madhya Pradesh.

Source: *The New Indian Express*, February, 24, 2012,
p10

Writing crime news is not as simple as it appears to be. If improperly done, it can contribute for the growth of crime. A carefully written crime story serves as a deterrent to certain crimes and an accurately narrated crime event puts the public on guard against various crimes. An

improperly designed crime story may glorify crime and build sympathy for the criminal. It may also help criminals by informing them of the police strategies. The reporter is expected to practice restraint in writing crime news. He should go slow on graphic description of crime, for such gory details make not only disgusting reading but also put ideas into the minds of the potential criminals. In fact, the reporter is not a witness to the crime.

The law enforcing agencies are often reluctant to reveal their cases to the press. Police records are often exaggerated versions of crime and they are not entirely dependable and the reporter should take care in mentioning his source clearly in his story. He is expected to record only privileged information such as entries made in the police charge sheets etc, and also indicate his source of information. He should know that the police cannot convict a person. It is only a court that can convict and award suitable punishment to a criminal. Confessions made before the police are not valid and cannot be considered always authentic. In scores of cases, alleged criminals have deposed before judicial authority that confessions were extracted from them under duress by the police. Only confessions made before the court of law are valid.

The reporter should be careful in constructing the crime story. No one is arrested "for" a crime. Arrests are made by the police "on charges of a crime." The reporter should be careful in mentioning the names and addresses of alleged criminals. Often addresses given by them turn out to be wrong, and publication of those addresses may embarrass law-abiding citizens living there.

The reporter should take additional care while writing suicide news. Suicide notes, though a good source of information may not be authentic documents. What appears to be a clear case of suicide may not be so and it is wrong to call any form of death a suicide. It is for the forensic medicine expert to declare the cause of an unnatural death.

7.5 A FAIR TRIAL VS. FREE PRESS

Some newspapers, magazines, and radio and television stations have been accused of inciting to crime by glorifying and making heroes of criminals; of assisting criminals to escape by relating detailed accounts of activities of police; of interfering with the administration of justice by emphasizing the horrible aspects of brute crimes, by quoting the prosecuting attorney as to the severe punishment he is going to demand and by editorial comment; of causing unfair suffering on the part of the relatives and friends of principles in the criminal case; and of offending public taste by relating lurid details of crimes and scandals.

Today the most important issue is how much pretrial publicity there should be so as not to interfere with a defendant's right to a fair trial before an impartial jury in an unprejudicial atmosphere. It is argued that the press by publishing information about trials guards against the miscarriage of justice. However, there is unanimity among lawyers and journalists regarding how far the press should go in exercising this function without jeopardizing the rights of the defendant.

A crime reporter should possess a good working knowledge of the legal system and be in the good books of the police. He should not publish fictitious news with an intention to gain cheap publicity. He must not resort to sensationalism, glorifying crime and criminals. A reporter must ensure that he doesn't invade the privacy of the people during the discharge of his duties. He must not suppress news or settle personal scores with police personnel and judges. Names of rape victims should be changed to protect the identity of the victim. A reporter must not stoop to unethical practices and hurt the feelings of the victims.

Sub-judice. When a case is progressing in a court of law, it is described as sub-judice. When the case is sub-judice, reporter must exercise caution while reporting.

In-camera. When a case is described as in-camera and the proceedings of the case should not be reported.

7.6 SUMMARY

In this Chapter, Crime News Classification, and the essentials of Crime News Reporting are discussed. The significant aspects of how to go about writing a Crime News Story are discussed through examples that enumerate the concepts learnt. The Chapter emphasizes on the difference between Fair Trial and Free Press, and eventually describes the roles and responsibilities of a Crime Reporter.

7.7 GLOSSARY

- **Crime:** an action or omission which constitutes an offence and is punishable by law.
- **White Collar Crimes:** The term "white-collar crime" refers to financially motivated, nonviolent or non-directly violent crime committed by individuals, businesses and government professionals
- **Law Enforcing agency:** Any government agency responsible for the enforcement of the laws.
- **Evidence:** the available body of facts or information indicating whether a belief or proposition is true or valid.
- **Objection:** A formal protest raised during a trial, deposition or other procedure indicating that the objecting attorney wishes the judge to disallow either the testimony of a given witness or other evidence that would violate the rules of evidence or other procedural law.
- **Criminal:** a person charged with and convicted of crime.
- **Defense Counsel:** Defense counsel is the client's professional representative. Defense counsel should act zealously within the bounds of the law and standards on behalf of their clients, but have no duty to, and may not, execute any directive of the client which violates the law or such standards.

7.8 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

- 1) What constitutes Crime News and What are the responsibilities of a Crime Reporter?
- 2) Elaborate upon Fair Trial and Free Press
- 3) How to go about writing a Crime News Report

7.9 SUGGESTED READINGS

- 1) Soares, R. R. (2004). Crime reporting as a measure of institutional development. *Economic Development and cultural change*, 52(4), 851-871.

Chibnall, S. (2013). *Law-and-order news: An analysis of crime reporting in the British press*. Routledge.

Lesson – 8

INTERVIEWS

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OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson, the student will be familiar with

- Tips for interviews
- Different types of interviews
- Source of interviews

4

STRUCTURE

8.1 Introduction

8.2 Tips for interviews

8.3 Different types of interviews

8.4 Sources of interviews

8.5 Dos and Don'ts of interview

8.6 Summary

8.7 Glossary

8.8 Self-Assessment Questions

8.9 Suggested Readings

8.1 INTRODUCTION

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Interview is an exchange of information, opinion or experience from one person to another. In conversation, control of the discussion passes back and forth from one person to another. In an interview, the interviewer begins the discussion to happen and determines the direction of the questioning. Interview is a dialogue between the journalist and the source. It is an exclusive news presentation. It is an independent effort of a journalist. Yet, they are accidental, sometimes deliberate.

Skillful interviewing is crucial to journalists, whether they write news reports or feature stories as they help to put things in a better perspective. Interviews are conducted for writing a character sketch, an investigative story, a profile and a round up.

8.2 TIPS FOR INTERVIEWS

The reporter should thoroughly prepare for the interview. Questions should be prepared in advance, and should have a logical sequence, facilitating a logical flow of thoughts. When you interview a personality, obtain as much information as you can; practically about his personal idiosyncrasies. An interview begins at the moment you send your card or knock at the door; but success or failure of it will depend entirely on the impression you make at your meeting. Do not waste time on trivialities at the outset; although they may well be useful at a later stage, should you need to gain a few moments before putting your next question. Say your name clearly, so that you can be addressed as Mr. X, Mr. Y. Never make an apologetic opening, as it makes a bad impression.

It is a good and wise plan to decide not only on your opening but also on the first three or four points you wish to rise. Much depends on the nature of the interview. The interviewer should not unnerve the "subject". Free pleasant and informal atmosphere is congenial for a smooth flow of thoughts. A good reporter does not take down every word spoken by the subject. It is better to carry a tape recorder, this helps the reporter to avoid controversies and denials that are common in interview. He should not dominate the interview; the best reporter is he who can listen. Every interview has a common problem; how is it to be recorded? The best way is make your entrance apparently devoid of tools of your trade and listen intently for a minute or two. Then you can quietly produce your pen and a piece of folded paper and pencil and ask: May I quote that? As you make your notes, allow him to prompt you on words to be used if he wishes. Then look up to him, put a question or allow him to continue talking. Watch him as much as you can and appear curious. It is advisable, before departing; spend a minute or two discussing commonplace matters. If the source says any point 'off - the - record' it cannot be included in the news report.

The reporter should write the interview story as soon as possible, otherwise, he is likely to miss subtle details, particularly the characteristics traits of the subject.

Interviews are written in different ways, but normally, the question-answer type of summary – quote style are used. However, the reporter should introduce the subject and also indicate the need for the interview in the beginning. In question answer type, the actual question posed by the reporter and the answer to the question are narrated verbatim. It is a series of questions and answers. In a summary quote-summary style, the interview is written as a narrative in third person, interspersing the story with quotes.

8.3 DIFFERENT TYPES OF INTERVIEWS

Interviews can be broadly classified into three broad categories:

1. News interview
2. Personality interview
3. Symposium interview

Often reporters are not satisfied with a mere news story; nor are discerning readers, who expect not only details but also an expert opinion on a news worthy event. To meet such demands reporters conduct interviews with those whose impressions are considered authentic and valuable by the reading public.



Example for a personality interview

Source: *Deccan Chronicle*

For example if the state makes an important decision to begin more engineering colleges, a mere announcement will be the lead story. A news story alone may not answer too many doubts. The reporter meets the concerned minister and the interview is likely to provide details that are generally beyond the compass of a news story. This is news interview, because both the “authority” and the issues are in news.

News interviews are also conducted to produce detailed feature stories on what otherwise could be dismissed as a four paragraph news item. If a well-known musician gets a national award the news is generally buried in the city page. But the same news could be for a 2000 word interview with the musician covering his career, training, achievement and his contribution to the art. This could make a full-page story in the arts section of the newspaper.

In symposium interviews, random reactions of common people are collected on current issues. When petrol prices go up, common man is affected. Their opinions, however candid, are symbolic of the opinion of the community and therefore, considered important. The reactions of the ordinary people to a common issue serve as a feedback from the general public to the government.

8.4 SOURCES OF INTERVIEWS

Generally most stories appearing in news columns are drawn from some form of an interview. Reporting while covering event, rely on eye-witnesses, whose versions of the event will form an important part of the story. Reporter is in constant dialogue with their source of news and what transpires between the reporter and the source is also a kind of interview. Apart from press conference, reporters seek exclusive interviews with “experts” and “authorities” in order to enlarge news stories with authentic and privileged material.

Telephonic interview

In recent years many newspapers have adopted this technique. The great advantage it saves time. It is a selfish way of doing about things. Personal touch is lacking, but it assumes that the paper is more important than the person being interviewed. He may unnecessarily be on the guard, for anyone with ulterior motives, could ring him up and profess to be a newspaper representative. On the other hand, he may for some reasons dislike using the telephone, which immediately places you at a disadvantage. Telephone interview has been found to be a useful way of getting the views of the local people, when you are nearing the deadline, which accounts for the extension of the use.

Before ringing up these people, try and put yourself in their position, ring up people and ask them they would give their views when he rings up again in ten minutes. It would give them a brief period of reflection, before committing themselves and they appreciate the friendly tip that you want them.

Specialized interview

Senior reporters are given assignments well in advance. He should frame questions in advance. He should spend many days studying the career of the great personality to be interviewed. He should have a rudimentary idea of the matter, which he wishes his personality to talk about. He should utilize the resourcefulness of the office library, where he can get a lot of information about the personality to be interviewed. When asked by the personality, he should submit the copy of the interview. The general sense of the interview should not be altered.

Political parties

Political parties are a big source of news. Political parties their policies and programmes, their shifting stances and loyalties are important for a journalist. Senior reporters are assigned particular political party. A large quantity of gossip comes from the political parties. Journalists who cover political beats have access to government and political leaders. They cultivate source over a period of time, which helps them develop a perspective beyond the stated public positions of the respective political parties.

Government ministries and offices

Government ministries are a major source of news. In a democratic society the government and the bureaucracy takes decisions of national interest. The ministers and senior officials announce policy decisions both at the center and the state by organizing press conferences and giving handouts. Apart from formal sources, informal contacts may help a reporter in getting at the news behind the news.

Civil society organizations

Non-governmental organizations and professional bodies are playing a significant role in contemporary society. These bodies regularly conduct press conferences and give handouts to publish their research findings on important social issues. This gives the media the opportunity to write on serious issues like health and environment.

Business and commercial organizations

The business and commercial organizations regularly interact with the press when an economic issue comes up to. The leading business organizations like the FICCI (Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry), ICI (Indian Confederation of Industries) and ASSOCHAM (Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry) play a crucial role in shaping the country's economic policies. They organize seminars and hold conference, which provide forum for political parties and the captains of the industry to spell out their views on the subject.

Hospitals: The press gets news about accidents, deaths from hospitals. All newspapers maintain contacts with hospitals.

Specialists and experts

Every news organization maintains a list of specialists and experts of different fields who can be contacted for an opinion on some development.

An imaginative and upcoming reporter will make his own source and never lose sight of the need to amend it. The above-mentioned news sources are available to all the reporters, but the reporters own contacts provide exclusive information. Some of the sources may be quoted; on occasion, they may give their opinion on the condition of anonymity. In that case, it is essential for the reporter to maintain the confidence of the contact.

Written interview

A person writes answers to a series of questions sent to him. This type of interview is never satisfactory. 'Follow up' question can never be asked; written answers almost demand questions to elucidate a point. It lacks a personal touch.

Question and answer format

This type of interview is adopted in Communist countries, where the questions are submitted in advance, if he is fortunate he gets replies, which will also be circulated, to the official agencies of the respective countries. Realistic atmosphere is missing in this type of interviews, which do not inspire any reporters entrusted with the assignment.

Special stories: special stories are done on special occasions. They are human-interest stories brought to light by the reporter. They are success stories published occasionally. Special stories are written on certain special occasions.

8.5 DOS AND DON'TS OF INTERVIEW**Dos**

- Some of the following points will be useful to a journalist.
- Thoroughly study your man and the subject about which you wish him to talk.
- Show interest in the job and try to get on easy terms with your man quickly.
- Go on the job well - dressed, but not over-dressed.
- Submit a copy of your interview to the person interviewed if time permits and see it when he returns it; take his consent for publication.
- Always remember that there is such thing as law of the libel, and the indiscreet personal remarks may cause a great deal of trouble.

Don'ts

- Don't think that you know more about the subject than the man you are interviewing.
- Don't adopt servile attitude, but at the same time, show that you respect your man for what he has done.
- Don't outstay your welcome.
- Don't feel that it is necessary to argue with your man if you don't agree with some of the views he expresses.
- Avoid 'off-the-record' statements. They should not be published. It is for the sake of information. It is ethical part of an interview. File the story immediately to avoid distortions.

8.6 SUMMARY

In this Chapter, we have elaborated upon effective approaches to taking interviews. And further discussed the different types of interviews such as News interview, Personality interview, Symposium interview. The Chapter also explains the various sources of interviews such as political parties, Civil Society Organisations, Government Ministries and Offices, Hospitals etc, finally contemplating the Dos and Don'ts of interview.

8.7 GLOSSARY

- **Interview:** a meeting at which information is obtained (as by a reporter, television commentator, or pollster) from a person
- **Narrative:** a spoken or written account of connected events
- **Written Interview:** It is essentially the same thing as a live interview except it is communicated in written form so that the person can take their time to compose their answers.
- **Idiosyncrasies:** a mode of behaviour or way of thought peculiar to an individual.
- **Round up:** In journalism, especially television or radio, a roundup of news is a summary of the main events that have happened.

8.8 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

- 1) Elaborate upon the effective approaches to taking interviews.
- 2) What are the different types of Interviews? Explain.
- 3) Write brief note on the various sources of interviews.
- 4) What are the Dos and Don'ts of taking interviews?

8.9 SUGGESTED READINGS

- 1) Jucker, A. H. (1986). *News interviews: A pragmalinguistic analysis*. John Benjamins Publishing.
- Bull, P. (1998). Equivocation theory and news interviews. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 17(1), 36-51.

Lesson – 9

COURT REPORTING

4 OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson, the student will be familiar with

- 11 Extraordinary remedies
- News sources
- Trial coverage
- Journalistic defence

66 STRUCTURE

- 9.1 Introduction
- 9.2 Pre-requisites
- 9.3 Trial coverage
- 9.4 Contempt of court
- 9.5 Journalistic defense
- 9.6 Summary
- 9.7 Glossary
- 9.8 Self-Assessment Questions
- 9.9 Suggested Readings

9.1 INTRODUCTION

Modern methods of news gathering have led to the growth of specialization and one of the 29 coveted specialist job is that of crime reporter. It is the most dangerous beat because of the tendency of the crime reporter to turn detective in order to get a new slant on an old story. His activities may well interfere with the judicial proceedings and may always meet with heavy punishments.

Court reporting is a specialized beat, which requires specialized skills and competence. The beat requires covering proceedings in criminal courts, High Courts and Supreme Court. Big national dailies employ full - time correspondents preferable with a legal background to cover the beat. Small dailies have stringers to cover court proceedings, majority of whom are practicing advocates. Miffusil reporters also cover legal and crime news in their respective areas. Small and medium - sized dailies, which don't have regular legal reporters; staff reporters are deputed to cover court proceedings. The coverage of court news has increased in recent times compared to the past. These changes have been brought about mainly due to growing public awareness about their Rights and seek the help of the courts for the redressal of their grievances. The increase in public interest litigations in various courts bear a testimony to this fact. Newspapers evince more interest on criminal proceedings than in civil suits. Court reporting is the process of making a complete and accurate record of trial court proceedings. No trial should take place without a verbatim account of these proceedings.

9.2 PRE-REQUISITES

A legal reporter must develop fair understanding of court procedures, jurisdiction, and hierarchy. Supreme Court is the apex court, High Court at the state level followed by sessions court and the magistrate court. There are also tribunals to look into the grievances of the central government employees. A reporter should be familiar with the hierarchy of the courts, the most frequently used legal words and jargon. A legal reporter must explain briefly the legal terms used in the news story. A news story must not have too many legal terms, as it would confuse the ordinary reader. As court proceedings are held in English, a good working knowledge of the language helps the reporter.

Extraordinary remedies

1. Contempt of court: an offence against the court, punishable by a fine or imprisonment or both.
2. Plaintiff: A person or the party, which initiates litigation.
3. Double jeopardy: The defendant has already been tried for the same offence.
4. Writ of Mandamus: A Higher Court's directive to the lower, or ordering a person to perform a public or statutory duty. It is Latin word 'mandamus' means we order. The writ of mandamus is an order of the Supreme Court or the High Court, commanding a person or a body to do that which it is his or its duty to do. There are three essential conditions for the issue of the writ of mandamus. Firstly, the applicant must show that he has a real and special interest in the subject matter and the special legal right to enforce.
5. Prohibition: A writ of prohibition is issued primarily to prevent an inferior court from exceeding its jurisdiction or acting contrary to the rules of natural justice. The term inferior refers to special tribunals, commissions, magistrates and officers who exercise judicial powers affecting the property or the rights of the citizens. The writ of prohibition is a counterpart of the writ of certiorari, which too is issued against the action of the inferior courts.
6. Certiorari: Is an ancient prerogative writ, which orders the removal of a suit from an inferior court to a superior court. It may be used before a trial to prevent an excess of abuse of jurisdiction and remove the case from a trial court to a higher court.
7. Quo warrant: The writ of quo warrant is a common law process of a great antiquity. The High Courts or the Supreme Court may grant an injunction to restrain a person from acting in an office to which he is not entitled and make the office vacant.
8. Habeas corpus: It is a term which means 'you may have the body'. It is a remedy by which a person unlawfully detained to be set at liberty. In Indian Constitution, the power to issue a writ of 'habeas corpus' is vested with the Supreme Court and the High Courts. The writ is issued against authorities of state and private organizations and individuals. The writ is direction of the court to the person who is detaining another, commanding him to bring the body of the person in his custody at a specified time for a specific purpose. The writ has only one purpose to set at liberty a person who has been put in confinement illegally.
9. Parole: Release on promise of reappearance at regular intervals.
10. Proceedings held in camera: Proceedings held in private and not in public.
11. Proceedings *suo moto*: Proceedings launched by the court on its own.
12. Bail bond: A security amount usually furnished to guarantee the appearance of an accused person in the court.

13. Extradition: Extradition is a process of returning a prisoner from one country to another.

14. Adjournment: It is an application requesting for more time for finding witness or important evidence for other reasons.

News source

Court records are a good source of news. The success of court reporter to a large extent depends on his contacts and his ability to gain access to the records quickly. One must be skillful in collecting newsworthy information from various sources in and around the court.

A reporter should have a good rapport with the lawyers and the parties. He must be aware of the various stages of civil and criminal proceedings. Court reporting involves patient and diligent checking of records. He should be fair and impartial in his reporting even under pressure from the rival lawyer. He should make it a point to attend important trials without fail.

9.3 TRIAL COVERAGE

Covering court proceedings - from preliminary hearing to trial – gives you a front row seat at one of the most exciting shows in town. Every day in the court will not be rewarding, but over a period of time you are bound to witness human drama while prosecutors and defense lawyers try to repudiate each other, often in a spectacular fashion. In trial reporting the reporter need not hype the story to make it interesting. Simply tell what has happened. Procedures in criminal trial are virtually the same in the courts. In courts one can see defendants and witness lay their emotions bare during the trial coverage reporter must jot down points and important dates quickly. He can consult his colleagues if he has missed a point or during the testimony. A reporter must learn to quote important questions, answers, comments and the remarks that rise during the debate. A story with good quotes makes for an interesting reading. While filing stories the reporter must guard against any contempt.

The reporter must use the term 'alleged', while referring to a person facing the trial.

Criminal cases begin when the state charges someone with violating a criminal statute. Court also hears cases in which one individual sues another. These are called the civil cases. They involve matters such as divorce, contracts, personal injury etc.

Knowledge of court system is important for all reporters, not just those who make the courts their beats. Courts are important source for all kinds of information. Business reporters, education reporters, and even sports reporters also follow trial coverage. A business reporter may want to know information about a corporation that plans to locate a new factory in the community. The corporation's public relation officer may provide lot of facts, but only what the corporation is willing to release. To go beyond the reporter needs other source and here the court records come in handy. Some of that information may become part of the court record available to public. The records may reveal the corporation's finances, structure and operating style. Reporters who cover courts regularly should spend some time with local judges, prosecutors and defense attorneys to learn the procedures. Bar and press associations bring out handbooks for reporters. These books can be valuable resources for reporters who cover court proceedings.

Court action in a criminal case begins when a complaint is filed against the defendant. This happens at the initial appearance, when the defendant is brought before a judge and informed of the charges. Misdemeanors can be settled at this level. If the case is a felony, the judge sets bail and date for preliminary. The purpose of the preliminary hearing is to persuade judge that

the state has probable cause to believe that a crime has been committed and that the defendant committed it. Preliminary hearings are open to the press and public, but judges may worry that the press and public will hear facts that are prejudicial to the defendant but will never be introduced at the trial. Judges may try to avoid this problem by sealing statements and evidence by closing portions of the preliminary hearing. At the end of the preliminary hearing, the judge may either free the defendants or have the defendant bound over for a trial. Jury deliberations are closed to the public, but reporters try to talk to the jurors after the trial to find out what evidence and arguments most persuasive and how the jurors evaluated the witness, the attorneys and the defendant. Occasionally judges try to protect jurors from news reporters even after the trial is over.

A civil case begins when one party files a complaint in court against another party. The person filing the complaint is the plaintiff and the other party is the defendant. The complaint states the factual and legal basis for the lawsuit and tells the court what kind of remedy the plaintiff wants. In many cases the plaintiff wants money to compensate for injuries, loss of property or misfortune arising from the defendant's conduct. The plaintiff may also seek a court order prohibiting the defendant from doing something or requiring the defendant to do something, which is known as 'equitable relief'. In some cases the plaintiff may ask for both kinds of remedies.

Reporters should be skeptical of the amounts of money demanded in lawsuits. To attract the media attention plaintiffs demand exorbitant amounts as compensation for minor injuries. They normally set for the fraction of the amount they have demanded. News stories should not emphasize the amount demanded.

Complaint presents on the plaintiff's charges which the defendants deny. If the charges are found to be untrue, the news story should indicate clearly that the charges are the plaintiffs' allegations, not accepted facts.

Incorrect: Because of the accident, Patel will require medical care for the rest of his life.

Correct: Patel's lawsuit says he will require medical care for the rest of his life.

The story should include the defendant's response to the charges. The reporter can obtain it by calling the defendant or his attorney. The civil trial proceeds much as a criminal one, and it is usually open to the press and public. A judge who decides the case may hear the trial. The jury presents the verdict. But a civil case is more likely to be halted by a settlement between the parties. The judges usually encourage such settlements before the trial and after the trial. The parties usually keep secret the terms of any agreement, but it must have the court's approval so may become public record.

The losing party in a civil case may ask the judge to set aside the jury's verdict and render a verdict in his or her favor; this is called a judgment of law. The loser may ask for a new trial. But neither of the requests is granted frequently. The loser must argue that trial court committed a legal error so serious as to warrant a reversal of the verdict or a new trial.

Daily trial coverage, whatever is most newsworthy belongs at the top of your story. The longer you sit through a trial the easier it becomes to fashion a lead as the reporter becomes familiar with the fact of the character, the main issue and previous testimony. In the beginning he goes by the opening statements of the jury. From then on, witness usually shapes the story. The trial story must have a logical, coherent order. If they are number of witness in the same day they should be presented in order of importance in the case.

Some background must be included in every story, even in the story runs for several weeks. The background involves several paras giving the date and particulars of the crime. Background can be inserted at an appropriate place to highlight a marked conflict in

testimony from two different witnesses. The accused taking a stand is always an opportunity for a dramatic story but the reporter may not get a chance to write it. Drama, emotion and color also have a legitimate place in the trial story if they are not overblown or sensationalized.

