



# **ALAGAPPA UNIVERSITY**

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(A State University Established by the Government of Tamil Nadu)

**KARAIKUDI – 630 003**



## **Online Programmes**

**M.A. (Journalism and Mass Communication)**

**I - Semester**

**205917**

**REPORTING AND EDITING**

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## INTRODUCTION

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### NOTES

A reporter may be defined as a type of journalist who researches, writes, and reports information to present in sources, conduct interviews, engage in research, and make reports. The act of collecting information by a reporter is called 'reporting'. A reporter is the eyes and ears of a news organisation. Without an able reporter who gathers information from his or her sources, or investigates stories on his or her own, there would be no 'news' to report. Therefore, the job of a reporter is the most important part of a news organization. A reporter may split his time between working in a newsroom and going out to witness events or interview people. They are assigned specific beats or area of coverage.

Editing is one of the most creative professions in the world. The scope of editing is quite wide, and it is required in several fields such as print media, broadcast media and the new media. Clear communication of the message is one of the foremost demands put upon an editor. The emergence of new media has increased the duties of an editor manifold. The editor is the mediator between those for whom a media product is intended and those who deliver it. Editors fine-tune a copy, video, audio and even photographs. Nowadays, one of the challenges that editors have to encounter is the emergence of new software that nevertheless empowers them to make changes hitherto considered unattainable. Digitization is ubiquitous and the editors have to constantly update their knowledge of the same. Editors have to balance the demands of a tight budget and creation of an effective media product. They have to equip themselves with the understanding of what sells and what does not, and then engage their audience long enough to care.

This book, *Reporting and Editing*, is divided into fourteen units that follow the self-instruction mode with each unit beginning with an Introduction to the unit, followed by an outline of the Objectives. The detailed content is then presented in a simple but structured manner interspersed with Check Your Progress Questions to test the student's understanding of the topic. A Summary along with a list of Key Words and a set of Self Assessment Questions and Exercises is also provided at the end of each unit for recapitulation.

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**BLOCK - I**  
**JOURNALISM AND NEWS**

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*Journalism: Nature,  
Scope and Functions*

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**UNIT 1 JOURNALISM: NATURE,  
SCOPE AND FUNCTIONS**

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**Structure**

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**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

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Journalism is a profession that is, in principle, meant for public service. Mahatma Gandhi, for the same reason, has described journalism as a service. However, with the growth and development of political parties and trade rivalries between business houses, journalism has become a sort of industry with significant power to manipulate the public opinion in order to muster power for itself or to support the political powers selectively. It has also become an industry that can generate employment to millions and create profits in hundreds of crores. This unit on journalism deals with various aspects of journalism along with its brief history. The purpose of this unit is to make you aware of the nature and scope of journalism. As journalism is an activity performed within a given society, it affects or is affected by the political and social orders. Hence, in this unit the role of journalism in various political systems will also be discussed. Though journalism is a term that is used in a global sense, there are many kinds of journalism and many types of media. Various kinds of journalism and various delivery mechanisms like print, radio, television and Internet would also be explored in this unit to give a wider perspective to this term.

**NOTES**

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## **1.1 OBJECTIVES**

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After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Define the concept of journalism
- Discuss the role and functions of journalism
- Explain the scope of journalism
- Identify the current trends in journalism

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## **1.2 MEANING AND DEFINITION OF JOURNALISM**

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In modern times, journalism is seen as the profession of gathering news and information, processing it and finally disseminating it through a particular media. The news and information so gathered is required to be relevant to society. It is for this reason that journalism, popularly known as the press, has been defined as an institution of mass communication essentially devoted to public service. It started as a small private trade and later became an industry, but it has now grown enough and has acquired gigantic proportion of corporate business which in some places has also become a multinational business.

Journalism has been described in the Encyclopaedia Britannica in the following words:

Journalism includes the writing and editing of newspapers and periodicals. The gathering and transmission of news, business management of journals and advertising in all its phases are often thought of as coming within the field of journalism and following the advent of radio and television, there was a trend toward including all communication dealing with current affairs in the term.

On the other hand, the New Webster's Dictionary gives a crispier meaning of journalism:

(Journalism is) the occupation of conducting a news medium, including publishing, editing, writing or broadcasting.

Many other definitions could be found in various books, dictionaries and encyclopaedia, but it would be enough to understand that journalism is an activity that involves the gathering of news and information, processing them by contextualizing them for the society where they have to be disseminated and distributed. The dissemination is actually done by replicating the said news and information with the help of one medium or the other, i.e., print, radio, television, Internet, etc.

## Origin and Nature of Journalism

*Journalism: Nature,  
Scope and Functions*

Journalism is as old as the primitive human societies. It has been a common human tendency to share new things with fellow beings. In interpersonal communication, we normally ask questions like ‘What is news?’ and ‘What is happening?’ etc. These questions are not referring to the news as we understand it now. Some people in India say that mythical characters like Narad Muni and Sanjay were the earliest reporters, but the fact is that these were the people who were involved in simple interpersonal communication. The activity of journalism as we know it today, came to existence only after the emergence of societies where printed word was used for mass communication.

## NOTES

The press or journalism has been seen as an important institution of society as the larger societies need to disseminate news and information for maintaining the status quo or changing the social order if the need be. The transition from feudal society to bourgeois democratic society could not have been possible without the printing press, which initially allowed the publication of books that became the instruments of advocacy of various ideologies. We may recall the great debate between the French thinkers, Descartes and Pascal. The philosophical vision of Descartes served as the basis of bourgeois revolution in France. The printing press was later used for practicing journalism and was given the status of the fourth estate of democracy as it had to strengthen the gains of democracy and to prevent the return of feudal system. However, when democracy became the established order of governance, the freedom of press was used by various sections to gain the control of the society.

The history of printing is traced back to AD 868 when the Chinese used the movable type of printing. However, Johann Guttenberg has the credit of developing movable metal types and the ink suitable for them in AD 1456. Twenty years later the first printing press of England was set up in Westminster. Printing press was introduced in India as early as AD 1556 and it took us more than two centuries to get the first newspaper rolling out. Some say that the first newspaper was started by an American, John Campbell in 1704. Many others consider *Relation aller Furnemmen und gedenckwürdigen Historien* as the first newspaper. This newspaper printed in German language was published in Strasbourg from 1605 onwards.

In modern times, journalism, as a central activity of the society, is required to maintain the social, political and economical order; it is required to provide information required in society. Journalism and media have acquired the status of industry and have become a major source of employment at various levels. Journalism has evolved into many forms to keep pace with the changing interests of people and the newly found segmented audiences. It is also true that with every

new innovation and invention in the area of media technologies, journalism has also changed itself to suite the newer environment. It is for this reason that one can say that journalism as an activity would always remain relevant.

## NOTES

### Check Your Progress

1. What is the meaning of the term journalism?
2. Why has the press or journalism been seen as an important institution of society?

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## 1.3 FUNCTIONS OF JOURNALISM

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Apart from disseminating news and information in society in public, interest, journalism is also seen as a bridge between the government and the people, in the sense that it communicates the policy and programmes of the government to the people and at the same time conveys the grievances and perception of public about issues of the society to the authorities.

As the ownership of the institutions of journalism is in the hands of people with a certain amount of capital to invest in this industry, there is always a possibility of using it for the benefit of the interests of certain individuals. In modern societies, we find linkages between the economically stronger groups and the political parties. Hence, journalism also functions as a means of influencing the political system by various kinds of interest groups. The recent exposure of the corruption in the distribution of 2G spectrum in our country has clearly shown the nexus between the top political leadership, managers of big corporate houses and the journalists trying to work for the benefit of big players in the area of telecommunication. The investigations and publication of the tapes of Nira Radia in conversation with some prominent journalists of Indian media recently have exposed this nexus which gives a picture of journalism having a function of lobbying for economic interests.

The political system uses journalism for the dissemination of news and information for its own interests. Besides, the role of press is one of maintaining the status quo as every morning the newspapers by and large make us feel that things are all right in the world in general and in the country in particular. Even on the days where we get one or more shocking news, we are assured that rest is all right. This too is an important function of the press. The example also shows that the political system uses the media and the lobbyists to negotiate with each other for the formation of government as well as for reducing conflicts that could lead to destabilization of political power.

Journalism as the fourth pillar of democracy has been granted the freedom in almost all constitutions as the freedom of speech and expression because it is journalism that has to function as the watchdog of democracy by constantly being

vigilant towards the functioning of the other three pillars, i.e., legislature, executive and judiciary. All governments in democratic systems try to use journalism for propagation of their views and in some countries the governments own various media to do so, but the presence of free press in democracies has always kept these governments on their toes by constantly investigating and exposing their misdeeds or anti-people policies.

The press or journalism also has the duty and function to be vigilant to the political, economical and social processes. The watchdog function of press maintains that the media is supposed to serve to monitor the government. Hence, press was also called the watchdog. The social theorist James Mill (1773–1836) was the first to propound the concept of the ‘watchdog’ function of the press. He advocated press freedom because it ‘made known the conduct of the individuals who have chosen to wield the powers of government.’

Though the role of press in being a watchdog over government was advocated by Edmund Burke in his seventeenth century pronouncement in England that the press had become a Third Estate in Parliament, it was not until the eighteenth century that Cato’s Letters, a series of letters written in England that advocated a free press, were widely reprinted in the colonies and began the American idea of the press being a fourth estate, a watchdog of government.

### **Scope of Journalism**

In the world today, a large number of people are eager to know about what is happening around them. Journalism is a vital instrument to provide them with the information regarding the happenings around us. Journalism has over the years, amassed a lot of importance as it not only informs the people, it also records the daily events of various areas of human activity and thereby provides their historical record.

In its earlier days, journalism was so closely linked with the printed word that it became synonymous with press. Even today, we use the term press for people engaged in the business of journalism. Freedom of press, press gallery or press conferences are terms difficult to erase from our memory in an age where radio, television and online media also indulge in journalism. The press and the occupation of journalism had a lot of scope those days as it had the duty to inform the people, at the same time being vigilant. Journalism in print media obviously involved writers as a result the journalists were also called scribes.

In the present day, the nature and scope of journalism has changed considerably as various types of media are functioning. There are broadcasters working in radio and television. There are producers and technical people who contribute in production and dissemination of news and other current affair programmes. Information technology and its deadly combination with communication technology popularly known as ICTs have given birth to various platform on which journalism is being done these days. Online or Web journalism

## **NOTES**

## NOTES

and journalism for mobiles are new professions that are included in the list of the scope of journalism. There are so many activities that require specialized training and the dependence on mere writing skills is no longer the truth of journalism.

If the initial phase of journalism was only concerned with news reporting and editing, then modern journalism has also stepped into various new domains of journalism. Travel journalism, life style journalism, business journalism, science and technology journalism and many more have been added in recent decades.

If there is an activity that will never become redundant in future, then it is journalism. There will always be the thirst for knowledge and information, and journalism of various kinds will be available in the service of mankind.

Journalism requires the presence of mind and passion to move around the world. Journalism is also interdisciplinary in nature and publishes various social, economic, political, cultural issues and events. It also deals with the current developments and historical changes of a society.

### 1.3.1 Role of Journalism

The primary purpose of journalism is to serve the citizens of a democratic society. A democratic society can only function properly if its citizens make informed choices. Journalism helps citizens make these informed choices by giving them access to reliable information that they can trust. Another important role of journalism is to be an independent monitor of power and offer a voice to the voiceless in society. In any society, the powerful always try to hide their crimes; if journalists are not present to expose them, they would get away with them. The third important role of journalism is to offer up a public platform for debate and criticism. A democracy can only become healthy when there is a rigorous public debate on the issues facing society. Journalism provides avenues for citizens to speak and share their opinion on issues through opinion pieces, letters to editors, and so on.

#### Check Your Progress

3. Who was the first person to propound the concept of the 'watchdog'?
4. What are the main functions of journalism?

## 1.4 CURRENT TRENDS IN JOURNALISM

Journalism has changed a lot over the centuries. Earlier it was a simple process of gathering, processing and disseminating information. Today, competitive markets have laid many responsibilities and the nature and work of journalists have changed. On one hand, we find big conglomerates pumping huge amounts of money into different media technologies and on the other hand, there are people



with relatively smaller amounts in media. The technology and the economics of management of media have forced the companies to employ journalists with multiple skills.

### **Convergent Journalism**

Convergent journalism is the name given to multi-tasking in journalism where a journalist is expected to not only produce a report for the newspaper, he is also required to give it orally for radio and/or television and at the same time give a brief one for mobile news services. A journalist needs to be trained in many skills like writing for newspapers, radio, television, online and mobile news service. Gone are the days when the journalism institutes were training journalists in specialised area for a specific media.

The convergent journalism is the end result of the convergence of media and communication technology. The most popular forms of convergent journalism are to be found in media houses owning more than one type of media. Today, almost all newspapers are having their hard copy editions and the online editions. They have also taken interest in the mobile news service as it gives them a better market reach. Even the radio and television houses have their online services where they not only provide the audio-visual content, but they also give textual reports. Looking at the economy of media management they prefer multi tasking journalists instead of having specialist in a particular media, though the demand for specialisation in various kinds of journalism like economic journalism, sports journalism, defence journalism, etc. has also increased over the years.

### **Supplement Journalism**

One recent trend in journalism is known as supplement journalism, which involves creating appropriate content for the newspaper supplements that are provided with the main newspapers. It is considered as value addition to the main product. We all know that the newspaper is a product that creates or should create an interest in every member of the society. Hence, they come up with supplements meant for women, children, school and university going youth and the old and seniors. They also bring out supplements related to different walks of life and profession. The supplements on real estate, fashion, education, health, shopping and matrimonials are specific and subject oriented. Newspapers also come up with pullouts at times as sponsored supplement for which the government or some institution or corporate house makes the payment. Such supplements are normally based on the information that the concerned body thinks to disseminate at a large scale. It is mostly the publicity material like the speech of the CEO of an organisation along with the agenda of their annual meeting or the achievements of a government publicised on the occasion of completion of a particular period or the information regarding social issues like diseases, government schemes, social problems like bonded labour or dowry, etc.

## **NOTES**

## NOTES

The result of supplement journalism is that newspapers which were normally of 12–16 pages now have 24–36 pages of reading material in them. A big advantage of supplements in newspaper is that the whole family is able to read the newspaper at the same time, each reading the topic that interests him.

### Online Journalism

We are living in an age where speed matters. The print journalism in spite of being analytical, used to appear stale in comparison to the news breaking style of television, a few years back. Today, even the television news looks slower than SMS messaging or the various news services incorporated by mobile service providers.

The information technology revolution has changed the world dramatically in the past two decades. From slow word processing computers, the IT has moved towards faster processors, increased bus speed and bus width to allow audio and video to be played at real time. The communication technology has also moved away from the slow and narrow copper lines to optical cable capable of carrying various signals at the same time more efficiently. The widening of pathways has become possible due to the conversion of signals from analogue to digital. The Information Super Highway works on broadband connectivity of ever increasing bites.

This has brought online journalism to the forefront. Newspapers have responded well to the new culture of paperless world and have started moving in a direction that is not only convenient but economical. Many newspapers have already started their online editions that could be accessed on the Net by paying a certain amount as subscription. In order to keep the conventional layout of the newspaper that has become a matter of habit for many of us, they also have the replica of the hard copy on the Net. This combination of Web journalism and mobile news services is the most recent trend of journalism.

### Check Your Progress

5. What is convergent journalism?
6. Define the term supplement journalism.

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## 1.5 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

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1. Journalism is the collection, writing, editing, and presenting of news or news articles for widespread distribution, typically in periodical print publications and broadcast news media, for the purpose of informing the audience. It is also considered as a profession of public service.

2. The press or journalism has been seen as an important institution of society as the larger societies need to disseminate news and information for maintaining the status quo or changing the social order if the need be.
3. The social theorist James Mill (1773–1836) was the first to propound the concept of the ‘watchdog’.
4. Some of the main functions of journalism include disseminating news and information to the public, entertaining the public; acting as watch and fourth estate against government; educating the public about politics and other things; etc.
5. Convergent journalism is the name given to multi-tasking in journalism where a journalist is expected to not only produce a report for the newspaper, he is also required to give it orally for radio and/or television and at the same time give a brief one for mobile news services.
6. One recent trend in journalism is known as supplement journalism, which involves creating appropriate content for the newspaper supplements that are provided with the main newspapers. It is considered as value addition to the main product.

## NOTES

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### 1.6 SUMMARY

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- In modern times, journalism is seen as the profession of gathering news and information, processing it and finally disseminating it through a particular media.
- Journalism is as old as the primitive human societies. It has been a common human tendency to share new things with fellow beings.
- The press or journalism has been seen as an important institution of society as the larger societies need to disseminate news and information for maintaining the status quo or changing the social order if the need be.
- In modern times, journalism, as a central activity of the society, is required to maintain the social, political and economical order; it is required to provide information required in society.
- As the ownership of the institutions of journalism is in the hands of people with a certain amount of capital to invest in this industry, there is always a possibility of using it for the benefit of the interests of certain individuals.
- Journalism as the fourth pillar of democracy has been granted the freedom in almost all constitutions as the freedom of speech and expression because it is journalism that has to function as the watchdog of democracy by constantly being vigilant towards the functioning of the other three pillars, i.e., legislature, executive and judiciary.

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- In the world today, a large number of people are eager to know about what is happening around them.
- In the present day, the nature and scope of journalism has changed considerably as various types of media are functioning. There are broadcasters working in radio and television.
- The primary purpose of journalism is to serve the citizens of a democratic society. A democratic society can only function properly if its citizens make informed choices.
- Convergent journalism is the name given to multi-tasking in journalism where a journalist is expected to not only produce a report for the newspaper, he is also required to give it orally for radio and/or television and at the same time give a brief one for mobile news services.

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### 1.7 KEY WORDS

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- **News:** News is the communication of information on current events which is presented by print, broadcast, Internet or word of mouth to a third party or mass audience.
- **Press:** Press is the section of the mass media industry that focusses on presenting current news to the public.
- **Broadcast:** A broadcast is a programme, performance, or speech on the radio or on television. In a broadcast on state radio the government announced that it was willing to resume peace talks.
- **Radio:** Radio is the transmission and reception of electromagnetic waves of radio frequency, especially those carrying sound messages.

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### 1.8 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

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#### Short-Answer Questions

1. Write a short note on the origin and growth of journalism.
2. What do you understand by the concept of journalism?
3. What are the various functions of journalism?
4. What is the main purpose of journalism?
5. Mention the importance of journalism.

#### Long-Answer Questions

1. Discuss journalism utility for the society.
2. What is the future of journalism? Explain.

3. Discuss the role of journalism.
4. Describe the current trends in journalism.
5. Write a detailed note on online journalism.

*Journalism: Nature,  
Scope and Functions*

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## 1.9 FURTHER READINGS

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## **UNIT 2 JOURNALIST: ROLE, QUALITIES AND ETHICAL STANDARDS**

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### **Structure**

- 2.0 Introduction
- 2.1 Objectives
- 2.2 Role of a Journalist
  - 2.2.1 Qualities of a Journalist
- 2.3 Journalism Ethics and Standards
- 2.4 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
- 2.5 Summary
- 2.6 Key Words
- 2.7 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 2.8 Further Readings

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### **2.0 INTRODUCTION**

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The last unit made you understand the basics of the meaning, nature, scope and purpose of journalism. This unit will introduce you to the fundamental principles involved in journalism. You will also learn various functions of journalism. Journalism is a profession that is essentially meant for public service. Mahatma Gandhi for the same reason described journalism as a kind of service. However, with the growth and development of societies, it has become a sort of industry with significant power to manipulate the public opinion to muster power for itself or to support the political powers that be. It has also become an industry that can generate enough employment as well as millions of rupees as profit.

This unit on journalism deals with various aspects of the ethical practices in journalism along with the evolution of the commonly accepted journalistic codes. As journalism is an activity performed within a given society, it affects or gets affected by the political and social order. Hence, in this unit the role of social responsibility in journalism will be explored in its various aspects.

Every field of human activity is governed by certain rules and regulations; journalism is no different. In order to allow the kind of freedom required by this profession, societies all around the world have established certain canons for the profession that serve as a commonly accepted set of rules and regulations. Apart from this, issues relating to the journalistic norms are discussed in terms of the principles of journalism.

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## 2.1 OBJECTIVES

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After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Define the role of journalist
- Discuss the various qualities of a journalist
- Explain the various aspects of the ethical practices in journalism

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## 2.2 ROLE OF A JOURNALIST

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Before you study the role of a journalist in detail, it is important to understand what journalists do.

The profession of journalists is known as journalism. It is an activity. In order to define journalism, you need to identify some journalists and see what do they have in common? In the Indian context, the following persons exemplify journalism:

- **Barkha Dutt:** She was the managing editor of NDTV and her claim to fame was the coverage of the Kargil war between India and Pakistan in 2006. She left NDTV in 2017 to start her own media venture.
- **Rajdeep Sardesai:** He is a journalist, political commentator and news presenter. He was the editor in chief of IBN 18 network. This network included channels such as CNN IBN, IBN7 and IBN Lokmat. He is currently a news anchor on India Today.

All these journalists remind us that journalism is not limited by sex, race or the type of medium for which they work.

### **Journalists are communicators**

Journalists are participants in the process of human communication. In order to communicate, at least two parties play a role in the process—one who transmits the stimuli and another who responds. These are often referred to as senders and receivers, or simply as writers and readers, speakers and listeners.

Journalists do an enormous amount of reading and listening. They work as receivers of communication and as observers, which helps them to gather the knowledge that they formulate in messages. Thus, journalists are responsible for the content that has been transmitted or conveyed to others. The signs that journalists use to convey their messages are most often verbal or written.

But other people such as poets, novelists, playwrights are communicators too. How do they differ from journalists?

Journalists send out messages that are true or factual. Therefore, you can say that the messages do not purport to be false, erroneous, made up, invented,

## NOTES

imagined or fictional. Journalists are responsible for messages about things that they claim have really happened, are really happening or likely to happen. Historically, newspapers are the media that is most frequently associated with journalism followed by television and radio.

Journalists are not the only non-fiction communicators. Philosophers, economists, sociologists and many others devise messages that are intended to be true. Among them the group that seems most akin to journalists is historians. Journalism is in fact referred to as contemporary or current history. But is there any difference between them? Is it true that historians write about the past whereas journalists write about the present? Not at all.

Both are concerned with the communication of knowledge. Historians acquire knowledge for the sake of sheer pleasure of knowing. This is known as theoretical knowledge. The other is acquired to procure some kind of good for the people. It is knowledge that is put to use. This is called practical knowledge. Journalists are interested in this kind of knowledge.

Therefore, the first kind of knowledge might be viewed as useful, but it is useful for increasing the understanding and not for determining future actions. Journalists on the other hand are ultimately concerned with helping people decide what would be a good thing to do or what should you avoid doing.

But others communicate useful knowledge too. Like parents profiting from their experience advice their children on how to make their first car purchase.

While journalists are mass communicators, lawyers are not.

There is another term that is closely associated with journalists and is sometimes used as a synonym. The 'fraternity of newsmen' is sometimes substituted for 'society of professional journalists'. Indeed in the mind of persons, news writers seem to occupy the centre most place in the house of journalism.

In the 1920s, an American writer, reporter and political commentator Walter Lippmann understood that the role of journalism role at that time was to act as a mediator between the public and policy making elites. Thus, the journalist became the middleman. When the elites spoke, journalists listened and recorded the information, distilled it and passed it on to the public for their consumption. His reasoning behind this was that the public was not in a position to deconstruct the growing and complex flurry of information present in modern society, and so an intermediary was needed to filter news for the masses.

In other words, none of us can experience everything first hand and it is difficult for us to look at things from different points of view than our own. Thus, we must rely on other sources, such as the media to help aid us in our understanding, and then be able to decipher the truth out of what the media tells us.

The journalist therefore fulfils the role of deciphering the world around us and giving us an insight into complex issues. Many times, a journalist also serves to



be the link between the decision makers and the masses by conveying the popular sentiment of the people. He plays the powerful function of opinion formation among the masses.

In a nutshell, journalists assume the following roles:

- Watchdogs
- Investigators
- Moderators
- Entertainers
- Analysts
- Informers
- Editors
- Commentators
- Advertisers

In many ways journalists are community activists, agenda-setters and voices for the voiceless. They are also given the following names:

- Public servants
- Keepers of public record
- Protectors of democracy
- Promoters of public dialogue

### **Responsibilities of Journalists**

Information as we know is power. Hence, those who wield information, also wield power.

The business of gathering and disseminating information automatically makes the journalists powerful. This implies that some ethical practices are necessary so that there is a commitment to a proper and an impartial use of power by journalists and media practitioners.

As you all know, journalists and reporters hold the responsibility of informing the public and keeping a watchful eye on the public employees. They serve as a sort of system of checks and balances. They gather the facts and check to make sure that they are all accurate. If they find something wrong, they can dig deeper to get the whole story. In their articles they can relay what they have found to the public. The public, having now been informed, can choose whether or not to take action.

While presenting any news, a journalist should be very careful and aware of his responsibilities towards the society. He must deliver such news as it serves a

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common purpose and fulfils major interests of the people. Following are the three main responsibilities of a journalist:

- 1. Social responsibility:** The media reflects the social images or pictures of our society. These images are powerful influencing factors in the society and shape the perspective and decision making of the policy makers. These also reflect the issues that are important to the common man. Thus, what a journalist reports should be fair, balanced, truthful, inspiring and it should meet the needs of the common man. This role is of particular importance in developing countries where it becomes the journalist's duty to highlight social issues and contribute in national development. Although every journalist has to work in the overall ambit of the editorial policy that his/her news organization subscribes to, he/she should strive to reflect a truthful picture of the social reality.
- 2. Responsibility towards the organization:** A journalist has a responsibility to follow the editorial policy of the newspaper organization that he is working for. Considering that the media in India has a dichotomous role of reflecting social reality and also making money, a journalist needs to participate in both the functions. This might at times conflict with the journalist's own principles, but a balanced view needs to be taken in such cases. Since, every news organizations has its own stylization of the presentation of news content or a style guide, the journalist needs to make himself familiar with it.
- 3. Responsibility towards sources:** It is crucial for a journalist to not only protect but also respect his sources. If the source wishes to be anonymous then the journalist should respect his confidence. In fact, sources should be sacrosanct for the journalist who must protect them at all costs. It is quiet important for a journalist to establish his/her credibility with the sources, a breach of which can mar the reputation of the journalist for good. Sources share sensitive information with journalists only when they can trust the journalist to handle it maturely and if need be, keep the sources anonymous. Journalists try the legal backing to keep the sources anonymous even when demanded by police or prosecutors, but in serious cases, they might land up in jail or be issued a contempt notice.

In order to maintain responsible journalism many ethicists have suggested that journalists should have some kind of control or a kind of institutionalized concept of responsibility that should be injected in the practice of journalism. This could be in form of governmental laws or professional sanctions, namely, an ethical code for journalists.

### **2.2.1 Qualities of a Journalist**

Some of the qualities of a journalist are as follows:

#### **Ethics and Integrity**

A solid ethical core characterizes a good journalist. Fairness, objectivity and honesty matter when reporting on the news. Professional journalists detest fake news based on rumour, innuendo and unverifiable anonymous tips.

#### **Courage and Boldness**

It is the duty of journalists to ‘speak truth to power’. They do this by pushing themselves to dig deeper into issues and asking tough questions to the powerful. They put their own feelings on an issue aside while unearthing the truth on events and stories taking. Courage is critical to investigating what is happening at the scene.

#### **Expert Communication Skills**

Along with impeccable character, a journalist should be skilled communicators to interview sources and write in-depth stories.

#### **Knowledge of Technology**

As part of their job, journalists follow and use social media suitably to provide immediate and transparent coverage of happening events. They know how to use the internet to research stories and access public records when engaging in investigative journalism.

#### **Investigative Skills**

A good journalist has an analytical objective mind that can base his or her stories on evidence and facts, and not emotion. They are also astute observers and instinctively sense when there is much more to a story than what is being shared at a news conference. Critical thinking skills are also important when weighing contradictory accounts of an incident and assessing the credibility of sources. Even when faced with looming deadlines, a good journalist takes time to get a balanced accounting of the news event.

#### **Check Your Progress**

1. What are the three main responsibilities of a journalist?
2. Mention any two qualities of a journalist.

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### 2.3 JOURNALISM ETHICS AND STANDARDS

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As a vocation, journalism has many facets. A journalist could be working in a newspaper, but he is only a particular kind of journalist. Today journalists work for radio, television and the Internet. However, terms like journalist and journalism are associated with newspaper or press. Though the term media is being increasingly used to incorporate other media, we still use certain terms like press conference, correspondent, etc., that relate to print media.

Over the years, journalism has seen many ups and downs, journalists have been involved in various types of reporting some of which have been vehemently criticized by people. In fact, after the press was given freedom in many democracies, it was found that in order to shield the business interests of their owner, the press is being used to mould public opinion in some very unethical ways.

It has become imperative in all societies for journalists to decide for themselves good practices and the norms for behaviour known as ethics. We would first of all deal with the desired standards for journalism practice and then discuss the ethics of journalism in a wider sense, which deal not only with the behaviour but also with certain practices that violate the laws of the land. As the freedom of press needs to be guarded, journalists and newspapers are required to be careful in dealing with certain kinds of news which lead to defamation or libel.

#### **Canons of Journalism**

There are always dissatisfactions and complaints against journalism. People feel that journalists are biased, they are not truthful or they take sides. The matter of fact is that journalists work under many kinds of pressures and the very nature of news writing is such that in spite of the good intentions of journalists it becomes difficult to satisfy everyone. Journalist associations and many other bodies such as press councils have evolved certain guidelines for journalists. Though not as 'official', through the years there have been codes of ethics drawn up and endorsed by editors and journalists associations.

The American Society of Newspaper Editors founded in 1922 made certain parameters in which journalists were asked to function. They were called 'Canons of Journalism'. These canons were listed as follows:

1. Responsibility (of newspaper and journalist)
2. Freedom of the Press (a vital right of mankind)
3. Independence (fidelity to the public interest)
4. Sincerity, truthfulness, accuracy (good faith with reader)
5. Impartiality (news reports free from opinion or bias)
6. Fair play, decency (recognition of private rights, prompt correction of errors)

It is interesting to note that these canons of journalism were also described by Casper Yost in his book *Principles of Journalism* in 1924 and they still hold good; though now we have added a few more things to it, as the practices of journalism has shown us the newer dimensions of the canons. In the following passages of this section we would discuss various aspects of good practices in journalism. We would start our exploration with the canons as described by Yost (1924).

**Responsibility:** The right of a newspaper to attract and hold readers is restricted by nothing but considerations of public welfare. The use a newspaper makes of the share of public attention it gains serves to determine its sense of responsibility, which it shares with every member of its staff. A journalist who uses his power for any selfish or otherwise unworthy purpose is faithless to high trust.

**Freedom of press:** Freedom of the press is to be guarded as a vital right of mankind. It is the unquestionable right to discuss whatever is not explicitly forbidden by law, including the wisdom of any restrictive statute.

**Independence:** Freedom from all obligations except that of fidelity to the public interest is vital. Promotion of any private interest contrary to the general welfare, for whatever reason, is not compatible with honest journalism. So-called news communications from private sources should not be published without public notice of their source or else substantiation of their claims to value as news, both in form and substance. Partisanship in editorial comment which knowingly departs from the truth is contrary to the best spirit of journalism; in the news columns it is subverting the fundamental principle of the profession.

**Sincerity, truthfulness and accuracy:** Good faith with the reader is the foundation of all journalism worthy of the same. By every consideration of good faith, a newspaper is constrained to be truthful. It is not to be excused for lack of thoroughness or accuracy within its control or failure to obtain command of these essential qualities. Headlines should be fully warranted by the content of the articles which they surmount.

**Impartiality:** Sound practice makes clear distinction between news reports and expression of opinion. News reports should be free from bias of any kind. This rule does not apply to the so-called special articles unmistakably devoted to advocacy or characterized by a signature authorizing the writer's own conclusions and interpretations.

**Fair play:** A newspaper should not publish unofficial charges affecting reputation or moral character without opportunity given to the accused to be heard; right practice demands the giving of such opportunity in all cases of serious accusation outside judicial proceedings. A newspaper should not invade private rights or feelings without ensuring public right as distinguished from public curiosity. It is the privilege, as it is the duty, of a newspaper to make prompt and complete correction of its own serious mistake of facts or opinion, whatever their origin.

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**Decency:** A newspaper is accused of insincerity if while professing high moral purpose, it supplies incentives to base conduct, such as are to be found in details of crime and vice, publication of which is not demonstrably for the general good. Deliberate pandering to vicious instincts will encounter effective public disapproval and professional condemnation.

### **Ethical Standards of Journalism**

Similarly, the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) has also prepared a code of conduct for journalists. Organisations like All India Newspaper Employees Federation, Indian Journalists' Union and National Union of Journalists are members of this organization.

The International Federation of Journalists, according to its website, is the world's largest organization of journalists. First established in 1926, it was relaunched in 1946 and again, in its present form, in 1952. Today the Federation represents around 600,000 members in more than 100 countries. The IFJ Code of Conduct, first adopted in 1954, provides a code of ethics adopted by all national representative journalists' organizations in Europe. Therefore, the IFJ Code of Conduct provides the basis for a common understanding on ethical issues through voluntary adoption of journalists and publishers. In this area, IFJ sees no active role for national governments.

### **IFJ declaration of principles on the conduct of journalists**

This international declaration is proclaimed as a standard of professional conduct for journalists engaged in gathering, transmitting, disseminating and commenting on news and information in describing events.

- (i) Respect for truth and for the right of the public to truth is the first duty of the journalist.
- (ii) In pursuance of this duty, the journalist shall at all times defend the principles of freedom in the honest collection and publication of news and of the right of fair comment and criticism.
- (iii) The journalist shall report only in accordance with facts of which he/she knows the origin. The journalist shall not suppress essential information or falsify documents.
- (iv) The journalist shall use only fair methods to obtain news, photographs and documents.
- (v) The journalist shall do the utmost to rectify any published information which is found to be harmfully inaccurate.
- (vi) The journalist shall observe professional secrecy regarding the source of information obtained in confidence.
- (vii) The journalist shall be aware of the danger of discrimination being furthered by the media, and shall do the utmost to avoid facilitating such discrimination

based on, among other things, race, sex, sexual orientation, language, religion, political or other opinions, and national or social origins.

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Qualities and  
Ethical Standards*

(viii) The journalist shall regard as grave professional offences the following:

- a. Plagiarism;
- b. Malicious misrepresentation;
- c. Calumny, slander, libel and unfounded accusations;
- d. Acceptance of a bribe in any form in consideration of either publication or suppression.

(ix) Journalists worthy of the name shall deem it their duty to observe faithfully the principles stated above. Within the general law of each country, the journalist shall recognize in professional matters the jurisdiction of colleagues only, to the exclusion of every kind of interference by governments or others.

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### **Press Councils and Ethics of Journalism**

In many countries, including India, there are autonomous or independent institutions that look after the grievances of public regarding the work of newspapers and other periodicals. In Britain, the Press Council was established in the earlier days, but as it was felt that it is not very representative and effective, a new body called the Press Complaints Commission (PCC) was formed. In India, there is an autonomous body chaired by a retired justice of Supreme Court of India, which is called Press Council of India. Similarly, in many other countries there are Press Councils that look into the grievances of public regarding the functioning of newspapers and the conduct of journalists. The process of nominations in these organizations may differ, but journalists and media organizations are adequately represented in them along with representatives from almost all walks of life.

After the expansion of privately owned television networks in India, there have been many complaints from various groups of people regarding news coverage and entertainment programmes. In recent years, the Government of India has tried to make such a regulatory body, but it has been opposed tooth and nail by media organizations and journalists. Some news and entertainment channels have made an independent organization called News Broadcasters' Association and has come up with certain codes of conduct. However, the issues have not been properly addressed till date.

In the following passages, we will look at the code of conduct as suggested by The Press Complaints Commission (PCC) and the Press Council of India (PCI) as they are much more comprehensive than those of journalists associations mentioned here.

The Press Complaints Commission, situated in London, is charged with enforcing the following Code of Practice, which was framed by the newspaper and periodical industry and was ratified by the PCC in September 2009.

**NOTES**

**Check Your Progress**

3. List the canons of journalism.
4. What is the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ)?

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**2.4 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS**

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1. The following are the three main responsibilities of a journalist:
  - Social responsibility
  - Responsibility towards the organization:
  - Responsibility towards sources
2. The two qualities of a journalist are as follows:
  - Ethics and integrity
  - Courage and boldness
3. Following are the canons of journalism:
  - Responsibility (of newspaper and journalist)
  - Freedom of the Press (a vital right of mankind)
  - Independence (fidelity to the public interest)
  - Sincerity, truthfulness, accuracy (good faith with reader)
  - Impartiality (news reports free from opinion or bias)
  - Fair play, decency (recognition of private rights, prompt correction of errors)
4. The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) is a global union federation of journalists' trade unions—the largest in the world.

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**2.5 SUMMARY**

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- Journalists are participants in the process of human communication. In order to communicate, at least two parties play a role in the process—one who transmits the stimuli and another who responds.
- Journalists are participants in the process of human communication. In order to communicate, at least two parties play a role in the process—one who transmits the stimuli and another who responds.
- Journalists are responsible for messages about things that they claim have really happened, are really happening or likely to happen.



- In the 1920s, an American writer, reporter and political commentator Walter Lippmann understood that the role of journalism role at that time was to act as a mediator between the public and policy making elites.
- The business of gathering and disseminating information automatically makes the journalists powerful.
- The media reflects the social images or pictures of our society. These images are powerful influencing factors in the society and shape the perspective and decision making of the policy makers.
- A journalist has a responsibility to follow the editorial policy of the newspaper organization that he is working for.
- It is crucial for a journalist to not only protect but also respect his sources. If the source wishes to be anonymous then the journalist should respect his confidence.
- A solid ethical core characterizes a good journalist. Fairness, objectivity and honesty matter when reporting on the news.
- A good journalist has an analytical objective mind that can base his or her stories on evidence and facts, and not emotion.
- As a vocation, journalism has many facets. A journalist could be working in a newspaper, but he is only a particular kind of journalist.
- Freedom of the press is to be guarded as a vital right of mankind. It is the unquestionable right to discuss whatever is not explicitly forbidden by law, including the wisdom of any restrictive statute.
- A newspaper is accused of insincerity if while professing high moral purpose, it supplies incentives to base conduct, such as are to be found in details of crime and vice, publication of which is not demonstrably for the general good.
- The International Federation of Journalists, according to its website, is the world's largest organization of journalists. First established in 1926, it was relaunched in 1946 and again, in its present form, in 1952.