9.4 CONTEMPT OF COURT

Publication of any matter or doing any other act, which lowers or scandalizes the authority of the court or interferes with the due course of judicial proceedings, is treated as contempt of court. They are of two types

1. Civil contempt
2. Criminal contempt.

Civil contempt

Civil contempt is the willful disobedience of any judgment, direction or decree of the court. Civil contempt will not be initiated against a person if it is an unintentional breach.

Criminal contempt

It mainly deals with publication of matter which lowers the authority of the court or interferes with the due course of judicial proceedings.

The Contempt of Court Act 1971 was basically framed to protect the judiciary from unwarranted allegations. Under the law, publication which creates doubts about the ability or fairness of a judge, is prohibited. A reporter should not write on the court proceedings held in-camera.

Attributing motives, making defamatory and baseless allegations against judges would come under contempt of court, as it is bound to create mistrust and shatters the confidence of the people in the judiciary. The press should not comment until the final judgment is delivered in an appeal against the court judgment is filed and accepted by the same or other court.

A legal reporter should be cautious while filing his reports. He may invite contempt of court if the report is written in an abusive language, if it discusses the merits of the case pending in the court. It may conclude this as court prejudicing fair trial.

Civic actions

There are a seemingly interminable number of kinds of actions. Judges and lawyers with years of experience pore over ponderous legal tomes for hours to refresh their memories regarding many of them. The lay reporter cannot be expected to master the intricacies of even an appreciable number of them. If he can understand the basic differences between the major types of actions and can translate the most frequently used legal language, he can get along.

Damage suits

The news interest usually is in the incident giving rise to the action: an automobile accident, a surgeon's error and so forth. If so, perhaps the paper carried a story at the time, which means the account of the filing of the complaint should contain a careful tie-back. The reporter should get: names and addresses of principals; the plaintiff's version of exactly what happened, all charges being carefully accredited to the complaint; the comments of the defendant on the charges; the amount of money demanded; is there a malice?

Libel

Newspapers are reluctant to give much publicity to libel suits against other publications so as not to encourage similar actions against themselves. Such a policy naturally cannot apply at all times

Divorce

Distinguish between divorce and annulment, and between separate and maintenance and alimony. What are the grounds (desertion, cruelty and so forth). Watch out for libel when reporting specific incidents cited as grievances (beating, criminal behaviour). The reporter should obtain names and ages of children and what the plea requests regarding them; suggested disposition of property; whether alimony is requested; whether wife asks court to authorize use of her maiden name. When a case comes to hearing, testimony, of course, can be obtained by default.

Foreclosures

A person who defaults in payments on a mortgage stands to lose the property through foreclosure proceedings. However, he has an equity of redemption, a period of time in which to pay up, even though a court has awarded the property to the mortgage holder.

Evictions

Many cases are file in the court under Rent Control Act and the landlord cannot forcibly evict the tenant. Such cases are filed in the rent control courts. The reporter does well to examine the statutes of the state of sections pertaining to the rights of landlords to evict or refuse to rent to families with children or pets.

Condemnation suits

When a new street or highway or public building is planned, the proper government agency uses its right or *eminent domain* to purchase- at a fair price- any privately owned land needed for the improvement. Property owners often resist such taking of their property or hold out for higher compensation. Scandals occur when some public official use prior knowledge of governmental plans to purchase certain property. They purchase it themselves and consequently reap a profit when it value increases. The insider may not technically be a part of the spending agency but such behaviour is not in the public interest.

Receiverships

Creditors or stockholders of a corporation or individuals in financial difficulties may apply to an equity court for appointment of a receiver to conserve assets and rescue the business. A chancery receivership, intend to put a going concern back on its feet, must be a distinguished from a receiver from bankruptcy, who is in charge of liquidating a defunct institution. Many banks, hotels, transportation companies and others continue operating under receiverships for years. Newspapers uncover scandals regarding political favoritism in the appointment of receivers or companies which they do business. Reporter should watch the periodic reports which receivers must make to the courts appointing them.

Bankruptcy

A final failure may file a voluntary petition in bankruptcy, or his creditors may file an involuntary petition in his case. The reporter should examine the inventory filed with the petition, to obtain: total assets; total liabilities; nature of liabilities; clues as to reasons for failure. Bankruptcy matters are handled by the civil courts. Every petition is referred to a referee in bankruptcy, a permanent court officer; the trustee is elected by the creditors and, if approved by the court, takes over the task of liquidating the assets and distributing them on

¹ pro rata basis. Usually some creditors are “frozen out” when such things happen, and the legal jockeying between them to avoid that happening is newsworthy when the company is important. Such every action of a trustee must be approved by the court, the reporter can keep close to the situation.

9.5 JOURNALISTIC DEFENSE

⁹ A person shall not be guilty of contempt of court for publishing fair comment; under the contempt of Court Act 1971. There is no yardstick whether a comment is fair or unfair. It depends on the facts and the circumstances. Commenting on the judgments without casting aspersions on the judge’s doesn’t invite contempt. The Contempt of court Act section 4, provides adequate protection to reporters for fair and accurate reporting of court cases.

In addition to the Official Secrets Act 1971, there are other statutes, which prohibit the publication of court proceedings. Section 33 of the special marriage act 1955 provides for in camera hearing if one or both of the parties pray for it. Section 14, of the Official Secrets Act 1923, empowers for in camera hearing. To protect the identity of the victim, the section 228-a prohibits the publication of names of rape victims.

Example

¹³ Opposing wage board report, newspapers seek early hearing

J. Venkatesan

¹³ Newspaper managements on Wednesday urged early hearing in the Supreme Court of the petitions challenging the Justice Majithia Wage Board report and the subsequent government notification. For, the batch of cases scheduled for hearing on Wednesday was deferred till July 31, 2012.

Senior counsel K.K. Venugopal, appearing for the Indian Newspaper Society, made a mention before a Bench of Justices Dalveer Bhandari, T.S. Thakur and Dipak Misra for early listing. He said that on October 11, an order was passed for listing the cases for final hearing on December 7 but now the matter was put up for July 31, 2012.

Justice Bhandari told counsel: “Subsequent to that order [October 11 order] Rajasthan Patrika also challenged the report. When that petition came before me, I passed an order refusing myself from that case and directed that all connected matters be listed before some other Bench. That is the reason why the petitions are not listed today [Wednesday]. You may make a mention for early hearing before the Registrar concerned, bringing to his notice the order passed on October 11.”

Meanwhile, ABP Ltd., publishers of Telegraph and other newspapers, and Bennett Coleman and Co. Ltd., publishers of The Times of India and other newspapers, filed fresh applications challenging the November 11 notification issued by the government for implementation of the Wage Board recommendations.

The petitioners maintained that the Centre had issued the notification without applying its mind. The recommendations had not considered the wages in similar industries which had been specifically placed before the Wage Board. They argued that the Centre had failed to consider the paying capacity of the newspapers, and various recommendations like variable pay had been made without issuing notice to the affected parties.

Further, the Wage Board had modified Schedule IA and IB Grouping of working journalists in newspaper establishments and functional definitions and they would have the effect of deleting certain designations/categories from a particular group. Contending that the notification was illegal, the petitioners called for abolition of wage boards for the newspaper

industry as with the efflux of time, they had lost their significance. In no other industry wages were being regulated by the government under the statutory wage board.

They sought amendment to the prayers, quashing of the notification and an interim stay of its operation.

Courtesy: *The Hindu*, December 7, 2011

9.6 SUMMARY

Court reporting is a specialized beat, which requires specialized skills and competence. The beat requires covering proceedings in criminal courts, High Courts and Supreme Court. Big national dailies employ full - time correspondents preferable with a legal background to cover the beat. Small dailies have stringers to cover court proceedings, majority of whom are practicing advocates. The Chapter has discussed the roles and responsibilities of legal reporters, and further concepts such as Extraordinary remedies, News sources, Trail coverage and Journalistic defense have been covered.

9.7 GLOSSARY

- **Court Reporting** Society needs journalists to attend court cases and to report exactly what happens there - who is accused of what, what evidence is brought for the prosecution and for the defence, what the court's decision is, and so on. ¹¹⁶
- **Contempt of Court:** Contempt of court, often referred to simply as "contempt", is the offense of being disobedient to or disrespectful toward a court of law and its officers in the form of behavior that opposes or defies the authority, justice, and dignity of the court. ⁷⁹
- **Court Proceedings** Court proceedings are first "issued" to court, and then "served" to the defendant. This is to let both the court and the defendant know that you will take the defendant to the court and have a judge decide on the verdict of the case and the compensation you may be entitled to. ⁶⁸
- **Plaintiff:** a person who brings a case against another in a court of law. ⁸²
- **Civil Case:** Civil cases involve a conflict between people or institutions, generally over money. A civil suit begins when a legal person claims that he has been harmed by the actions of another person or business and asks the court for relief by filing a "complaint" ⁸⁰

9.8 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

- 1) Explain Court Reporting and Journalistic defense.
- 2) What are the various News Sources for Court Reporting?
- 3) What is Contempt of Court. Explain.
- 4) Explain Trial Coverage in detail.

9.9 SUGGESTED READINGS

- 1) ⁸⁴ Barnes, M. L. (2016). *Journalism and everyday trauma: A grounded theory of the impact from death-knocks and court reporting* (Doctoral dissertation, Auckland University of Technology).

²⁶ Grabosky, P. N., & Wilson, P. R. (1989). *Journalism and justice: How crime is reported*. Sydney: Pluto Press.

Lesson – 10

SPORTS REPORTING

4 OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson, the student will be familiar with

- 11 • Style in sports reporting
- News values
- Qualifications of a sports reporter
- How to report and write sports news, features and columns
- Sub-editing the copy for the sports desk

STRUCTURE

10.1 Introduction

10.2 News values in sports reporting

10.3 11 Qualifications of sports reporter

10.4 How to report and write sports news, features and columns

10.5 Sub-editing the copy for the sports desk

4 10.6 Summary

10.7 Glossary

10.8 Self-Assessment Questions

10.9 Suggested Readings

10.1 INTRODUCTION

Sports stories are among the most widely read news and features all over the world. It may not be an exaggeration to say that no other branch of reporting has become as popular as sports. It has grown in proportion to the growth of sports. Games and sports have attracted millions of young people everywhere, thanks to the invasion of the sports arena by electronic media. No other area of reporting offers as much challenge and freedom of expression to a bright and talented reporter as sports writing does.

Though sports stories are said to be among the worst-written articles and features, some reporters have reached such levels of perfection, and consequently popularity, that their writing has come to be distinguished as an art form. The sports writer is more than a mere writer of news. His readers are more knowledgeable than many others and, therefore, his ability and credibility are more frequently put to test. Sports reporting is a specialized beat meant for a target audience. It calls for good writing skills and technical knowledge. A sports writer should be conversant about the rules of several games. Every sport has its rules, records to think that he could write sports without adequate knowledge of all these. Ethics and aesthetics form a vital part of sports, and the reporter is expected to uphold these values. People these days read the sports pages before anything else in the newspaper. Many sports fans who watch the live action on television avidly read newspaper account of the game the

next day. Sports are a national obsession. The popularity of the game like cricket is rapidly increasing due to burgeoning influence of the middleclass. Sports have become a booming business with corporate house pumping money in a big way and sportsmen have become national icons and brand ambassadors.



A sports page

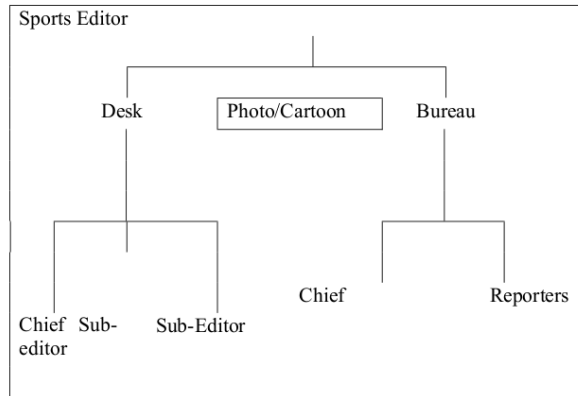
Source: *The New Indian Express*

A new reporter must realize that sports writing has evolved from who won /lost kind of coverage reporting that takes a much more in-depth approach in writing about players, coaches. On a few papers players are treated reverentially, but the trend, in professional sports is to cut them to size-to show them as merely as human beings who, because of their skills, make bags of money and aren't always models for kids. There is also among editors that sports are dominated by big business whose owners make decisions that usually are more in the interests of their bank accounts than the fans and the communities that support them.

Sports pages no longer function as public relations outlet for the home team. Reporting is often sharp-edged. Sports writers strive to bring the excitement and passion on the field to the reader. Sports writing has changed; it must still be combined with a thorough knowledge of the game. At the outset of their career, sports writers should be familiar with several sports, particularly if they start on smaller newspaper, where they will be covering from cricket to football. Sports writing ranges from straight to a feature style in which almost anything goes. Certainly, it has more latitude than the general news section. This might be called a typical nuts-bolts story.

A reporter must write features making it appealing to a target audience interested in sports and mesmerize those who are not keen on sports and make the sports lively. He should concentrate his energy to develop his skills on the given subject. He should make it a point to structure his story around reader's interest.

Big newspapers have independent sports departments, headed by a sports editor. The reporters and sub-editors function both as writers and editors. They design their pages and often the style and tone of the sports page are different from those of other pages.



Structure of sports desk/bureau

A sports reporter should have facts and figures at his fingertips and must be able to bring out report under pressure and meet deadlines. A sports writer must develop a habit of recording ideas or any information and material he comes across. Don't forget to preserve the material.

Read newspapers thoroughly and mark articles, which you find it as interesting. Cut the articles and file them under the appropriate head. You have a flood of material from which you can refer and write a feature. Keep looking around for fresh ideas and themes on which you can write an article. Probe for any material for its newsworthiness, so as to reach the sports pages of a newspaper. Learn to look at people and things from a journalistic point of view. A good sports reporter should not only have a rapport with sportspersons but also be equally be proficient with the technicalities of sports.

Sports correspondent of a newspaper has almost a full page at his disposal. He has to cover not only local sports events, but receive reports from all over the country and even abroad through special correspondents. He should be an authority on sports affairs. He should know the rules and regulations of all sports and be fully acquainted with sports terms and their interpretations. He should be enthusiastic enough to cover all events with gusto and feel as if he is fully moved by the results. His commentary on sports events should depict his grasp of the problem facing sportsmen and their teams. He should be aware of the good and bad points of different players.

Fresh ideas do not come automatically. It requires patience, hard work and experience to identify and locate a story. Think clearly as it will help you to write in lucid style. Compare your reports with those appearing in other dailies. It is the best way to learn.

10.2 NEWS VALUES IN SPORTS REPORTING

1. Victory
2. Defeat
3. Human interest

The major news value in sports is conflict, resulting in victory (progress), defeat (disaster) and human interest (prominence). The reader is a fan highly conditioned to ready responses. He may take the reporter to the skies or reject him straight away. Sports writers are stars among newsmen; they enjoy a unique relationship with the reader. People watch a cricket match on television, and yet look at the sports columns with great interest because he knows there is so much in sports that can be discovered only by an expert. The nuances of the game, its subtleties and its inherent charm are generally beyond the comprehension of many readers.

The reporter should inform the readers who emerged as victorious and losers. He should carefully analyze the games high and low points, the individual performance and the crucial turning point of the match. He can add a bit of interpretation and comment on the game, the strategies adopted by the rival teams and highlight the brilliant individual performance. He can add human interest to the story.

A sportswriter should keep his eyes and ears open; sometimes an insignificant event may provide the lead for an exclusive story. A reporter should do his homework for a good story. Sports reports are read by people who have not followed the game. The reader expects analysis, expression that the reporter should highlight them in the lead and lend a fresh perspective to the story.

Sports pages should contain results of various games and events held at home and abroad. It must carry the complete details and results at a glance as the enthusiastic sports followers would be eager to know the result first before going through the details of the match.

A sports reporter must give the right information so that it is read well and at the same time meets the approved length. It should be precise in technique which is an integral part of sports journalism. Space is allotted on the basis of the importance of the event. A local sports event may be given a single column space; a national or international event has to be covered in detail, because of the significance of the event. Emphasis in sports writing is on crisp writing rather than on lengthy and boring reports.

10.3 QUALIFICATIONS OF SPORTS REPORTER

Apart from having a thorough knowledge of the sports of which he is considered an expert, the reporter should possess three basic qualifications:

- Background
- Judgment
- Detachment

Background of the sport can be acquired either by experience or by extensive reading or by both. It is not necessary that a good cricket writer should have played Test cricket. But a thorough background, both historical and technical, is essential for every sports reporter, for sports stories are written with rich details from full background outside the event. Today's game is compared with similar ones played in the past and today's performance is compared with the records of the past. Every sport has its rules and techniques, most of which are known to readers. But they are eager to know the entire significance of the event and expect the reporter to interpret the event with authentic felicity. If the reporter's background is not deeper than that of his reader's his credibility is at stake.

Judgment is must for all reporters, more so for the sports writer. He should learn to assess the strengths and weaknesses to teams and individual sportsmen, without being influenced by his personal likes and dislikes. The reporter's success depends more on his accuracy and independent judgment than on his mastery over descriptive prose. He should remember that

he is writing for a public that has already seen the event in person or live on television with a critical eye.

The sports reporter should control the overwhelming desire in him to take sides with his favorite team or sing praises of his favorite stars. A strong sense of detachment and impersonal attitude are vital for successful career in sports reporting.

10.4 ¹¹ HOW TO REPORT AND WRITE SPORTS NEWS, FEATURES AND COLUMNS

A sports report is a complex mosaic of narrative, descriptive prose with a fine variety in style and expression. What begins as a straight news story – gradually develops into an interpretive feature and ends as an editorialized column. Every sport story should tell the reader what happened in the event and how. The report begins as a narrative telling the reader who won, by how many runs and goals or points. The 5 Ws and H are answered as early as possible in the narrative part of the report. Then the reporter describes the event capturing the beauty, grace and subtlety of the event. He re-enacts the drama and the highly-charged spirit of competition for the benefit of those readers who have not seen the event. For those who have witnessed the sport offers plenty of details that has escaped their attention. An aspiring sportswriter must know the landmarks in the history of the game, rules and the leading players of the sports. Sports news includes coverage of local events, which come under amateur and international events as professional sports. Readers are interested in the outcome of the match, individual performances, information about the event and a post-mortem of the contest. A sportswriter should assess the strength and weakness of the teams and state them in simple technical terms of the game. He must rely on accurate, objective writing avoiding unfamiliar terminology. The report must include individual performance, strategies adopted, finer points of the game and crowd reaction. To succeed in sports writing one should be a keen observer and describe clearly what one sees and choose your words with discretion when commenting on senior players.

¹⁹**Research beforehand.** Find out who is playing. Get team lists; find out what the teams have been doing recently. Find out what happened when they last met, who is expected to win. Then if there is unexpected upset, you can immediately, see what the story is. The peculiar thing about sports reporting is that very often large number of the potential readers has also seen the match. So you need to keep your wits about you the whole time, because if you say X has made the match-winning pass when it was actually made by Y, your readers will not forgive you.

There is often a chance to talk to players, coaches and officials after the game, and indeed the post-match press conference can make up a large part of the story. You will get better quotes at this if you were clear what was expected to happen, and if there was any upset.

¹⁹**Work at tremendous speed.** Sports results and reports are vital for newspapers, whose edition timing and distribution are often dictated by sporting events. Reporters sometime have to write some of the match report on the way to the game and then slot in a couple of paragraphs at the top about the results. The area of sports is so vast; one may not be well informed in every game. He should at least know the salient features of every sport.

A sports reporter is supposed to specialize in one or two disciplines, depending on his interest and inclination. If a reporter is conversant with the rules of the games than he can write with ease and finesse. Cultivate good relations with officials to get information for an advance copy. International sports are essentially being played at the mental level. Psychology plays an important role in the success of the game in addition to technique and skills. This is an important aspect the reporter has to study before stating the reasons for a loss or win.

Tell the story immediately. This is the cardinal principal in sports reporting. Do not apply color and drama to the report unless the situation demands. Remember important happenings, major moves that have a bearing on the final outcome and learn to take notes.

The reporter may look for the following areas to provide him with features for the story.

- Results of the event
- Spectacular performances
- Individual players
- Significance of the game
- Upsetting the reversals
- Comparison of teams
- Background of the game
- The audience – their reactions

A sportswriter need not follow the rigid rules of reporting. But there are some conventional rules, which he must follow. The news report should have a lead (what, who, where, when, why, and how). The lead should be followed by details like turning point of the game and highlights of the day. It should be followed by minor details like spectator behavior, press conference by players or the captains and at last statistics. Sports reporters follow unconventional methods in writing leads, which is generally a summary lead. The use of soft language and original expression suits the style of sports reporting.

A senior sports reporter may be asked to write features and columns. While writing a feature or a column, he should exercise moderation in praise and also in criticism. Almost all dailies and magazines give widespread coverage to sports and games. They carry features and columns written by senior reporters and editorial people specializing in sports and retired sportsmen.

The reporter may choose a single incident lead or a summary lead depending on the event. However, the 5 Ws and H are generally answered in the narrative part of the story, though the reporters often opt for a strong feature approach. The body of the story constitutes development of various features mentioned in the lead. It includes interpretation of the event, chronological description of the game, comments on the strengths and weakness of the teams and players, new records, significance of the event and the spectator's reactions.

11 10.5 SUB-EDITING THE COPY FOR THE SPORTS DESK

A sub-editor subs the copy and gives a catchy headline and keeps them within certain space allocation, so as to prevent overset. All major dailies have their own sports departments which handles reporting, editing and page- making. At time the sports reporter is also required to work at the sports desk. The principles of page- making are same for the sports page. The sub-editor draws up the dummy, makes enough provisions for photographs, so that the page is lively with action filled pictures. A sports page sans photographs makes it a dull page.

Before winding up one can't help but re-emphasize the importance of sports reporting from a fresh angle and the need to specialize in a particular sport and be knowledgeable about the intricacies of the rules and the top ranking players in the particular sport. One should be skilled in asking players and officials the right questions. A sports reporter should always be on his toes, scouting around for information, what make sports reporting exciting

10 Sri Lanka beats South Africa by 5 wickets



10 Sri Lanka earned its first victory of the series after Tillakaratne Dilshan scored 87 and Thisara Perera finished off with a majestic six. (AP) (Associated Press)

21 Jan 2012

10 KIMBERLEY: Sri Lanka earned its first victory of the series against South Africa on Friday after Tillakaratne Dilshan scored 87 and Thisara Perera finished off an impressive run chase with a majestic six for a five-wicket victory in the fourth one-day international. Perera hit an arching ball out of the ground to secure the victory with eight balls remaining, taking Sri Lanka to 304-5 after South Africa captain AB de Villiers had smacked 96 in leading the hosts to an imposing 299-7 at Diamond Oval.

South Africa won the series on Tuesday in Bloemfontein when it took an unbeatable 3-0 lead and looked set to remain unbeaten until Dilshan's run-a-ball 87 set Sri Lanka on its way. The tourists needed their best score of the series so far for a victory but were dealt an early setback when Upul Tharanga was caught by De Villiers for six in the fourth over. But Kumar Sangakkara joined Dilshan for an 83-run partnership to get Sri Lanka back on track, before Sangakkara went out on 32 when Alviro Petersen made a spectacular leaping catch above his head.

Dinesh Chandimal then partnered with Dilshan to take the total up to 168 before the captain was caught by Duminy at short extra cover. With Lahiru Thirimanne and Chandimal gone to leave Sri Lanka 246-5, Perera guided Sri Lanka home together with Angelo Mathews (21 not out). After South Africa won the toss and opted to bat, former Proteas captain Graeme Smith gave his ODI credentials a much-needed boost with 68 off 69 balls, only his second half-century in a year.

Smith's and Alviro Petersen made a brilliant start averaging more than seven an over. Their opening partnership ended at 84 with Sri Lanka's fifth change of bowler, Rangana Herath. With his first ball of the 14th over, Herath induced a slice off Petersen, on 37, for Upul Tharanga to make a low, running catch. De Villiers came in and wasted no time. He took 31 balls to reach his 28th half-century, whacking counterpart Tillakaratne Dilshan with a third six in eight deliveries. De Villiers took 19 off Dilshan's over. Dilshan caught Smith, however, off Lasith Malinga at 171-2 in the 26th over. After seven boundaries and a six, Smith popped a legside delivery to short midwicket.

Colin Ingram lasted only four balls for 1, then JP Duminy helped De Villiers take South Africa past 200 in the 31st over. But the run-rate was slowly declining. South Africa was 242-3 in the 39th before Duminy edged behind off Thisara Perera for 36 off 47 balls. His departure started a slide. De Villiers was next, moving across the crease but missing Perera's delivery which hit the middle stump. De Villiers hit eight fours and three sixes in his entertaining 76-ball knock.