## NOTES

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## 2.6 KEY WORDS

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- **Journalist:** Journalist is a person who writes for newspapers, magazines, or news websites or prepares news to be broadcast.
- **Media:** Media is the collective communication outlets or tools used to store and deliver information or data.
- **Ethics:** Ethics or moral philosophy is a branch of philosophy that involves systematizing, defending, and recommending concepts of right and wrong conduct.

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## 2.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

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### NOTES

#### Short-Answer Questions

1. What are the various qualities of a journalist?
2. Why are the ethical norms necessary for journalists?
3. What are the canons of journalism?
4. What do the critics of freedom of press say about the freedom of press?
5. What is the role and relevance of press councils?

#### Long-Answer Questions

1. Journalists are participants in the process of human communication. Explain.
2. Discuss the three main responsibilities of a journalist.
3. Write an essay on the canons of journalism and their relevance today.
4. Describe IFJ declaration of principles on the conduct of journalists.
5. Explain the role of the Press Complaints Commission.

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## UNIT 3 NEWS: CONCEPT, DEFINITION AND ITS TYPES

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*News: Concept,  
Definition and  
its Types*

### NOTES

#### Structure

- 3.0 Introduction
- 3.1 Objectives
- 3.2 Definition of News
- 3.3 Types of News
- 3.4 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
- 3.5 Summary
- 3.6 Key Words
- 3.7 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 3.8 Further Readings

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### 3.0 INTRODUCTION

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It is important to know that reporting is a much coveted and sought after aspect of journalism. It is the reporter who is the known face of the newspaper or news channel. He comes in contact with people and represents their opinion. Generally, reporters are accorded a special treatment by the public and government alike. It is the reporter who is given a ringside seat in a special enclosure along with other media persons in any event, public function or even in legislative proceedings.

This does not mean that other aspects of journalism like editing or page making are less important or command lesser respect. However, a reporter occupies a special place in the process because he goes out in the field, gathers news and submits it to the news desk for further processing. It is the reporter who deals with people outside the newspaper office; it is he who represents the paper to the people or newsmakers.

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### 3.1 OBJECTIVES

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After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Understand the definition and meaning of news
- Differentiate between soft news and hard news
- Discuss the various types of news

## NOTES

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### 3.2 DEFINITION OF NEWS

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Different scholars have given their own interpretations about the meaning of news. According to **John Bogart** of *New York Sun*, ‘when a dog bites a man, it is not news but if a man bites a dog, it becomes news’. He pointed out that unusual events fall under the purview of the news. Similarly, William Hearst has defined news as ‘... what somebody somewhere is trying to suppress. Everything else is advertising’.

**Walter William**, who has been credited with founding the first school of journalism, defined news as, ‘...news in its broader sense, is that, which is of interest to the readers – the public’. According to another scholar G. Johnson, news is what interests a newsman.

The well-known publisher of *New York world* **Joseph Pulitzer**, whose name is now synonymous with a prestigious journalism award, defines news as ‘original, distinctive, dramatic, romantic, thrilling, unique, curious, quaint, humorous, odd and apt to be talked about’.

The *Funk & Wagnall’s Dictionary* defines news as: ‘Information of a recent event, development, etc., especially as reported in a newspaper, on the radio, etc...any new or unfamiliar information.’

News is the timely report of events, facts and opinions, and interests a significant number of people. It is a new piece of information about a significant and recent event that affects the readers/audience and is of interest to them. The definition of a news item is dependent on the following:

- The size of the community (audience).
- The periodicity of the publication (daily, weekly, fortnightly, monthly, etc).
- The social character and economic strata of the community.
- The emphasis of the community (e.g., the elections to the *panchayat* in a village do not become the headline of a provincial or national newspaper).

Turner Catledge, former managing editor of *New York Times* said that news was ‘...anything you can find out today that you didn’t know before’.

In brief, the main characteristics of news are as follows:

- It is perishable, i.e., the moment it is known to the readers, it perishes. Once known, the news loses its value and becomes a part of history.
- It is of interest to a considerably large number of people.
- It possesses an unusual nature.
- It is something that is new to the people at large.
- It is provided by a reporter; it does not exist without a reporter.

However, here one should keep it in mind that the general idea of news differs with people and situations. In a common perspective, some of the defining elements of news may vary, but their essential components are same throughout the world.

One must try to find out what exactly is the meaning of news? After reading the definitions and opinions of various scholars on the issue, it is better to ponder over the nature of news? Most of us watch television news bulletins, listen to radio news bulletins or leaf through newspapers a number of times. Why do we do this? One may say, 'to get information'. But why do we need to get information in the first place? One may feel that something is amiss. Without knowledge and information about contemporary happenings, an individual will not be able to connect with the society at economic, social and political levels. Further, one does not generally read Monday's newspaper on Friday. One may refer to an old newspaper to recheck certain information but this is rarely done on a daily basis.

To begin with, any unusual happening falls under the category of news. News is what you do not know. People turn to mass media like radio, newspaper and television to get informed about the latest happenings around the world. Without this information, one may not be able to relate and keep pace with the society. News is basically the report of facts. It is anything out of the ordinary. News is what a newsman makes it. An essential feature of news is that it is 'new'. There are no rigid rules to define news. It is unpredictable. In case of political news, prediction depends more or less on educated guesswork. Remember, the best way to learn about news and reporting is to develop an ability to analyse a news story.

A news story in a modern society reflects on various aspects of everyday life. For example, the prices of onion have skyrocketed. Why are media organizations giving so much prominence to this news? Why is it making headlines? Why is it consuming important time slots in different news channels? This is because onion is an essential commodity in kitchens throughout the country. It is also an important component in the menu of poor people. In our country a considerable percentage of population consumes raw onion as a substitute of expensive vegetables. Here, poor people cut it or crush it, put a little salt and pepper on it and eat it with bread. Given this background, skyrocketing of onion prices makes important news. It was on the issue of onion prices that a political party like Congress had dethroned Bharatiya Janata Party in 1999.

### **Exercise 3.1**

You are a regular reader of a daily newspaper which you subscribe. You may have a vague idea about the news and its elements which differentiate news from other pieces of writing. The following news item is extracted from the front page of *Times of India*, New Delhi, Wednesday, 17 November 2010. Go through it carefully and list the reasons as to why you consider it a news item.

## **NOTES**

**NOTES**

**Del-Mum airfares jump 300%**

**Saurabh Sinha/TNN**

**New Delhi:** If you are planning to fly from Delhi to Mumbai at short notice, get ready to shell out more than you would for a return ticket to, say, Dubai or Bangkok. Passengers' buying tickets on the date of travel or a day or two earlier on this sector in the past few days have seen one-way fares on full service carriers skyrocket to ₹16,000-20,000 in economy and ₹20,000-35,000 for business class!

While airfares across domestic networks are 15-25% higher this peak travel season, the Delhi-Mumbai sector has seen a 200-300% jump, thanks to a number of factors plaguing the two airports that together account for almost 70% of all domestic flights.

Low cost carriers are only marginally cheaper with spot or day before travel date fares (one way) ranging from ₹13, 000-17,000; some budget players, however, are charging even up to ₹22, 000. Only tickets being bought at least three or to four days before travel date on this sector begin at a slightly more normal rate of ₹6, 000 but with only a few seats available, even that gets sold out fast.

The main runway in Mumbai is closed for eight hours a day from Monday to Saturday, leading to a massive drop in capacity. With domestic travel growing in double digits post-slowdown, airlines wanted 573 daily slots from the airport there but got only 490. The peak demand season saw supply getting reduced, leading to huge fare hikes, particularly on the super-busy Delhi-Mumbai route.

Delhi is facing huge schedule uncertainties and baggage delays at IGI Airport's new T3 from where Air India, Jet and Kingfisher now operate. Catching a flight from T3 means a walk of 1-1.5 km, something that old passengers and family travellers are keen to avoid, leading to a rush for other airlines.

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**Exercise 3.2**

Scan any newspaper of the day and find out which news story appeals to you most. Then pick up your exercise notebook and try to answer the following questions:

- (i) List the reasons why it appeals to you the most.

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.....

- (ii) How original is it ? Have you seen it for the first time or do you recall having read it before?

.....  
.....

- (iii) Does it stand out in the newspaper? How is it different than other news stories surrounding it?

.....  
.....

(iv) Do you find any element of drama in it? Do the words conjure up any moving picture before you?

.....

.....

(v) Does it arouse your curiosity in any way?

.....

.....

(vi) Does it thrill you in any way?

.....

.....

(vii) Do you find any element of humour in it?

.....

.....

## NOTES

### Check Your Progress

1. What are the factors on which news is dependent?
2. Define the term 'news'.

## 3.3 TYPES OF NEWS

There are two main categories in which the news is mainly divided: hard news and soft news.

### Hard news

It is mostly event-centered. It is the narration of an event. Hard news items are centered on 'what, when and why'. Consider the following news item taken from the front page of *Indian Express*, Delhi, Saturday, 20 November 2010.

#### Terror Probe: CBI arrests Aseemanand in Haridwar

**Jaipur, Nov. 19.** In a breakthrough for investigation agencies probing terror incidents involving right wing Hindu outfits, the CBI today arrested Swami Aseemanand from an ashram in Haridwar in Uttarakhand.

Officials said Aseemanand had been in Haridwar for weeks, using forged identification papers. He is considered one of the main conspirators in the Malegaon, Mecca Masjid and Ajmer Dargah blasts cases. The Rajasthan ATS maintains it was Aseemanand's plan to target Muslim places of worship across the country.

The Uttarakhand police confirmed Aseemanand's arrest in Haridwar. "A team from the CBI was here and they have arrested Swami Aseemanand from an ashram in Haridwar. We believe they have taken him to New Delhi," a senior officer told *The Indian Express*.

## NOTES

Rajasthan ATS Chief Kapil Garg said a team would soon be sent to question Aseemanand in connection with the Ajmer Dargah blast case.

“He is a vital link in this investigation. We hope to question him. We have also been on his trail since the first arrest in this case in April,” Garg said. He pointed out that the ATS chargesheet mentions Aseemanand as the main conspirator and ideologue behind the 2007 Ajmer Dargah blast.

Sources said Aseemanand went underground soon after the Rajasthan ATS made the first breakthrough in the case with the arrest of Devendra Gupta on April 29 in Ajmer. During the course of his interrogation, Gupta mentioned that it was Aseemanand and Sunil Joshi who had brought him into their fold and convinced him to carry out attacks in Ajmer and Mecca Masjid, the sources said.

Aseemanand remained in the Dangs in Gujarat where he was based for a few weeks after Gupta’s arrest. A team from the Rajasthan ATS had been tracking Aseemanand ever since. According to the ATS, he was spotted in Gujarat a few times but then fled to South India.

“Aseemanand had sympathisers who probably sheltered him for a while. We believe he kept moving to keep his location secure. We also believe he went to certain areas in the NorthEast before settling down in Haridwar,” a senior official said.

According to senior ATS officials, the plot to target Muslim places of worship was intended to “avenge” attacks against places like the Akshardham temple and Raghunath Mandir.

“We believe it was Aseemanand’s plan to start the series of attacks across the country. He was not only responsible for choosing targets and making plans, but was vital in supplying logistics and financial aid to those who would execute the operation,” an official said.

It is alleged that Aseemanand also harboured Sunil Joshi—prime suspect in the Ajmer blast case, he died later—and other accused in his ashram in the Dangs.

No doubt, a daily newspaper focusses more on hard news. It is its main thrust area. The principal task of the dailies is to provide information to readers. A mere account of events however does not satisfy readers. They would like to enter beneath the upper layer of news.

### Soft news

Soft news is beyond what has happened. It analyses and interprets in order to arrive at logical conclusions. This is becoming a very important segment of modern newspapers. The following is a sample of a news item that has been quoted from *Times of India*, Delhi, Friday, 26 November 2010:



**From Jan 20, switch mobile operator but keep number  
Times News Network**

**New Delhi:** Exasperated with your present mobile service provider but unwilling to switch because that would mean changing your number? Soon, you'll be free to change operators at will, for a nominal transaction fee of ₹ 19. On Thursday, telecom minister Kapil Sibal launched mobile number portability (MNP) in Haryana. Nationwide implementation is expected to be completed by January 20.

Of course, the implementation of MNP has missed many deadlines. In March 2006, TRAI had recommended that MNP be implemented by April 1, 2007. In December 2009, the government set a deadline of March 31, 2010 for its implementation, which was extended to June 30, 2010 and later to October 31, 2010.

From Friday, mobile phone customers in Haryana can port their numbers provided at least 90 days have elapsed after subscription to the service of the current provider. For change of service provider or porting, a subscriber has to send an SMS (PORT followed by the mobile number) from the number s/he wishes to be ported, to number 1900 whereby a Unique Porting Code (UPC) will be received on SMS from the current service provider. The subscriber will need to apply in the prescribed application form to the chosen new service provider quoting the UPC.

The new service provider will then take action to get the required processes completed to enable the subscriber to get connected to his network. Porting has to be completed within seven working days. Before making the porting request, subscribers will have to make sure their last bill has been paid failing which the change request will be rejected. In case of pre-paid subscribers, any balance amount left will not be carried forward when the number is transferred.

**Exercise 3.3**

Take a newspaper of your choice. Now carry out the following instructions:

- List all the news items on a piece of paper and count their number.
- Categorize them as hard news or soft news.

Use the given template to carry out this exercise:

Newspaper .....

Issue Date .....

News Items Hard / Soft News

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**NOTES**

**Check Your Progress**

3. What is hard news?
4. What is soft news?

## NOTES

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### 3.4 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

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1. The factors on which news is dependent are as follows:
  - (i) The size of the readers
  - (ii) The socio-economic character and background of the readers
  - (iii) The frequency of the publishing newspaper
  - (iv) The focus of attention or emphasis of the readers
2. News is the timely report of events, facts and opinions, and interests a significant number of people.
3. Hard news narrates an event or a happening. What has happened a short while ago is narrated bit by bit in hard news.
4. Soft news goes beyond what has happened. It analyses, interprets and draws logical conclusions.

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### 3.5 SUMMARY

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- It is important to know that reporting is a much coveted and sought after aspect of journalism. It is the reporter who is the known face of the newspaper or news channel.
- It is the reporter who is given a ringside seat in a special enclosure along with other media persons in any event, public function or even in legislative proceedings.
- News is the timely report of events, facts and opinions, and interests a significant number of people.
- It is a new piece of information about a significant and recent event that affects the readers/audience and is of interest to them.
- A news story in a modern society reflects on various aspects of everyday life.
- There are two main categories in which the news is mainly divided: hard news and soft news.
- Hard news is mostly event-centered. It is the narration of an event. Hard news items are centered on 'what, when and why'.
- Soft news is beyond what has happened. It analyses and interprets in order to arrive at logical conclusions.

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### 3.6 KEY WORDS

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- **Reporter:** Reporter is a person who reports, especially one employed to report news or conduct interviews for the press or broadcasting media.
- **Newspaper:** Newspaper is a printed publication (usually issued daily or weekly) consisting of folded unstapled sheets and containing news, articles, advertisements, and correspondence.
- **Publication:** Publication is a technical term in legal contexts and especially important in copyright legislation.

### NOTES

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### 3.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

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#### Short-Answer Questions

1. Why does news perish so fast?
2. What are the main characteristics of news?
3. Mention some of the best definitions of news.
4. What is a news story?
5. Write a short note on reporter.

#### Long-Answer Questions

1. Explain the term 'news'.
2. Discuss the difference between soft news and hard news.
3. Provide an example of a news story.
4. Describe the characteristics of hard and soft news.

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### 3.8 FURTHER READINGS

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Burns, Lynette Sheridan. 1900. *Understanding Journalism*. New Delhi: Sage Publications.

Hartley, John. 2002. *Communication, Culture and Media Studies: The Key Concepts*. New York: Routledge.

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**NOTES**

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Schramm, Wilbur. 1966. *The Story of Human Communication*. New York: Harper and Row Publishers.

Sharma, K. Suresh. 2006. *Press in India*. New Delhi: Vista International Publishing House.

William, Raymond. 1976. *Communications*. London: Penguin Books.

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# UNIT 4 NEWS: VALUES, ELEMENTS, FUNCTIONS AND SOURCES

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*News: Values, Elements,  
Functions and Sources*

## NOTES

### Structure

- 4.0 Introduction
- 4.1 Objectives
- 4.2 News: Values, Elements and Functions
  - 4.2.1 Elements of News
  - 4.2.2 Functions of News
- 4.3 News Sources
  - 4.3.1 Impact of News
- 4.4 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
- 4.5 Summary
- 4.6 Key Words
- 4.7 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 4.8 Further Readings

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## 4.0 INTRODUCTION

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News value is determined by public interest. It differs from person to person and society to society. News value is the significance and importance of a news item. It determines how much prominence the news story should be given by the media organization. In practice, such decisions are taken by the news editor on the basis of his experience and knowledge as well as the media policy of the organization.

In this unit, you will learn about the news values, elements, functions and sources. This unit will also deal with the impact of news.

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## 4.1 OBJECTIVES

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After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Describe the various functions, values, and elements of news
- Discuss the classification of news sources
- Explain the process of framing of news
- Discuss the impact of news on public opinion and attitudes

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## 4.2 NEWS: VALUES, ELEMENTS AND FUNCTIONS

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### NOTES

The following are the factors that determine, affect and influence the news value of any news story:

- (i) **Timeliness:** This is an important factor that decides the news value. If the news is not timely, it has little or no value. There is a fierce competition among newspapers to publish important events as quickly as possible. Strict watch is kept on news events till the eleventh hour, i.e., the deadline when the final pages go to print. In case something really important happens, other stories are pushed to the back pages or dropped and the important story is flashed on the front page. This is done keeping in view the reader's desire for information on the latest happenings. If there is any delay in the coverage of news, the reader might lose interest in the news or the news element itself might diminish.
- (ii) **Proximity:** Human beings are inclined to know about the news events as soon as possible. Things that happen at faraway places like other countries are of relatively lesser interest to people. Something happening in the locality draws more interest than something occurring in the other town or for that matter, in another country. For example, a crime incident in the city evokes more interest than something that happens in a neighbouring country.
- (iii) **Eminence:** If the focus of the news is someone of prominence like the President or the Prime Minister, the interest of the reader automatically shifts to him as compared to people of little or no eminence at all. For example, many ordinary people die in road accidents and hardly anyone bothers. Even the passerby thinks twice before stopping, particularly in metropolises. Moreover, the utterances of eminent people also make news; their speeches decide the leads of newspapers.
- (iv) **Size:** Different angles to a story decide its size. This happens particularly in crime-oriented stories. The more the angles to a story, the more will be the interest of readers in it. So at times, size also determines the news values of stories.
- (v) **News policy of the news organization:** The spectrum of coverage that a news organization decides in accordance with the readership it wants to cater news to is also an important determinant of the news value. For example, *Indian Express* enjoys a special readership because of its, what some people say, 'anti-establishment stance'.
- (vi) **Human interest:** People are always interested in knowing what is happening to other people. Something that deviates from ordinary course of life is always interesting. The uncertainty of human nature and oddity of

circumstances normally contributes to such stories. For example, in 2006 a boy named Prince fell into a deep bore-well pit and this prompted the media to go after the story. Human interest is much in demand as far as news value is concerned.

- (vii) **Novelty or oddity:** Anything that is new or odd in a way adds to the value of the news. For example, in 2006 Pravin Mahajan, brother of then prominent BJP leader, shot his elder brother in his flat. It was something absolutely unusual with no other parallel in Indian politics. So it made banner headlines throughout the country.
- (viii) **Conflict:** Like creative stories, conflict plays an important role in determining news value. Conflict of any kind is news, whether it is the family squabble of Ambani brothers, agitation of Gujjars in Rajasthan to be included in the list of scheduled castes, Telangana movement in Andhra Pradesh or the scourge of Naxalites in many states of India.
- (ix) **Weather and sports:** Both categories of weather and sports carry considerable news value. Monsoon arrival, cyclones, soaring (or plummeting) of mercury, icy chilly winds or dust storms make front page news material. Many newspapers dedicate entire page or a couple of pages to sports.
- (x) **Follow-up:** News items carry a lot of interest for the general public when the issues are followed up and updated. Follow-up of news events keeps the interest of readers alive. Every good news story has follow-ups as it does not end at the first reference only.

## NOTES

### 4.2.1 Elements of News

There are certain parameters on which any news has to be tested. News has certain fundamental qualities, which are as follows:

- **Accuracy:** Accuracy is basic to any news item. It will not be an exaggeration to say that it is the backbone of any news story or news item. When a reporter fails in accuracy, s/he loses credibility. Before writing the news, it is absolutely must for a reporter to crosscheck the facts and information. S/he has to check facts, figures and names to make sure that the meaning is not changed and the statements are not quoted out of context.
- **Balance:** A news item, report or story has to be balanced and this is as important as being accurate. While writing about a controversy, both sides of the story should be given. A story may appear to be 'imbalanced' and thus biased, if it has too much of government views, or tends to give too much of foreign news which has little relevance to readers.
- **Objectivity:** The reporter's opinions should not creep into the story. Only facts and other people's opinions should be reported. The reporter should be a disinterested observer, reporting events without taking sides.

## NOTES

- **Clarity:** The opening sentence should be short and in active voice to the maximum extent possible. The ideal length of each paragraph may be 3–4 lines containing one-to-three small sentences to facilitate easy comprehension.
- **Impact:** Whenever a reporter does a news report, s/he should consider the impact the story will make. Will it induce some changes for the better? S/he will have to develop a ‘nose for news’, particularly news that will leave an impact.

### Exercise 4.1

The following news story appeared in *Indian Express*, New Delhi, Thursday, 18 November 2010. Since we have just finished a discussion on the fundamental qualities of news, now, read the news item carefully. You may have to read it more than once.

#### **CBI tells Govt to shunt out top NHAI officer after ministry rejects probe** **Ritu Sarin**

New Delhi, November 17. The Union Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH), under Kamal Nath, has refused the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) sanction to initiate an enquiry against a top official of the National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) in connection with a corruption case registered six months ago in which two top NHAI officials were arrested.

CBI officials said the denial of sanction came early this month after it sent several reminders to the ministry and to the Cabinet Secretary underlining that it was Union Minister Kamal Nath who was the “competent authority” to take a final decision in the matter.

Sources have confirmed to *The Indian Express* that the CBI, after seeking legal advice, has written to the Cabinet Secretary, K.M. Chandrasekhar asking him to transfer out S I Patel, and Additional Secretary–level officer who is now posted as Member (Projects) in the NHAI.

The cabinet secretary is understood to have scheduled a review meeting with CBI officials later this week.

The case in question is a controversial award of contract in the 120 km Nagpur Betul Highway (NH 69) to a Delhi based private firm, Oriental Structural Engineers Pvt. Ltd. (OSEPL). The contract value, over an 18-year period, is ₹ 10,800 crore, and, the CBI has alleged several irregularities in the manner in which it was awarded.

It was in May this year that the CBI registered a case after it received complaints from among the 12 other bidders and put telephones of NHAI and OSPEL under surveillance. Cash totaling ₹1.86 crore was recovered by the CBI from NHAI officials during searches.

The CBI called it a case of criminal conspiracy and corruption in which while awarding a contract, the NHAI had tried to “eliminate all possible contenders on one pretext or another and favoured the accused company ensuring huge financial gain to it.”







- 6. Spreading awareness:** News helps in spreading awareness regarding what is going on around the world on serious topics like politics, health, business and other people-oriented matters.

*News: Values, Elements,  
Functions and Sources*

### Check Your Progress

1. Mention any two factors that determine, affect and influence the news value.
2. State any three parameters on which any news has to be tested.

### NOTES

## 4.3 NEWS SOURCES

Since we have discussed several points concerning news, news stories and news reports, one question that is bound to emerge in your mind is that where does the news come from. Now, we shall discuss various sources of news.

Generally, news comes from the reporter's contacts. When a reporter covers a regular beat, he visits the places that fall within his specific beat. For example, a crime reporter regularly visits police stations and police headquarters. Since he visits these places every day looking for a news story, he comes across several persons who share the information with him. They can be senior police officers, station house officers, beat officers and even constables. See these people constitute his sources of information. The beat assigned to a reporter may include politics, municipalities, municipal corporations, metropolitan councils, education, etc.

A reporter, to be successful, should have a variety of reliable and highly placed contacts which can be useful to get information. Among the news sources, some are available to all reporters, for example, public meetings, radio and television programmes, press conferences, news briefings, seminars and other functions. However, personal contacts are sources of exclusive information for a reporter. They may be in the government, public or private sector and so on.

An important thing to remember is that some of the contacts may like to be quoted for the story as it gives them publicity. However, in case of a critical story, they may not risk their neck. In that case, the story may have to be attributed to 'sources' only. It is the responsibility of a reporter to ensure the truthfulness of a report. In such cases, it is advisable to keep some documents, audio tape or digital recorder to substantiate the story.

A journalist chronicles daily events, places and facts before the public; s/he tries to communicate what s/he considers truth. This may not suit some individual, institution or the system all the time. Thus, there are chances of confrontation as well. In case a confrontation becomes inevitable, the reporter has to tackle the situation by using personal and professional traits. S/he should also treat his sources as 'sacred'. There may be pressure on the journalist from the government and the judiciary at times to disclose the sources. Nonetheless, protecting one's source is a cardinal principle of journalism.

## NOTES

You should remember that there is no role of imagination in news as it has to come from 'somebody'. This 'somebody' is the source of news. There is no news without a 'source'. It always flows through a channel. Sometimes, there may be a number of sources. Since, a newspaper carries 130 to 150 stories every day, it needs to have a number of sources.

### Exercise 4.2

After being familiar with the 'news sources' you must be clear about the variety of news sources a reporter must have at his disposal. The following exercise will give you a first-hand experience of the usages of a variety of sources in a newspaper.

- Take a newspaper and concentrate on the first page.
- Scan all the news items and find out how many and what types of sources have been used in the news items.

The format given below will come handy in completing this exercise in a more organized way.

News sources used on the front page of .....  
on .....

Serial News Items Sources

.....  
.....  
.....

### Classification of Sources

The news sources have been classified as:

1. Primary sources
2. Secondary sources
3. Tertiary sources

**1. Primary sources:** These include the sources which a reporter cultivates while working on a regular beat. For instance, a crime reporter develops sources in police as well as among the 'underworld' if he spends considerable time on that particular beat. In case of spot coverage, he has to gather most of the information on the spot. All these sources are primary sources of information.

**2. Secondary sources:** National and international news agencies are the most important secondary sources in the newspaper industry. At this juncture, we will define a news agency.

According to UNESCO a news agency is

'an undertaking whose principal objective, whatever its legal form, is to gather news and news material of which the sole purpose is to express or present facts, and to distribute this to, a group of news

enterprises, and in exceptional circumstances to private individuals with a view to providing them with as complete and impartial a news service as possible against payment, and under condition compatible with business laws and uses’.

*News: Values, Elements,  
Functions and Sources*

In simpler terms, a news agency can be defined as a professional organization that collects the content from various parts of the country or world, as the case may be, on various beats and then transmits the raw content in the form of a news story to its subscriber newspaper organizations on a regular payment basis.

## NOTES

In India, Press Trust of India (PTI) and United News of India (UNI) are the most prominent news agencies. They also cater the news in Hindi. UNI and PTI provide Hindi news services known as *Univarta* and *Bhasha* respectively.

Internationally, the news agencies of importance are Reuters of Britain, Associated Press (AP) and United Press International (UPI) of USA, Agence France Press (AFP) of France, Deutsche Press Agentur (DPA) of Germany, Itar Tass of Russia and Middle East News Agency (MENA) of Egypt.

- 3. Tertiary sources:** Press releases, statements and press notes are classic examples of tertiary sources. Every day in a newspaper office, a stream of such material keeps pouring in. This includes press releases by local leaders about civic problems, statements of leaders on any particular issue, or petitions by general public on lack of civic amenities in the area.

Announcement stories emanating from companies and individuals pour in bulk into newspaper offices. As one editor put it, ‘Press releases arrive as a giant snowstorm each day.’ Obviously, a newspaper can use very little information that comes into the office on a daily basis—even if it is high quality—because of space limitations.

Nonetheless, most releases are valuable for setting up a directory of potential sources. A professional release has the name and address of the PR officer and the company which can be contacted, as can be the office bearers of the divisions and other personnel mentioned in the releases. The reporter should not throw away such items without giving at least an evaluative glance.

Some small weeklies functioning with a limited staff directly use such releases. Most newspapers, however, rewrite the releases they decide to use. This is done for several reasons. Certainly, many releases are incomplete, too lengthy or too superfluous. For example, a good reporter will want the reader to know where an event will take place, a point that a release may overlook. An announcement of a campus event by a university may make sense to campus readers, but the general readers will need to know the address of the lecture hall as well.

Most standard releases have a release date, or ‘embargo’ line, which tells the paper when to release or print. Conventional newsrooms almost always put embargoes on stories until the time of the speech or event. For example, a national

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non-profit agency had prepared grandiose plans for reorganization. The board officers had heard much about the plans in a general meeting two days before the scheduled announcement in Mumbai. Reporters from New Delhi, Chandigarh and the wire services gathered for the 7 a.m. announcement breakfast. However, to their amazement, the local morning paper was already on the street with a banner headline on the story.

The difference between tertiary sources and other two types of sources should be clearly understood. In the first two, the reporter searches or looks forward to the sources of news while in tertiary sources, information comes to him on its own.

### **Other Sources of News**

Apart from what has been already explained, there are some other sources of news as well, they are as follows:

#### **Speeches**

Speeches are a major source of news and every day many news items that appear in newspapers can be traced back to some speech or the other. Sometimes several speeches form part of one report. This happens in reports of seminars, symposia and legislatures. In such situations the most important speech, normally from the most important speaker, gets prominence.

While covering political party conferences and international conferences on various subjects, one has to deal with several speeches in a row. Depending on the content and the speaker, a reporter has to decide who should come first. Effort should also be made to generalize observations if possible and then mention who said what. In such cases the most important things said by different speakers should be mentioned and there should be no repetition of ideas. If there are contrary opinions expressed by different speakers they should be mentioned and then supporters of different schools of thoughts, which should be quoted. Here again repetition of ideas should be avoided.

If in a special debate in a house of Parliament, the speech of a minister of state gets prominence in case the cabinet minister of the same department does not speak. If the cabinet minister also speaks then the state minister is normally pushed out of the story. If the prime minister intervenes during the debate and says something on the subject even the cabinet minister is mentioned later in the body of the story. So while reporting multiple speeches the reporter must evaluate all these factors.

#### **Libraries**

Time spent browsing in libraries can turn up prospective story ideas. You may find an author who has been so far overlooked. You may also find consumer reports which you can localize. Glance through magazine articles. They deal with the

relevant themes in contemporary life, many of which you can adapt and discuss for the readers in your locality. You can also pick up a few ideas from out-of-town newspapers. Libraries not only contain resources for story research, they can also be the source of new ideas, background information, and fact verification.

Libraries also have books and reference materials. Usually, media organizations have a research and reference section where a reporter can access newspaper clippings and published material on a particular topic. Many a times, simply wading through the files, one comes across a lot of information and innovative story ideas.

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### 4.3.1 Impact of News

The concept of narrative has been used to study a variety of media contents. Basic narrative forms of media are wide-ranging; from news ‘stories’ and advertisements to drama presented in sitcoms. By and large all media content tell stories in a rather predictable and patterned form. The main function that a narrative serves is to make sense of experiences that are reported. Narrative does this in precisely two ways. First of all, it links events and actions in a casual but sequential and logical way. Secondly, narrative provides a realistic character to places and people. Further, narrative gives a rational explanation to human motive and thereby makes sense of fragmentary, discrete observations. So when one calls news a narrative, one must appreciate that news is a process by which the dominant and recurrent themes of society are retold and reaffirmed, albeit with a certain ideological colouring.

News items too, just like all stories, are cast in a typical narrative format in that it has a beginning, middle and an end; it has minor actors and principal ones; and it has connected sequences. Often news stories also follow familiar patterns just as fictional stories do and also register dramatic shifts and turns in the narrative. However, news stories also differ from fictional ones. For one, news cannot follow the narrative that fictional stories do; news stories must provide in the beginning, an abstract of the story and must also give the sequence of events in which its various actors will play out their roles. Moreover, news information is assembled by journalists in an order that is newsworthy and not necessarily chronological. Van Dijk has analyzed the news narrative structure in the tradition of discourse analysis. He has provided the syntax of news schemata by developing an empirically based framework that analyzes news on the basis of news schemata.

Many aspects of news form are related to the pursuit of objectivity, that is, factualness. News is presented in a linear language. That is to say, it reports an event in a single dimension while adding illustration, information and discussion. Gaye Tuchman in *Making News* lists some of the features that are essential for news narrative. News, according to her, should be told in the past tense whereas the headlines should be in the present tense. News must also avoid the conventions that fictional narratives follow. The Glasgow Media Group says that ‘the language

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of news seems to be in a form which would allow a fairly simple test of its truth or falsity. It has for the appearance of being entirely *constative* (propositional and capable of being shown to be true or false) and not *performative*.’ The terms constative and performative were coined by J.L. Austin to describe the ambiguity of the news discourse. She does a structuralist analysis of the news form. She says that for it to be comprehensible, an event needs to be presented as a story. This process of presenting an event as a story requires the negotiation of the two modes which are essentially opposed to each other: the performative and the constative. The performative is the storytelling mode; it is also the interpretative mode. The constative is the factual mode; it is also the demonstrative mode. Different kinds of stories require different combinations of both and in the discourse of television analyses, these can be plotted against the two axes.

It cannot be denied that factuality is indispensable to the news genre. Gaye Tuchman insists that factuality of any event is predicated on the reliability or credibility of verifiable sources. In Smith’s words, ‘The whole idea of news is that it is beyond a plurality of viewpoints.’ He opines that it is credibility alone which distinguishes news from propaganda or entertainment. This is one reason why the secular trend in news development has been towards neutrality and away from ideology. But, as Gerbner says, ‘there is no fundamentally non-ideological, apolitical, non-partisan news-gathering and reporting system.’

### **Learning from News**

Political communication and news is that feature of mass communication that has seen maximum competition between the new media such as the Internet and mainstream media such as newspapers and magazines. It cannot be denied that the Internet offers a much more varied and diverse news content than any magazine, newspaper or news channel can. It also allows the reader to select news content as per the reader’s interests. Moreover, the Internet being an interactive medium allows readers to actively interact with other sources of information.

As such news does not have any learning goals. News in many ways is a kind of service; it offers diverse items of events and information to the audience. The circumstances that attend to the consumption of news are different from those that attend to other kinds of mass communication. News content is very often peripheral and perishable, although its overall purpose is to inform the audience. This is why news content is often judged as per its information value. The extent to which news can affect its audience depends on the degree of attention that the audience pays to news content; the extent to which the audience understands news content; and the how much the audience can recognize and recall news content afterwards. This relationship of recall and comprehension in turn depends on some prime factors: audience, message and sender. News messages can be interesting, relevant and comprehensible. The sender or news sources can vary as per the credibility and trust which the sources establish amongst the audience. The main factors which effect the audience include among others, the general level of



education of the audience; the motivation to keep abreast of current events and to follow news; and a general pre-existing familiarity with the topics and events in news. Generally, however, most news is received with little attention and without much active processing.

Published research on learning from news is very little. The results achieved so far merely confirm some of the outcomes of earlier research on basic communication theory. Thus the relevance, interest and correctness of stories are indispensable to the comprehension of news content. Further, the habit of discussing topics of current events also plays a significant role in aiding comprehension of news content. Television is by and large cited as the main source of news. However, Robinson and Levy agree that television's role as a source of news is overrated since it cannot provide much knowledge of public affairs. At the same time, visuals as demonstrated by Graber can help recall news content. In this television as a source of news has an advantage over print media.

McQuail identifies the following factors associated with news learning:

- Repetition of news
- Credible or trusted news channel or source
- Prior knowledge or interest on part of audience
- News fits an available frame of interpretation
- Visual illustration
- Perceived relevance of topic
- Concrete subject matter and 'hard news' character

These factors are attributes of believability by an audience. Essentially some trust is necessary for any news source to be effective. It has also been noticed that people habitually pay attention to media sources they do not trust. There are also cross-country variations. In UK compared to other European countries the press is much less trusted. The issue of credibility has been revisited with the emergence of the Internet as a news medium. It is difficult to assess the credibility of information available on the Internet unless it comes from established and reliable media names.

### **Framing of News**

News is thematically and topically 'framed' so that it can be easily understood by the audience. It is not an exaggeration to assume that the audience too uses some of these frames to process news content received by them. In this context much attention is paid to how news information is presented or framed. In a journalistic context, news value connects each event with the other and stories are given meaning by referring to such news value. According to Entman, 'framing involves selection and salience.' Frames for him, make moral judgments, define problems and suggest remedies after diagnosing causes. Framing is a way of providing an overall interpretation to isolated events. It is almost impossible and unavoidable for

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journalists to escape framing. All sources provide news media with information that has a built-in frame. This frame usually suits the purpose of the sender and is least likely to be of objective nature. There are various examples of news framing. For instance, during the Cold War almost all news coming from the erstwhile USSR and the Soviet Bloc was reported in terms of the Soviet 'enemy.' Today, Europe and America presents all news coming from the Middle East in terms of Islamic fundamentalism. In other words, news content is never purely objective and always suffers from some intended bias.

Thus frames become guides to selection, relevance and cognition. These frames are constructed collectively and are used widely by people across the world. Graber defines schema as a 'cognitive structure consisting of organized knowledge about situations and individuals that has been abstracted from prior experiences. It is used for processing new information and retrieving stored information.' Schemata help evaluate new information and fill gaps if information is ambiguous or missing. The broadest and most enduring frames are those that have an international currency, while others may be specific and local. The way that schemata are used by people to respond to news information is also varied. Very simply, new learning is seen as the process by which new information is integrated with pre-existing frames.

Exemplification is one type of frame that is used to create an effect and is often used by news. Exemplification is the act of illustrating general themes and conclusions by citing specific concrete cases. However, where the case is not representative, it can lead to bias or misinformation. This can lead to four possible effects according to Zillmann. Audience perceive issues better if examples are emotionally arousing; or when the presentation of news is vivid; or if concrete examples rather than abstract points are made use of; or where more than one example of the same kind is given.

### **News Diffusion**

Early understanding of the term diffusion was limited to the spread of news. Further the spread of news was measured by the capacity to recall certain events. The following four main variables are taken into consideration in this matter:

- The perceived salience or relative importance of a given event
- The extent to which knowledge of an event comes from news media rather than from personal contacts
- The extent to which people know about the event
- The volume of information which is transmitted about the event
- These four variables interact with one another in a very complex manner. One model of their interaction is the J-curved relationship, proposed by Greenberg, between the proportion that is aware of an event and the

proportion that has heard of the same event from an interpersonal source. The findings of the J-curved model are as follows:

- When an event is known by almost everyone, for example Princess Diana's death in a car accident or the attacks of 9/11, a high proportion of people is likely to have heard about the event from a friend.
- When events are known by decreasing proportions of the population, more people get to know of the event through media sources than through personal contacts.
- A very small category of events are known by an equally small or sometimes a miniscule proportion of the population. This proportion comprises of the minorities and for them the event is highly salient. Therefore, the proportion of knowledge from personal contact is more than that from a media source.