Source: *expressbuzz.com*

10.6 SUMMARY

Sports news includes coverage of local events, which come under amateur and international events as professional sports. Readers are interested in the outcome of the match, individual performances, information about the event and a post-mortem of the contest. A sportswriter should assess the strength and weakness of the teams and state them in simple technical terms of the game. In this Chapter, the writing style of sports reporting, News values, Qualifications of a sports reporter, know how of writing sports news, features and columns, sub-editing the copy for the sports desk are discussed in detail.

10.7 GLOSSARY

- **Sports News Reporting:** Sports journalism is a form of writing that reports on matters pertaining to sporting topics and competitions.
- **Sports Correspondent:** A sports reporter has to report about sports games, events, venues and competitions. The sports audiences are keen to know about not only the events unfolding on the field but also behind the scenes and personal lives of the sportspersons.
- **Sports Pages:** the page of a newspaper that is devoted to coverage of sports events.
- **Sub-Editing:** The checking, editing and improvement of what has been written. Layout and design. The typefaces to be used; and how the material to be used on a page (words and pictures) is to be displayed.
- **Sports Desk:** television, radio, the editorial section of a newspaper, television or radio programme, etc that deals with sports news.

10.8 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

- 1) What are the criteria and skills necessary for a sports reporter
- 2) Explain Sports Reporting and detail on the format and style of writing sports news.

10.9 SUGGESTED READINGS

- 1) Reinardy, S., & Wanta, W. (2015). The essentials of sports reporting and writing. Routledge.
 - 2) Horky, T., & Stelzner, B. (2013). Sports reporting and journalistic principles. In *Routledge handbook of sport communication* (pp. 132-141). Routledge
- Aamidor, A. (Ed.). (2003). Real sports reporting. Indiana University Press.

Lesson – 11

OBITUARIES

4 OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson the student will be familiar with

- 11 Basic elements
- Reviewing a life
- Morgue stories
- Side features
- Follow-ups

All publicity is good, except an obituary notice.

Brendan.

Live so that when the final summons come you will leave something more behind you than an epitaph on a tomb stone or an obituary in a newspaper.

Bill Sunday

120

A life spent in constant labor is a life wasted, save a man be such a fool as to regard fulsome obituary notice as ample reward.

George Jean Nathan

STRUCTURE

- 11.1 Introduction
- 11.2 Basic elements
 - 11.2.1 Circumstances of death
 - 11.2.2 Reviewing a life
 - 11.2.3 Morgue stories
 - 11.2.4 Side features
 - 11.2.5 The second –day story
 - 11.2.6 Follow - ups
 - 11.2.7 Language and style
- 11.3 Example: Dev Anand
- 4 11.4 Summary
- 11.5 Glossary
- 11.6 Self-Assessment Questions
- 11.7 Suggested Readings

11.1 INTRODUCTION

Obituaries are the description of someone's life and notice of death. It is one of the most popular sections of the newspaper. They are scrutinized by loved ones, generally inspected by the local people and perused by others who have moved away but still subscribe to their

hometown newspaper. They are popular because of their importance to the people involved. Obituaries are well read because only newspapers report them. The electronic media mentions the death of celebrities, but most newspapers publish obituaries of everyone in their communities. Obituaries are reports on people who have died. Writing an obituary is an art in itself. It is accurate and positive account of a dead person. It announces a person's death, describes briefly the person's life and summarizes the funeral arrangements.

Obituaries are cold and impersonal and few convey the feeling that the people they describe possessed the unique personalities and set of experiences. They are poorly written and few papers devote enough resources to them. Writing obituaries are assigned to the least experienced reporters. Editors assign the job to new recruits, because basic organization of the story can stay the same from one obituary to another. The inexperienced writer can group similar attributes such as clubs or professional experience together within the same paragraph in an obituary; feeling assured that 'the formula' has been followed. They seem detached because journalists often do not take time to go into depth. They assemble facts sitting in their offices and rarely contact friends and relatives to capture the personality of the person who has died – contrary to the way reporters cover other stories. Journalist considers the task of obituary writing unpleasant, so they lack enthusiasm and forgo effort. Journalists are uncomfortable with death and are reluctant to question the grieving relatives and friends. A final reason reporters give short shrift to obituaries is the lack of reward and recognition for writing good obituaries.

Newspapers publish obituaries for everyone who lived in the geographical area. Newspapers in smaller communities publish longer obituaries. The amount of space devoted to obituaries varies from newspaper to newspaper and some newspapers no longer publish everyone's obituaries due to lack of space. Adopting the practice of radio and television they report the death of prominent members of their communities.

They are not news stories. If well-known person or one's death is unusual, newspapers publish news item about the events surrounding the person's death. The news story includes news elements and comments from cross section of the society. Newspapers publish these reports on the next day, once the funeral arrangements are determined. The principal difference between an obituary and a news item; obituary emphasizes the person's life, not his or her death.

Obituaries should not be confused with paid notice. Newspapers publish funeral notices in alphabetical order among the classified advertisements. They are usually one paragraph long; they indicate the person's name and funeral arrangements and names of the relatives. A funeral notice is a paid publication. Some people have funeral notice as well as an obituary (a news story).

Funeral source gives newspapers much of the information they need to write obituaries. Funeral homes obtain the information when families arrange services. If the dead person is a celebrity, the reporter goes to the library and goes through the previous published stories to know about the person. He may also call the members of his family, friends to obtain additional information and a recent photograph.

The contents of an obituary: the lead of an obituary establishes the central point of the story. It gives information about the individual's life and major accomplishments. It also gives his identity. The lead must include some unique facts, which makes obituaries more interesting. Dull and routine facts like the person's age and accomplishments make it a very dull lead. The lead might describe a person's interest goals, hobbies, and philosophy.

Body: The body should summarize the individual's life, which include:

- Identification (name, age, address)
- Unique and outstanding qualities
- Time and place of death
- Major accomplishment
- Chronology of early life (place of birth, moves, education)
- Place and date of marriage
- Occupation and employment history
- Honors, awards and offices held
- Additional interests and accomplishments
- Membership in churches, clubs and other civic groups
- Military service
- Surviving family members.
- Religious service (location, officiating clergy, pallbearers)
- Other funeral arrangements

The reporter after collecting the relevant information summarizes the most important aspects of the person's life. The second and third paragraphs should develop the primary idea summarized in the lead. If the deceased person was a carpenter who played the guitar, the next paragraph should say something about his work and hobby.

11.2 BASIC ELEMENTS

The size of obituary a person gets depends upon his importance as news. Obituary must include these basic elements:

- Name of the deceased
- Identification
- Time of death
- Place of death
- Cause of the death
- Age of deceased

Unless the death occurs in some unusual way, the name (who) always is the feature of an obituary. Identification in the brief notice may be by address or occupation only. The paper must be on guard against false rumors or a man's death spread by enemies. Sometimes a reporter discovers an interesting circumstance in the life of a relatively unimportant person.

11.2.1 Circumstances of death

If the person is popular to the readers, the circumstance of his death should be mentioned. Circumstances of death include;

- Beside scene
- Last words, message and so forth
- Account of the last illness.

11.2.2 Reviewing a life

Generally the body of an obituary consists of mostly of an objective biographical resume of the deceased's career. Eulogies and reminiscences may be included or run as sidebars.

If, however, the death is that of a world famous person, one, whom history will remember, the trend is towards interpretative pieces, which blend the details of the death with attempts to evaluate the person's importance. The purpose is to place the subject in history with emphasis upon his lasting contribution. The interpretative obituary is not an editorial, although it is impossible for writer qualified to pass judgment upon the subject to avoid evaluation.

11.2.3 Morgue stories

Morgue story is an interpretative biographical sketch in which the writer attempts to evaluate the person and assign him his proper historical importance. In composing it the reporter has an opportunity to do some of his best writing. The best source of material about the basic facts of a man's life is, of course, the man himself. Since the sketch is prepared during the subject's life, it is usually written following an interview. Here the emphasis in writing should be upon the outstanding characteristics, achievements and activities of the person.

11.2.4 Side features

In addition to the obituary proper, a newspaper may print several other related items. It is the habit of newspapers, to print encomiums of prominent individuals who die. Persons acquainted with the career and reputation of the dead man are solicited for statements which usually are included in a single story with a comprehensive lead. Sometimes the death of prominent person leads to an official proclamation by a public official; ordering of the flags to be hoisted at half mast or suggesting the cessation of business. When messages of condolences are received by members of the dead person's family, a newspaper obtains them for publication, either in place of or in addition to the statements that it gathers itself.

11.2.5 The second -day story

The second-day story will primarily be story of the funeral. The details to look forward in the funeral arrangements include;

- Time and place
- Who will officiate?
- Will services be public or private?
- How many will attend?
- Names of the relatives
- Where will the burial/cremation take place?
- What will be the program of the services?
- The second-day may include additional details of the illness and death, sympathy received by the family, memorial services etc.

11.2.6 Follow - ups

Number of stories will be filed after the death of a prominent person. Stories need to be filed about every one who is worthy of an obituary. There will be change in business organization after the death of the of the head of the organization. Newspaper print speculative stories as to who will be the successor in case of the death of the head of the state.

Memorial services will be held and ¹ schools and clubs may be named after him and statues erected in his memory.

11.2.7 ¹ Language and style

The language of obituary should be simple and dignified. The verb “to die” is the safest to use, no religious group can take offense at it. Avoid expression like “passed away,” “passed on,” “called home.” Also remember a man does not leave a widow; he leaves a wife.

11.3 ⁶ EXAMPLE: DEV ANAND

- Dev Anand, who has died in London aged 88, was one of India’s most dashing and enduring film legends, playing romantic leads opposite a succession of nubile starlets until well into old age.



⁶ While this might have exposed a lesser figure to ridicule, Dev Anand inspired only adoration among his hundreds of millions of his fans across South Asia. To these legions “Devsaab” was the most handsome actor ever to grace the Hindi screen. Even on Air India flights today, his celebrated film Guide (1965), based on the novel by RK Narayan, is inevitably included as part of the in-flight entertainment.

Guide was made simultaneously in two versions. The English version, made in collaboration with the American Pearl S Buck, stuck narrowly to the novel and proved a complete failure. Dev Anand’s younger brother, Vijay Anand, then produced a Hindi script which tells the melodramatic tale of a tour guide (Dev Anand) who gets caught up in the relationship of a married couple, is jailed for forgery, and on his release experiences a spiritual awakening.

When Guide was released in India it opened to unprecedented crowds. India’s entire cabinet (excepting Nehru) attended its premiere in Delhi and the film’s memorable songs – such as Gaata rahe mera dil; Tere mere sapne; Kya se kya ho gaya; Aaj phir jeene ki tamanna; Piya those naina; and Wahan kaun hai tera – are now established parts of popular Indian culture, known across the global Indian diaspora.

Dev Anand would often meet people who confessed to having seen Guide “more than 30 times” and in 2008 the film was featured as one of the “Cannes Classics” at the French film festival. When Dev Anand arrived on the red carpet, it was clear that he relished hogging the limelight again. He even threatened to return to the main competition with a new film.

Few would have resented it if he had. For in a notably cut-throat business, he endeared himself by relishing the success of others. Dozens of actors and actresses got their first break with him. As a result his death will be the cause of genuine mourning wherever Hindi films are shown.

Dharamdev Pishorimal Anand (he quickly shortened the name to “Dev Anand”) was born in Gurdaspur in Punjab on September 26 1923. Pishorimal was the name of his father, a scholarly lawyer who sent his son to a convent school in Dalhousie in the Himalayas and saw to it that his son studied English at Lahore Government College. After getting a BA, Dev Anand wanted to carry on with an MA in English but his father, who was facing financial problems, demanded that his son work in a bank. At this Dev Anand felt aggrieved, since his elder brother, Chetan, 10 years his senior, had been sent to university in London.

In Lahore, Dev Anand got his first exposure to the big western movies of the time. “This was the period of MGM, of Fox, of Paramount, of Clark Gable, of Gone with the Wind,” he noted. But it was not until he headed to Bombay – then as now the city of celluloid dreams – that he got his screen break.

He left for the city in 1943, aged only 19 and with just 30 rupees (not even £3) in his pocket. More than 55 years would pass before Dev Anand returned to Lahore, which had become part of Pakistan after Partition. Then, with the Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, he climbed on board a touring “friendship” bus as India and Pakistan attempted to resolve their differences. Dev Anand received a rapturous welcome and was serenaded by one fan who could play the melodies from all his hit movies on a flute.

His first starring role came three years after he arrived in Bombay, with the film Hum Ek Hain (1946), about gangsters in Lahore. Other productions followed and by 1948, the year Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated, he had begun to establish himself, earning 365 rupees a film.

This was enough to buy his first car, a Hillman Minx, which he took out for a spin on the day that Gandhi was killed. Returning to the set of Vidya after racing along Bombay’s Marine Drive, he found that filming had been suspended as India mourned the passing of the “Father of the Nation”.

Vidya was one of seven films in which Dev Anand took the role of male lead opposite the popular star Suraiya. The pair were often romantically linked but religious differences (she was Muslim, he Hindu) scotched any plans of marriage.

After Do Sitare (1951) the pair did not share the screen again. Instead he sought to establish himself as a star in his own right by setting up the production company, Navketan. Among its first films was the thriller Baazi (1951), with Kalpana Kartik playing the female lead. Once again Anand found himself one half of a couple adored by audiences, and the pair reprised the success of Baazi throughout the Fifties in films such as Aandhiyan (1952) and Nau Do Gyarah (1957). By then, however, the screen couple had become man and wife in real life; following the marriage Kalpana Kartik began to wind down her film career.

By contrast Dev Anand went from strength to strength, finally establishing himself as one of sub-Continent’s great romantic leads. With his good looks bolstered by a trademark scarf and his dark hair rakishly swept over his forehead, he became – with the late Raj Kapoor and Dilip Kumar – one of three dominant celebrities of Indian film. Indeed, such was their status that the trio were often invited to private meetings by prime ministers including Nehru and Indira Gandhi.

Apart from Guide, films that secured his place in India’s pantheon included Hum Dono (1961); Jewel Thief (1967); and Hare Rama Hare Krishna (1971). In 1978 he set Des Pardes, a film about illegal immigration, in London. Despite missing out on the chance to attend university in Britain, he always felt at home here and was a frequent visitor. At any restaurant in London he would be instantly recognised by Indians, old and young, and would happily sign autographs and pose for group pictures.

During the Seventies and Eighties, Dev Anand managed to defy the passing of time, resolutely wooing much younger female stars on screen. Eventually, though, as he moved into his 70s, audiences and critics found it increasingly difficult to suspend their disbelief.

Despite the enormous and enduring affection in which he was held, Dev Anand's later films – such as *Love at Times Square* (2003); *Mr Prime Minister* (2005); and *Charge Sheet* (2011) – did not prosper. But his energy and enthusiasm for the film business never waned. The fact that Navketan was producing the movies meant that he could go on living the life of the Bollywood hero until the very end. Even as one film was being taken off the screens by weary distributors, Dev Anand was enthusiastically planning his next cinematic disaster.

He usually wrote the treatments for these films in English and was proud of the fact that did not require a ghostwriter for his autobiography, *Romancing With Life*.

Dev Anand is survived by his wife and their son and daughter. His nephew is the distinguished film director, Shekhar Kapur.

Source: *The Telegraph, Kolkata*

11.4 SUMMARY

The principal difference between an obituary and a news item; obituary emphasizes ³ the person's life, not his or her death. In this Chapter, we have discussed the basic elements including Circumstances of death, Reviewing a life, Morgue stories, Side features, The second –day story, Follow – ups, Language and style involved in writing an Obituary. This form of writing is explained through the Example of an Obituary written for Dev Anand.

11.5 GLOSSARY

- ¹⁹¹ **Biographical Resume:** A bio is a detailed description of someone's life, professional background, education history, achievements.
- ¹⁴⁴ **Obituary:** Someone's obituary is an account of their life and character which is printed in a newspaper or broadcast soon after they die. Obituaries should not be confused with paid notice. Newspapers publish funeral notices in alphabetical order among ^{the} classified advertisements. They are usually one paragraph long; they indicate the person's name and funeral arrangements and names of the relatives. A funeral notice is a paid publication. Some people have funeral notice as well as an obituary (a news story).

11.6 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

- 1) Detail on the differences between a news report, an obituary and a funeral notice?
- 2) Explain the language and style involved in writing an Obituary.
- 3) What are the basic elements to be included in an Obituary?

11.7 S¹⁷⁶UGGESTED READINGS

- 1) Haley, W. (1977). Journalism: Rest in Prose: The Art of the Obituary. The American Scholar, 206-211.

Bland, A. M. (2020). The existential obituary writing technique for emerging adults: Thematic and content analyses. The Humanistic Psychologist.

Lesson – 12

REPORTING GOVERNMENT NEWS

4 OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson, the student will be familiar with

- Tips to report Government news
- Local Governments

STRUCTURE

- 12.1 Introduction
- 12.2 Tips to report government news
- 12.3 Local government
- 4
12.4 Summary
- 12.5 Glossary
- 12.6 Self-Assessment Questions
- 12.7 Suggested Readings

12.1 INTRODUCTION

In a democracy people choose their representatives and put them in positions of power to rule them. Running the government is a big business and the people are the stock holders of that business. They have a right to be informed about various plans, programmes, projects and policies of the government. In a free land, the newspaper functions as a liaison body between the government and the people. It informs and educates the public on the affairs of the government, including the legislations passed and those yet to be passed. Newspapers, therefore, help create strong public opinion in favor of or against the various programmes of the government.

Citizens come in contact with local governments, which provide basic amenities like schools, hospitals, water service and upkeep of their environment. People do not know about the local governments and how they function. Citizens are eager to know how a newly laid road in their area will affect the property values and the environment. They evince keen interest on how the tax incentives designed to attract business community impose additional tax burden on them. People who turn to print media are disappointed at the lack of information regarding these issues. There is criticism that the press tends to ignore complicated issues, which affect the lives of common man in favor of sensational news. Some critics are of the view that news organizations driven by stockholders' demands for higher profits are cutting on investigative reporting and hard news and are filling their newspapers with fluffy human interest stories. News organizations should go beyond reporting what the officials say and try find out issues that interest the citizens and help them discuss find solution to the problems. News organizations have responsibility to see civil life goes well for the citizens. News organizations should encourage public participation without becoming advocates to any party. Critics of public journalism say it risks excessive entanglements between journalists and public officials and undermines the traditional obligations of journalists to identify

problems for the readers and viewers. Local governments are close to people and news organizations must cover for their readers.

12.2 TIPS TO REPORT GOVERNMENT NEWS

In a democracy there is practically no area of life that does not revolve around political decisions, right from taxation to primary education. A political correspondent is an advocate of governmental reforms and not an advocate of the government. He should keep a constant check on the performance of the government. He must analyze all vital issues concerning the common man and interpret them for the benefit of the public. The readers expect the reporter explain to them the merits and demerits of every governmental action. He should lay bare before them all decisions, actions, plans and schemes of the government. He is expected to make an objective analysis of issue. The political correspondent should keep a close watch on political parties, since decisions made at the party forms are likely to become government decisions.

The executive wing of the government implements all political decisions. The bureaucracy is responsible for strict enforcement of all programmes and policies of the government. It is here the reporter can detect many irregularities. The reporter should inform the public from time to time how these schemes are being implemented at different levels in the government.

Judiciary is a vital wing of a government. It interprets law and dispenses justice. The validity of a judgment or fairness of a judicial verdict cannot be questioned by the reporter, but it is his duty to inform the people as to what is the effect of the verdict on them. A sweeping judgment may affect many in many ways. It needs to be explained for the benefit of the public. Pendency, long delays in dispensation of justice, inadequate facilities in law courts and lacunae in legal codes and procedures etc. are tackled by the reporter.

12.3 LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Local governments have ¹⁷ limited powers. They collect taxes levied by all the governments. They assess the value of all real and personal property and they may hear from the citizens ³ from who believe that the assessment is too high. The local government is the storehouse of records of births, deaths, marriage, real estate transactions and motor vehicle registration.

Reporters covering local governments may write on a wide variety ³ of issues including the awarding of contracts for construction or purchase of equipment. Local governments get money from central and state government, sales tax, and user charges. The council or the corporation prepares City budgets. Usually the head of the departments submits the proposals for the coming year. The council ³ reviews the request and makes changes it considers as prudent.

Covering city hall ³ requires establishing a routine for visiting the various offices and departments ³ and taking time to get to know of the various departmental heads. Reporters must also cultivate contacts among the assistants, staff members, and secretaries ³ who work in various offices. Such workers can be very helpful in steering reporters towards information for a story ³. Officials fear press coverage or want to control information released to the press. The local reporters also need to be familiar with public records. The local governments provide access to government records. These include purchase orders, payroll, bids and bid specification, licences, and inspection of reports. Computers have changed way governments do business. Reporters can analyze data that are available in electronic form in ways that would be impossible with paper document.

12.4 SUMMARY

This Chapter deals with News organizations and their responsibilities to see civil life goes well for the citizens. News organizations should encourage public participation without becoming advocates to any party. A political correspondent is an advocate of governmental reforms and not an advocate of the government. He should keep a constant check on the performance of the government. He must analyze all vital issues concerning the common man and interpret them for the benefit of the public. The readers expect the reporter explain to them the merits and demerits of every governmental action. He should lay bare before them all decisions, actions, plans and schemes of the government. He is expected to make an objective analysis of issue. The political correspondent should keep a close watch on political parties, since decisions made at the party forms are likely to become government decisions.

12.5 GLOSSARY

- **Bureaucracy:** ⁹⁹ A system of government in which most of the important decisions are taken by state officials rather than by elected representatives.
- **Executive:** ⁶⁹ The primary function of executive is to enforce laws and to maintain law and order in the state. ... Each government department is responsible for the implementation of the laws and policies concerning its work.
- **Judiciary:** ⁶⁹ The judiciary plays a fundamental role in society and for the upholding of social order. Its primary function, in fact, is to resolve conflicts through the application of pre-existing norms or, in some cases precedents, which have been issued through legitimate procedures, as recognized by the political system.

⁴ 12.6 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

- 1) What are the roles and responsibilities of Government News Reporters?
- 2) What are the issues that can be addressed by reporters covering Local Government News

12.7 SUGGESTED READINGS

- 1) ¹⁰² Atwater, T., & Fico, F. (1986). *Source reliance and use in reporting state government: A study of print and broadcast practices. Newspaper Research Journal*, 8(1), 53-61.
- ⁹¹ Henderson, L. (2014). News for everyone? Perspectives of young people and journalists on political reporting in UK television. *Young*, 22(2), 135-152.

Lesson – 13

REPORTING MEETINGS AND CONVENTIONS

66 OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson, the student will be familiar with

- Tips to cover meetings and conventions
- The follow-up

STRUCTURE

13.1 Introduction

13.2 Significance of meetings

13.2.1 Style

13.2.2 The preliminary story

13.2.3 The follow-up

13.3 Conventions

13.3.1 The preliminary notice

13.3.2 The follow-up

4 13.4 Summary

13.5 Glossary

13.6 Self-Assessment Questions

13.7 Suggested Readings

13.1 INTRODUCTION

Meetings are a prime example of expecting the unexpected, especially when personalities and egos clash on the issue. A routine municipal council meeting may explode into a shouting match among the members and the audience. In a democracy, public bodies are under constant scrutiny by the press and the public. City councils spend huge amount for conducting public business where important decisions vital to the lives of citizens are taken. Media are the watchdogs of these agencies. People attend meetings only when they are affected by a particular item on the agenda and they depend on the press to keep them informed. At times it can be boring and virtually newsworthy. One can't estimate the value of the proceeding until he sits through them. A routine meeting might end up as a near brawl among the members or an important decision not in the agenda may be announced. A word of caution for reporters never leave the council meeting in the midway no matter how late the hour.

Meetings are generally not an exciting assignment for a bright reporter, but they are covered in good measure in newspapers depending on their importance to the reading public. Reporters are wary of covering meetings, for they could turn out to be drab and boring. Political, social, religious, scholastic meetings are important and cannot be ignored by newspapers. Meetings are a prime example of expecting the unexpected, especially when

personalities and egos clash on the issue. A routine municipal council meeting may explode into a shouting match among the members and the audience. In a democracy, public bodies are under constant scrutiny by the press and the public. City councils spend huge amount for conducting public business where important decisions vital to the lives of citizens are taken. Media are the watchdogs of these agencies. People attend meetings only when they are affected by a particular item on the agenda and they depend on the press to keep them informed. One can't estimate the value of the proceeding until he sits through them. A routine meeting might end up as a near brawl among the members or an important decision not in the agenda may be announced. A word of caution for reporters never leave the council meeting in the midway no matter how late the hour.