Media research is usually biased toward such class of events as 'hard news' since the latter has a high level of unexpectedness. Therefore the theory about news diffusion suffers from certain pitfalls. More evidence regarding anticipated or routine events as well as 'soft news' will provide a fuller picture of news diffusion. The other limitation which this theory suffers from is the inability to estimate event importance independent of the amount of attention given to it by media; especially different sections of society show varying interests for each news item. The decline of a centralized mass news channel and the availability of numerous news channels have added to the complexity of studying and theorizing about news diffusion.

### **Agenda Setting**

The term agenda setting was coined by Shaw and McCombs. It was used by them to describe a phenomenon that had long been studied and noticed in the context of election campaigns. The idea at the core of this discussion is that news media indicates to the public what constitutes the main issues of the day. The corollary is that this in turn is reflected in what the public perceives as the main issues. As McQuail points out, 'evidence strongly suggests that people think about what they are told but at no level do they think what they are told.' Research indicates that there is a link between the order of significance that is given in the media to 'issues' and the order of significance given to the same issues by the public and the politicians. Lazarsfeld refers to this as the power to 'structure issues.' Politicians wish to convince the public that the issues with which they (the politicians) most closely identify are most important. In this way politicians seek to advocate their agenda and sway public opinion in their favour. This in brief is the agenda-setting hypothesis. However, evidence of this kind is not sufficient to illustrate a casual connection between the various issue 'agendas.' In order to achieve that one may have to focus on various dynamic: evidence of opinion change over time, analysis of media attention to different issues in the said period; content of party programmes; and use of relevant media by the concerned public.

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According to Rogers and Dearing, three different agendas need to be distinguished from each other: the priority of policy, the priority of media and the priority of public. All three interact in complex ways and have effects in different directions. They go on to say that that the public may not share the same values regarding news as media may; that media may vary in its credibility; and that personal experience may not correlate with media picture. Further developments in the real world may upset previous agendas. A lot depends on how power is balanced between media and sources; which too is a factor that varies from one case to another.

Despite the difficulties it offers, agenda-setting has been of much attraction to scholars of mass communication because it offers an alternative to the effect that media has on individual behaviour and attitudes. Dearing and Rogers offer several generalizations about agenda-setting. First of all, different media agree that certain issues are considered relatively salient. Secondly, there is no congruence between real-world indicators and media agendas. Thirdly, the relative importance of an issue is not what counts but the extent to which people try to promote and define an issue. Finally, in Dearing and Roger's words, the 'position of an issue on the media agenda importantly determines that issue's salience in the public agenda.'

### **Effects on Public Opinion and Attitudes**

Research on mass communication began with the expectation to find significant influences of mass media on public attitudes and opinion. It is next to impossible to observe attitude and opinion directly or to precisely define it. Attitudes are basically underlying dispositions toward a person, issue, object, race, class, etc. These can be detected or measured through statements, verbal responses that can be evaluated. These statements or responses show the strength and direction of an individual's leaning toward an object such as a leader, an issue or a political party. A person's attitude toward various objects are usually thought to bear a relation to one another in that each person has a structure of more or less consistent attitudes. It is also possible to speak of 'public attitudes' to designate the predominant tendency in a group or society.

Opinions are statements of preference from a side of a choice or argument presented. It has both evaluative and cognitive value. An individual may have more than one opinion on a given issue without any cohesion of these varied opinions. Thus opinions are also provisional and specific. Opinions also vary in the strength to which they are held. People may have strong opinions on some matters and not on others. Opinions further vary in the degree to which they are based on credible information. Aggregates of opinion form what is referred to as public opinion. Public opinion means the sum of views or the predominant leaning of a large group of people or the population as a whole. In other words, although opinion is individual the sum of similar individual opinions forms 'public opinion.' At the same time, however, public opinion does enjoy a degree of independence from the individuals that contribute to it. First of all, individuals are able to perceive,

whether accurately or not, that the prevailing view is that of others and is available as public opinion. Further, when the media holds tremendous influence over public opinion, it becomes important for politicians and those answerable to the public to give weightage to public opinion as if it is a tangible fact. So, the strong public opinion that was formed in India after the Munirka rape case, regarding amendment in rape laws, became a social fact for the political players of India. Not only did each and every politician spoke on the subject, but the government made it a point to swiftly introduce in the parliament of India, a bill that would amend the existing rape laws.

The aforementioned suggests that media effect is very relevant to the formation of public opinion and attitude; after all the wide coverage of student protests outside Raisana Hill and at India Gate in the case cited above, helped create public opinion in the said matter. In other words, media has considerable potential to influence the thoughts, the attitudes and the opinions of others. Often these are achieved unintentionally, simply by giving information about various events, informing about issues and relating the options that are available. For instance, the wide disapproval that the government faced in the aftermath of its crackdown on the protesting students at India gate was an unintended consequence of media reports. No news channel had to specifically tell anyone that the government is unjustified in its extreme response to peaceful protests. Simply by showing images of students being hit by water canons and images of their being lathicharged were enough to generate public anger and anguish. Since then the government had to widely publicize its efforts to book the culprits of the gang rape case and its efforts to introduce strong sentences for rape and sexual offences. Thus, for the Indian government the public opinion created in the aftermath of the Munirka gang rape case became a social fact and political players of the ruling party had to organize their activities around that fact. Further, media, by conducting and highlighting public opinion poll results add another element of potential influence. Questions asked in a public opinion poll demand of even otherwise neutral audience to take a position on the issue under discussion. Moreover, by discussing pros and cons of the existing public opinion and by basically articulating public opinion in editorials, panel discussions, etc., media further participates in and demonstrates its potential to direct the process of whereby public opinion is created. Nonetheless it must be mentioned that media has more potential to form opinions than to alter attitudes even if it successfully brings relevant evaluative information to the public sphere. This is because attitudes are deeply ingrained and resist change.

The most basic principle by which opinions and attitudes, especially attitudes are organized is the social milieu in which individuals holding them move and their grounding in social groups. Another important principle is that of balance or consistency. People are most comfortable when their opinions, their likes and dislikes are congruent with those of others. This is also known theoretically as cognitive consistency. The other position is of cognitive dissonance which is the theory that states that people consciously look for ideas and opinions which are

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consistent with their own so as to avoid any social discomfort or embarrassment arising from incompatible ones. This also suggests that new information can question, unsettle and challenge existing ones and lead to realignments and reconsiderations. This makes the informational effects of mass media very significant in the longer term. Denis McQuail identifies the following reasons for the media not being able to affect public attitude and opinion:

- Persuasive content is reinterpreted by its audience
- People tend to attend selectively to sources and messages they already agree with. This leads to reinforcement of existing opinion and attitude, not change
- Attitudes are determined by more fundamental and enduring personal circumstances
- Media offers competing views on issues that often contradict each other and cancel each other out
- Public is resistant to attempts at persuasion
- Social environment and personal influence are more influential on opinions than media

### Check Your Progress

3. What is a cardinal principle of journalism?
4. Define the term 'news agency'.

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## 4.4 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

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1. The two factors that determine, affect and influence the news value are as follows:
  - Timeliness
  - Proximity
2. The three parameters on which any news has to be tested are as follows:
  - Accuracy
  - Balance
  - Objectivity
3. Protecting one's source is a cardinal principle of journalism.
4. A news agency can be defined as a professional organization that collects the content from various parts of the country or world, as the case may be, on various beats and then transmits the raw content in the form of a news story to its subscriber newspaper organizations on a regular payment basis.

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## 4.5 SUMMARY

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*News: Values, Elements,  
Functions and Sources*

- News value is determined by public interest. It differs from person to person and society to society.
- News value is the significance and importance of a news item. It determines how much prominence the news story should be given by the media organization.
- Accuracy is basic to any news item. It will not be an exaggeration to say that it is the backbone of any news story or news item. When a reporter fails in accuracy, s/he loses credibility.
- A news item, report or story has to be balanced and this is as important as being accurate.
- The reporter's opinions should not creep into the story. Only facts and other people's opinions should be reported.
- A reporter, to be successful, should have a variety of reliable and highly placed contacts which can be useful to get information.
- An important thing to remember is that some of the contacts may like to be quoted for the story as it gives them publicity.
- A journalist chronicles daily events, places and facts before the public; s/he tries to communicate what s/he considers truth.
- Speeches are a major source of news and every day many news items that appear in newspapers can be traced back to some speech or the other.
- Libraries also have books and reference materials. Usually, media organizations have a research and reference section where a reporter can access newspaper clippings and published material on a particular topic.
- The concept of narrative has been used to study a variety of media contents. Basic narrative forms of media are wide-ranging; from news 'stories' and advertisements to drama presented in sitcoms.
- The main function that a narrative serves is to make sense of experiences that are reported.
- News is thematically and topically 'framed' so that it can be easily understood by the audience. It is not an exaggeration to assume that the audience too uses some of these frames to process news content received by them.
- The term agenda setting was coined by Shaw and McCombs. It was used by them to describe a phenomenon that had long been studied and noticed in the context of election campaigns.
- Research on mass communication began with the expectation to find significant influences of mass media on public attitudes and opinion. It is next to impossible to observe attitude and opinion directly or to precisely define it.

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- Attitudes are basically underlying dispositions toward a person, issue, object, race, class, etc.

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### 4.6 KEY WORDS

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- **Timeliness:** Timeliness is the fact or quality of being done or occurring at a favourable or useful time.
- **Proximity:** Proximity means nearness in space, time, or relationship.
- **Eminence:** Eminence is the quality of being very well-known and highly respected.
- **News reports:** News reports are found in newspapers and their purpose is to inform readers of what is happening in the world around them.

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### 4.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

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#### Short-Answer Questions

1. What are the various elements of news?
2. List at least five 'news sources' a newspaper reporter should have at his/her disposal at any time.
3. What kind of help does a digital recorder provide to a newspaper reporter?
4. Why should a reporter maintain the confidentiality of his sources?
5. Write a short note on 'speeches as a source of news'.

#### Long-Answer Questions

1. Explain the factors that determine, affect and influence the news value.
2. Describe the various functions of news.
3. Discuss the classification of news sources.
4. Identify the factors associated with news learning as proposed by McQuail.
5. Explain the process of framing of news.
6. Discuss the impact of news on public opinion and attitudes.

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*News: Values, Elements,  
Functions and Sources*

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**BLOCK - II**  
**REPORTING AND ITS DIFFERENT TYPES**

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**UNIT 5 CONCEPT OF REPORTING**

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**Structure**

- 5.0 Introduction
- 5.1 Objectives
- 5.2 Concept of Reporting
- 5.3 Types of Reporting
  - 5.3.1 Reporting Skills
  - 5.3.2 Terms Related to Reporting
- 5.4 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
- 5.5 Summary
- 5.6 Key Words
- 5.7 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 5.8 Further Readings

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**5.0 INTRODUCTION**

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A democracy can only function properly when the public remains well informed. One way in which a public remains knowledgeable is through watching or reading the news. News essentially means newly received or noteworthy information about recent or important events. The task of providing news to the public is the job of a journalist.

A journalist could either be a reporter, editor or commentator. However, the entire charm of the profession of journalism lies only in reporting. The job of a reporter is the most sought after. These days, whenever any newspaper advertises vacancies or announces recruitment, the office often gets flooded with thousands of applications. Out of these thousands of applications only six or seven are found suitable.

A reporter is the face of a newspaper outside its office. It is the reporter who gets recognized by the administration or the government. It is the reporter who gets all the privileges of a newsman. In public places, special seating arrangements are made for reporters. For examples, the reporters who cover municipal corporation meetings are made to sit in a separate box from where they can observe the proceedings and record the speeches in their respective note books.

It is a reporter who brings the fresh news to the office. Reporting is his job. No newspaper can survive without reporters.

The heroes of journalism are reporters. What they do is find things out. They are inquisitive and sceptic. They go in first, amid the chaos, sometimes taking risks, and capture the beginnings of the truth. Sometimes, the doors are slammed shut on their faces. Sometimes they are attacked. There are instances of reporters being killed. Daniel Pearl is one such example. And if reporters do not bring in the fresh news, who will? Without reporters, what would editors and commentators know?

However, most of the time there is only one alternative to reporters: accepting the authorised version, the one the businessmen, bureaucrats and politicians choose to hand out. It is obvious that they will show only their side of the coin, which will, of course be far from the complete picture, and may not be the total truth at all!

Reporters are usually quite intelligent. Some of this intelligence and sharpness are instinctive; other qualities are developed with experience. Most are built up through years of experience - by researching, re-researching and writing and re-writing hundreds of stories.

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### 5.1 OBJECTIVES

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After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Define the concept of reporting
- Identify the different types of reporting
- Explain the various reporting skills

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### 5.2 CONCEPT OF REPORTING

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*The first step in good reporting is good snooping.*

— Matt Drudge

Reporting basically means writing the report after researching, collecting all the relevant data and gathering facts. Here, the research pertains to background information of the event that is to be reported when dealing with current events and contemporary issues and celebrities. Reporting is the art, the skill and the business of gathering information for immediate use.

The concept of immediacy of news is at par with the requirement of the news organisation for which a reporter works. A reporter who works for a television channel has a deadline almost every minute because he has to update his story every minute with fresh images and quotes in view of the competition with the rival channels. Same goes for a reporter who works for a wire service as his agency has to cater to several newspapers with different printing deadlines.

In the same manner, a reporter who works for an evening edition has to be a lot faster than his counterpart who works for a morning daily. However, a reporter

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who works for a weekly has to work on a totally different pace than his counterpart who works with a daily. The weekly's reporter can afford the luxury of more details, a different angle or for that matter, better images.

Reporters for magazines may work for a deadline that may be one week, one fortnight or one month away. The reporters who work on special in-depth stories, particularly of investigative kind, for newspapers, sometimes spend weeks and months on a story. But reporting deals with the current and the contemporary irrespective of the pace of working with a single goal of delivering the fresh, alive and timely news.

### **Reporters' Place of Working**

Reporters gather news from various sources; sometimes by themselves and sometimes through secondary sources. Newspapers gather news through their reporters, distribute and finally deliver it to their news-hungry readers in a number of different ways and through a number of different organizations and agencies. They collect news for their own use and deliver it directly to their subscribers.

Wire services, like the United News of India (UNI) and Press Trust of India (PTI), gather news and distribute it to newspapers and other publications. They also distribute news to radio and television stations. Similarly broadcasting organisations like television and radio networks gather news for distribution to news work affiliates. Radio and television stations maintain their own news staff.

There is also a huge secondary network of news gathering and distribution called public relations or public information. An organisation called Press Information Bureau gathers and prepares news about the activities of Government of India for distribution to newspapers, broadcast stations and other primary distributors of news and information. Similarly almost every state government has a full fledged public relations department to give out the news of their activity. Same goes for educational institutions, social agencies, corporates, industry and business.

### **Newspaper Reporting**

A newspaper organization is basically a news gathering organisation. Its editorial section is divided into desks and sections that deal with different areas of news. For instance, if the elections are going on, it will have a separate election desk which will deal with the election news. Political desk deals with news on politics and so on. In larger newspaper organisations like *The Times of India*, *The Hindu* or *The Indian Express*, these functions may be further expanded like there may be a separate desk for each political party while in comparatively smaller newspapers; these may be clubbed together, i.e., a single desk dealing with two or three different areas of news.

Reporters work in two ways. Some of them work in specific areas called beats. A beat is nothing but a particular topic or area. Like in a police station

where different policemen have different beats, in a newspaper office different reporters have different beats. For example, crime beat can be allotted to a reporter while another one may look after municipality or Municipal Corporation. Yet another one may cover hospitals. Beats then are basically the areas of operation for reporters. After working for sometime on a beat, a reporter develops sufficient contacts so as to cover the beat. So whatever happens in his or her beat, information reaches him or her automatically. A good crime reporter for example would be able to develop contacts in the police and therefore be able to report about everything related to crime in the city in the newspaper that he or she is working for.

In a good news organisation, beats of a reporter are rotated regularly. This enables a reporter to master all the beats so that in the absence of one reporter, another one can perform the task of covering that particular beat. This also helps in case a reporter suddenly quits the job. Another reporter can be given his or her beats to cover while a replacement is organised.

A few reporters maybe kept on a standby. They are known as general assignment reporters. They are assigned stories as and when they break. They are, in a way, kept in reserve for anything that needs to be covered or any situation that arises suddenly. For example, if there is a big disaster, these reporters are given the assignment to cover it and are made to rush at the spot.

In a limited way, newspapers still cover the things that happen at police headquarters and in the courtroom, but they are more likely to view police stations and courts as part of a larger problem of law enforcement and criminal justice.

Another example is covering education. Education is no longer a matter of covering occasional school board meetings but of reporting on the whole process of education and activities throughout the school system.

Other popular beats include health, environment, consumer issues, lifestyles and the arts as well as business and labour.

Newspapers set up suburban bureaus, state capital bureaus like in Mumbai or national bureaus in Central capital like New Delhi. Reporters visit places in order to cover stories, but the idea of news gathering today is to treat it more broadly and to follow it wherever it leads. These days, it is of common occurrence for a reporter to follow a story that leads to some other beat.

Today, news gathering has become more organized to deal with news as it concerns issues, problems and activities. Newspapers like *Indian Express* organize their news gathering efforts to cope with the expected as well as the unexpected.

A lot of news is anticipated. It is possible to arrange well in advance a reporter, who will cover a certain event, a public meeting, the monthly meeting of the municipal council, an election or a political defection. A considerable amount of the news in the daily newspaper is derived from routine scheduled events like the assembly or parliament in session, movie premiers, politics and other activities.

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Newspapers also have to be prepared to deal with the unexpected spot news (covered live, on-spot). A news staff must be sizeable and experienced enough. They have to be deployed in a way that allows the newspaper to cope with sudden mishappenings. In events like terrorist attacks, fires, train wrecks, plane crashes, tsunamis, and earthquakes, the reporting staff of any newspaper is put to test. Catastrophes never occur at convenient times or in convenient places. The biggest example of this is the Bhopal gas tragedy, when the toxic Methyl Isocyanate (MIC) gas leaked at 1 a.m. from the Union Carbide factory. The reporters had to rush in the middle of the night to the mortuaries of the hospitals. The News staff in such cases has to rise to the occasion.

In addition to the expected and the unexpected categories of news, there is another variety that can be called 'made' or 'planned news'. Sunday editors plan in advance so as to have feature stories available for the various sections of the next Sunday's paper. Editors assign reporters to do interviews, personality sketches, profiles and detailed stories with complete background information.

Biographical sketches needed either for obituaries or elevation are assigned, written and filed away for future use. For example, in 1998 when it looked like Sonia Gandhi could become the Prime Minister of India, all hell had broken loose to secure her biographical sketches. So a couple of books written on her were immediately procured by the newspaper and television organisations. However, it never came to that later, but the preparations of the media organisations were complete.

Major investigative stories are carefully planned in response to what editors and reporters believe their readers ought to know or might be interested in. None of these stories fall into the expected or unexpected categories. Ideas for some may originate on beats, but all are forms of news in the sense of organizing information and providing background and meaning to the news.