Agendas are usually passed out to the public and the media before the meeting. However, there is no guarantee that officials follow the script in *toto*. So, get a copy of the agenda before covering a meeting so you can easily follow the proceedings. A reporter who has been covering a particular beat on a regular basis has an easier time writing a knowledgeable story. The reporter knows the background of the issues, the members of the body and the members' background, as well as the arguments and compromises made in the house. They are able to assign instant value to a subject under debate. The longer the reporter stays on particular beat, the greater the capacity to handle the story. Nevertheless, over a period, his reports become dull.

For the beginners, note taking at a meeting can be made easier by drawing a diagram of the table and identify each individual sitting around it. If you arrive few minutes early, you can get the names from the clerk and make your sketch. It will be of immense help if you are a beginner. Getting the names of the audience members who speak out is a bit trickier, but it can be done. The reporter cannot run to each speaker for names, identify the person, at the end of the meeting go the individual and ask for their names to go along with their quotes. A tape recorder comes in handy. The main idea of covering a meeting is to understand what is going on.

The meeting has generated lot of news, some newspaper publish them as main news story and rest of them as smaller sidebar stories. The news values determine what goes on the top and what ends up at the bottom of the story. Be wary of being carried away by a loud and angry delegation that creates a stir in the chambers but is concerned about a matter that is of minor interest to the community at large. The protest may be worth mentioning only if placed in a proper perspective. Strong quotes; color, humor and human interest can be employed to dress up a meeting story. News writing should be interesting as well as informative, and a funny or outrageous remark can turn an otherwise drab article into one with zest and high readability. To get additional information the reporter can contact outside source to get their reactions.

13.2 SIGNIFICANCE OF MEETINGS

It is difficult for newspapers to cover all meetings and editors weigh the importance of the meetings with three factors.

1. Number of people in attendance
2. Prominent speakers
3. Programmes

Meetings which are likely to attract a number of people of participants, those which have prominent speakers and meetings that have significant programmes cannot be avoided. In fact

a dull meeting need not be a dull story and the reporter is expected to focus on what happened in the meeting. If one of the participants makes a good speech, it could be the lead. The reporter should look for a fresh angle even in a routine meeting, but should guard himself against creating one.

13.2.1 ¹ Style

Expressions such as “Members are urged to attend,” and “The public is cordially invited” should be avoided. If the purpose of the meeting is stated correctly, the former expression is superfluous. The latter expression is poor because of the “cordially.”

If an invitation is not cordial, it should not be extended.

Other expressions to avoid include:

- was the most important happening
- was the main business transacted
- was the topic of discussion
- featured in the meeting
- was the principal transaction

13.2.2 The preliminary story

Significant meetings deserve advance stories. Advance information regarding the meeting is made available to newspapers by the organizers. Many associations, clubs and committees supply the details of the meetings including agenda and list of participants, the speaker in advance. The reporter should check all the information supplied to him and convert a drab announcement into a news story. The advance story should include correct name and address of the organization, the exact time, date and venue of the meeting, details of the programme including speakers, entertainment and election of office bearers. Avoid leads like “The members of Bombay senate will meet on Wednesday. Instead the reporter should highlight the significant part of the programme³³, maybe with a prominent speaker or interesting part of an entertainment programme. In the body of the story the reporter should not offer editorial comment on the quality or significance of the meeting. Avoid expressions like “an excellent lecture will be delivered”. It is for the public to decide if the lecture is really excellent.

13.2.3 ¹ The follow-up

In the follow-up or story after the meeting has been held, the outcome, or result, should be featured, and the writer should look to the future.

Example: Keystone Lodge No. 14, I.O.O.F., last evening voted to build a new million dollar lodge hall¹

Rather, emphasize the future, as¹

A new lodge hall to cost one million will be erected by Keystone Lodge No. 14, I.O.O.F., as the result of last evening’s meeting.¹

Other beginnings to avoid include

- The Cosmos club met last evening
- There was a meeting
- The purpose of the meeting was
- One of the most interesting
- The outcome of the meeting

The coverage given to a meeting will depend on its importance. The reporter should build the story on the following aspects

- Definite action: including decisions made, resolutions passed, plans and programmes for future.
- Discussions including criticism, conflicting views, different opinions.
- Important speeches
- Elections of office bearers, nomination of members, resignations, prominent guests, interesting personalities

The reporter may opt for a summary lead or single-featured lead. It depends on how many features he is able to identify. If there are more than two interesting features, it is not advisable to write a summary lead. The reporter should look for a central theme to base his story. The meeting story is said in a logical order, where facts are narrated in order of their newsworthiness.

13.3 CONVENTIONS

Political parties and organizations which are influential in national affairs, when they meet, what they do is of general interest to the general public. Such conventions frequently pass resolutions concerning vital political and business situation.

Conventions of other organizations which ordinarily are of non-political may be of widespread interest because of their large membership and generally attract delegates from all parts of the country. Apart from the general interest which an important convention create, they also create local interest, provided the locality is to be represented by delegates.

13.3.1 The preliminary notice

The first story of a convention usually appears a week or two before the opening session. The secretary of the organization sends a press note to the newspapers informing them of the business of the convention and the important speeches or papers to be read. Sometimes the nature of a report which a special committee will make is disclosed in advance.

The story which appears just before the convention begins may emphasize the purpose and main business of the meeting or it may play up the arrival of delegates, the probable attendance and the first day's programme. Some matters

Reporters are assigned to gather side features and anecdotes unrelated to the serious business of the convention. Statistics may be included of the oldest delegate, the delegate who has come the longest distance, the delegate who has attended the most conventions etc. The newspaper may take advantage of the opportunity to obtain feature interviews with important delegates and speakers.

13.3.2 The follow-up

After convention begins, newspapers report its progress. Important speeches and debates are reported. Minor speeches, such as the address of welcome and the response may be ignored by the reporter unless someone disregards the customs and selects such an occasion for an important statement. The result of the election of officers and selection of the next convention city usually are of general news interest.

13.4 SUMMARY

Meetings can be efficient source of News, some newspaper publish them as main news story and rest of them as smaller sidebar stories. The news values determine what goes on the top and what ends up at the bottom of the story. Be wary of being carried away by a loud and angry delegation that creates a stir in the chambers but is concerned about a matter that is of minor interest to the community at large. The protest may be worth mentioning only if placed in a proper perspective. Strong quotes; color, humor and human interest can be employed to dress up a meeting story. News writing should be interesting as well as informative, and a funny or outrageous remark can turn and other wise drab article into one with zest and high readability. To get additional information the reporter can contact outside source to get their reactions. In this Chapter the significance of meetings and conventions as a source of News are discussed, the style and structure of reporting meetings and conventions are examined.

13.5 GLOSSARY

- **Meeting:** A meeting is where a group of people come together to discuss issues, to improve communication, to promote coordination or to deal with any matters that are put on the agenda and to help get any jobs done. **Mould:** A hollow container used to give shape to molten or hot liquid material when it cools and hardens.
- **Convention:** A meeting of people for a common purpose. **Systematize:** Arrange according to an organized system; make systematic.
- **Committee:** A group of people appointed for a specific function by a larger group and typically consisting of members of that group.

13.6 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

- 1) Detail on the significance of meetings and conventions as efficient sources of News.
- 2) Explain the Style and Structure of writing and reporting News stories pertaining to meetings and conventions

13.7 SUGGESTED READINGS

- 1) Sobieraj, S. (2010). Reporting conventions: Journalists, activists, and the thorny struggle for political visibility. *Social Problems*, 57(4), 505-528.
- 143 Molotch, H., & Lester, M. (1974). News as purposive behavior: On the strategic use of routine events, accidents, and scandals. *American sociological review*, 101-112.

Lesson – 14

REPORTING RALLIES, DEMONSTRATIONS AND COMMUNAL CONFLICTS

4 OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson, the student will be familiar with

- Guidelines to cover rallies
- Reporting communal conflicts

STRUCTURE

14.1 Introduction

14.2 Guidelines for covering rallies and demonstrations:

14.3 Reporting communal conflicts

4 14.4 Summary

14.5 Glossary

14.6 Self-Assessment Questions

14.7 Suggested Readings

14.1 INTRODUCTION

Rallies and demonstrations are an integral part of a democratic society. Political parties, pressure groups, unions organize rallies to highlight their grievances and bring them to the notice of the government. In today's surcharged political climate, political and social groups can whip up demonstration or rally within hours. Some rallies and demonstrations end on a peaceful note, while others are shattered by violence and rhetoric. It is not common for the leaders to manipulate the media to draw attention to their cause. These groups are familiar with newspaper deadline and stage their demonstrations accordingly. They bring eye – catching placards and odd costumes to ensure prominent coverage. These rallies have 'sound and fury' but have no news value. Speakers after speaker extol the same thing, which were heard before.

The reporter must evaluate the significance of the meeting and the issue at stake. Some rallies are confined to non-emotional issues for raising money for charity and to bring awareness among people about a social problem. The noise and bustle may create an air of excitement but when it is all over there may be little to write about. The job of a reporter is to take a hard look at the event and attempt to determine its real impact and news value. Crowd size is no barometer of the demonstration importance. Many people who attend rallies care less about the issue. However, rally organizers inflate the attendance to get prominent coverage in the media. The reporter must ascertain the size of the crowd to enhance the credibility of the story. To confirm your guesswork interview the police and officials at the scene for their figure. They rally leaders tend to exaggerate the turnout which must be taken into account.



Source: si.wsj.net

The reporter must remain free from bias; this is necessary for the credibility of the newspaper and the reporter. He must report clearly and dispassionately staying clear of rage and emotion. People must be presented with straight facts and not with partisan viewpoint.

14.2 GUIDELINES FOR COVERING RALLIES AND DEMONSTRATIONS:

- Take into account the crowd size; types of people, noises and banner all lend color to the story.
- Concentrate on the speeches and check the figures given by the organizers.
- Give the background on the organization and the issues in your story to make it more understandable to the reader.

14.3 REPORTING COMMUNAL CONFLICTS

⁵⁰ The Press Council of India has formulated a code of ethics on communal writings. With the *mandir-masjid* issue threatening the very social fabric of the nation, this has acquired greater importance. It lays down that the press should avoid the use of intemperate language in the presentation of news and views.

Making derogatory comments on different religions of faiths should be avoided. Press should not publish news unsubstantiated, provocative news which embitter relations between different communities. The press should avoid exaggeration³⁴ of news to achieve sensationalism, which adversely affects the communal harmony. It is improper and a breach of journalistic ethics to invent grievance or exaggerate real grievance as they tend to promote communal ill-will and accentuate discord.

In a country of religious and social diversities, a reporter must exercise restraint while reporting on communal issues. He should not be partisan towards any religion or linguistic group. News organizations and press should be extremely careful about reporting events of communal nature. During communal violence when members of particular community are affected, papers do not mention the names of the community. Newspapers follow a laid down policy by the Press Council of India, while covering communal violence to prevent further escalation of tension between the communities. Places of worship affected in riots are not mentioned during communal riots. Do not identify communities involved in the clash nor should you refer to them as majority or minority community. Generalized allegations like 'being anti-social' should not be made against an individual or a community. Do not give

facts and figure without verification. If their publication is likely to arouse communal passion, do not publish them. News of incidents involving loss of life, lawlessness and arson should be reported in an objective manner and attributed to the competent authority. Refer the place of worship, which was attacked instead of church or mosque. The greatest care must be taken in reporting communal classes as it may threaten the very social fabric of the country.

14.4 SUMMARY

The reporter covering rallies and demonstrations must evaluate the significance of the meeting and the issue at stake. The reporter must remain free from bias; this is necessary for the credibility of the newspaper and the reporter. He must report clearly and dispassionately staying clear of rage and emotion. People must be presented with straight facts and not with partisan viewpoint. In this Chapter the guidelines for covering rallies and demonstrations are stated along with description of reporting know how on communal conflicts.

14.5 GLOSSARY

- **Communal Conflicts:** Communal conflict is defined as a conflict between non-state groups that are organized along a shared communal identity. They are products of social relations.
- **Rallies:** A rally is a large public meeting that is held in order to show support for something
- **Demonstrations:** A demonstration is a march or gathering which people take part in to show their opposition to something or their support for something.

14.6 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

- 1) Write a short note on the guidelines for covering rallies and demonstrations.
- 2) What are the roles and duties of a reporter covering rallies, demonstrations and communal conflicts? Detail on the style and structure of the News report in each of the scenarios

14.7 SUGGESTED READINGS

- 1) Perreault, G., Johnson, B., & Klein, L. (2020). Covering hate: Field theory and journalistic role conception in reporting on White nationalist rallies. *Journalism Practice*, 1-17.

Robertson, A. (2015). *Global news: Reporting conflicts and cosmopolitanism*. Peter Lang Publishing Group.

Lesson – 15

INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING

4 OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson, the student will be familiar with

- 11 • Tips to cover investigative stories
- Investigative Journalism In India

STRUCTURE

15.1 Introduction

15.2 Tips for investigative reporting

15.3 Investigative journalism in India

15.4 Summary

15.5 Glossary

15.6 Self-Assessment Questions

15.7 Suggested Readings

15.1 INTRODUCTION

Investigative reporting is a specialized branch of journalism. Investigative reporting involves uncovering something somebody wants to keep secret. Though some people dispute on the word investigative, as all reporting is investigative, as news gatherers seek facts. All newspapers with a standing in the community is constantly being importuned to “look into” this or that, which is usually means to uncover facts which are allegedly concealed in the public interest by vested interests. Public service has become vital part of newspaper’s responsibility. The Indian newspapers have done a commendable job in documenting the rights and the wrongs of the government processes as well as focusing on the short comings of the private sector.

15.2 TIPS FOR INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING

16 Investigative reporting is not easy as it appears. It is not so easy to reach dependable sources, particularly if one has to pierce through officials and unofficial secrecy to uncover trickery in political and bureaucratic processes, inhuman conditions in prisons and certified homes for juvenile delinquents and women, negligence in hospitals, lack of facilities in schools and colleges, exploitation of unorganized labour and tribal people or evasion of tax by large industrial houses.

Reporters are advised to keep a watch on tax payments, land sales and mortgages to detect a curious pattern of events showing wrong-doing by people concerned. However, a good investigative reporter gets most of his material through his contacts with public office holders and officers in key positions.



A page 1 investigative story

Source: *The Indian Express*

Investigative reporting is time consuming, expensive and the process itself may be drab and uninspiring. But, a patient and diligent investigator sooner or later stumble on vital document or a witness that will make all the efforts worthwhile.

No special attributes are required of the investigative reporter, except a sharp inquisitive mind and familiarity with the area of his investigation. The investigative reporter seldom plays detective in the sense of shadowing persons. It is high risk task and the reporter often ends up facing the wall. It calls for tremendous patience, courage, perseverance and dependable contacts. Rather, his quest more often takes him to public records where he uncovers information about which to query interviewees. In print, these facts usually speak for themselves.

Experienced reporters sometimes do undercover work, infiltrating the agency or the organization they are investigating. Some have even gone to jails to experience the conditions of the prisoners.

Journalists who dig deep to expose murky and shady deals to discover the truth are called investigative reporters. It calls for courage, tact and a sprit of adventure and he must be prepared to face any consequence. Investigative reporter must be able to back up his story with adequate evidence or else the publication may lose its credibility. He must be in a position to prove his story with evidence, if the concerned authorities deny it.

The purpose of investigative reporting often is to expose wrong-doing and the source may fear losing his careers and relations. Reporters working on the investigative story must obtain the same information as those working on more routine news stories or personality profiles plus some additional data, such as the subject's version of event, which differs from other sources and records. The reporter must ask for an explanation if the version of the subject differs from that of other source and records. During the course of investigation, the reporter may collect certain allegations, which must be presented to the subject, for his comments.

However, editors maintain that all reporting is investigative or should be. Investigative reporters are a special breed who have the temperament, patience and curiosity that enables them to spend long plodding hours poring through documents interviewing individuals. Investigative reporting lies in learning the basic skills as a general assignment or beat reporter. Becoming familiar with the criminal justice system, the court and city hall is the best education if one is to take up investigative reporting as career.

The work of reporter always involves certain amount of investigation, examination of facts and details. Investigative journalism involves finding out the truth. Investigative reporting is teamwork, the team members' work on different aspects of the investigation with full support from the editor. The doyen of investigative reporting in America, Clark Mollenhoff, considers personal integrity and motivation for investigative reporters as essential for the craft. Any action by the reporter or the newspaper that is illegal, politically partisan, or even unfair by generally accepted standards can undercut or destroys a valid journalistic inquiry. The investigative reporter must believe that it pays to be honest and ethical and know that any illegality or dishonesty is dangerous for the reporter, the newspaper, and the cause in which they are interested. Investigative reporting needs balanced judgment and in-depth understanding. Investigative reporting may be reflective, even speculative but always based on hard – core evidence.

Investigative reporting is very expensive and time-consuming, as most newspapers do not encourage them. Investigative stories should be handled with extra - care or else they bring disrepute. Investigative story should be based on strong evidence, which can stand scrutiny in a court of Law. Sometimes insignificant leads may lead to the unearthing of a major scandal (Nixon Watergate scandal). Investigative reporting got a boost with the Nixon Watergate Scandal

Watergate is the popular name for the political scandal and constitutional crisis which began with the arrest (June 17, 1972) of five burglars, who broke into the Democratic National Committee Headquarters at the Watergate office building in Washington D.C. It is the best example of investigative reporting. The investigation by two Washington Post reporters Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein lead to the arrest of four persons responsible for burglary at the Democratic Party office. It culminated in the resignation of President Richard M. Nixon. Watergate has entered political lexicon as a term synonymous with corruption and scandal. "Watergate", is a term used to describe a complex web of political scandals between 1972 and 1974 in the U.S.A.

Several young reporters have exposed the sordid happening in public domain – jail administration, stock market and defense deals. Ashwini Sarin, of the Indian Express, reported the inside story of Tihar Central Jail. Sucheta Dalal, while going through stock market quotations, noticed phenomenal rise in the value of shares. Her investigation revealed the manipulation of the stock market by broker in connivance Indian and foreign banks.

Investigative stories can be presented in a several ways. When the subject is familiar and does not require explanation, it can be narrated as a straight news story. But, if the matter is complicated, it is essential to interpret the story for the common reader to understand. However, care should be taken to see that investigative stories do not resemble editorials and signed articles. They are most effective when writing in restrained and detached style rather than wrapping them in emotional language and appeal.

15.3 INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM IN INDIA

One of the functions of the press is surveillance. In a democratic society, the press has a representative character along with its watchdog function. A majority of the population in the country is illiterate, who cannot understand the workings of a government. In such a situation, one of the pillars of the society, the press is expected to check any deviance in governance. Though the press has an adversary role, it withstands the pressures from within the organization and outside the organization.

During the period 1980-90, *Indian Express*, notably, exposed the government deeds. With the expose of Bhagalpur blindings in *Sunday*, a weekly magazine, in 1979 startled the nation and a public uproar began in the country. Thus began the era of investigative journalism. Later, *Express* under the editorship of Arun Shourie exposed the alleged misdeeds of A. V. Antulay, the chief of Maharashtra in 1982. Later in 1982, the same paper brought to light the scandal in purchase of oil from Kuwait. The paper published a stunning report headlined as 'The case of a missing file'. Though there were some reports, they were not very significant between 1984 and 1986. But, during the prime minister ship, of Rajiv Gandhi, a big expose that shook the nation, known as Bofors scandal. The Hindu pursued the story. N Ram and Chitra Subramanian, the Geneva correspondent of the paper tried to dig out a lot of information relating to the alleged commission paid to the top brass of the country. Commenting on the Bofors scandal, Ram described investigative journalism as "an exercise aimed at unearthing facts that are concealed deliberately and details that generally remain inaccessible. The role of investigative journalism ...is not much to analyze policy measures, but to highlight the hidden aspects to facilitate a proper analysis.

However, there is a slump in investigative stories in the English newspapers a long time. In 1995, a young reporter Sucheta Dalal exposed a story of stock market scandal to the tune of Rs 5000 crores. Though there are investigative stories later, they cannot be considered to be of much significance. Nevertheless, newspapers at present investigate corruption in the government or other places; they have not made much impact as was done earlier.

Government functions under the cloak of the Official Secrets Act. Corruption is all-pervasive and eating into the vitals of our system, the need for investigative reporting cannot be over-emphasized. The best investigative reporting should keep public interest in mind. It should steer clear of mudslinging, character assassination and blackmail. The Press Council expressed for the return to objective reporting in view of the decline in professional and ethical standards in recent times. The council was critical of the biased and partisan reporting by a section of the media.

15.4 SUMMARY

The purpose of investigative reporting is to expose wrong-doing and the source may fear losing his careers and relations. Reporters working on the investigative story must obtain the same information as those working on more routine news stories or personality profiles plus some additional data, such as the subject's version of event, which differs from other sources and records. The reporter must ask for an explanation if the version of the subject differs from that of other source and records. During the course of investigation, the reporter may collect certain allegations, which must be presented to the subject, for his comments. In this Chapter, the essentials for effective investigative reporting are discussed and the scenario of Investigative Journalism in India is examined.

15.5 GLOSSARY

- **Witness:** A person who sees an event, typically a crime or accident, take place.
- **Mortgage:** A legal agreement by which a bank, building society, etc. lends money at interest in exchange for taking title of the debtor's property, with the condition that the conveyance of title becomes void upon the payment of the debt.

- **Journalistic Inquiry/Investigative Journalism:** Investigative journalism is a form of journalism in which reporters deeply investigate a single topic of interest, such as serious crimes, political corruption, or corporate wrongdoing. An investigative journalist may spend months or years researching and preparing a report.

15.6 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

- 1) What is the purpose of Investigative Reporting?
- 2) Explain the scenario of Investigative Journalism in India.
- 3) What are essentials for effective Investigative Reporting?

15.7 SUGGESTED READINGS

- 1) De Burgh, H. (2008). Investigative journalism. Routledge.
- Houston, B. (2010). The future of investigative journalism. Daedalus, 139(2), 45-56.

Lesson – 16

BUSINESS REPORTING

OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson, the student will be familiar with

- Sources of business news story
- Types of business news stories
- Trends and analysis
- Developing the story ideas
- Four ways to approach business stories
- Conducting interviews
- Tips for business reporter
- Reporting agricultural news
- Reporting labor news

STRUCTURE

- 16.1 Introduction
- 16.2 Types of business news stories
- 16.3 Trends and analysis
- 16.4 Developing the story idea
- 16.5 Four ways to approach business stories
 - 16.5.1 Marketing
 - 16.5.2 Management
 - 16.5.3 Finance.
 - 16.5.4 Competitive strategy
- 16.6 Conducting the interview
- 16.7 Tips for business reporter
- 16.8 Reporting agriculture news
- 16.9 Reporting labor news
 - 16.9.1 Stressing the public interest
 - 16.9.2 Union demands
 - 16.9.3 Strikes
- 16.10 Summary
- 16.11 Glossary
- 16.12 Self-Assessment Questions
- 16.13 Suggested Readings

16.1 INTRODUCTION

The economic liberalization has changed the complexion of business reporting in India. Increased importance of economy and changing pattern of ownership of business and industry has called for specialization in reporting commerce and business. Stories on business are no longer confined to business page; they merit the front page treatment. National and international economic events and changing trends in business and finance have direct impact on the people. And a reporter is expected to reach below the surface of events and bring out significant trends and patterns that are likely to affect the public. Demands from readers has forced business reporter to possess more than a passing knowledge of economics, business and industry.

Sources of business news story

Much of the news comes from covering things that either have just happened or are still happening, like a seminar or product launch. But ideas for business news stories can come from many other sources. They can be through



Page 1 of a financial newspaper

Source: *Business Standard*

- **Listening:** Many business stories come from hearing what people in trade, industry and commerce say.
- **Observing:** Some of the best business stories come from noticing something new, unusual or something taken for granted by everyone else.
- **Asking questions:** A reporter can create a good story by interviewing some industrialist or renowned personality.
- **A tip:** A suggestion or story idea from a person who knows about something that may be a potential story.
- **A document:** A document can be source of news. Sometimes it gives some relevant information, which makes a different sense to the news story.
- **Another news story:** Termed a "follow up," that answers questions the previous business story did not go in a new direction or examine a local element to a story originating elsewhere.

- A writer's curiosity and imagination: Once you have an idea about something you think is news, a business reporter then tries to find out as much as possible about the story.
- Through research: Going to libraries, reading about an idea, thinking about where to get more information and whom to talk to. Most of all, reporting involves meeting and interviewing people who either know about the story or who are part of it. Those people are called sources.

16.2 TYPES OF BUSINESS NEWS STORIES

Although business reporters write about a wide range of companies and issues, virtually all of these stories can be placed in one of several categories.

News. Business news stories can be described as hard news, follow-ups or backgrounders. An example of a hard news story would be the announcement by Apple Computer that it is taking a second quarter loss of about \$700 million. Another example would be the company's decision to restructure its operations. These events often result from company announcements, but enterprising reporters also can unearth breaking news. In the case of the Apple announcement, journalists had known and anticipated a significant loss but they didn't know its size and composition until Apple made the announcement.



Page 1 of a financial newspaper

Source: *Business Line*

Quarterly earnings report. which is often treated perfunctorily. Earnings reports, however, can often be the starting point for solid follow-up or analysis pieces. Follow-up stories add detail to stories that have already been reported. In the Apple example, reporters might have

had enough information to write a hard news story for one day but might have needed to follow-up with other details the next day.

Both hard news and follow-up stories lend themselves to a treatment that some business editors call the "forward spin." This approach is especially favored by weekly business journals that can find it difficult to compete with the daily business sections on breaking news. In the forward spin, the writer looks at a story as having three elements: action, impact and countermove. The action component means that some event happened. The impact component means that the reporter tries to find all of the parties affected by the action. And in the countermove, the reporter tries to anticipate how the affected parties will respond. This model clearly is an attempt to answer any question a reader might have about what an action or event might mean to her or to a broader audience.

Backgrounder. A backgrounder often explores the "how" or "why" an event occurred. It might spin off a news event or it might appear after the reporter has collected enough information on a topic. It is not uncommon for backgrounders to carry headlines using the words "how" or "why."

Profiles. Staples of this genre are profiles of people or companies. Bill Blundell, a former editor and writer for *The Wall Street Journal* has developed a model that can be used for profiles of both types, as well as for many other stories.

Before writing the story, Blundell says the reporter should develop a main theme statement that provides guidance by developing a "well shaped idea." Blundell's main theme statement is brief (two or three sentences); emphasizes action, impacts or countermove; is written to stress the most important element or elements; and is very simple, omitting all details.

The Blundell model typically contains six "story elements." When used in profile of an individual the elements are:

History: The writer should ask how the subject's past has shaped how he/she is today.

Scope/qualities: what's different about this person that makes him/her worth writing about? What qualities are typical or like those of others that make him/her worth writing about? The latter question is especially important in a microcosm profile.

Reasons/values and standards: What does the subject believe in most strongly? How does that shape his/her actions?

Impacts: How does the subject affect those around him/her?

Countermove: How are others responding to the subject's actions?

Futures: What does the subject think his/her future looks like? What do others think it looks like?

When used in a company profile or trend story, the elements include:

History: The writer should ask questions like: Does the main theme developed have roots in the past? What are they? Are there historic details that can be used to lend points of authenticity and interest to the story?

Scope: How widespread, intense and various is the development the reporter is writing about?

Reasons: All contemporary causes to explain why something is happening now. Causes might be economic, social, political/legal or psychological.

Impacts: What are the consequences of a development?

Countermove: How might the affected parties be responding?

Futures: What might the future hold?

16.3 ⁵TRENDS AND ANALYSIS

Reporters often look at the performance of an industry as a whole and describe how it is evolving and why. These trend stories can incorporate some of the Blundell elements noted in "Profiles" and allow the reporter to display an ability to synthesize a wide variety of information. Underlying a trend story is the answer to the question, "How is this industry evolving?"

An analysis also allows the journalist to display the ability to do sophisticated in-depth reporting by putting a company's performance into perspective.



Indian Stock Exchange, Mumbai

Source: Topnews.in

16.4 DEVELOPING THE STORY IDEA

⁵For many reporters, the job of coming up with strong story ideas- often a difficult task in many newsrooms- is made doubly challenging by their section's failure to determine what it wants to be. A mission statement, for example, would give reporters a reasonably specific idea of the kinds of stories they should write. Is it the section's mission to target the business community or consumers? If the section has an idea of its audience, the reporters will be able to tailor their stories to the interests and needs of readers and potential readers.

And although many newspaper newsrooms are moving to more of a team approach to reporting, few business sections are taking advantage of the opportunities of teamwork. Most sections continue to operate on a beat structure that gives the reporter one or several beats or areas to cover.

16.5 FOUR WAYS TO APPROACH BUSINESS STORIES

⁵ Business writers often find themselves approaching stories from a marketing, finance or management perspective — or from a combination of the perspectives. Another approach some writers find especially helpful is to examine how a company defines its competitive strategy.

16.5.1 ⁵Marketing

One of the most basic approaches looks at a company or business from a marketing perspective. The company can be examined by looking at:

Segmentation: How does the company segment its markets? Some companies segment markets geographically, meaning they might focus their efforts on specific regions, or city. Other companies segment markets demographically, meaning they might focus their efforts on specific age ranges, family size, family life cycle, education levels or social class. And yet other companies segment markets psycho graphically, meaning they might focus their efforts on audiences with certain life styles or personality characteristics.

Positioning: How does the company position itself or its products in the market? Companies must examine their potential customers, their competition, and the channels of distribution and the characteristics of its own company. Essentially, the companies seek to make themselves stand out from their competitors.

Marketing mix strategies: How does the company use the various marketing mix tools? According to Philip Kotler, the marketing mix consists of the four P's of product, promotion, pricing and place (meaning distribution).

Kotler's model gives reporters an effective way of analyzing how the company approaches product decisions, including quality, features, options, style, brand name, packaging, sizes, services, warranties and return policies.

A company's promotion decisions are reflected in the company's advertising, personal selling, sales promotion and publicity. Pricing decisions include list prices, discounts, allowances, payment period and credit terms.

16.5.2 ⁵Management

One of the most basic approaches looks at a company or business from a management perspective. The company can be examined by looking at:

Overall impression management and its style: Interviews within the company and with outsiders such as competitors or academics can provide insights into how the company operates. For example, is it rigidly structured or laid back, does it have a heavy financial orientation or is it market driven, etc. If the reporter is able to get into the company at some depth, a story examining the company's corporate ⁵culture could result.

To effectively analyze the corporate culture; the reporter would need to identify the company's business environment, its values, its heroes, its rites and rituals, and the cultural ⁵network.

Traditional management issues: How does the company deal with the basics of management, such as planning, organizing, staffing and budgeting, among other things?

"New" approaches: How does the company deal with newer ideas such as team management, empowerment, TQM (total quality management), just in time, among other things?

16.5.3 ⁵ Finance.

Another basic approach looks at a company from the financial perspective. The company can be examined by looking at:

Financial picture now: Good reporters examine the company from a number of perspectives. They should look at the company's balance sheet, income statement and statement of cash flows. They should look at the company's performance over a five or 10 year period. And they should compare the company's performance with that of others in its industry.

Capital sources: Reporters should be attuned to how the company raises capital for startup, for expansion, or for other uses.

16.5.4 ⁵ Competitive strategy

One of the most interesting approaches a reporter can take is to look at how the company positions itself to deal with its competitive environment.

⁵ A reporter can look at a company in terms of how well it performs these functions:

Target markets

Marketing

Sales

Distribution

Manufacturing

Goals of the Organization

Labor

Purchasing

Research and development

Finance and control

Product line

The reporter should also look at the five competitive forces a company faces:

Industry competitors

Potential entrants into the market

Pressures from substitutes

Suppliers' bargaining power

Buyers' bargaining power

16.6 CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEW

A business journalist must be thoroughly acquainted with the subject before he can hope to conduct a successful interview or write a business feature. No matter how expert you may be in some particular field, one of the first thing you will learn when you conduct your initial interview is that you have to work. Businessmen are not sitting with stories all ready to give you when you appear. The businessman you interview is primarily interested in operating his own business; He is interested in serving his customers to the best of his ability, and make money for himself. He takes time off from his business activities to talk to you. He may feel flattered by the sudden media attention and may give him a feeling of importance. His viewpoint is narrow – in a sense it is confined entirely to his own operation – whereas your viewpoint is national.

Since his viewpoint is limited you find that he does not understand your angle. Some of his business operations that appear novel to you are commonplace to him. In fact they have become so ordinary for him that it may not occur to him to mention them to you. The business reporter must dig, prod, and stimulate his memory until at last he makes some remark that you instantly recognize as a story material. The reporter must conduct his interview in such a way as to bring out every facet of the subject you have selected; every fact and figure may be related to it. It is important to have a firm grounding in the business practices, methods, and principles of every businessman you contact. The reporter may enter the retail store and observe an unusual lighting arrangement, or an exceptional counter placement. Any of these things may indicate to you a definite story. In your enthusiasm to develop a particular story you identified in the newspaper advertisement, window display or something else don't neglect to keep one ear cocked for the unexpected statement, the reporter may develop much more important story than the one originally anticipated.

There is another type of interview which is similar to stationery interview. In this type of interview the businessman has no idea at all. He answers your questions with yes or no which contributes little to the actual conversation. Assuming that you finally dig out a salable story-subject, you cannot write a useful and entertaining article if you follow the style used to get the material. Unless you put your words into the businessman's mouth your interview will not be a success. Present the material in a saleable form instead of writing complete article. There you have series of yes's thrown away. Your own question clarified here and there, has been put into the mouth of the man interviewed. It doesn't matter particularly whether you use the direct or indirect quotations. Let the businessman read the article and sign it. If you by chance made a factual error he is sure to catch it. This gives you the opportunity of making a correction before you pass the story along to the editor.

As new writer you will be wise to get such a signature on your manuscript. This will not only make a friend of the businessman but the editor will know that you are accurate and reliable. It is true that calling back for a signature takes extra time. When you become well known to an editor as a reliable correspondent you can skip the signature, as the editor will have confidence in you.

In other type of interview the businessman may answer all the questions in detail and may even introduce ideas of his own. All the ideas are old and at the end of the interview the reporter realizes he doesn't have the story. If the reporter can give a new twist to the old subject he will come out of the interview with flying colors.

Be constantly on the alert for new twists. Keep in mind that you can't always find something that is genuinely new- there aren't enough new things to go around. If business editors never published anything but genuinely new methods and ideas they would never be able to put out in their magazine on a monthly basis. A great deal of what you write is old stuff in a new grab.

Jot down the names, figures, dates and a word or two, which will serve to remind you of some particular phase of the conversation. Keep the notebook out of sight and try to keep the book on your knee, if the man faces you across a desk, as it may be distracting to the man whom you interview. It is better to rely on one's memory for important facts, figures and dates – they should be down black and white.

There is another type of interview, which is fraught with many pitfalls. The man who is being interviewed may stray away from the main subject. It is the job of the reporter to lead the man carefully back to the matter on hand. This has to be handled deftly without giving the impression that you are not interested in what he is saying. Every reporter has to solve the problem on his own and be careful that your leading questions are not too obvious.

The interrupted interview can be annoying for a trainee reporter. When you are talking to the man, there may be regular phone calls, stenographer coming with letters to sign and so on. And after very interruption you find that your man has completely lost track of the conversation. An experienced scribe enjoys this type of interview; during the breaks he has the opportunity to make notes without disconcerting the interviewee. The reporter has the time to muster his own thoughts and prepare his next series of leading questions. Instead of being confused by the interruptions the reporter takes advantage of them.

The reporter's ability to obtain salable information will depend upon his skills in conducting the interview. Unless the business journalist is thoroughly acquainted with the field in which he is writing the interviews will turn out to be insipid. You don't know what questions to ask, and fail to recognize good material even if you come across- you would be virtually groping in the dark. This brings us back to the basic fact – knowing your field is of paramount importance in business reporting.

In addition to interview it is always wise to pick up whatever printed matter about the company is available. This includes cards, folders, pamphlets, newspaper advertising anything you come across. This helps in refreshing the memory of the business journalist and can be incorporated in the story. Sometimes you can the printed material to your editor as a backup to what you have written or to provide additional material for the story when it appears in the print.

Success of an interview depends on two things. First you must enjoy your work. If you approach each interview with hesitation you are cut for business journalism. Secondly you must have genuine interest of business subjects. Unless you have the enthusiasm you cannot generate the same from the businessman. The reporter's first interview may not be easy. There will be lot of indecisions and stumbling around. As you grow in experience you enjoy meeting all types of people and relish the wits of the battle involved. When the reporter uncovers a good story he will be thrilled as a gold miner finding nuggets in the sand.

16.7 TIPS FOR BUSINESS REPORTER

Objective interpretation is vital in reporting business, industry and labour. Stock quotations, commodity prices, real estate values, payment of dividends and bond issues do not make sense to the average reader unless they are explained with corresponding figures in the past. This information will be of help in projecting the future trends. The reporter must be careful in making forecasts on business conditions. Reporter should inform the readers on the setting up of new industrial establishment or industrial unit likely to be close. What are its implications? What effect will that be on the local people? The reporter should answer these questions. Unless a reporter is a keen observer of economic activity of the country it would be difficult for him to inform the national and international commercial activities that have a bearing the community. The business reporter should have ready information on population, chief sources on income, tax structure, exports and imports, value of properties, internal and external debt, and balance of payment position, new products and labour regulation. The reporter can get information from local stock exchange, local industries, chamber of commerce, industry, export promotion councils etc.

16.8 REPORTING AGRICULTURE NEWS

Failures of monsoons, continuous drought or devastating floods have an impact on food production upsetting the economic balance of the community. Prices of essential commodities increase as a result of inflation. This will result in the slowing down of industrial activity. To cover agriculture the reporter should be aware of the general state of agriculture in the country. The local agricultural community, agricultural products and marketing committees, traders in food grains, progressive farmers are among the chief source of news for an agricultural reporter.

16.9 REPORTING LABOR NEWS

Reporting labor news is perhaps more difficult than writing business and economic stories. The reporter's task becomes more sensitive particularly in covering labor disputes. Labor disputes in industry may lead to lay offs and lockouts, bringing production to a grinding halt. This not only affects the labor force, but also the economy. Labor management affairs should be reported with utmost care, accuracy and objectivity. If the managements presume that the particular newspaper is pro-labor they may withdraw advertisement support to the newspaper. A reporter would be doing a disservice to the community if he takes sides and projects either the management or the labor's version.

16.9.1 Stressing the public interest

In covering many aspects of labor news, the reporter should consider the public interest as paramount.

Union Affairs

Apart from the reader interest regarding the activities of any large organization, there will interest in unions in its activities.

Policy statements

Organized labor is a political force. The statements made by prominent union leader on current issue are significant news and has widespread interest.

Management Agreements

As in other fields, it is conflict that attracts attention and strife is the exception rather than the rule. Nevertheless, changes in wages and hours affect the working condition of employees.

16.9.2 Union demands

When management's turn down union demands, it will result in strike and lockout of the company. In such cases the reporter should seek the versions of both union and managements as to the issue: what the unions ask and what the managements offer. This involves comparing the new conditions sought with the existing ones.

16.9.3 Strikes

After the strike begins, the reporter describes what happens

- How many members of what union are participating in the strike
- What is the nature of picketing – number engaged location and activities.
- Police handling of the situation

- statements by union and management
- violence or threats of violence
- the effect of strike on the public
- efforts to settle the strike

A fair treatment of labour disputes requires constant contact with both the sides and equal space of comment for both the sides. Good reporting consist in frequent reminders as to the issues involved; that is the union's demands and company's counter proposals. Too often tempers become so inflamed that by the time a strike ends nobody remembers what it was all about in the first place. The newspaper which never forgets that no one, including the participants really want a strike contribute towards peaceful settlement by not contributing to the incipient at all. What follows is an excellent example of clarifying the issue and presenting both sides in labour dispute.

16.10 SUMMARY

Business news stories can be described as hard news, follow-ups or backgrounders. In this Chapter we have discussed the types of business news stories, Trends and analysis, details on Developing the story idea, Four ways to approach business stories namely Marketing, Management, Finance and Competitive strategy, Tips for business reporter, Reporting agriculture news and labor news.

16.11 GLOSSARY

- **Economic Liberalization:** Economic liberalization (or economic liberalization) is the lessening of government regulations and restrictions in an economy in exchange for greater participation by private entities. ... Liberalization in short is "the removal of controls" to encourage economic development.
- **Business Journalists:** Their main task is to gather information about current events as they related to business. They may also cover processes, trends, consequences, and important people, in business and disseminate their work through all types of mass media.
- **Buyers' bargaining power:** refers to the pressure that customers/consumers can put on businesses to get them to provide higher quality products, better customer service, and/or lower prices

16.12 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

- 1) Explain the Different Types of Business News Stories
- 2) Detail on the essentials for developing a Business News Story.
- 3) What are the four ways to approach Business Stories? Explain

16.13 SUGGESTED READINGS

- 1) Henriques, D. B. (2000). Business reporting: Behind the curve. Columbia Journalism Review, 39(4), 18.
- 2) Soloski, J. (1997). News Reporting. Social meanings of news: A text-reader, 11, 138.

Lesson – 17

LEGISLATIVE REPORTING

4 OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson, the student will be familiar with

- 17.1 Importance of legislative reporting
- 17.2 Essentials of Parliamentary proceedings
- 17.3 Tips to cover legislative proceedings

STRUCTURE

- 17.1 Introduction
- 17.2 Importance of legislative reporting
- 17.3 Parliament
- 17.4 An organ of information
- 17.5 Lok Sabha: Composition
- 17.6 Rajya Sabha
- 17.7 Powers and functions of Parliament
 - 17.7.1 Legislative powers
 - 17.7.2 Control of the Executive
 - 17.7.3 Financial power
 - 17.7.4 Judicial powers
- 17.8 Parliamentary committees
- 17.9 Legislative procedures in the Parliament
- 17.10 Law making procedure
- 17.11 Essentials of parliamentary proceedings
- 17.12 Relation between Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha
- 17.13 Tips to cover legislative proceedings
- 4 17.14 Summary
- 17.15 Glossary
- 17.16 Self-Assessment Questions
- 17.17 Suggested Readings

17.1 INTRODUCTION

7 Free flow of information is vital for the success of a democracy. In fact, no democracy is complete without a free press and its success or failure depends on how truly and fully its citizens are informed about the affairs of the government and various political parties. Governments all over the free world have all along tried to achieve little success. In fact, at

every level of the government, attempts are made to muzzle the press, but the media has survived all these assaults.

17.2 IMPORTANCE OF LEGISLATIVE REPORTING

Legislative reporting is an important function of a mass media. It involves reporting of the proceedings in both the Houses. It includes debates on important bills and issues of public importance. Legislative reporting often involves taking long notes of speeches of ministers and members, in both the Houses. Knowledge in shorthand would be an added asset in legislative reporting. The quote-carried ad verbatim lends credibility to his news report. It is a specialized beat. He has to report on the complex process of legislature. A reporter with requisite ability and maturity would be given the job. Reporting the proceedings in Parliament and assembly is a specialized job entrusted to senior reporter of a newspaper.

The Constitution of India provides for bicameral Parliament consisting of president and two Houses, Lok Sabha (The House of people) and Rajya Sabha (The Council of states). Parliament serves two-fold purpose of public interest and popular representation. To facilitate the participation of the public and evaluation of the government action in the light of public interest, lead to the creation of the representative institute. By representing the public they reflect the conflicting interests that exist among the people.

Parliament and legislatures are good sources of news. The government makes major policy decision announcements when Parliament and Legislatures are in session. The strategies of various political parties, the views expressed by politicians on various issues, are grist to the newspapers mill.

To be able to report the Parliament proceedings competently one should have a basic understanding of Parliament and state legislature is essential. He must know the basic structure of Parliament and assembly. A reporter covering legislature beat, must be thoroughly conversant with the rules and procedures, the rights, privileges, immunities of the members to judge the government action in public interest. Public in the modern state means millions of people. Parliament serves the twin purpose of public interest and popular representation. The Indian Parliament is constituted on the basis of the principle of bicameralism (i.e. legislature having two Houses) under the Constitution. Legislature of the union is called the Parliament. This lead to the constitution of two Houses the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha.

17.3 PARLIAMENT

The word parliament is derived from the French word 'parler' which means 'to talk'. The term connotes a place where people sit and discuss national and international problems and enact legislations for their country. The modern parliamentary system owes its origin to Western countries particularly the United Kingdom. The term parliamentary refers specially to a kind of democratic polity wherein the supreme power vests in the body of people's representatives called parliament. The parliamentary system is one in which parliament enjoys a place of primacy and pre-eminence in the governance of state.



Indian Parliament House

Source: *Indiannews99.com*

Our constitution has adopted the parliamentary system of government which results in a harmonious blending of the legislative and executive organs of the state in as much as the executive power is wielded by a group of members of the legislature who command a majority in the popular chamber of the legislature and remain in power as long as they can retain that majority. Article 79 of the Indian constitution provides that, "there shall be a parliament for the union which shall consist of the president and two houses to be known respectively as the council of states and the House of the people". These two Houses are called Rajya Sabha [Upper House- council of states] and the Lok Sabha [Lower House- House of the people]. In England parliament is constituted of the king, the House of Lords and the House of commons.

17.4 AN ORGAN OF INFORMATION

Parliament is more powerful than the press or any other private agency, for parliament secures the information authoritatively. The information is collected and disseminated not only through the debates but also through the specific medium of putting questions to Ministers.

Legislation

The next function of the Legislature is that of making laws [Arts. 107-108]; 245] which belongs to the legislature equally under the presidential and parliamentary forms of government.

Financial control

Parliament has the sole power not only to authorize expenditure for the public services and to specify the purposes to which that money shall be appropriated but also to provide the ways and means to raise the revenue required by means of taxes and other impositions and also to ensure that the money that was granted has been spent for the authorized purpose.

17.5 LOK SABHA: COMPOSITION

The Lok Sabha [House of the peoples] is known as Lower House of parliament and its members are to be chosen by direct election from territorial constituencies in the states, and not more than 20 members to represent the Union Territories. In addition two members of the Anglo-Indian community may be nominated by the president. The people elect the members of the Lok Sabha directly. The strength of the House, which was originally fixed at 500, was further raised to 545 through the constitutional thirty-first amendment in 1973. Twenty seats are reserved for members from union territories who may be elected directly or otherwise. Present strength of the house is 545, which includes two Anglo-Indian representatives to be nominated by the President, if no member of the community is elected to the House. The total elected strength of the Lok Sabha is distributed among the states in such a way that the ratio between the number of seats and the population of any state is the same for all the states.

Direct election

The election to the Lok Sabha is conducted on the basis of adult franchise, every man or woman who has completed the age of 18 years are eligible to vote. The constitution provides for a secret ballot. The candidate who secures the largest number of votes is declared elected.

Duration of the Lok Sabha

The term of Lok Sabha is five years from the date appointed for its first meeting. After the expiry of five years the House is dissolved but it can be dissolved before the expiration of its full term under certain circumstances, when a proclamation of emergency is in force, the term of Lok Sabha can be extended by the parliament for a period not exceeding one year at a time and not exceeding in any case a period of six months after the proclamation has ceased to operate.

Qualifications for membership

The member of Lok Sabha should be an Indian citizen and must have completed the age of 25 years. A striking feature of the electoral law is that a candidate for election to the Lok Sabha may stand from any parliamentary constituency from any of the states in India.

Disqualifications for membership

The constitution has laid down certain disqualifications for membership [Article 102]. These are:

- If he holds any office of profit under the government of India or the government of any state.
- If he is of unsound mind and stands so declared by a competent court.
- If he is adjudged an insolvent.
- If he is not a citizen of India.
- If he is disqualified by or under any law made by parliament.

Sessions

The Lok Sabha shall meet at least twice in a year and the interval between two consecutive sessions shall be less than six months. The President who will summon the House to meet will decide the time and place of meeting. He had also the power to prorogue the House. The Lok Sabha can also be summoned in a special session for disapproving the proclamation under Article 352, if a notice in writing signed by not less than one tenth of the members of the Lok Sabha is given to the speaker. When such a notice is given the President must summon the session within 14 days.

17.6 RAJYA SABHA

The Rajya Sabha [the council of states] is the upper House of parliament and is also called as the 'House of Elders'. It was the government of India Act, 1919 which established the first second chamber. The council of the states is the upper House of parliament is also called the 'THE HOUSE OF ELDERS'. The present strength of the council is 244, of these 232, are elected by various legislatures assemblies on the basis of proportional representation.

The Council of states is a permanent body and members of Rajya Sabha are elected for a period of six years. The term of the Lok Sabha is five years from the date of its first meeting. However, the term may be extended for a period not exceeding one year during emergency. Like Parliament the states have bicameral, legislatures, Assembly and the council. There are some states, which have only the Vidhan Sabha, and no Vidhan Parishad.

17.7 POWERS AND FUNCTIONS OF PARLIAMENT

Parliament today is not only a law-making body but it has become a multifunctional institution performing a variety of roles. The important powers of the Indian Parliament are;

17.7.1 Legislative powers

The constitution has classified the subjects for legislation into three lists;

- The Union List
- State List and
- Concurrent List.

The Union List includes those items over which parliament have exclusive authority to make laws. The concurrent list enumerates those subjects over which Parliament as well as states have power to make laws. The parliament is empowered to make laws in certain special circumstances on the subjects included in the state list as well. The parliament can take steps in this direction provided Rajya Sabha declares by a resolution supported by a special majority that it is necessary or expedient in the national interest to do so. When a proclamation of emergency is in operation, the legislative competence of parliament is widened so as to extend to any matter in the state list. Parliament also enjoys the power to legislate for implementing any treaty or agreement with any country. During emergency parliament can issue directions to the state governments in the matters of exercising executive powers. In case a state government cannot be carried on in accordance with the provisions of the constitution, the Assembly may be suspended or dissolved by the president and parliament make laws in respect of that state. In addition to these three lists, it also has been mentioned in the constitution about the residuary powers of the center in respect of any matter not enumerated in any of the three lists. The residuary powers, i.e., power to legislate on a matter not enumerated in any one of the three lists belong to parliament.