### The Reporter

We shall now discuss what exactly is meant by the word 'reporter' -

Reporters are people who get what they are sent for. If one considers this as a definition of sorts, this can be illustrated with the example of a hound that is sent on the hunt. After some time he comes back with the quarry in his mouth. Similar is the case of a reporter who is sent on the hunt of a story and sometime later he comes back to the office with the story in hand.

Yet another example: A reporter more recently described himself in this way:

'I am a reporter. In twenty minutes with a mobile phone and a computer I can write a coherent and substantially accurate 700-words story of a highway accident or collapse of a government. With one rumour, a couple of facts, and a half an inch-high bunch of clippings,

I can weave a scandalous account of what's being done with your hard earned money paid in taxes. I can bluff my way through a probing conversation with a minister or a mobster. I have knocked on strange doors at unearthly hours to get the information.'

Another editor described a reporter only in terms of abilities. 'Reporters should respect deadlines, they must be able to gather information and present it in news format as fast as possible and they must be able to generate ideas.'

Another way to define a reporter is to differentiate him or her from a correspondent. A correspondent generally includes some of his/her own perspective on the news. For example, a correspondent is expected to provide considerable context to the events being chronicled. A reporter, on the other hand, offers largely fact-based reporting. This difference is also the reason why one has foreign correspondents and not foreign reporters in a country. A foreign correspondent is writing for a foreign audience and so he or she is expected to give the context behind a particular news story from a country and not simply report facts.

The reporter can also be defined in terms of the skills needed to gather information about a wide range of events, occurrences and human activities. Reporters should be skilled at:

- Seeing, hearing, note taking and researching,
- Finding information and supplement it by asking questions,
- Checking, verifying, analyzing and interpreting information

However, sometimes a reporter may not be able to write a news piece well. An editor would be lucky if his reporter could also write well. Not all reporters write well and not all good writers are good reporters. Nonetheless, there are people who would be a combination of both, of course. They are good at digging out information and at the same time adept at presenting it well enough to catch, arouse and maintain reader's attention. But this is not always the case. Some reporters do not have to write. They are legmen, who telephone their stories to the rewrite desk, where somebody else writes their story for them. Some able reporters write only passably well but are excused because of their special newsgathering talent.

#### Check Your Progress

1. Define the term 'reporting'.
2. Differentiate between a correspondent and a reporter.

### 5.3 TYPES OF REPORTING

The types of reporting are the following: Crime reporting, objective reporting, interpretative reporting and investigative reporting.

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### 1. Crime reporting

What constitutes crime? The dictionary meaning says crime is ‘a wrong act that is against the law’ or ‘a violation of law’ and it is also defined as an act or omission punishable by law.

Crime is an important beat in big, medium and small newspapers because it is the inseparable part of city coverage. The reason is that people take considerable interest in them. Sex and crime have the highest rating points in media in terms of sale. The mass media cannot afford to paddle sex for the fear of moral police in India, but they do carry crime stories to a considerable extent. Crime stories are widely read and add to the circulation of a newspaper and establish its credibility as well.

Crime is the dark side of human society and is associated with negative manifestations of human nature and behaviour. Despite its dark connotations it holds a tremendous attraction for the common man and that is why stories related to crime are taken very seriously by the readers. Like other news stories, it is imperative for a newspaper to inform its readers about the incidents of crime that are happening in the city, state, country or the world. Crime reporting is one of highly responsible and a specialized job, though mostly it is assigned to a junior reporter or a cub reporter.

Fortunately, the police beat is considered as the best training ground for future investigative and diplomatic correspondents. As Richard Critchfield writes in *The Indian Reporter's Guide*,

‘While speech reporting trains the ear and sports reporting the eye, crime coverage gives the new reporter a broad range of events on which to exercise his talents, usually providing action stories with narrative as well as human drama.’

The point can be driven home with the help of an example. The crime reporter of a local newspaper got a tip-off that two children aged 12 and 8 years, respectively, had drowned in a pond. The police simply registered a case of accident. When the reporter visited the accident spot, he spoke to several people some of whom claimed to be the eyewitnesses. There was so much variation in their statements that he began to suspect a foul play. Then he asked for a long bamboo which he inserted in the pond and was shocked to discover that the pond was only three feet deep! Autopsy report of the children indicated that there was mud in the nails of deceased children. When he reported the matter in his newspaper in all its sordid details, the police had to change the case from accident to murder.

Crime stories seem to be more of a staple diet in evening papers than the morning dailies. At any given day, you find screaming headlines in evening papers selling at traffic intersections or outside local train stations or metro stations. Since evening papers are published mostly from the major cities, it is easy to infer that the crime is largely urban in nature and is of major interest to urbanites. During the



yesteryears, dacoity in Chambal area constituted a major part of crime stories throughout the country and you know very well that it is a rural crime.

*Concept of Reporting*

### **Ingredients of a Crime Story**

How does one report crime cases? Here a partial list of questions to be asked by a reporter is given:

- *Casualties*: Was anyone killed? If so, how? Similarly, was anyone injured? How? What were the weapons used? What happened to the dead? Was a well-known person killed?
- *Property Loss*: What was the value of property lost or damaged? What exactly was stolen, defaced or destroyed?
- *Method of Crime*: How was the crime committed? What weapons, if any, were used? How were the victims treated by the criminals? Was this a repetition of any similar crime?
- *Motive*: What moved the criminal to commit the crime? What did the victims report? What did the police or other witnesses have to say?
- *Arrest*: State the names of arrested people, along with their age and occupation. What formal charge was preferred? How did the police apprehend the criminals? Where were they taken to?
- *Clues*: Did the criminal leave behind him any clues? What clues did the witnesses provide? What clues are the police investigating? Is a description of the criminals available?

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### **Classification of Crime Cases**

A crime reporter has to build-up good contacts in police. Besides he should have a good knowledge of relevant sections of IPC that the police commonly uses against the accused persons. Some of the more common crimes may be classified as follows:

1. 'Abetment' means assisting and aiding, facilitating or instigating a crime. Usually, the punishment in this case is the same as for the offence itself.
2. When there is an agreement between two or more individuals to commit an offence, it counts as a criminal conspiracy. It involves some action besides the agreement in pursuance of the plan by one or more parties to the scheme.
3. Offences against the state comprise anti-national activities like sedition and assaulting state officers among others.
4. Offences concerned with the navy and army comprise desertion, mutiny, giving shelter to a deserter, insubordination and pretending to be a military personnel.
5. Offences which spoil the social order and public tranquility are rioting and arson, taking part in an unlawful gathering, hiring and encouraging people to

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- get involved in an unlawful assembly, attacking public servants and abetting animosity between classes or communities.
6. Offences concerned with public servants include corruption, illegal financial indulgence and impersonating as a public servant. Other offences that can find a public servant in the dock are: noncompliance with law with an intention to cause some fraud, forging incorrect documents, buying property illegally or getting involved in unethical trade.
  7. In the domain of elections the offences comprise false statements, bribery and not keeping election accounts.
  8. Showing contempt for the lawful exercise of powers by the public servants, for example, absconding to escape a summon.
  9. Rape is an offence by a man with his own wife aged below 12 years and in any other case involving unnatural sexual offences against the consent of a woman.
  10. Following are the offences against property:
    - (a) Theft: If an individual, having an intention to dishonestly grab any movable property, takes its possession from the legal owner without his consent, it comprises a theft.
    - (b) Extortion: It involves blackmailing to obtain illegal compensation.
    - (c) Offences related to dacoity and robbery involve simple robbery, robbery on a highway at night or becoming the member of a gang involved in the act of committing theft and dacoity.
    - (d) The act of criminal misappropriation of property.
    - (e) A servant, clerk, banker, merchant or agent indulging in criminal breach of trust.
    - (f) Getting possession of stolen property or becoming a part of a scheme meant to conceal or dispose it.
    - (g) The acts of cheating through impersonation or fraudulently inducing delivery of property or by changing or destroying a security possessing some monetary value.
    - (h) Falsified concealment or removal of property or executing a false deed.
    - (i) The acts of mischief resulting in damage to a sum of fifty rupees or more, or through indulging in purposeless maiming or killing an animal of value, or causing obstruction to a public drainage resulting in reduction of water supply to farm lands, destroying bridges and public roads, damaging landmarks, mischief through explosives and fire, etc.
    - (j) The illegal and immoral acts counting as criminal trespass, e.g. lurking with an intention to intimidate or in pursuance of any other illegal scheme, trespassing a house at night or deceitfully breaking open any closed container or any other vessel containing property.

- (k) The acts of offences related to documents and trade or property marks, e.g. forgery and counterfeiting plates or seals with an intention to effectuate a forgery, destroying or defacing a document of will, falsification and manipulation of accounts. It further involves the use of fake trademarks and counterfeiting the national currency.
11. Following are the acts of offences concerned with human body:
- (a) The offences that affect life:
    - (i) Committing a murder or putting up an attempt to commit a murder.
    - (ii) An act born of negligence but which may cause death, with or without the real intention of committing it.
    - (iii) Causing injury or death through a blind, rash or negligent act.
    - (iv) An offence amounting to abetment of suicide by insane, child, idiot, intoxicated, delirious person or someone not in his proper frame of mind.
    - (v) Attempt to commit suicide.
  - (b) Offences related to injuring unborn children, causing miscarriages, abandoning infants and cover up a newborn's birth by secretly disposing the dead body.
  - (c) Offences related to intentionally injuring someone with dangerous weapons or drugs, wrongful confinement through assault and criminal force to stop a public servant from performing his duties, outrage a woman's modesty, dishonour a person, etc.
  - (d) Offences related to kidnapping, abduction, slavery and forced labour:
    - (i) Kidnapping with the intention to get ransom.
    - (ii) Abducting someone with the motive to kill.
    - (iii) Kidnapping a woman to force her into marriage or ruining her modesty.
    - (iv) The evil practices of procuring a minor girl or importation of girl from a foreign country, buying and getting possession of a minor for prostitution.
    - (v) Kidnapping an individual with an intention to slavery or hurt. It also involves abducting a child to grab its property.
12. Giving false evidence and committing offences against public justice system such as destroying documents, providing false evidence, sheltering capital offenders, resisting lawful apprehension and questioning, insulting public servants performing their judicial duties, etc.
13. There are certain offences concerning coins, currency and government stamps. These comprise forgery, counterfeiting, possessing counterfeit money and fabricated stamps, etc.

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14. Offences in the area of weights and measures involve the deceitful use of false tools and instruments for the purpose of weighing and measuring. It further involves the manufacture of such instruments.
15. The law mentions certain offences that affect the public health, convenience, safety, morals and decency. These comprise intentionally spreading diseases, adulterating eatables and medicine, hampering public water supplies, careless driving on public roads to put human life at risk, using fire and explosives to harm human life and property, not taking sufficient measures to avert possible dangers by the fall of a building over which the individual possesses the right to renovation and repair, engaging in a public nuisance, selling obscene books and literature, vulgar songs or running unauthorized lottery office.
16. The law provides for certain cognizable offences concerning religion. These include damaging or defiling a religious place, spitefully insulting the religious beliefs of a community, disturbing a religious gathering or congregation, disturbing a funeral procession with wrong intentions, hurting religious feelings through verbal or behavioural gestures.
17. There are certain punishable offences related to the institution of marriage. For example, by deceit a man may cause a woman, not his legal wife, to think that he will marry her and share an accommodation with her on the basis of this false belief. Further, it is counted as adultery, an offence, if somebody entices a married woman with criminal intent.
18. Defamation is an offence. It is prohibited to sell the printed matter which is defamatory by nature.
19. Insult, criminal intimidation and irritations like spreading a false rumour with the intention of disturbing public peace, or coercion through unidentified communication, or making an individual believe that he will become an object of divine anger, or insulting the modesty of a woman through behaviour and words, or visiting a public place while drunk thus causing annoyance to fellow human beings.

This is a pretty exhaustive list of criminal acts and a reporter covering crime must familiarize himself with it. It is equally important that he is familiar with the processes of dispensation of justice.

Apart from this, a crime reporter should have a sharp news sense, a nose for news and he should be able to separate chaff from the grain, i.e. the truth from lies. Besides, he must follow the code of ethics and should be as objective as humanly possible and refrain from cheap gimmicks and sensationalism. Further, reports that glorify the activities of criminals should be discouraged and sensationalism should be boycotted at any given point of time. The standards of decency and good taste should be maintained.

### Crime as News

The crime news comprises many types. It may range from rape, kidnapping, blackmail, fraud, burglaries, robberies, accidents, fires and murders.

## Fires

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Fires are common occurrences throughout India. The number of fire incidents mysteriously goes up during summers, particularly in slums. While reporting a fire incident, the reporter should take care to get the essential elements like number of persons killed or injured, the quantum of damage to the property, the loss of valuables, etc. He should also find out the response time of the fire brigade and the swiftness of firefighting operations and the adequacy of water supply. He should talk to eyewitnesses and look for some act of bravery or cowardice.

The following is a sample.

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### Four major fire incidents in Delhi

#### New Delhi Apr 2.

Four major fire incidents were reported from the national capital today; including one at former Union minister Ram Vilas Paswan's residence and another at the Income Tax office. Four persons, including a three-year-old girl, were injured and two expensive cars and various items in a saree shop were gutted in the incidents, fire brigade and police officials said. The incidents came a day after Comptroller and auditor general (CAG) pointed out in its performance audit of the fire brigade that fire safety and prevention measures were not adequately enforced in many buildings in the capital. A fire broke out in Mr. Paswan's 12 Janpath residence here this afternoon, in which two expensive cars were gutted. The blaze was reported from the garage at around 3:15 pm and three fire tenders were rushed to the spot to douse the flames, fire brigade officials said. They said the fire broke out in the fibre sheet apparently due to a short circuit. Two cars—an Audi and a Honda Accord—were gutted in the incident but no one was injured. The LJP chief was in Patna when the incident took place. Last year on May 13, a fire broke out in the same house due to a short circuit in which several household items, including cupboards, antique statues, sofa sets and chairs were destroyed. Another incident was reported from Income Tax Office here in which a labourer suffered minor burn injuries. Seven labourers were trapped inside the fourth floor of the building at ITO crossing after the fire broke out when they were engaged in woodwork there. Sixteen fire tenders were rushed to douse the flames and the labourers were rescued, fire officials said, adding one of them received minor injuries. The reason behind the fire is yet to be ascertained. In the third incident, a fire broke out in a shop in a busy market in central Delhi but no one was injured. The blaze was reported from the saree shop on Ajmal Khan Road in Karol Bagh at around 2 pm. Eight fire tenders were rushed to the spot to douse the flames. The fire broke out due to an electrical short-circuit. The officials said no one was injured in the incident and they were ascertaining the loss. In the fourth incident, a three-year-old girl and her parents were injured when a fire broke out in a slum cluster in south Delhi's Kishangarh early this morning. The three were identified as Pappu and Seema, both 26, and their three-year-old daughter Priyanka. They were rushed to Safdarjung hospital where they were undergoing treatment. "The fire may have been caused because of a carelessly thrown bidi...but we are yet to ascertain the cause," officials said. PTI SJY

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**Homicide**

Murders, being sensational in nature, carry more news value. So they are considered more important in crime reporting. The more high profile and sensational a murder is, the more space it will get in the newspapers and will be splashed with prominence. Murders like Shivani Bhatnagar murder, or, for that matter, murder of Jessica Lal that even inspired a movie hogged headlines for weeks to come. Arushi murder case is still in the news even after the CBI recommended its closure. For reporting a murder case, the reporter should ideally conduct his/her own investigations. This is possible to some extent in small towns and state capitals, but in metropolitan cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata or Chennai, the press depends on police for information and normally there is a big time gap between their own investigations and the police version. Ideally, a crime reporter should rush to the scene of crime as soon as possible after receiving the tip-off from his/her sources and gather all the relevant facts. The dependence of press on police in such serious matters like murder always hampers the search for the truth. If you can groom yourself to investigate the murders independently, your investigative skills will sharpen and the experience of reporting crimes like murder will be a thrilling and exciting one. Besides, you will also be able to see for yourself, how attempts are made to hush up such cases. The experience will be useful for you in the due course of your career.

The following is a sample.

**Teenage girl taken to Dwarka apartment, killed; one arrested**

Shalini Narayan New Delhi, November 18. A man was arrested for murdering a 16-year-old girl at his rented apartment in Dwarka early on Saturday morning. The victim, a resident of West Delhi's Vikaspuri area, was reported missing on Thursday, when she didn't return from her tuition class. According to the police, the victim and the accused were well-acquainted. According to the police, the victim, a resident of Hastasal village in Vikaspuri had left for her tuition class at 3.30 pm on Thursday. At 6.30 pm, she reportedly told a friend of hers to go home, stating that she would come home later by bus. But the girl never returned." She left with the accused to his rented apartment in Dwarka," said a senior police officer. The accused, identified as Om Yadav (28), a construction material vendor residing in Vikaspuri, allegedly took the girl to his Janata flat no 1481 in Sector 16, Dwarka. Meanwhile, the family—clueless about the victim's whereabouts—registered a case of kidnapping with the Vikaspuri police station the following day. The victim's elder sister reportedly told the police that she received a call from an unknown number around 8.46 am on Friday. "It was my sister. All she said was didi, and started crying," she mentioned in an FIR. Investigators are currently trying to identify the source of the call. People residing in the victim's neighbourhood disclosed that the girl and the accused had been seen together on several occasions. Yadav was detained for questioning, following which he disclosed that he had rented an apartment in Dwarka 15 days ago. Deputy Commissioner of Police (West) V Renganathan said, "We found the victim's body with her throat slit at the apartment this morning. Her body has been taken

for a post-mortem examination.” When Newline reached the flat, located in pocket B of Dwarka, it was found locked. However, through an open window of the one-bedroom apartment, one could see a single bed, a television set placed in a corner, bottles of water and soft drinks arranged a top a small refrigerator. In the backyard, the police found four bottles of Corex cough syrup and a few used contraceptives.” We are waiting for the medical examination report to check if the victim was raped or not,” the officer said, adding that a dagger has been recovered. The accused has admitted his guilt, the police said, adding that nobody else was involved in the crime. Renganathan said, “We have arrested the accused. Earlier, we had filed a case of kidnapping under Section 363 of the IPC. Now we have registered a case under Section 302 of the IPC (murder).” The victim, a class XI student, was living with her parents and two siblings in Vikaspuri. Her father was a hawaldar in the Army. Caution, however, should be taken and the reporter has to refrain from leveling uncorroborated statements against one party or the other. There are always vested interests out to take the reporter for a ride. So a crime reporter has to get his/her facts right by talking to the IO (Investigating Officer) and the eyewitnesses or relatives of the victim(s) and s/he should do proper cross-checking before including any fact in his/her report.

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### Accidents

Newspapers report cases of accidents on the basis of police bulletins or information given by the police spokesman only. Reporters are sent only to cover major cases of accidents like building collapse or landslide. However, our suggestion is that as a crime reporter you should rush to the scene of a major accident to give authenticity to the story. The following is a story from the *Indian Express* of 16 November 2010.

#### **30 killed, dozens injured as building collapses in East Delhi Express News Service New Delhi, November 15.**

At least 30 people were killed and nearly 50 others injured when a four-storey residential building collapsed in east Delhi tonight, police and hospital authorities said.

Some 60 people were rescued from the building in Lalita Park area of Laxmi Nagar, but scores of others are still feared to be trapped, a senior police official said.

Doctors and officials at Lok Nayak Jai Prakash Hospital and Lal Bahadur Shastri Hospital said 13 dead people were brought to the two centres.

R A Gautam, Medical Superintendent of LBS, said 20 injured were brought to the hospital, of which four are in a critical condition.