Parliament enjoys the power to legislate for implementing any treaty, agreement or convention with any country or any decision made at an international conference, association or other body on any subject, even if it falls in the state list. Parliament may enter the state list by invitation also. If two or more state legislatures consider it desirable that any of the matters within their exclusive legislation competence should be regulated by parliamentary legislation and pass resolutions to that effect, parliament can undertake the necessary legislation. However, the legislation so passed has effect only in the states, which had

requested and those others, which may adopt it afterwards by resolutions passed in that behalf.

The constitution empowers parliament to make changes in the boundaries of the states and effect changes in the name of existing states. It can create new states by uniting two or more states. It can regulate the citizenship. The constitution empowers the parliament to amend the constitution

17.7.2 Control of the Executive

Parliament exercises control over the executive through questions, calling attentions notices and other procedures like votes of censure, adjournment motions and numerous other procedures. It can also prevent executive from taking a course of action by refusing to pass legislation required by the government or by its refusal to give its consent. More particularly the Estimates Committee, the public Accounts Committee and the Committee on Public undertakings also exercise control through the various committees of parliament. The Executive is not a separate body. It is part of Parliament.

17.7.3 Financial power

The parliament also controls the finances of the Union. It sanctions money to the government to enable it to run the administration. It may pass, reduce or reject the demands for grant presented to it by the government, but it cannot increase them. No taxes can be allocated and no money can be spent without the authority of the parliament. The two Houses of parliament enjoy co-equal power and status in all spheres except in financial matters. The following limitations have been placed on the power of Rajya Sabha; A money Bill cannot be introduced in Rajya Sabha.

Rajya Sabha has no power either to reject or amend a Money Bill. It can only make recommendations on the Money Bill. If such a Bill is not returned to Lok Sabha within a period of 14 days, the Bill shall be deemed to have been passed by both the Houses at the expiration of the said period in the form in which the Lok Sabha passed it.

Whether a particular Bill is Money Bill or not is to be decided by the speaker of Lok Sabha. Rajya Sabha may discuss the Annual Financial statement. It has no power to vote on the demands for grants.

Parliaments control over the financial system

Consolidated Fund of India: All money received by or on behalf of the government of India will be credited to either of two funds the Consolidated Fund of India or the Public Accounts of India. Thus, subject to the assignment of certain taxes to the states, all revenues received by the government of India, all loans raised by the government and all money's received by that government in repayment of loans shall form one consolidated fund to be called "the consolidated Fund of India" [Art 266(1)].

Contingency Fund of India: Art.267 of the constitution empowers Parliament and the legislature of a state to create a 'Contingency Fund' for India or for a state as the case may be. The Contingency Fund of India Act, 1950, has constituted the Contingency Fund of India. The Fund will be at the disposal of the executive to enable advances to be made from time to time for the purpose of meeting unforeseen expenditure, pending authorization of such expenditure by the Legislature by supplementary, additional or excess grants. The amount of the Fund is subject to be regulated by the appropriate legislature.

The custody of the consolidated fund of India and the contingency fund of India, the payment of money into such funds, withdrawal of money, custody of public money other than those credited to such funds, their payments into the public accounts of India and the withdrawal of

money from such accounts and other matters connected with shall be regulated by law, by Parliament.

17.7.4 Judicial powers

Parliament has power to make laws regulating the constitution, organization, jurisdiction and powers of the courts. The President can remove a judge from his office, if a joint address passed by both Houses of Parliament with a special majority is presented to him. Parliament may by law provide for the establishment of an administrative tribunal for the Union and a separate administrative tribunal for each state or for two or more states. In brief the parliament of India has rather extensive powers and performs a variety of important functions. Its main function, of course, is as India's chief law-making body. Its functions in this respect are limited legally by the federal nature of the Indian Republic and by the power of the Supreme Court to declare parliamentary legislation as unconstitutional. It is further limited in an extra-legal way by the degree of real control over it, which is exercised by the prime Minister, and the Chief organs of the dominant party.

17.8 PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES

Over the years the Indian Parliament has functioned as a sovereign body, which leads to remarkable developments in parliamentary practice and procedure. A noteworthy part of these developments has been in the form of Parliamentary committees. Though Parliament discusses policies, but unless there are committees discuss the matters thoroughly parliament control tends to be feeble. In the committees, the members can meet in an informal and peaceful atmosphere and concentrate in a truly business like fashion on the problems entrusted to them. It is here that the greatest advantage of the committee system lies.

The Parliament committees make parliament work smooth and efficient. They provide expertise to the deliberation of parliament. The members of the committees are elected by House or nominated by the speaker. The speaker appoints the chairman of the committee. The members of the committee have the power to take evidence from witness called for the purpose. The report of the committee is submitted to the appropriate House.

There are 12 committees in Parliament. Legislatures have to handle a lot of work of varied in a short span of time. Legislatures do not have the time to deliberate on legislative and other important matters before it. A good deal of legislative business is transacted by what are called the parliamentary committees.

Parliament has two types of committees.

1. The Ad hoc committees.
2. Parliamentary committees.

Example: The select committee, Joint committee on Bills.

Legislatures have regular committees, which are permanent, but are re-constituted from time to time. These committees function as parliament's 'watch dog' over the executive.

A reporter should keep track of the reports of the various committees, as they are good source of news.

A reporter on the legislative beat should have knowledge of the privileges, and functioning of the House and its committees, as the reports of the committees are a source of information relevant to newspapers. He must know the significance of Zero Hour and Question Hour and a fair knowledge about the procedures of the House. He must report the proceedings of the House in a fair manner, free from bias.

²² An Adhoc committee is appointed for a specific purpose and when it has finished its assigned work and has submitted its report, it ceases to exist. The best-known and most regular examples of Adhoc committees are the select and joint committees on Bills.

² Each House has a number of standing committees. The Rajya Sabha and the Lok Sabha each have a Business Advisory Committee, a committee on petitions, privileges and rules committee. The Lok Sabha has in addition a number of other committees. Of special importance is yet another class of committees which act as parliament's 'Watch Dog' over the executive. These are;

The committee on subordinate Legislation, the committee on government Assurances, the Estimates committee, the public accounts committee, committee on public undertakings. The Estimates Committee, the Public Accounts Committee and the Committee on Public Undertakings play an important role in exercising check on governmental expenditure. The functions and composition of the important committees of parliament are discussed here;

Public accounts committee

¹⁷¹ This Committee consists of 22 members, 15 members elected by Lok Sabha and Seven members from Rajya Sabha . The main duty of the committee is to ascertain whether government within the scope of the demand has spent the money granted by parliament. If any money has been spent on any service during a financial year in excess of the amount granted by the House for that purpose, the committee examines the circumstances leading to such excess and make such recommendation as it may deem fit. Such excess are required to be brought up before the House by government for regulations. The appropriation accounts of the government of India and the audit report presented by the Comptroller and Auditor General mainly forms the basis for examination by the committee. Cases involving losses, nugatory expenditure and financial irregularities come in for severe criticism from the committee. The committee is concerned with the execution of the policy laid down by parliament and its results. The life of the committee is one year.

Estimates committee

²² This Committee consists of 30 members who are elected by the Lok Sabha every year from among its members. A minister is not eligible for election for this committee. The life of the committee is one year. The committee examines estimates of the various ministries, departments and projects of the government of India and suggests economics, improvements in organization and efficiency or administrative reforms which can be effected in consistence with the policy underlying the estimates. It makes a detailed examination of the annual budget estimates in order to;

Report what economics, improvements in organization, efficiency or administrative reform, consistent with the policy underlying the estimates, may be affected.

Suggest alternative policies in order to bring about efficiency and economy in administration.

Examine whether the money is well laid out within the limits of the policy implied in the estimates.

⁵ Suggest the form in which the estimates shall be presented to the parliament.

If found that a particular policy is not going in the desired direction and will lead to waste, it is considered the duty of the Estimates committee to point out the defects and bring to the notice of the parliament the need for change in policy.

Committees on public undertakings

The committee on public undertakings consists of 22 members - 15 elected by the Lok Sabha and seven from the Rajya Sabha. The Members of the committee hold office for a term of one year. The Committee was constituted for the first time with effect from May 1, 1964.

The functions of the committee on Public Undertakings are;

To examine the reports and accounts of the Public Undertakings

To examine the reports, if any of comptroller and Auditor General on the Public Undertakings.

To examine in the context of the autonomy and efficiency of Public Undertaking, whether the affairs of the Public Undertakings are being managed in accordance with sound business principles and prudent commercial practices.

To exercise such other functions vested in the Public Accounts Committees and the Estimates committee in relation to the Public Undertakings as are not covered by clause [a], [b] and [c] above and as may be allotted to the committee by the speaker from time to time.

Business advisory committee

The Business Advisory committee of Lok Sabha consists of 15 members, including the speaker who is the ex-officio chairman. The speaker nominates the members. Almost all sections of the House are represented on the committee. In the Rajya Sabha, this committee consists of eleven members including the chairman of the committee. The function of the committee is to recommend the time that should be allotted for discussion of legislative and other business, which the speaker/chairman, in consultation with the leader of the House, may refer to it. This committee, on its own initiative, may also recommend to the government to bring forward particular subjects for discussion in the House and recommend allocation of time for such discussion. The decisions reached by the committee are always unanimous in character and represent the view of the House. The committee generally meets at the beginning of each session and thereafter as and when necessary.

Committee reports instill fear and respect in the administration. An act of negligence, nepotism and waste are not committed for the simple fear that they may be looked into and exposed to public gaze by a committee of parliament. Reports of committees have been of great educative value for members as well as the general public. By their constant vigilance and fair and constructive appraisals of the functioning of government departments, the committees have made a distinct contribution to the effective working of the parliament and have played a significant role in generally strengthening parliamentary institutions in the country. An integrated system of committees could provide a powerful mechanism for a meaningful multilateral dialogue between the government and the members of parliament enabling a proper appreciation of each other's views, reasonable accommodation of varying viewpoints and harmonization of conflicting interests. The committees are an additional supervisory or overseeing authority, along with the minister and on behalf of and representing parliament like the minister himself. Committee reforms should seek to make our committees more effective in this task assigned to them.

17.9 LEGISLATIVE PROCEDURES IN THE PARLIAMENT

- a. Introduction of the Bill
- b. General Discussion
- c. Voting

The main legislative business of the House is the introduction and passage of Bills into laws, financial business, presentation, discussion and passage of General and Railway Budgets, voting on various demands for grants, passing of appropriation and Financial Bills. The legislative business consists of introduction, consideration and passing of government bills. The primary function of parliament is law-making. Without legislation work Parliament ceases to be Parliament.

Introduction of the bill

The concerned minister accompanied by a statement explaining the purpose and the background of the bill, can introduce a bill in either House of the Parliament. A private member intends to introduce a bill he must give notice to the speaker. Every bill introduced in the House has to be published in the Gazette. There will be no debate at the time of introduction of the bill. A person who introduces the bill can make a brief speech outlining the aim and objectives of the bill.

General discussion

In the second stage, the bill may be taken up for consideration or the House may decide to refer the bill to the select committee or joint committee of both the Houses.

Voting

After a clause-by-clause discussion the bill may be passed by a voice vote. But on occasions a division may take place and the bill may be passed or rejected by the majority of the members present and voting. A bill that is passed is sent for the consent of the President.

Call attention motion

This is unique innovation in the parliamentary procedure of the country. It enables the member to of the House to draw the attention of the government to the latest development and elicit the government view on the subject.

Rule 377

Members are at liberty to raise any issue of public interest and importance. The member is allowed to make a brief submission on the subject.

No-confidence motion

It is a censure motion and expression of a lack of faith in the ministry. At least fifty members of the House should support the motion. If the motion is accepted, the speaker decides the date and duration of the debate. No-confidence motion is used as a weapon to discredit the government. If the no-confidence motion is carried the government stands defeated and has to resign.

Special debates

The speaker allows debate on subjects of national importance from time to time. A member with the consent of the speaker can move a motion for discussion a matter of general interest. After admission of the motion, the speaker would decide on the day and duration of the debate in the Business Advisory committee meeting. Every member will be allowed to take part in the debate.

Breach of privileges

Article 105 of the Indian constitution deals with the powers, privileges and immunities of the Parliament, members and its committees. It grants member's immunity from proceedings in any court of law in respect of anything said or any vote given by him in Parliament. Parliament has not made much headway, in formulating a comprehensive law defining and

codifying the powers and privileges and immunities for its members, committees and houses. The rules and procedures mainly deal with the question of privileges, the arrest and imprisonment of member. The release of member from detention should be communicated to the speaker. Member can neither be arrested nor can legal process be served within the premises of the House without obtaining the speaker's prior approval. The Parliament privileges have been evolved for the purpose of maintaining independence and dignity of the House. A reporter should be conversant about the privileges.

Article 361A, of the Constitution provides immunity to publication of proceedings of Parliament and state Legislature from civil and criminal action. However, it does not apply to scurrilous writing and publication of these writings held in-camera. The Article which was repealed during the Emergency its scope has been further widened to cover the proceedings of the Legislature.

A reporter has to exercise restraint in reporting the proceedings. Deliberate distortions of speeches, casting aspersions on member's behaviour, attributing motives to his speech or conduct are a serious violation of the privileges of the members. A reporter should have knowledge about parliament privileges and the Article 361A to safeguard him against any default that may occur in reporting the proceedings of the legislature.

The different stages in the legislative procedure in Parliament relating to Bills other than Money Bills are as follows:

Ordinary bill

A Bill other than Money or financial Bills may be introduced in either House of Parliament and requires passage in both Houses before it is presented for President's assent. A Bill may be introduced either by a minister or by a private member. The difference in the two cases is that any member other than a minister desiring to introduce a Bill has to give notice of his intention and to ask for the leave of the House to introduce. If a Bill has been published in the official gazette before its introduction, no motion for leave to introduce the Bill is necessary. The Bill is published in the official gazette as soon as may be after it has been introduced.

Motions after introduction: After a Bill has been introduced, the member in charge of the Bill may make one of the following motions as regards to the Bill,

That it be taken into consideration.

That it be referred to a select committee

That it be referred to a joint committee of the House with the concurrence of the other House.

That it be circulated for the purpose of eliciting public opinion thereon.

Amendments to the Bill and clause-by-clause consideration of the provisions of the Bill take place when the motion that the Bill is taken into consideration is carried.

17.10 LAW MAKING PROCEDURE

One of the important functions of parliament is to make laws for the country. This function forms the bulk of parliament's time. The constitution provides that money bills must be introduced in the Lok Sabha. The Rajya Sabha within fourteen days make recommendations with respect to a money bill transmitted to it but Lok Sabha may reject them and the bill may yet be considered to have been passed. Bills other than money bills can be introduced in either house of parliament though a vast majority of them are introduced in the Lok Sabha. To become a law both Houses, must pass a Non-Money bill disagreement between the two, if

any, being resolved by means of a joint sitting at which the speaker of the Lok Sabha presides.

Ministers present most legislative proposals even of the non-financial type to parliament. As soon as a legislative proposal has been conceived, the ministry concerned works out its political administrative, financial and other implications, and where necessary, takes the advice of experts. If the proposed legislation concerns other ministers or state governments, they are also consulted.

The Ministry of Law and Attorney General of India are consulted in respect of the legal and constitutional aspects of the proposed legislation. When the proposal has been examined in this manner, the ministry, which has initiated the bill, prepares a memorandum for the cabinet. The cabinet may give its approval after briefly considering the broad aspects of policy underlying the proposed legislation or, if it is of an important or controversial character, refer it to one of its standing committees or to an adhoc committee so that the bill may receive a more detailed consideration. In some cases, the cabinet may after approving the underlying principle of a proposed legislation, require that the bill, when it has been drafted, be submitted to it again for closer scrutiny. After a legislative proposal has received a line clear from the cabinet, the relevant papers are sent to an official draftsman who puts the proposal into the form of a bill. Drafting a bill is a highly technical job calling for a great deal of expert knowledge and experience. The ministry concerned examines the draft prepared by the draftsman and often several drafts have to be prepared before a bill is finally put into shape.

Introduction and first reading

The bill is ready for introduction and first reading takes place after this in one of the Houses of parliament. A duly corrected proof copy of the bill is submitted to the secretariat of the House in which it is being introduced. The bill is included in the list of business on a date selected by the speaker after considering the desire of the member - in - charge of the bill, the availability of the printed copies and the importance and urgency of the proposed legislation. After the question hour on the date appointed, the member-in-charge of the bill rises in his seat and moves the motion to introduce. In case there is opposition to the introduction of a bill, speaker allows one brief explanatory statement by the member-in-charge and one by the member opposing.

After a bill has been introduced in the House, it is published in the Gazette of India.

Second reading

After a bill has been introduced and copies made available to members of the House, it gets a second reading. Normally there is an interval of two days between the introduction and second reading of a bill but this interval can be dispensed with and the second reading taken immediately after introduction, if in the speakers opinion the bill relates to a matter of exceptional urgency. The second reading of a bill is divided into two stages. During the first stage, the member in charge may move that the bill be taken into consideration or be referred to a select committee of the House or in certain cases, to a joint committee of the houses with concurrence of the other house or that it be circulated for the purpose of eliciting public opinion thereon. If the motion for consideration is moved by the member-in-charge, any other member may move an amendment proposing one or the other of the three alternatives. If the member-in-charge moves for reference to a committee, an amendment for circulation of the bill may be moved.

If a motion for the circulation of a bill is carried, the secretariat of the House addresses state governments concerned asking them to publish the bill in the state Gazettes and invite opinion from local bodies, recognized associations or the other interested associations and

individuals. The motion for circulation normally prescribes a date-, which may be extended by a subsequent motion- by which opinions should be reached.

After opinions have been received and circulated, in precise, to members of the House, the member-in-charge moves a motion that the bill be referred to a select committee. This is the second stage of the second reading. The motion thereafter is followed by a debate. At this stage the discussion is of a general nature. Only principles of the bill are discussed generally and the details of the bill are not discussed further than is necessary to explain its principles. No amendment to the bill can be moved at this stage.

Committee stage

After the motion for reference of the bill to a select committee is carried the House appoints a select committee to consider the bill. The date by which the committee's report should be presented to the House is also indicated in the motion. Each select committee is separately constituted and there is a nucleus of members who generally participate in the work of select committees. The chairman is appointed by the speaker from among the members of a committee and is normally a member of the majority party. The chairman conducts the work of the select committee concerned subject to the rules of the House and directions issued to him by the speaker. As the general principles of a bill referred to a select committee have already been discussed on the floor of the House, the committee concentrates its attention on details. A select committee may appoint one or more sub committee to examine particular points connected with the bill under its consideration. A sub committee submits its reports to the parent select committee.

Procedure in a select committee is informal and confidential. Meetings are held in private and the press is not allowed. No verbatim record of the proceedings is kept but a summary of decisions taken is kept by the secretary to the committee and is circulated to the members at the end of each meeting.

The committee stage is a vital step in the career of a bill because it is at this stage that it receives detailed minute examination. Amendment to the bill can be proposed during the committee stage subject to the provision that these amendments must conform to the general principles of the bill. If the committee decided to propose substantial amendments, it may advise that the bill be circulated or re-circulated if it has been circulated already.

When the select committee has heard the experts, examined the witnesses and has completed the clause-by-clause consideration of the bill, it prepares its report embodying the recommendations including such amendments as it proposes. Committee reports are published as soon as they have been presented to the House.

Report stage

The committee's report is signed by its chairman and presented to the House by him or in his absence by another member of the committee. The report and the bill as amended by the committee are then printed and copies are made available for the use of members of the House. After the presentation of the committee's report, the member-in-charge of the bill may move;

That the bill as reported by the select committee may now be taken into consideration.

That the bill as reported be recommitted to the select committee with or without instruction.

The bill as reported be circulated or re-circulated for eliciting opinion or further opinion thereupon.

If the motion that the bill as reported by the select committee is taken into consideration is carried, the bill is taken up for consideration clause-by-clause. Each clause is placed before the House for discussion and amendments may be moved. The speaker determines the

admissibility of amendments and is empowered to select amendments to be discussed. In practice, however, the speaker does not exercise this power of selection.

Third reading

After the clause-by-clause stage is over, the bill receives its third reading. The third reading is in fact, the motion that the bill is passed. At this stage, the discussion is confined to the submission of arguments either in support or rejection of the bill. At this stage, only verbal amendments designed to improve the wording of the bill are permitted during the third reading. Since the general principles of the bill have already been agreed to and its details have also been examined, the third reading is seldom the occasion for a lengthy debate.

The Bill in the other House

When the bill has passed through all these stages in the originating House, the presiding officer authenticates it and transmits it to the other house for its concurrence. Here it again goes through all the stages described above. If the second House passes the bill as transmitted by the first, a message to that effect is sent to the presiding officer of the originating House. The bill then goes to the president for his assent. If, on the contrary, the other House proposes amendment to the bill, it is returned to the originating House. There the amended bill is laid on the table of the House. After two days notice, any Minister or any member may move that the amendment or amendments proposed by the other House be taken into consideration. If the originating house agrees to the amendments proposed by the other House, the bill is deemed to have been passed by both. If the originating House is unable to agree to these amendments, the bill is sent back to the other House with a message to that effect. If this House continues to insist on its amendments, the result is a deadlock, which can be resolved by means of a joint sitting of the two Houses, the decision being taken by a majority of votes.

The President's assent

Finally, when all necessary stages in the two Houses have been completed, the bill, as passed by both Houses, is presented to the President for his assent. The president may either give his assent to the bill or withhold his assent or return the bill to the originating House with the message that the bill or any specified provision thereof should be reconsidered. If the bill is passed a second time with or without amendments and presented to the president for his assent, the latter cannot withhold his assent from it. [K.R. Bombwall; Government and Politics of India] pp.216-221

17.11 ESSENTIALS OF PARLIAMENTARY PROCEEDINGS

Question hour

The first hour in each sitting of Parliament is devoted to Question Hour. The main purpose is to seek information and draw the attention to the grievances of public importance. The speaker's decision is final on the admissibility of the questions.

The questions are of three types.

1. Starred Questions.
2. Un-starred Questions.
3. Short Notice Questions.

Starred questions

Answers to the main question will be in the written form with explanatory statement, while the minister will answer the supplementary orally. Members can raise supplementary to the main question.

Un-starred questions

In an un-starred question no supplementary can be asked and a written answer is considered to have been laid on the 'table of the House'.

Short notice question

It relates to matter of urgent public importance and can be asked with the consent of the speaker at a short notice. The question hour is regarded as a searchlight turned on the activities of the government. It enables the minister to look into the question of public importance and also the voters to have a peep into many acts of omission and commission of the government. The reporter covering the question hour has to carefully go through as the written answers yield a great deal of information concerning various states and the Central government departments. Parliamentary questions cover all ministries and the information can lead to many good stories.

Zero hour

The House becomes lively during the 'ZERO' hour, with members cutting across party lines try their best to draw the attention of the chair to the issues they think as the most important. During the zero hour the opposition may try to embarrass the government on major issues. A reporter should be very attentive and jot down information as quickly as possible. A reporter must scan through major dallies – as questions relating to the stories may be raised in the House.

Decline of Parliament

The pivotal position of parliament in the Indian political system, in recent years, has some decline in its prestige. The reasons for the decline of parliament are:

The cabinet has usurped the area of authority originally belonging to the parliament. It is the cabinet which decides about many things like summoning and proroguing the session of the parliament, writing the text of the inaugural address to be delivered by the head of the state, preparing a daily time table of the session of the House or Houses effective initiation of the debate on the bills and resolutions moved by it and doing a host of other things that constitute the stock of parliamentary business.

The role of the members of parliament has also not been praiseworthy. If the sense of responsibility to parliament of new members is poor, if their competence and commitment is appallingly low, it is difficult for them to perform the far more difficult job of closely scrutinizing the work of the ministries.

The standard of debates in parliament has considerably fallen. Debates in parliament were once characterized by sharp irony, wit and humour. Today they have been reduced to character assassination, abuse and choicest insults. Monopoly of political power enjoyed by a single political party for some 40 years after independence has systematically converted parliament into a legislative rubber stamp. The financial accountability was not satisfactory.

Joint sessions

In Parliament, any Bill, other than a Money Bill, can become a law only if both the Houses, with or without amendments, agree it to. Machinery should then exist, for resolving a deadlock between the two Houses if they fail to agree either as to the provisions of the Bill as introduced or as to the amendments that may have been proposed by either House.

As regards all other Bills [including financial Bills], the machinery provided by the constitution for resolving a disagreement between the two Houses of parliament is a joint sitting of the two Houses. The President may notify to the Houses his intention to summon them for a joint sitting in case of disagreement arising between the two Houses in any of the following ways;

If, after a bill has been passed by one House and transmitted to the other Houses-

The bill is rejected by the other House; or

The houses have finally disagreed as to the amendments to be made in the Bill; or

More than six months have elapsed from the date of the reception of the Bill by the other House without the Bill being passed by it.

The Speaker presides at the joint sitting. In the absence of the Speaker such person as is determined by the Rules of procedure made by the President [in consultation with the Chairman of Council of States and the Speaker of the House of people] shall preside [Art 118 [4]]. [D.D Basu; Introduction to the Constitution of India]

17.12 RELATION BETWEEN LOK SABHA AND RAJYA SABHA

In India, the Rajya Sabha plays a secondary role to that of the Lok Sabha in which it has no control over the executive. The relationship between Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha are as follows;

Financial powers

In the legislative sphere, the Rajya Sabha enjoys an equal status with the Lok Sabha in all respects except in certain financial matters. A money Bill or a financial bill cannot be introduced in the Rajya Sabha. It is to be introduced in the Lok Sabha. A Money Bill when passed by the Lok Sabha has to be transmitted to the Rajya Sabha for its recommendations. The Lok Sabha then can either accept or reject its recommendations, if any, made by the Rajya Sabha. Under the procedure established by the constitution, however, the Rajya Sabha is not altogether prevented from scrutinizing Money Bills. But its power is only of an advisory character. Every Money Bill passed by the Lok Sabha will go to the Rajya Sabha for its consideration and within 14 days after the receipt of the Bill, the Rajya Sabha must take whatever action it deems necessary. It may pass it, in which case the Bill goes to the President for his assent. If the Bill is amended or rejected by the Rajya Sabha it goes back to the Lok Sabha where it is reconsidered and voted by a simple majority and sent to the President. Thus in financial matters, the Rajya Sabha plays an advisory role and the Lok Sabha has the final say. The Rajya Sabha can at the most delay a Money Bill by 14 Days only.

Mere perusal of the financial provisions in the constitution cannot give an adequate idea of the impact of the discussions in the Rajya Sabha on the financial affairs of the country. The lengthy debates on budget and financial bills in the Rajya Sabha take in all aspects of the financial affairs of the country and the government takes note of every suggestion put forward in course of these discussions. By discussing the budgetary proposals, the Rajya Sabha criticizes the government's whole economic policy.

Legislative powers

The Rajya Sabha enjoys co-equal powers with the Lok Sabha in the field of ordinary legislation. An ordinary bill or a non-money bill can be introduced in the Rajya Sabha and it has to be approved in both the Houses of Parliament before it becomes an Act. The Lok Sabha has no power to overrule Rajya Sabha. In case of disagreement between the two

Houses on any such bill, it has to be resolved in a joint sitting in which each member of each House has to vote. This gives an advantage to the Lok Sabha which is more than twice the size of the Rajya Sabha. It is possible to contemplate a situation in which the decision of the Lok Sabha may be outvoted in a joint sitting of the two Houses.

Constitutional amendments:

With regard to the amendment of the constitution both the Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha have been placed at par. Though it is true that most of the Bills to amend the constitution had been introduced in the Lok Sabha, both Houses have got equal powers with regard to the amending process and in order to amend the constitution, both the Houses of Parliament must pass a Bill.

Control over the Executive:

The executive is responsible to the Lok Sabha alone. The Rajya Sabha cannot make governments. A vote of no confidence against the government, if passed by the Rajya Sabha would be a mere expression of opinion. The Lok Sabha alone can pass a vote of censure and no confidence against the cabinet. The Rajya Sabha can simply discuss the government policy and exercise some influence through questions, adjournment motions and critical speeches.

Electoral powers

The electoral powers of the Rajya Sabha are the same as the Lok Sabha. Its elected members along with the elected members of the Lok Sabha participate in the election of the President. Even the Vice President is elected by the members of an electoral college consisting of the members of both the Houses of Parliament. Its members also elect one of its members as Deputy Chairman.

Special powers

There are two other provisions which confer upon the Rajya Sabha, as the sole representative of the states, power in its own right and to the exclusion of the Lok Sabha. Under Article 249, the Rajya Sabha may by a resolution supported by not less than two-thirds of the members present and voting declare that it is necessary or expedient in the national interest that Parliament should make law with respect to any matter enumerated in the state list specified in the resolution. After such a declaration, it is lawful for the Parliament to make laws for the whole or any part of the territory of India with respect to that matter while the resolution remains in force. Such a resolution will remain in force for a period not exceeding one year as may be specified therein but its period can be extended by one year at a time by passing a further resolution. This constitutional provision specifically recognizes the Rajya Sabha as the representative of the state and on the authority of the Rajya Sabha in that capacity the Parliament becomes competent to legislate on a subject exclusively reserved for the state legislatures. The second exclusively power of the Rajya Sabha is connected with the setting up of All India Services. All India Services is common to the Union and the States. As such the setting up of such a service affects the powers of the states. Hence, the council is given the power to decide by a resolution supported by a two-thirds majority the question of setting up of an All India Service. Hence any laws connected with such a service can be initiated only if the Rajya Sabha passes such a resolution. In both these cases, the Lok Sabha comes into the picture only after the Rajya Sabha has acted and the Lok Sabha does not share the Power of the Rajya Sabha in deciding as to what action is necessary under both the contingencies.

17.13 TIPS TO COVER LEGISLATIVE PROCEEDINGS

The nation's Parliament and the state legislature are bodies that formulate legislations and the political correspondent is expected to explain to the people how legislation affects them. What are its advantages and disadvantages? Who will it benefit and how? Or, is it detrimental to the interests of the common man? Bills that are placed before Parliament or state legislatures, perhaps, assume more importance than those that are passed. The public should be informed about the bill, its proposal, and the possible repercussions if the bill is passed. The correspondent creates an atmosphere of clarity for the public to form an opinion and act as it thinks right. He is instrumental in influencing the public to form an opinion for or against legislation or a governmental policy. But he cannot misuse his position and misguide the people.

17.14 SUMMARY

A reporter covering legislature must be thoroughly conversant with the rules and procedures, the rights, privileges, immunities of the members to judge the government action in public interest. Public in the modern state means millions of people. Parliament serves the twin purpose of public interest and popular representation. The Indian Parliament is constituted on the basis of the principle of bi-cameralism (i.e. legislature having two Houses) under the Constitution. Legislature of the union is called the Parliament. This leads to the constitution of two Houses, the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha. In this Chapter we have covered the importance of legislative reporting, essentials of Parliamentary proceedings and the Tips to cover legislative proceedings.

17.15 GLOSSARY

- Zero Hour:** Zero Hour is the time when Members of Parliament (MPs) can raise Issues of Urgent Public Importance. For raising matters during the Zero Hour, MPs must give the notice before 10 am to the Speaker/ Chairman on the day of the sitting. The notice must state the subject they wish to raise in the House.
- Ordinary Bill:** An ordinary bill is introduced in either House of the Parliament. This bill is introduced by Minister or a Private member. There is no recommendation of President in case of ordinary bill. Ordinary bill can be amended/rejected by Rajya Sabha and it can be detained by Rajya Sabha for a period of six months.
- Democracy:** a system of government by the whole population or all the eligible members of a state, typically through elected representatives.
- Legislative Reporting:** Legislature reporting involves reporting day-to-day proceedings of these government bodies. This task of reporting involves multifarious activities of legislatures, including the complex process of legislature, and debates on subjects of public importance.

17.16 ⁴ SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

- 1) Explain the importance of Legislative Reporting.
- 2) Write a detailed note on Legislative reporting writing style and structure.
- 3) What are the essential for reporting Parliamentary Proceedings?

17.17 SUGGESTED READINGS

- 1) Valleau, J. F. (1952). *Oregon Legislative Reporting: The Newsmen and Their Methods*. *Journalism Quarterly*, 29(2), 158-170.
- ¹¹⁴ Ries, N. M., Rachul, C., & Caulfield, T. (2011). Newspaper reporting on legislative and policy interventions to address obesity: United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom. *Journal of Public Health Policy*, 32(1), 73-90.

Lesson – 18

SOCIETY PAGE

4 OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson, the student will be familiar with

- Types of society news
- Elements of society news
- Covering society news
- Writing the feature
- Style

STRUCTURE

9 18.1 Introduction

18.2 Type of society news

18.3 Elements of society news

18.4 Covering society news

189 18.5 Summary

18.6 Glossary

18.7 Self-Assessment Questions

18.8 Suggested Readings

18.1 INTRODUCTION

Society pages and society reporting revolve around ²⁹the lives of the rich and the famous. Newspapers ¹in the past were reluctant to publish such news as it might be treated as “invasion of privacy”. ¹⁸⁹Today the problem of most of society editors is not to get news, but how to satisfy everyone wanting “nice” notice on the pages.

The appeal of society page has been two fold:

1. to the vanity of those considered important enough to receive mention,
2. to the curiosity of all others regarding the glamorous way of life of their social superiors

¹ 18.2 TYPE OF SOCIETY NEWS

The society page mainly consists of the following kinds of news.

- Parties: birthday, reunions, announcement, theater, theater
- Teas, luncheons, banquets, cocktail parties
- Receptions, engagements and weddings

Society pages are mostly written by women who have a social rank among themselves. The society editors attend major social events, and only a few occasions require the presence of

the reporter. A large majority of society page items are contributed by persons concerned or by social secretaries.



A society page

Courtesy: *The Herald*

18.3 ELEMENTS OF SOCIETY NEWS

Most society events have the following elements in common, which include:

Names. Host and hostess; guests of honour; members of the receiving line in order of importance; assistants to hostess in the parlor and dining room; entertainers; musicians; prominent guests.

Decorations. Colour scheme, its significance and how it was carried out; flowers, palms and ferns to make the room resemble tropical garden and so on.

Refreshments. Distinguish between luncheon and tea and between supper and dinner and banquet. At reception, always learn who has poured and who served and ask of these assistants were selected for any particular reason (relatives).

Occasion. Is it an anniversary or annual event? What will be done with any proceeds? Does the place have any significance?

18.4 COVERING SOCIETY NEWS

In writing routine society news, restraint should be exercised. Every hostess would like to see her party mentioned in the “loveliest affair of the season”. The reporter must avoid too much usage of superlatives. An accurate, impartial description of an object or an event conveys its beauty or importance much better than does an article which makes and indiscriminate use of adjectives. There is a tendency, however, towards more informality in longer features stories concerning important social events.

Receptions. The reception story should emphasize the name of the guest of honour, the occasion of the reception. Those who assist the hostess, entertainers, musicians and decorations need to be mentioned.

Coming out parties. A debutante is presented to society by her parents, or if they are dead, by a near relative. Some biographical data concerning the girl should be included, as well as a description of her dress. A possible feature may be found in the date or place or in the number of names of guests.

Engagements. Usually the parents of the bride-to-be announce their daughter's engagement. Sometimes the announcements will be in the form of newspaper advertisements or they will make at social functions. If such is the case, the manner of announcement constitutes a feature. In the announcement story, the names of the parents' names and their addresses. Also the probable date of the wedding and the city, in which the couple will reside, should be given prominent coverage.

Wedding. The strength of society page is the wedding story. It is the longest and the most difficult to write. Since most weddings are planned, it is possible for the society editor to obtain information about them and even to write them in advance. The editor writes an advance story of the approaching wedding of the man/woman who is prominent socially, often using a picture with the story. Ordinarily, the advanced story of a wedding is brief unless the principals are prominent.

Writing the feature

The society editor will possibly look for a feature and the possible features to give depth to the account include.

The Romance. The manner of meeting or the length of the engagement is unusual, if childhood sweethearts are united after years of separation.

Place. If relative of either party was married at the same place. If the marriage is performed at an unusual site this becomes a good source for feature.

Bride's costume. Often brides wear dress or veil or some other family heirloom. Some article of a bride's costume may be of unusual.

Relationship. If the scions of two old and prominent families are married their family connections may constitute a feature.

Style

Avoid using hackneyed style and use of expressions such as “blushing bride,” “holy wedlock.” Begin the story with a straight lead like: “A and B was married - .” Feature writers vary the order of details in the body of the story. The bride's costume is described in the lead followed by the attendants. However, the decorations or the march may come first. The account of any wedding dinner or reception follows the account, followed by wedding trip and future residence. The list of guest comes at the end.

18.5 SUMMARY

The reporter concerning the Society Page must avoid too much usage of superlatives. ¹ An accurate, impartial description of an object or an event conveys its beauty or importance much better than does an article which makes and indiscriminate use of adjectives. ¹ There is a tendency, however, towards more informality in longer features stories concerning important social events. In this Chapter we have covered types of society news, elements of society news and further the essentials of reporting the story and style of presenting the feature are discussed

18.6 GLOSSARY

- **Social Secretaries:** ²⁰¹ The Social Secretary is tasked with effectively organizing, communicating, and recording all social activities to members.
- **Society Reporting/Society Pages:** ⁸³ In journalism, the society page of a newspaper is largely or ⁸³ entirely devoted to the social and cultural events and gossip of the location covered. ⁸³ Society pages expanded to become women's page sections..

18.7 ⁴ SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

- 1) Explain the types and elements of Society News
- 2) What are the essentials of Society Reporting? Comment on the style of writing in such scenarios.

18.8 SUGGESTED READINGS

- 1) ¹³⁷ Blair, A. L. (2002). Rewriting heroines: Ruth Todd's "Florence Grey," society pages, and the rhetorics of success. *Studies in American Fiction*, 30(1), 103-128.

Bourad, A. (2016). From the "Business" Section to the "Society" Pages. *Etudes rurales*, (2), 133-154.

Lesson – 19

INTRODUCTION TO FEATURES

4 OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson, the student will be familiar with

- Structure of a Feature
- Importance of Features
- Features and Articles
- Tips for Feature writing

STRUCTURE

19.1 Introduction

19.2 Structure of a feature

19.2.1 Lead

19.2.2 Body

19.2.3 The ending

19.3 Importance of features

19.4 Characteristics of feature writing

19.5 Features and articles

4 19.6 Summary

19.7 Glossary

19.8 Self-Assessment Questions

19.9 Suggested Readings

19.1 INTRODUCTION

News stories describe events of recent happening- meetings, crimes, fires, and accidents. These stories inform the public about that are important or unusual. Feature writing by contrast read more like non-fiction short stories. They have a beginning, middle and an end. They inform, amuse, stimulate, and entertain the readers. Because of this characteristic, they are also called 'human interest' and 'color' stories.

Features describe a person, place or idea rather than the event. The topics may be less earthshaking, less timely, and less local than the ordinary news stories. While writing a feature a reporter uses no single formula, like the inverted pyramid. Features explore the topics in a greater depth than then news stories. To make the feature absorbing the writers may borrow techniques from fiction, and employ the description and sensory details, quotations and anecdotes. They use characterization, scene setting, plot structure and other novelistic elements to dramatize the story's theme and add more details. Feature stories are journalistic creative writing. Like news stories they are factual and original. They are fair and balanced, objective.

Newspapers have been allocating a major portion of their resources and efforts for news gathering especially the hard news. But in the recent times there has been a change in the contemporary newspapers in terms of content, designing and presentation of news. With the advent of round the clock news channels, breaking news has become a regular practice. The live coverage of events as the events unfold has altered the news gathering process. The stress is on the exploration of the details and human-interest angle which clearly bring home the point of the story, the place and context and not on the hard news.

Features are becoming an integral part of the print media. Newspapers and magazines have taken to features as never before. Feature find place in daily newspapers and are no longer part of the Sunday magazine section as in the past. Feature is a newly emerging genre, which defies a precise definition.

One can pursue writing Event Features like the valentine day, Teacher's day, Independence day, etc. themes. Feature writing on Health & medical issues, Sun sign writers or Numerical features like writing on the magic of numbers – astrology and numerology. Historical features can be made interesting with the perpetual spell of age old times with history, stories, unique features and more.

A 700 to 800 word limit will make an ideal newspaper feature whereas magazine features can be more elaborated and descriptive in nature with more than 15000 words! It is only required to be seen that the Beginning, middle and end part holds good in any literary exercise especially by adopting the four basic skills: a flair for good writing, an eye for the market, a talent for sound organization and writing skills.

Features offer greater variety and reading material and gives individual character to a newspaper. Features are the soul of a newspaper. Feature writing is leisurely and non-serious writing. Freelancers and senior journalists write features. It is a retired people's avocation. Newspapers and magazines carry features written by freelancers and staffers. Features can be written on any subject.

The most important step in feature writing is a selection of a topic. The topic must be fresh, dramatic, colorful and exciting. The concept of universal needs helps a reporter choose his topic. People are interested in the needs all human beings have in common and the way of satisfying these needs. They are interested in topics as food clothing, shelter, health, money and leisure. Feature writers also find story ideas by being curious and observant. News stories may provide the spin-off topics for features. An earthquake, plane crash, international incident or other news event can spark human-interest stories - reaction of the survivors, and other people angle that bring the event into sharp focus. Feature about a major event can be localized through personal interviews and background research on the event or the issue.

After selecting the topic that might be of interest to the reader, he must narrow the subject and find a central point that emphasizes, person, situation or an episode. For example a profile cannot summarize a person's entire life, so a reporter might discuss just one aspect- a single experience, trait or achievement that sums the person's character. If he fails to identify the central point the story becomes too long, superficial and disorganized. They may ramble or skip from one idea to another without adequate transition and without explanation any idea in detail. This leaves the reader in confusion. This may force the reader to skip the story as the point of the story is lost. While gathering information for feature stories, reporters consult several sources, perhaps a half-dozen or more to obtain a well-round account. Good reporters gather two or three times as much information as they can use, then discard them.

Features support news coverage, providing background on developments. Feature coverage can be a vehicle for advertising. They are 'think pieces' for prominent people and experts who are authoritative in their respective fields. Interviews with prominent people provide

material for good features. Specialized magazines and periodicals¹⁷ carry features dealing with the progress of a new project or innovation. This can be an invaluable means of keeping a new business development in the press, long after the initial news value has died down. Features expand the news coverage and also prolong the press interest. It is difficult to maintain the news value of an existing product or service. But such stories have their limitations.

A feature writer has a greater flexibility than a reporter. Feature deals with fact³² it is lengthier than a news story and doesn't follow standard form of news presentation. A feature is an umbrella term for⁴⁷ number of soft news stories that profile, humanize, add color, educate, and entertain. It is not meant to deliver news first hand. It recaps major new⁴³ that was reported in the previous news cycle. It can stand alone, or it can be a sidebar to the main news story. The side bar runs next to the main⁴³ story or else where in the same edition, providing the readers with additional information. A feature to be read and appreciated must have immediate reference to what the reader knows only sketchily. A feature in the circumstances must fill in the reader with new information of which he has been hitherto ignorant. It must provide him with all that he wanted to know but had no time to enquire about.

A feature is expected to give the background to the news. It includes analysis, explanation, and discussion. It should document facts, and anticipate development. Newspapers present a brief write up on events, issues and⁴³ people, features present a detailed analysis often in the form of discussion and narratives. News reports are written most in the form of inverted pyramid. Feature follows the structure of essays and discussion and present a distinct point of view. A feature is an essay like piece written for publication in a newspaper or publication. News reports dominate the newspaper, but features make up most of the space of a⁴³ newspaper. While writing a feature, journalists do not follow the standard formula of writing. Hard news attempts to tell what is happening, features have more room to develop why and how something is occurring and provides more perspective.

19.2 STRUCTURE OF A FEATURE

Structure of a feature comprises lead; body; and conclusion.

A feature has three main components.

- Lead
- Body
- Conclusion.

19.2.1 Lead

Focus is a key step in⁵⁷ both selecting the story topic and writing the story. The focus must be specific, not general. The feature lead, is also called the soft lead, has got to be different from that a news story which usually writes itself. It can be one or more paragraphs, can take a little longer to get to the main point of the story. It might delay telling the reader w⁴⁶ the story is about by teasing the reader with description or the story telling ap⁴⁶ each. A lead is supposed to capture the reader's attention. It is usually about a person, doing somethi⁴⁶ somewhere related to the topic of the story. A lead without an opinion is incomplete. It can⁴⁶ the hardest part of the story to write. A lead clarifies what exactly the story is about. At the conclusion, it's good to go back to the person that is in your lead and close the story with either a quote form them or a specific action they are doing. The person in the lead is actually supposed to be a real living person, not a fictional character. Many features begin with summary leads. However, features may also begin with quotations, anecdotes, questions,

action, and description, shocking facts or combinations of these techniques. The only requirement is that the leads interest the people, luring them into the story. Every lead should either state the central point of the story or lead the reader to such a statement. Summary leads contain the central point of the story. Delayed leads, whether they are quotations, anecdotes or description prepare the reader for the central point, which is stated in the nut paragraph.

19.2.2 Body

With all the facts written in the lead, there has to be a smooth transition from the lead to the body the story and to the ending. Write briefly what the people are doing and let them talk. This is the way to sustain the reader's interest.

19.2.3 The ending

The ending of feature should be strong. End the feature with a colorful anecdote, a touch of humor, an appropriate quotation, or a food for thought comment.

19.3 IMPORTANCE OF FEATURES

Features have become an important part of modern day journalism. There are several reasons for their growing popularity.

- The phenomenal growth of television in India and the proliferation of satellite channels have facilitated the dissemination of hard news in no time to the viewers. The newspaper readers wish to have more of the background articles and in-depth stories which may put the news in a proper perspective.
- The increase in the literacy rate and improvement in the general standard of education has made even the ordinary citizen aware about the national and international issues.
- The democratic form of society calls for greater accountability from elected representatives of the people. The readers are naturally interested to know more about how the taxpayer's money is being spent on public works. This information is elicited only through well-written and in-depth features on issues, which have relevance to the people.
- The increasing number of woman journalists in the profession and the growing recognition of their role in the society has spawned features on a number of issues concerning woman and children; family, health and nutrition. These features have extensive readership across the spectrum.
- Newspapers have added a number of supplements of different subjects – agriculture, health, education, travel, science etc. feature form a major segment of these theme pages.
- The Sunday magazine and weekend supplements have created a growing market for feature writers. With the increase in competition magazines sections of newspapers are becoming more and more innovative. Newspapers are re-designing their style and content and presentation. Features offer the newspapers sufficient scope of this type of adaptation.
- Good features enable readers to convert information into understanding and develop proper appreciation of the issues involved. Good features constitute good journalism, which enhances the overall standards in the industry.

According to Val Williams, features can work in several ways.

Features can

- Explain what is happening

- ⁷²Expand on news item, an official statements
- Explore ideas, new concepts
- Investigate issues, social problems and scandals
- Describe experiences, people
- Entertain with humor, or give description
- Campaign ⁷²for the improvement of human condition
- Comment usually in the form of column.

There are no hard and fast rules for writing a feature. A budding journalist is advised to read as many features as possible in many magazines both in Indian and foreign magazines, as he can lay his hands on. Libraries have a good stock of magazines, which one may start looking for. As they are no rules for feature writing, there are no limits to subjects what make a feature. Many subjects require lot of research. For example, a major air crash in Delhi airport, which required the services of ambulances, and hospitals in the city. Reading this you may ask yourself that if an air crash could cause this much emergency aid, what could happen in a major disaster? How many emergency cases can be dealt with by the hospitals and ambulance services? How many doctors are on duty? How much blood does the hospital stock? Is there a transfusion service in case of emergency? The obvious source for a feature like this would be the head of medical service and the police department. But always try to go outside the official sources, to responsible, informed people you may find in the universities and research institutions.

19.4 CHARACTERISTICS OF FEATURE WRITING

- They identify with the Reader: Features are written in informal or conversational basis.
- They make a point: ¹⁷⁷Unlike a news story, the feature story must justify its existence to the reader.
- They are interestingly written: Features are written on a non-serious topics or the serious message is weighed down by humor, drama and suspense, irony. All this makes the piece lively.

²⁶19.5 FEATURES AND ARTICLES

Feature is a product of the heart. Its subject matter is specific. It is based on feeling and personal reactions of the writer to people, places and happenings. Compared to an article it has an informal style and employs a language, which embodies feeling and emotions. The basic purpose of a feature is to provide entertainment. If there is any instruction or message, it is incidental. Photographs are essential for a feature. An article is an extended piece of writing on a broad subject. It is serious and scholarly in tone. A newspaper article may not be heavily documented with facts and statistics, is still a ⁴⁰product of research and serious reflection. The purpose of any article is to social issues in a broad perspective and to present the author's viewpoint within the convention of beginning, middle and an ending. ⁴⁰The difference between an article and feature, for example the problem of unemployment, one may attempt a general survey of the entire situation completely with facts, figures and diagrams. The plans and projections of the government find a place in the article. The article will analyze all aspects of the problem in detail. But a feature will deal with the problem in a different way. It will introduce you to the actual life of a jobless individual and his family. It

presents tale of human suffering rather than present a factual account of the job situation in the country. The feature also portrays the hardships of the family in day-to-day living. Ideally the feature must be accompanied by a photograph of family facing hardship due to the unemployment of its principal breadwinner.