Fire brigade, police and MCD officials were engaged in the rescue operation and removal of debris with the help of local residents.

Finance Minister A K Walia, who rushed to the spot, said the foundation of the old building could have weakened due to the heavy rains in the Monsoon season when water of the Yamuna river flooded the area.

Locals said some water was still there in the basement of the building.

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Some eyewitnesses also claimed that construction of an extra floor was going on when the incident took place. Many of the injured were labourers.” Such a large building just went down in minutes,” an eyewitness said. People gathered in large numbers in the area. Locals complained that initially there were no power and no cranes to help in the rescue efforts. Ambulances and PCR jeeps were seen rushing the injured persons to hospitals. For a better understanding of the subject, the same accident we are producing from *Times of India*, 15 November 2010.

### 2. Objective reporting

Reporting that is meant to portray issues and events in a neutral and unbiased manner, regardless of the reporter’s opinion or personal beliefs is known as objective reporting.

### 3. Interpretative reporting

*A type of reporting is the interpretation of facts.* A reporter tries to balance the writing with reasons and meanings of a development. He provides the information along with an interpretation of its importance. This is special type of writing in the sense that it tries to give meaning to bear facts. Unlike objective reporting which merely recounts events or occurrences in an objective manner, interpretative journalism attempts to explain them and relate events to each other. We will discuss interpretative reporting in greater detail in Unit 7.

### 4. Investigative Journalism

It is a type of journalism that uncovers what powerful people do not want to be exposed to the public whether it be corporate financial corruption, political violence, violent crimes, or other topics that might not get covered in the everyday news. A primary aim of investigative journalism is to spur change. For example, an investigative journalist might spend four years following a politician and uncovering his disproportionate assets to protect the people from electing a criminal. Investigative journalism is also known as watchdog journalism. However, it is important to understand that investigative journalism is not leak journalism, which is when a reporter releases sensitive documents to the public without any further research into the documents. We will discuss investigative reporting in detail in Unit 7.

#### 5.3.1 Reporting Skills

A right attitude towards the profession is a must to achieve success. This often requires accuracy, objectivity, general competence, industriousness, initiative and intelligence. However, many more qualities and traits of one’s personality and character can add to the profession of journalism. Following are some of these points.



## Excellent News Sense

A reporter is the most important pillar of a newspaper organization in the domain of news operations. So as a reporter it is absolutely necessary for you to know what news is so that you can get the news. Though this age of information explosion has simplified this task to a major extent, but at the same time it has made it difficult as well. Traditionally, the sources of news vary from daily press releases or press notes; their range extends from public at large to press conferences and official spokespersons to websites, portals and blogs. So today, a reporter has to separate the grain from the chaff, differentiate between the news and the trivia and this is not possible unless s/he develops a proper news sense.

As a reporter you have to wade through all the printed material which can be simply publicity material or an advertisement in disguise. You should have a fairly good idea of what kind of readership do you have and what is their interest. This should be your guiding force while selecting the topic to write on. Even when you go for routine coverage like press conference or go through press notes, you should keep the interest of your readers in mind, though these things may not be exciting. As a reporter, you may be assigned less important matters like covering the local self-government issues like municipality or civic problems. Later you may graduate to cover more important matters.

Not that all the reporting assignments are exciting. Most of the time, you may be given the coverage of speeches, announcements and declarations by VIPs, persons in authority, politicians and political parties. Getting an exciting newsbreak will be occasional only. The routine reporting may be boring, but you should always be on the lookout for something unusual that may be hidden in ordinary things. This is not possible unless you develop a keen sense of observation. When H.D. Deve Gowda was Prime Minister of India during late nineties, the newsmen had a field day because of his habit of dozing off. Photographers are always on the lookout for an unusual picture like some participant yawning or scratching his head or slurping the tea at some important conference. So you have to be a keen observer to discover exciting stuff out of the ordinary. This sense will help you find interesting sidelights or snippets for your readers and will make you popular among them. Developing this keen sense of observation will make you alert and will enable you to discover contradictions and problems even on your daily routine beat.

## Extrovert Nature

A professional journalist has to be outgoing, meeting people, making their acquaintance and winning their confidence. He will have to communicate with them. For this, he will have to be extrovert and a good verbal communicator. It is the interpersonal communication between a reporter and his source that enables the reporter to go for mass communication. So if a reporter does not have good communication skills, he may not be able to get any information at all. This is the reason why introverts make poor reporters.

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Readers are interested to know what is going on behind the scenes. Some newspapers have established insight teams that go for inside stories. So in an era of investigative reporting, you will have to be outgoing and extrovert with a jovial temperament.

### **Knack to Establish Sources and Develop Contacts**

An extrovert nature and good communication skills are the basic necessities to establish sources and develop contacts. During the course of your routine coverage you may come across people who have lots and lots of information which you are yet to tap. Or they have contacts with other people who have the information which you can use. So you have to develop friendly relations with these people who are the potential sources of information and win their confidence and respect. This is not possible without devoting some time for them and communicating with them properly. Some of these people may voluntarily offer you the information. You may have to work upon some of them. This is particularly true when you are working on an investigative story. The potential sources may be hesitant in talking to you. They may want to come out with the information but may be afraid to do so because it may adversely affect their interests. Such individuals may be ordinary people or government officials, operatives of the underworld or anybody. Their jobs or their lives may be at stake. So you will have to assure them to keep their identity a secret if they so desire.

In future, the task is simplified for any reporter who wins the trust of his sources and contacts. The information and the documents come to him instead of him going to sources and contacts for information. There are cases when the photocopies of government files have come to the residence of reporters. However, to reach this stage, you will have to work really hard and devote a lot of time.

As a reporter you should be able to differentiate between genuine information and a 'plant'. Genuine information is something you look for as a reporter. You plan a story and then look for information. A 'plant' is something which somebody hands over to you to serve his/her own vested interests. Such information may comprise half-truths and even lies. So you should verify this information with the help of independent contacts.

Sometimes even ordinary sources are very valuable and important sources turn out to be useless at the right moment. So as a reporter you should evaluate your sources and maintain them accordingly. The Watergate Scandal that rocked the United States in the seventies was the result of the report done by ordinary reporters and they had acted on the tip from an ordinary source.

The ability to keep an eye on the happenings and to pursue the right sources to get the right lead works wonders for a reporter. These things do not develop overnight but take years. There are several examples to show how this combination worked and several major scandals came to light. Finally it is the persistence of a reporter on a lead that counts the most.

### **Capacity of Neutral Observation**

As a reporter, you should be neutral in your approach without any prejudices or biases. It is your duty towards your reader to present the facts in an absolutely impartial manner. This is necessary to maintain the objectivity. Reporters are usually charged with mixing their own prejudices and biases in the form of comments and thus becoming subjective. As a reporter, you may have your own views but you have to take precautions to keep them away from your report. Your report should simply be a statement of facts.

To maintain the objectivity and balance, the story should be properly sourced so that your reader knows that what you are passing is simply the news and not publicity material or your own comments or opinions. Unless they want to remain anonymous, the sources must be quoted. You should ensure adequate coverage to all sides of the story in order to make it balanced. You should always keep in mind that what is fair for one group of people may be biased for another group. So you must try to ensure that both sides get an equal representation in your report.

### **Precision in Articulation**

As a reporter, you may be assigned any beat. You may cover Ministry of Defence or, for that matter, Ministry of Science and Technology or Department of Atomic Energy. These subjects are complex and specialized in nature. So the complicated issues involved in the coverage of these subjects should be simplified for the sake of common reader in a layman's language. This is not an easy task. To do this, you should be able to understand the subject yourself so that you are able to explain it to your readers in simple terms. For this, you need clarity in your expression.

Even the government press notes on such topics are beyond understanding. So your task gets multiplied. This can only be achieved by having a proper understanding of the subject. Experts in this field say that journalism is a profession of not knowing the subject, but knowing the person who knows the subject. So you should contact the expert on such topics and seek his help in understanding the subject properly before you explain it to your readers.

### **Team Spirit**

Apart from the routine beats, which are looked after by individual reporters, many major stories in a newspaper organization are handled by a team comprising several reporters. We have talked about insight teams in some of the Indian newspapers in the previous sub-topics; they are attributed to the insight team of the newspaper. Many major stories are the handiwork of such teams. Even when there is a big issue before the press, a team of two or three reporters handles it. When the Parliament is in session, the reporters have to exchange notes among themselves to ensure a proper coverage of the proceedings of the house. Thus, by and large, a newspaper job is a team work and as a reporter you should be able to develop team spirit among colleagues.

## **NOTES**

## NOTES

### **Endurance against Pressure**

For a fair and objective reporter, pressure to keep someone's wrongdoing hidden from the public view is nothing new. History is replete with such examples. Such persons are usually quite influential. Very often they leave no stone unturned to achieve their aims. Further, they may offer bribes to keep the story hidden from the public at large. Also, there are many people in positions of power who need publicity to discharge their duties. So they seek favourable publicity and avoid unfavourable or negative publicity. If they find out some negative publicity coming their way, they can exert pressure on you through their power and clout. This pressure could be to dilute your story or kill it completely.

The more powerful press groups like Government or the advertisers can bring pressure on you through your organization itself. Some can take recourse to legal means, threats or even violence. However, there are ways of dealing with this pressure. You can fight it out; you can give in; or take preventive measures visualizing it in advance.

During emergency, many newspapers fought it out leaving their editorial space vacant. Some of them, of course, gave in, changing their editorial stance completely in support of the then Government. Even during those days, some people like Kuldip Nayar took preventive steps by filing Habeas Corpus petitions and taking legal recourses. In the areas suffering from militancy, many newsmen have fallen to the bullets of terrorists. They preferred to work in tight circumstances rather than succumbing to the diktats of terrorists.

### **5.3.2 Terms Related to Reporting**

There are certain terms which a reporter must know. Here we shall discuss them one by one.

#### **Embargo**

Many times, during a function or in parliament, it is common practice that officials or ministers provide advance copies of their speeches to reporters so that the reporters can read them at length and report them accurately. This practice benefits the officials or ministers as they can hope for better coverage and thus tempts the reporter to use its complete material. It is also advantageous for the reporter to go through the full content of the speech.

However, to discourage the reporter to rush to his office with the advance copy of the speech, an embargo is usually put on it. The embargo clearly states the time when the text of the speech is to be released for publication. It specifies the exact time of publication. The idea is that this advance copy should be used and published only after the speech is delivered and not before.

### **Off the Record**

It is well-known in journalism that in crime, science, diplomacy and politics, no reporter is fully privileged to write all that he knows. In many cases of sensitive nature, many bureaucrats summon the reporters of their confidence and share all the information with them; however, 'off the record'. That means the information cannot be attributed to them.

If the reporter feels that being a part of off the record briefing is not in public good, he can refuse to be a part of this briefing. Many senior government officials adopt this practice, particularly when the person involved is a politician.

### **Pool Reporting**

On several occasions, it so happens that only one or two reporters are invited to be present during the visit of a VIP, particularly a foreign dignitary. There is usually an unwritten agreement that the reporters, thus invited, will share the news with other reporters. This is known as pool reporting. As the word pool suggests, the invited reporters thus pool their information with other reporters, who, for some reasons were not invited.

### **Follow-up**

Follow-up is basically further development of a story. For example, a person is arrested on the charge of robbery. His arrest and the rest of the details would make the first story. Next day when he is presented before the judge and is remanded to police custody for a week, this becomes a follow-up story. If he spills the beans during interrogation, it becomes further follow-up. Follow-up is the chasing of the details of an earlier report. It is important to remember that a follow up report must always have the reference of the original event. This reference should be placed right after lead.

### **Facts and Figures**

There is no news report or story without facts and figures. Usually no report is complete without 5 Ws and 1 H. Some scholars have termed it, one husband with five wives. These Five Ws are: Who, What, Which, When and Where and the one H is How. It is absolutely imperative to answer these six questions in any news report. Therefore, these six facts will have to be present in the story.

If there are figures in the story, they should also be incorporated. Numbers add to the accuracy of the story. But here a reporter should create a balance between the fact and figures and the readability of the story. Keeping the interest of the reader in mind, he should not give too many figures in the story just to show his thoroughness, to the extent of his story becoming boring. What is a story if nobody finds it worth reading!

## **NOTES**

**NOTES**

**Quoting and Paraphrasing**

While reporting the news story, one finds that much of the story may have been gathered by the people connected to the events or by the people who have witnessed the events. The facts told by these people must be recounted, quoted or paraphrased in such way as to indicate the source too. These are the quotations within the news story.

All quotes must be attributed to their original meaning and to their respective speakers. In addition, the information paraphrased too must be attributed to the sources. Quotes can back up the lead and substantiate information in the news story. In addition, good quotes let the reader hear the speaker. They add drama and interest to the story. But boring quotes can bog down stories. If they repeat what has already been said, it's better to eliminate the quotes altogether.

What is a good quote? One that is vivid, clear and strong. It should denote the feelings or reactions of the speaker. For example, in the wake of Bhopal gas tragedy, the state's Culture Secretary, when confronted by a reporter about a cultural extravaganza organized in the wake of the holocaust, said, 'Nobody dies with the dead'.

A quote should be judged on account of its emotional or informational appeal. A number of reporters use quotes just to prove that they spoke to a source. A senior columnist of an American newspaper once said that reporters should consider quotes as the spice of the story, not the meat and potatoes. 'Readers come to the newspaper the way they come to a party,' she said. 'They want to talk to interesting people. Long quotes usually are not very interesting.'

Direct quotes should be avoided when the source is boring or the information is factual and indisputable. Avoid any direct quote that isn't clearly worded. If a government official says something in bureaucratic language that you don't completely understand, ask for clarification and then paraphrase.

Avoid quotes that don't relate directly to the focus or supporting points in your story. Some of the best quotes a source says may have nothing to do with your focus. It's better to lose them than to use them poorly.

At the outset, writing quotes may seem easy: You just write down what somebody else has said. But in reality, you must observe the following guidelines if you want to use quotes correctly and effectively: Always put commas and periods inside the quotation marks: 'There are no exceptions to that rule.'

**Check Your Progress**

3. What do you understand by neutral observation?
4. State any three qualities which you consider essential for a reporter.

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## 5.4 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

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1. Reporting basically means writing the report after researching, collecting all the relevant data and gathering facts.
2. A correspondent generally includes some of his/her own perspective on the news. A reporter, on the other hand, offers largely fact-based reporting.
3. Neutral observation means a detached observation in which the reporter observes a news event without any personal involvement like a third party. This is must to maintain objectivity which is an important requisite of news. Besides, the reporter should also present all the sides of a picture in his story so that the reader gets a complete view of what happened.
4. A reporter should have a well-guided news sense, good command over the language and a deep understanding of laws governing the press in the country concerned.

## NOTES

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## 5.5 SUMMARY

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- Reporting basically means writing the report after researching, collecting all the relevant data and gathering facts.
- Reporters for magazines may work for a deadline that may be one week, one fortnight or one month away.
- Reporters gather news from various sources; sometimes by themselves and sometimes through secondary sources.
- A newspaper organization is basically a news gathering organisation. Its editorial section is divided into desks and sections that deal with different areas of news.
- Newspapers also have to be prepared to deal with the unexpected spot news (covered live, on-spot).
- The crime news comprises many types. It may range from rape, kidnapping, blackmail, fraud, burglaries, robberies, accidents, fires and murders.
- Reporting that is meant to portray issues and events in a neutral and unbiased manner, regardless of the reporter's opinion or personal beliefs is known as objective reporting.
- A reporter tries to balance the writing with reasons and meanings of a development. He provides the information along with an interpretation of its importance.
- A reporter is the most important pillar of a newspaper organization in the domain of news operations.

## NOTES

- A professional journalist has to be outgoing, meeting people, making their acquaintance and winning their confidence.
- As a reporter, you should be neutral in your approach without any prejudices or biases. It is your duty towards your reader to present the facts in an absolutely impartial manner. This is necessary to maintain the objectivity.
- For a fair and objective reporter, pressure to keep someone's wrongdoing hidden from the public view is nothing new.

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### 5.6 KEY WORDS

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- **Beat:** A beat is nothing but a particular topic or area. Like in a police station where different policemen have different beats, in a newspaper office different reporters have different beats.
- **Abetment:** Abetment means assisting and aiding, facilitating or instigating a crime.
- **Objective Reporting:** Reporting that is meant to portray issues and events in a neutral and unbiased manner, regardless of the reporter's opinion or personal beliefs is known as objective reporting.
- **Investigative Journalism:** It is a type of journalism that uncovers what powerful people do not want to be exposed to the public whether it be corporate financial corruption, political violence, violent crimes, or other topics that might not get covered in the everyday news.
- **Follow-Up:** It is basically further development of a story.

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### 5.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

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#### Short-Answer Questions

1. What is newspaper reporting?
2. What are the different skills a reporter must possess?
3. Write a short note on crime reporting.
4. Mention the various terms related to reporting.
5. What is pool reporting?

#### Long-Answer Questions

1. Explain the concept of reporting.
2. Discuss the various types of reporting.
3. Describe the term 'embargo' in the field of journalism.



4. Give a detailed note on the 'follow-up' in the domain of news.
5. Explain the expression 'off-the-record' in journalistic lingo.

*Concept of Reporting*

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## 5.8 FURTHER READINGS

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## NOTES

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## UNIT 6 COVERING NEWS BEAT

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### NOTES

#### Structure

- 6.0 Introduction
- 6.1 Objectives
- 6.2 Political and Business Reporting
  - 6.2.1 Business Reporting
- 6.3 Sports, Science and Technology and Education Reporting
  - 6.3.1 Science and Technology Reporting
  - 6.3.2 Education Reporting
- 6.4 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
- 6.5 Summary
- 6.6 Key Words
- 6.7 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 6.8 Further Readings

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### 6.0 INTRODUCTION

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With changing times, the domain of media has also multiplied many times to cater to various aspects of human interests. Technology-driven push has created many fresh parameters in our lives that things, trends, tastes and preferences are changing like never before. Media also has to adapt itself to run parallel with these changes. In the same vein the art and craft of reporting has been honed to a level that presently there are many distinct types of reporting.

In this unit, you will learn about various types of reporting, such as political reporting, business reporting, sports reporting, science and technology reporting, education reporting, etc.

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### 6.1 OBJECTIVES

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After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Define political and business reporting
- Explain the importance of sports reporting
- Discuss the concept of science and technology reporting
- Describe the role of education reporting in journalism

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### 6.2 POLITICAL AND BUSINESS REPORTING

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In this section, you will deal with political and business reporting.

## Political Reporting

Political reporting is considered to be one of the most important beats in a newspaper. It includes reporting activities, conferences and events concerning political parties. Major political parties at the national level and even in the states, generally have party spokespersons who regularly brief reporters about the point of view of the party on issues of the moment. Mind you, it is absolutely imperative for the political parties to remain alive in the newspapers. So they keep doing something or the other to make their presence felt in the mass media.

In any news organization, political reporting is considered very important. Particularly in India, reporting politics has been a major focus of the press—a legacy from the pre-independence period. Please remember that press in India has a history of being a participant in the freedom struggle.

As a political correspondent or political reporter you should know the leaders of major political parties; it will be your job to know them inside out. You will also have access to the ministers and senior politicians. You would not only be reporting political events but in several cases analyzing and anticipating them as well. In this era of coalition politics, even the regional parties are playing an important role at the national level. Hence, political reporting from state capitals has become equally important.