Tips for feature writing

Features are written on current affairs. Good features are in demand as stories on human interest stories can be made into a good feature. Many publications have special supplements and employ the services of freelancers to meet their requirement. Interviews, personality stories, human interest stories can be made into a good feature.

There is no rule for feature writing, but the following tips will help you organize your self for feature writing.

- When writing about a feature on any subject, try to find people who are experts in that particular subject. Find out what has been published on the subject before.
- Feature writing must begin with an idea. Idea comes from extensive reading of books, research publication, and research reports published by leading research institutions. All ideas should be written down and kept in a file.
- Listen to what people are taking about. Sometime feature idea may come up while conversing in bus or the problems faced by the common man. Any subject with little effort and imagination can yield a good feature.
- News stories can offer great ideas for feature articles. Develop the idea further and research the topic thoroughly.
- The feature must synchronize with definite occasions –anniversaries and events.
- Do not be afraid of blank sheet syndrome. The best way to overcome this phenomenon is to start writing

19.6 SUMMARY

Features support news coverage, providing background on developments. Feature coverage can be a vehicle for advertising. They are 'think pieces' for prominent people and experts who are authoritative in their respective fields. Interviews with prominent people provide material for good features. Specialized magazines and periodicals carry features dealing with the progress of a new project or innovation. This can be an invaluable means of keeping a new business development in the press, long after the initial news value has died down. Features expand the news coverage and also prolong the press interest. In this Chapter, we have discussed the Structure of a Feature, Importance of Features, and the tips for Feature writing

19.7 GLOSSARY

- **Feature Writer:** A feature writer is a journalist at a magazine, newspaper, or online publication who is responsible for researching and writing feature stories, such as the

cover story or a long-form article. ⁸⁹ As a features writer, one may pitch stories to the editor, or one ⁹⁴ may be assigned topics.

- **News Report:** ⁹⁴ News reports are found in newspapers and their purpose is to inform readers of what is happening in the world around them. News reports have a certain structure that one needs to follow. This structure is sometimes called the Inverted Pyramid.
- **Advertising:** ⁸¹ Advertising is a means of communication with the users of a product or service. Advertisements are messages paid for by those who send them and are intended to inform or influence people who receive them, as defined by the Advertising Association of the UK.
- **Blank Sheet syndrome:** ¹¹⁸ Blank page syndrome is another word for writer's block, which describes the creative blocks and avoidant thought patterns that many writers suffer from at some point in their careers.
- **Readership:** ⁴ the readers of a newspaper, magazine, or book regarded collectively.

19.8 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

- 1) List some essentials for Feature writing.
- 2) Discuss the importance, style and structure of Feature Writing /

19.9 SUGGESTED READINGS

- 1) ²⁰² Garrison, B. (2014). Professional feature writing. Routledge.
- Hennessy, B. (2013). Writing feature articles. Taylor & Francis.

Lesson – 20

DIFFERENT TYPES OF FEATURES

4 OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson, the student will be familiar with

- Different types of leads
- Writing headline
- Tools of feature writing
- Brights
- Different types of features

STRUCTURE

20.1 Introduction

20.2 News summary

20.3 The **32** short sentence lead

20.4 Quotation lead

20.5 Question lead

20.6 Contrast lead

20.7 Picture lead

20.8 Humorous lead

20.9 Body

20.10 Conclusion

20.11 **15** Why a feature is not a news release

20.12 Tools for feature writing

20.13 Different types of features

20.13.1 Personality features

20.13.2 Human interest features

20.13.3 Historical features

20.13.4 Seasonal features

20.13.5 Travel writing

20.13.6 Service features

20.13.7 Personal experience articles

20.13.8 Writing science and technical features

20.13.9 How to do it features

20.13.10 Adventure features

20.13.11 Explanatory features

20.13.12 Unusual occupation or hobby features

20.14 Summary

20.15 Glossary

20.16 Self-Assessment Questions**20.17 Suggested Readings****20.1 INTRODUCTION**

A feature writer has the choice in selecting his lead. Many features begin with a summary leads. However, features may also begin with quotations, anecdotes, action, description, shocking facts or a combination of all these. But the only requirement is the lead must interest the reader and make them read the story.

There are seven types of leads.

- News summary lead
- Short sentence lead
- Quotation lead
- Question lead
- Contrast lead
- Picture lead
- Humorous lead

20.2 NEWS SUMMARY

This type of lead has the five news elements of five Ws (what, where, when, who, and why) like in a normal news story.

Example

The Communist party's politburo meeting held at New Delhi, last week witnessed a heated discussion on the issue of having an alliance with Congress party in the ensuing Parliamentary election. The majority of the members stiffly opposed the proposal. In the absence of a consensus, the party deferred its decision on the issue to the next meeting.

A feature lead can be a unit of thought that contains one or several paragraphs. They come seeking excitement: the thrill of toting a gun and flashing a badge. They leave disappointed to find that the job of an auxiliary Highway patrol officer includes even mundane tasks

20.3 THE SHORT SENTENCE LEAD

This lead has single short striking lead.

Examples:

- Life is not a bed of Roses.
- Time and tide waits for no man.
- His uncle was a versatile man.

20.4 QUOTATION LEAD

The quotation of famous personalities and politicians may be taken as lead.

Examples:

- Swaraj is my birthright.
- Necessity is the mother of invention.

- To be or not to be.

20.5 QUESTION LEAD

The feature begins with a question, it give the feature the added attraction.

Examples:

- Are you leaving for Delhi tomorrow?
- Does the sun rotate around the Earth?
- Will India make it to the finals?

20.6 CONTRAST LEAD

It brings to the fore the controversial nature of the feature. It has the ingredients of contrast and conflict, which makes for lively and interesting reading of a feature.

Example: The government, which came to power on the slogan of providing one crore jobs to the unemployed has failed to fulfill its promise. But on the contrary the government has been retrenching the staff under the VRS scheme. Recruitment in all government offices has been banned.

20.7 PICTURE LEAD

It gives a graphic description of the setting of the feature and evokes a mood.

Example: India looks like a bride with a veil over her head when viewed from space.

20.8 HUMOROUS LEAD

Features written in a lighter vein have humorous lead.

Example: Long experience has taught me that in Bombay nobody goes to the theatre unless he or she has bronchitis.

20.9 BODY

The body in the story is developed on the similar lines of a news story. A feature writer informs, entertains and educates, whereas a news reporter informs. A feature should confirm to the basic principles of good writing like unity, coherence and readability. He should present his material with brevity and elegance avoiding clichés. With his creative talent a feature writer can turn a simple and ordinary incident into a major happening. The body of a feature can take many forms. The inverted pyramid style may be appropriate for some features and chronological features for others. Regardless of the form of style it must be coherent. All the facts must fit together smoothly and logically. Transition must guide the audience from one segment of the story to the next and clearly the relationship between those segments. The transition should be brief. Reporters must be concise and never waste the reader's time. It must emphasize lively details and provide the occasional change of pace. A good reporter never writes a story consisting only of quotations and summaries. He might several paragraphs as summary, then use some quotations to explain an idea, then some description and then more quotations or summary.

85 Reporters reveal character by using quotations and describing speech patterns, mannerisms, body language, appearance, dress, age, preference, prejudice, use of personal space and a host of other traits. Reporters can sprinkle touches of these descriptions throughout the story to show what the subject of interview is like. The settings reveal the subject's character and provides context for the audience to understand the subject. Geography shapes physical and mental traits, determines lifespan, and influences ways of earning a living. A reporter must tell where the subject grew up, what the person's surrounding are now and how these factors contribute to what he is. The plot of feature stories is often a description of the obstacles that lie between the subjects of the stories and their goals. The resolution of the conflict presents the theme of the human-interest feature. The main variations of the plot are the conflict between humans and nature, humans and humans. A reporter interviews people and ask them about events in their lives, plots naturally emerge. Time can be handled in a variety of ways. To organize some types of features, reporters use dramatic episode in the present as an opener, then flash back to the beginning of the story and bring it forward in chronological order. Reporters can foreshadow the future or build in a series of flashbacks, arranged in an order in which they happened. Whatever the form the reporter chooses, they should be sure to use the transitional words – "now," "then," "in 1978" – to let the audience know when the event was taking place. Feature stories need dialogue. Journalists use dialogue to show the temperament, plot, events, time, customs, color or continuity. They must be careful to choose only the best, most revealing quotes. Reporters use narrative to weave a story together. It summarizes, arranges, creates flow and transitions and links one idea to the next.

20.10 CONCLUSION

It is the summing up of a feature. A news report needs a conclusion but a feature need not end with a conclusion. It is a flashback to the lead. Feature should end with a satisfying conclusion, perhaps an anecdote, quote, key word or phrase repeated in some surprising or meaningful way. Reporters should avoid ending feature stories with a summary. Summary ending are likely to state the obvious, to be repetitive flat and boring.

In the following example, a reporter used a quote to end a story about a law on drunk drivers. O' Conner said the law has solved part of the drunken driving dilemma, but still hasn't abolished the problem. "We've made a big impression in keeping drunken drivers off the roads, but we still have a long way to go."

A reporter after completion of the feature is likely to edit and rewrite it many times. He will angle the feature to a particular audience, publication or news program, emphasizing the story relevance and importance of it

20.11 WHY A FEATURE IS NOT A NEWS RELEASE

A feature should be more informative and entertaining than a news story. It can make more use of the vernacular or idiom. This helps better relate the tale. It is more acceptable in a feature to tell how the senses react. Include the sight, smell, feel, and sound. First thing, tell what your feature is about. Do this also in the headline. It is the headline the editor reads when checking the schedule of stories in a feature package. Many decide then.

The lead paragraph should be concise. Try to keep it under 30 words. It requires an element that grabs readers' attention. It is an element that intrigues, challenges or otherwise spurs the reader to continue. Facts are implicit to a good story but are best-employed one at a time. Use

them to emphasize the points you make rather than stacking them in a single paragraph or sentence. Avoid superlatives. Facts have more impact.

Don't digress. Each sentence should move the story along; tell a key element of it, back up what you said in the lead and help the story reach its conclusion. To keep it tight and punchy, use simple, declarative sentences. When you see the word "and," substitute a period.

Intersperse the text with quotes. They are best used to pass along someone's opinion. Attribute quotes and statements to an individual. Identify the person's affiliation or expertise.

Don't disturb the sensibilities of the reader. Avoid attributing with such words as "echoed," "joked," "commented." "Said" can be said repeatedly without disturbing the sensibilities of the reader. "Says" - *the present tense* - gives the story a feel of currency and is today acceptable in most lifestyle reporting.

Adjectives help. But multiple adjectives interrupt. Feed them into the story one at a time.

Clarity is important. Make every word count.

A feature writer is both a reporter and a story teller. A feature writer enjoys telling a good story. He or she "spins the yarn."

Writing a headline

Nothing sells a feature release more than the headline. Since, they are intended to attract the readers. Readers scan headlines before they settle to read the story they choose. The headline that stands out attracts them to read the story.

The function of a headline is to tell the reader what the story is about. The tone of the headline indicates the type of the story - whether it is hard or a soft news story. The headline indicates the relative importance of the story from the readers' point.

Try writing a headline before writing the story. It helps find the lead. It helps organize the story. Good heads use short words and sentences: "Man Bites Dog, Dog Bites Back." Quotes in headlines are traditionally single quotes. Example: 'Canine Gypsy' Bows, Wows; Is 'Howling Hit'.

Generally teaser or teller headlines are used in feature stories. 'Teller' headlines attract the attention of the reader by clearly and concisely summarizing the story. The 'teaser' headline besides attracting the reader's attention arouses his curiosity with its play on words. Unlike news headlines feature headline can loosely constructed and can play with words.

20.12 TOOLS FOR FEATURE WRITING

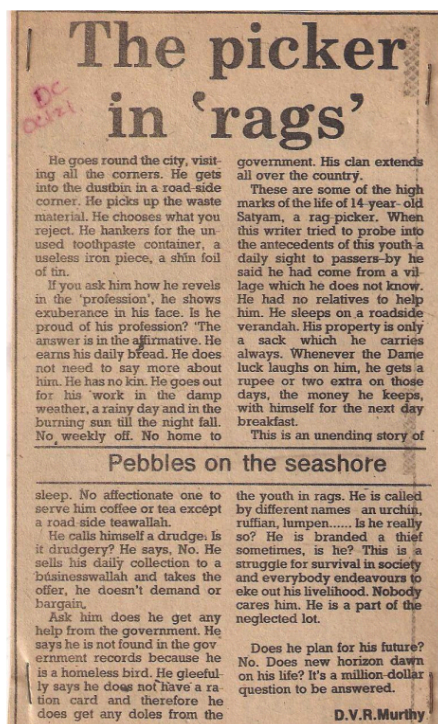
The feature writer must use a variety of words to avoid repetition of words which will bore the reader. When describing a place or someone avoid using too many adjectives. Use quotes and anecdotes which make the feature lively and interesting. To make the story use lively verb, for example don't say pedestrian crossed the road, when he noticed a speeding car. You say he darted the cross or lurched forward in order to avoid being hit by a speeding car.

Brights

Brights are short features or *featurettes*, which find an important place in the newspaper as they brighten the page that is usually filled with volumes of information. They are humorous *featurettes* with a twist in the end. Brights give relief to readers from mundane problems in life.

The purpose of Bright is to entertain, produce a smile, a laugh, an amused reflection, and the writer can create this effect only when he develops a narrative line, character or situation and keeps the piece brief. If they are too many narratives, characters or situations, it lessens the emphasis on each one and thus diffuses the force of the article's impact, or the message is not

conveyed properly. If the story is too long and punch line comes after several paragraphs, the reader might lose interest as in a joke that is told with too many details. Brights should come under 300 words, and the longer one varies from five to ten paragraphs. Brights have universal appeal and their humour is general. They may be a touch of satire or irony but certainly no malice which is why they are usually appreciated by all. If the target of humour, happens to be any particular person, it the writer himself or herself.



An example for Brights

Source: *Deccan Chronicle*

The best source of writing a bright comes from observation of life and people around you. Incidents and events that take place could be taken from one's own life or from those around you. What the writer should bear in mind is the length of the bright and the way it is written. It need not conform to any particular structure. Some Brights found in newspapers are anecdotal with a bizarre twist in the end, whereas others follow the chorological structure.

Tips to write Brights

- Read humorous stories that appear in newspapers.

- Be a keen observer of happenings around you which will give you idea for writing features of this genre. There are several other live situations you may come across which lend themselves to humorous writing.
- Have a catchy lead. The teaser lead will be better. Build suspense and end with surprise. Remember, humour in a bright can be subtle humour or wry humour which might produce a smile. It need not produce laughter as in a slapstick comedy.

20.13 DIFFERENT TYPES OF FEATURES

Features can be written on any subject. It has no specific length. ³⁶ Personal accounts of travel, reminiscences of ³⁶ the past, any ³⁶ subject can be made into a feature. A feature can vary in length from four paragraphs to ten paragraphs.

20.13.1 Personality features ²¹

It's not everybody's cup of tea to attain fame and fortune. Fame and success stories are rare and conjure up the imagination of the readers who would find juicy fulfillment in them. It makes the reader dive into the hidden traits of a character with the effective newsworthiness and reality of truth. The rich and famous celebrities are common subjects that have a curiosity value. Remember everyone has a story worth telling if you dig deeply enough. But from an editorial perspective, you should try to give the readers an idea of your talent's life outside the particular field they are recognized in, or what the circumstances were those made them what they are. The personality profile is a common staple of newspapers and magazines. While most of these articles are based on a single interview with the subject, a well-constructed profile also contains information from a wide variety of other primary and secondary sources, and is essentially an overview of the person's whole life.

20.13.2 Human interest features

Human touch is the vital component in this feature. Human-interest features focus ⁷ on an individual rather than on a group. The actual subject is related to a feeling or an emotion. These stories have humor, color, description, anecdotes, drama and emotion. Human-interest stories generally focus on odd or unusual happening. They discuss the human problem rather than the philosophical aspects of human existence. An aspiring feature writer must bear in mind that the readers are more interested in people than in things. Even if the features are ¹⁸¹ about things, they have to be written around people doing the things or affected by things. Human-interest stories are written to a subject's oddity or its practical, emotional or entertainment value. These stories discuss matters or events that are of basic interest or concern to the people. If such stories are light and humorous, they may be called page brighteners.

20.13.3 Historical features ³

It deals about eminent people and historical places. ³ Historical features commemorate the dates of important events, such as the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi, the bombing of Hiroshima. ³ Historical features are tied to current events that generate interest in their topics. If a tornado, flood or earthquake strikes the city. News organizations are likely to present stories about early tornado, floods or earthquakes. Historical features may also describe famous landmarks, pioneers and philosophies; improvement in educational, medical and transportation facilities; and changes in an area's racial composition, housing patterns, food, industries, growth, religion and wealth. Every region city and school is likely to have

experienced some interesting events. A good feature writer will learn more about these events, perhaps by consulting the historical document or interviewing the people who witnessed or participated in them.

20.13.4 Seasonal features

Editors and directors often assign feature stories about seasons and holidays such stories are difficult to write because, to make them interesting, reporters must find a new angle. When you think of seasons, perhaps you think of the weather or sports. May be food, perhaps special clothing, holidays, vacations or family gatherings. There are many different types of seasons, and people associate as many or even more different activities and traditions with them. We often associate vacation camp with summer, for example. In the spring each year, typically, many newspapers and certain magazines devote attention to summer camps. As part of this annual activity, parents and children spend countless winter hours talking about camps and deciding what they will do that upcoming summer. Same camp as last year? Something new? As a seasonal feature, articles help such discussions with new information and descriptions.

20.13.5 Travel writing

The Indian public is traveling more than ever before, creating a growing market for travel writing. Books, magazines, newspapers, newsletters, other printed material, and online publications are used for guidance in making travel decisions and for getting the most out of travel budgets. For most writers, travel stories are fun assignments. Perhaps one of the most glamorous feature writing assignments is to write about an exotic, faraway land. People are enriching, not escaping, their lives by travel recent surveys of travelers tell travel editors. And those who travel do so frequently. They are interested in cultural and historical locations and places of natural beauty instead of nightlife, luxury, or shopping.

The Travel themes are a class apart for the adventure they hold in the writing themes. The Travel features unfold the romance inducing the wander lust and creating a spell on readers making them fly on the seventh heaven. People and places are always exciting but the places recommended must be worth spending money, time and trouble. Travel features demand exceptional descriptive and narrative skills.

Travel writing is part reporting, part diary and part providing traveler information. Travel writers create their art using a multitude of different styles and techniques but the best stories generally share certain characteristics, notably. Clear writing style, without affectation, used by a writer who knows the point of the story, gets to it quickly and gets it across to the reader strongly and with brevity and clarity.

- Strong sense of the writer's personality, ideally demonstrating intelligence, wit and style.
- Use of the writer's personal experiences, other anecdotes and quotations to add life to the piece.

Vivid reporting - the ability of the writer to convey to readers, using as many of the senses as possible, the travel experience through the use of words alone.

Travel writing is without doubt a glamorous profession. The lure of traveling to distant lands (often for free) and being able to share your experiences with others can be exciting.

20.13.6 Service features

Service publications are catching on with readers. More and more readers are discovering publications that serve them by providing practical information. Yes, entire publications are devoted to service journalism. Many of them are aimed at women, but some recent efforts have been aimed at men as well. And some women's magazines are going through major changes. Readers like the practical value of service articles.

Service features should help people live their lives better. The articles and other content help readers to make better decisions as consumers, to take better care of them, to improve relationships, to make things, and cope with realities of everyday life. Such features can have tremendous impact; they can change the way readers think or act, alter the way they spend time or money, influence style, eating habits, and travel plans, improve relationships, diminish biases.

20.13.7 Personal experience articles

Stories of eminent people are worth telling. Human interest in them survives even many years after their death. Features can be written on their achievements and contribution. Insightful writing is one goal of personal experience feature writing. A personal experience article allows you to do much more than the usual feature article because you, as a writer, can become highly involved in the storytelling. Most beginning writers have been encouraged to take themselves out of the story -- to *de-personalize* the article -- as much as possible. However, personal experience feature writing offers something unique in journalism -- the chance to become part of a personalized story.

20.13.8 Writing science and technical features

Writing about science and other technical subjects such as medicine and health can be doubly rewarding. You can provide an educational service to readers who learn about the latest medical or engineering developments. This, in turn, helps to live more complete, enjoyable, and fulfilling lives. Increasingly, this is a major role of the science feature writer in our society.

Concern about AIDS, with the ongoing mixture of rumor and fact, left the public confused over the truth about this disease. Governments around the world turned to the news media to help to disseminate the known facts about AIDS and to educate the public about how to avoid the fatal epidemic. These public health information campaigns depended in part on science writers and medical writers for their success. Citizens are generally better informed about AIDS today, but still turn to the news media for the latest developments in the prevention and treatment of the disease. The public's dependence on the news media for such valuable information underlines the significance of science and health feature writing. Through news stories, and through feature articles about discoveries dealing with AIDS and other medical problems as well, the public is educated and better served.

There is equal concern today about the environment. Environmental reporting and writing has become its own specialization. Numerous publications have full-time staff writers who cover the environment and many publications today use freelance articles on the subject. For many communities, the environment is a critical part of the lifestyles and economies.

20.13.9 How to do it features

These features tell the reader how to perform certain task. This may include a tangible project like building a garden or training a puppy. It focuses on psychological issues, such as strengthening a marriage or overcoming shyness. Or they may explain how to find a physician. In experienced reporters tend to preach their audience, presenting their personal views. Senior reporters gather facts from several sources, including books, magazines and articles. They also interview experts and get tips from people who have worked on the subject. Reporters divide the task into clear, simple, clear, easy-to-follow steps. They tell the readers what material is needed and the cost in money and time. Often they conclude such stories with a list or summary of the process, such as 'eight ways to build self-confidence in children.

20.13.10 Adventure features

The adventure feature describes unusual and exciting experiences- somebody who has climbed the mountain or sailed around the world. Quotations and descriptions are important in this type of features. The writers often give survivor's account to recreate the scene. Many writers begin with action – most important and dramatic moments.

20.13.11 Explanatory features

The explanatory feature is also known as the interpretative feature. These reports provide more detailed description or explanation of organization, activities, trends, and ideas in the news. For example if a news story describes an act of terrorism, the explanatory feature takes an insight into their tactics, identity and goals. After a bank robbery, the explanatory feature can be on the training given by the banks to their employees to face the situation. It may give detailed account of the typical bank robberies, and the probable punishment to the culprits.

20.13.12 Unusual occupation or hobby features

People have pursued for various hobbies and a very few exceptional genre have the taste of interest in various hobbies. Stamp collecting, gardening, reading, music, photography are the common hobbies but some uncommon hobbies like cloud watching, bird watching, lizard eating, bees collecting etc. present exotic feature avenues. Hobby feature writing interests the reader that has to say about exceptional hobbies.

20.14 SUMMARY

Features may also begin with quotations, anecdotes, action, description, shocking fact or a combination of all these. A feature writer informs, entertains and educates, whereas a news reporter informs. A feature should confirm to the basic principles of good writing like unity, coherence and readability. It is the summing up of a feature. A news report needs a conclusion, but a feature need not end with a conclusion. It is a flashback to the lead. In this Chapter, we have discussed the style and writing format of different types of features such as Personality features, Human interest features, Historical features, Seasonal features, Travel writing, Service features, Adventure features, Explanatory features, Unusual occupation or hobby features etc.

20.15 GLOSSARY

- Lead** : The lead, or opening paragraph, is the most important part of a news story. It gives readers the most important information in a clear, concise and interesting manner. It also establishes the voice and direction of an article.
- Anecdote**: a short amusing or interesting story about a real incident or person.
- Feature**: A feature is a longer piece of writing than a news story. A feature will often cover an issue in greater depth than a news story would do; or it might look at an ongoing story from a different angle.
- Reporter**: A reporter is a type of journalist who researches, writes and reports on information in order to present using sources. This may entail conducting interviews, information-gathering and/or writing articles.
- Readership**: the readers of a newspaper, magazine, or book regarded collectively.

20.16 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

- 1) What are the different types of Features? Explain
- 2) Explain the different types of Leads and their applicability to different scenarios.

20.17 SUGGESTED READINGS

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102JM21

M.A Degree Examination January -2022

First Semester

Journalism and Mass Communication

Paper-II: Reporting for Print Media

Time : Three Hours

Maximum : 70 Marks

Answer any FIVE questions

All questions carry equal marks

1. Discuss the problems of translation.
2. Write a historical background of writing.
3. What are the sources of news?
4. Write about the ethical aspects in news writing.
5. What are the principles of crime reporting?
6. What are the limitations of legislature reporting?
7. What are the various types of reviews?
8. Write a review on a film you have seen recently.
9. Write about types of editorials.
10. Write a feature on any theme you like.

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