However, here is a major pitfall. As a political correspondent, the distance between the reporter and the politician gets minimized. When Rajiv Gandhi was the Prime Minister, the well known journalist M.J. Akbar had become friendly with him. It was because both of them belonged to the same age group. Besides, when Akbar interviewed Rajiv Gandhi for his newspaper, *The Telegraph*, he was impressed with Rajiv and what many people say took a ‘personal liking for the young Prime Minister’. Critics point out that due to this personal factor even a journalist of this caliber lost his objectivity and impartiality. Later, during 1989 parliamentary elections, which proved Rajiv Gandhi’s Waterloo, Akbar even fought election from Bihar on a Congress seat.

Political reporting sometimes tends to take the shape of political activism. Several journalists tend to become closely associated with a particular political party so much so that their vision becomes blurred. Their writings become persuasions primarily based on self-interest.

On the eve of elections, the parties hold press conferences to release their manifestos, explain their policies and strategies for the election. Ever since electoral politics has assumed prominence, political reporting has come into its own. The party manifestoes arrive with a bang comprising best possible postulate on social justice, fighting communalism, rural development, health, education, in short issues which would go down well with the electorate. The very same are publicized through various means such as press conferences, distribution through organized outlets throughout the country and election speeches. This takes the shape of unpaid political advertisement.

## NOTES

## NOTES

A reporter must not be seen as being the part of a political propaganda of a particular party. To keep the sanctity of his profession his name should not come to be closely associated with a particular party.

Political reporting is the most complex of genres of reporting, requiring the journalist to go for detailed preparation and deep understanding of parties and personalities, socio-economic factors and their interplay. The dependable rule for the reporter in all events is to be non-partisan and to guard himself against being drawn into controversy.

While covering a national meeting of a political party, the reporter will have to explain not only what decisions are reached at the meeting but also whether they represent any variation from the party's past policy, what effect these decisions are likely to have on the party's future and their likely impact on other parties. The reporter must be dispassionate and strictly adhere to the rules of objectivity without attempting to project his own preferences.

A senior journalist S. Nihal Singh says:

It is not a reporter's job to further his own political philosophy or bias by tilting to one party or politician or the other. It is his job to assess a situation as objectively as he can, draw his conclusions from a rigorous examination of the often contradictory assertions he has gathered and, based upon his experience and study and present an honest picture of the trend.

The most difficult aspect of political reporting is to strike a balance in a reporters' relationship with a politician. By the nature of his job, he must cultivate acquaintances with politicians and be privy to their confidences. Politicians, on the other hand, naturally try to further their own or their parties' interests and are not too scrupulous about the methods of achieving their objectives. Following is a sample of political reporting.

### **Doors for talks with extremists must be kept open: Sonia**

Voicing concern over spiraling extremist violence, Congress chief Sonia Gandhi on Sunday said while such elements need to be combated, the doors for dialogue must remain open and the prospect of "political accommodation" should be kept alive.

She also made it clear that the efforts of forces operating from across the border to spread terror in the country would be fought with determination including in Jammu and Kashmir, where the government has appointed interlocutors to give "new energy and focus" to the political process.

"We are confronted with terrorist groups in Jammu and Kashmir. In a number of states, Naxalites are using violent methods to undermine the basis of the democratic system. In parts of northeast, militant groups disturb peace," the Congress President said addressing the party plenary in Burari here.

While these elements have to be combated with "all the means at our command, the door of dialogue has to be kept open and the prospect of political accommodation kept alive in the troubled spots," Gandhi said.

In J&K, there was a need to address “the alienation of the whole new generation of youth that has known nothing but conflict”. At the same time, Gandhi said security forces were facing a difficult situation with courage and fortitude.

“The political process must get new energy and focus. That is what our government has sought to do by appointing interlocutors,” she said.

Citing the recent bomb blast in Varanasi, Gandhi said this has reminded that the vigil cannot be relaxed. “Let there be absolutely no doubt about our determination to confront those elements and organisations who operate from across the border to spread terror, to destroy our social fabric and weaken us economically”.

In the Naxal-affected areas, the Congress President emphasised the need to resolve issues of daily concern to tribal communities, particularly the loss of land and livelihood and the absence of even the minimum basic services.

“This must go on hand-in-hand with upgrading police capabilities and effectiveness,” she said.

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### **Sonia had close association with Quattrocchi: Advani**

Veteran BJP leader said Congress president Sonia Gandhi had a close association with Italian businessman Ottavio Quattrocchi, who was a ‘regular’ at her house.

“Congress president Sonia Gandhi had close association with Quattrocchi, who was a regular at her house. Though I am not making an allegation against any person, but people should know the details as our image has been internationally tarnished (due to Bofors pay-off scam),” Advani told an NDA rally at the conclusion of the BJP national executive meet.

“It is common knowledge that the Bofors issue was suppressed by the government. Even the Income Tax Tribunal had pointed out Quattrocchi had taken commission from Bofors and be taxed accordingly, but the CBI suppressed it,” Advani alleged.

“Our image has been tarnished. I appeal to the Prime Minister to either protest or order further investigation,” he said.

On corruption in Congress-ruled Assam, Advani said he was told by rights activist Akhil Gogoi that Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi had acquired five houses in the USA. “If this is wrong, Gogoi should take action and if he does not, then the public has full right to accept that this a fact.”

On the illegal migration to Assam, he demanded the Congress government to implement in letter and spirit the Supreme Court directive that illegal influx should be viewed as aggression on the country.

## **NOTES**

### **6.2.1 Business Reporting**

Presently the happenings at the level of business and the economy affect peoples’ lives to a great extent. Now we want to know how the economy is functioning; what are the latest trends in business; what is the scene at the stock market; and what is happening in the domains of their investments, inflation, banks and jobs. So we can summarize that the domain of business and economy touches most of the lives in an exclusive manner. This beat has come to be elevated to a critical

plane due to its ability to influence people's reaction to various other issues. Hence business and economy is a significant beat and needs expert handling.

### **The Role of Business and Economy Reports**

#### **NOTES**

All stories in the media perform one or the other function. The following are some of the roles suggested by Mencher (2010) which the Business and Economy stories are supposed to play for the society:

- Should present economic data to the populace and interpret them appropriately.
- Should introduce the human interest angle to its reports whenever possible.
- Should discuss new business policies and labour laws and how the man on the street is affected.
- Should do a thorough analysis of business and economic related issues to the appreciation of the ordinary and educated audiences.
- Should give the audience the latest updates on business and economic issues.
- Should interpret technical terms related to business and the economy to the audience in a way they will understand the meaning and implications.

### **Qualities of a Business and Economy Reporter**

Mencher (2010) suggests some qualities of a business and economy reporter.

- A good business and economy reporter must normally possess the qualities of a reporter which has been treated in detail earlier. These qualities are basic. The other ones following these are additional because of the demands of business and economic reporting.
- A good business and economy reporter must have passion for business and economic related issues and go in-depth in its coverage.
- A good business and economy reporter must have a clear understanding of the meaning of economy and business related issues. He or she must also have an understanding of the Stock market and give the audience detailed explanation about the market happenings.
- The business and economy reporter is a specialist who feels at home with numbers and is not frightened by lengthy reports and press releases, many of which contain rates, percentages, business and consumer indexes and the jargon of the business world.
- The business and economy reporter must have the skills and attitudes to recognize the power business exerts and become a tough questioner.
- He or she must also have a healthy skepticism that keeps him or her from being awed by the muscle and money that business power generates.

- Even though the business and economy reporter is a specialist, he or she must know much more than the world of finance. He or she must be knowledgeable in related areas and subjects as well.
- The business and economy reporter should be a Corporate Raider. He should approach the money managers and manipulators with the same objectivity and distance that any reporter takes on an assignment.
- He or she should have a good knowledge of the working system of the economy and the business world. He or she should be familiar with market forces and the nitty-gritty of the financial circle.
- He or she should have a basic tertiary education in related fields like business administration, economics, accounting, banking and finance and others.
- A good business and economy Reporter must also be research savvy, very analytical, detailed and critical in his or her writings.

## NOTES

### Sources of Information

Good contacts and sources can be made among the following (Mencher, 2010):

- Bank officers and tellers
- Savings and loans officials
- Chamber of Commerce Secretariats and secretaries
- Union leaders
- Securities dealers
- Financial experts and analysts
- Real estate brokers
- Trade organization officials
- Teachers of business and economy related disciplines
- Government ministries concerned with business and economy related issues
- Employees and former employees of businesses

### Tips for Efficiently Covering the Business Beat Better

Given below are some tips by Henry Dubroff, a veteran business editor as cited in Mencher (2010) regarding the efficient ways of handling the business beat:

- Become a financial news junkie. Pay attention to developments on your beats even if there is no obvious local or connecting angle to the story.
- Look for hidden hooks in releases and routine earnings announcements. Hint: Read the last line first.
- Use your sources for insight, not necessarily quotes.
- Be comfortable with basic financial terms.

**NOTES**

- Never be afraid to go back to a company or a source two or three times to get the whole story.
- The best stories often are the ones that break late on your beat.
- Learn from reading and rereading major publications like The Wall Street Journal, Forbes and Barron’s not just for content but for how they approach a big research project or how they tell a story.
- It’s always better to get off the phone and get on the streets to actually see what a company looks like up close and personal.

**Check Your Progress**

1. What is political reporting?
2. Mention any three good sources of information.

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### **6.3 SPORTS, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND EDUCATION REPORTING**

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In this section, you will deal with the sports, science and technology and education reporting.

#### **Sports Reporting**

The sport pages are heavily read pages. In many African and Asian countries where some ‘Man U fans who may never see the Theatre of Dreams are killing Chelsea fans over arguments of who will win the Premiership’. But sports pages take them to the world of sports at faraway places. In Nigeria for example, husbands fight with their children over Premiership clubs. This sporty picture is just pleasantly illogical. Given the increasing graph of readership in this domain, sport reporting has become a specialized coverage area world over due to the millions of sports lover following their respective stars and teams.

#### **Role of Sport Reporters**

Sport reporters have come to occupy an exclusive place in the society due to the popularity of different sporting activities which they help communicate to the audience and fans. Obe (2005:112-113) has outlined some responsibilities of sport writers:

- A good sport reporter should be able to bring the players, coaches and administrators closer to the general public and fans in particular. Check out the popular players, coaches and administrators and you will find that their popularity is often connected to favourable media coverage.



- Sport reporters could also act as watchdog over the players, administrators and coaches to avoid and help expose embarrassing behaviour associated with sportsmen and women.
- It is one of the primary roles of sport reporters to beam their searchlight on negative boardroom politics that could hamper sport development.
- Sport reporters must see to the end of a game and make sure accurate and unbiased account of such games is published timely.
- It is one of the core roles of sport reporters to analyze game situations before and after the games so as to help build excitement and sense of fulfillment respectively in the fans.

## NOTES

### Qualities of a Good Sport Reporter

According to Obe (2005), the basic qualities of a good sport reporter are as follows:

- A good sport reporter must normally possess the qualities of a reporter which has been treated in detail earlier. These qualities are basic. The other ones following these are additional because of the demands of Sport Reporting.
- A good sport reporter must have a passion for the type of sport he or she is covering.
- A good sport reporter must have a clear understanding of the rules of the game and be able to interpret results of game to his readers.
- He or she must also be research savvy and a good historian of sport matters.
- He or she must have adequate knowledge about the players, coaches and administrators and be able to discuss them comfortably.
- A good sport reporter must be a good analyst and have a good sense of judgment.
- A good sport reporter must always respect the triple news virtues of truth, objectivity and accuracy in his reports.
- The good sport reporter must know how to use few words to tell his story.

### Sources of Information for the Sport Reporter

The sport reporter has many places he may visit to check out the facts of his story before sending them to press (Obe, 2005). These comprise:

- The venue of the game or meeting
- The Local Organizing Committee of the competition or games
- The Sports Council
- The Ministry of Sports

## NOTES

- The controlling Federation of the particular sport
- The players and coaches hideouts
- Popular sportsmen, women and administrators
- Sports library
- Online resources, etc.

### 6.3.1 Science and Technology Reporting

According to Obe (2005), the requirement for people to know the social aspect of sciences breeds the necessity of science and technology reporting. It does not involve bombarding the reader with scientific jargons. Instead it interprets science-based stories to enable non-science reader in finding meaning in these reports. It helps them in knowing how such scientific analysis affects them. Therefore, science and technology helps common people to 'decode, analyze and interpret' as well as get meaning from scientific reports. Communicating the social aspect of science is the basic purpose of science and technology reporting.

#### Qualification and Training

Science and technology reporting constitutes a technical domain. A few basic academic and professional training is needed for the reporters interested in this area. The science and technology reporter should possess an academic qualification in basic sciences. Such academic background provides him a firm footing for detailed analysis and then presents the matter for the benefit of the common masses. However, a degree or any pertinent qualification in a science subject is not a prerequisite for success as a science and technology reporter. Further, the reporter should possess some specialized training for covering these exclusive beats.

#### Issues for Science and Technology Coverage

A science and technology reporter can focus on various pertinent issues that that will enable him to avail constant news sources for his newspaper. According to Obe (2005), these include:

- News on latest scientific development and discoveries;
- News on scientific predictions;
- News on scientific adventures;
- News on the unusual;
- News on issues and processes for improving health care delivery;
- News on technological developments and innovation;
- News on scientific warning, nature of the universe and heroism;
- News on scientific researches, findings and breakthroughs;
- News on universities, technology institutes etc that focus on science and technology issues.

## Writing Rules for Science and Technology Reporting

Obe (2005) has suggested the following rules in this regard:

- Do not use too much technical language especially for the purpose of impressing instead of informing. This should be avoided at all cost. You are the expert.
- Interpret the reports to the understanding of your audience. They are reading your article or story to make meaning not to be dazzled or confused with jargons.
- Make your reports very brief, accurate, interesting and straight to the point. Unnecessary details that do not add anything new or fresh to the story should be removed. Avoid needless verbosity.
- Be creative as a reporter. Bring colour and human interest angle to your story.

## Qualities of a Good Science and Technology Report

According to Gary Blake (1996) cited in Obe (2005), the qualities of a good science and technology report comprise:

- **Mechanical Accuracy:** There must be grammatical accuracy and the entire report must be error-free. A good science and technology is also free of linguistic errors.
- **Technical Accuracy:** This has to do with the reporters' capacity to write credibly in the area of science and technology. Is the report an expert opinion in the area? Is the analysis credible? What are the competencies of the writers? These questions are to be answered in the affirmative for you to know that you have a good science and technology report.
- **Internal Consistency:** There must be uniformity of purpose and content especially the way and technical details are presented.
- **Interest:** Interest is the primary reason the readers want to read the story. Therefore, there is no substitute in making the report interesting.
- **Factual and Objective:** Apart from making the report interesting, it must also be factual, accurate and objective in order to retain the interest of the readers.
- **The Report Should be Persuasive:** Yes, the primary purpose of science and technology reports is to provide information. However, it should also have the capacity to persuade the readers to action.
- **Conciseness:** The science and technology story must be brief and straight to the point. Needless details should be avoided.
- **Clarity:** The science and technology story is not the right avenue to mesmerize the readers with scientific jargons and needless technicalities.

## NOTES

## NOTES

Clarity and brevity are two core qualities that a good science and technology story should have.

So we have seen that science and technology reporting is a specialized type of reporting. Given its technology-dependent domain, it may also be put under the category of ‘advanced reporting’. Presently it is becoming one of the common beats in the industry. All media organizations must strive to include specialist and well-trained reporters covering this beat for them.

### 6.3.2 Education Reporting

The education beat has assumed considerable importance presently. It has all the possibilities of giving good stories to a reporter. With the rapid expansion in the education sector—government education department, scientific and research institutes, universities, academic and other learned bodies and school system—education is now an important beat that has considerable interest for the readers. Since half of Indian population comprises youngsters, their educational institutions have acquired possibilities of giving good news stories. Usually, the students and teachers organization always come up with their set of issues and problems leading to discussions, protests and agitations. Research studies and their results, conducted in various subjects by the departments in universities, are a potential source of a number of news items. Parents also want the problems like increase in school fees and improving quality of education to be highlighted in the newspapers.

What is expected of the reporter working on this beat is to be alert and aware of the developments in this sector. In many cases, students or student leaders are appointed stringers who cover the campuses and get published in the newspapers. Following is a sample story.

#### **HRD ministry to give UGC event a miss**

Akshaya Mukul

Times News Network

**New Delhi, November 13.** Despite the University Grants Commission’s contention that everything is hunky dory with the ongoing conference of vice-chancellors – jointly organised with the Association of Indian Universities (AIU) – the HRD ministry will give the event a miss.

Two senior officials – higher education secretary Vibha Puri Das and joint secretary Amit Khare – who were to speak at the event have decided to play truant.

Sources said, the secretary is very upset with the news of a grant of ‘ 1 crore to a private institution for the event from non-plan fund. The ministry is likely to seek explanation from the UGC. “Expenditure from non-plan fund is scrutinised by the expenditure department of the finance ministry,” a source said.

The UGC, on its part, clarified that the event is organised with the AIU to avoid duplication of efforts on higher education. According to the UGC, all financial rules and austerity norms of government have been followed.

The UGC claimed that in the past, too, it has given a grant of more than ₹ 1 crore for academic activity without specifying the exact nature for which the sum was sanctioned.

The UGC maintained that ₹ 13 crore was given to the North-East Hill University, Shillong, to organise the Indian Science Congress and ₹ 5 crore to the Punjab University for an international conference. The UGC said on number of occasions it has given financial assistance to private deemed universities for “such type of academic activities”. For instance, funds have been disbursed to the Kalinga Institute of Information Technology, Bhubaneswar and SRM Institute of Science and Technology, Chennai, even though the UGC did not specify academic activities.

## NOTES

### Check Your Progress

3. List any two responsibilities of sport writers.
4. What is the basic purpose of science and technology reporting.

## 6.4 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. Political reporting is considered to be one of the most important beats in a newspaper. It includes reporting activities, conferences and events concerning political parties.
2. The three good sources of information are as follows:
  - Bank officers and tellers
  - Savings and loans officials
  - Chamber of Commerce Secretariats and secretaries
3. The two responsibilities of sport writers are as follows:
  - Sport reporters could also act as watchdog over the players, administrators and coaches to avoid and help expose embarrassing behaviour associated with sportsmen and women.
  - It is one of the primary roles of sport reporters to beam their searchlight on negative boardroom politics that could hamper sport development.
4. Communicating the social aspect of science is the basic purpose of science and technology reporting.

## 6.5 SUMMARY

- Political reporting is considered to be one of the most important beats in a newspaper. It includes reporting activities, conferences and events concerning political parties.

## NOTES

- In any news organization, political reporting is considered very important. Particularly in India, reporting politics has been a major focus of the press—a legacy from the pre-independence period.
- Political reporting sometimes tends to take the shape of political activism.
- The most difficult aspect of political reporting is to strike a balance in a reporters' relationship with a politician.
- A good business and economy reporter must normally possess the qualities of a reporter which has been treated in detail earlier. These qualities are basic.
- A good business and economy reporter must have a clear understanding of the meaning of economy and business related issues.
- Sport reporters have come to occupy an exclusive place in the society due to the popularity of different sporting activities which they help communicate to the audience and fans
- A good sport reporter should be able to bring the players, coaches and administrators closer to the general public and fans in particular.
- A good sport reporter must have a passion for the type of sport he or she is covering.
- Science and technology reporting constitutes a technical domain. A few basic academic and professional training is needed for the reporters interested in this area.

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## 6.6 KEY WORDS

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- **Mass Media:** The mass media is a diversified collection of media technologies that reach a large audience via mass communication.
- **Business Reporting:** Business reporting is an essential part of any planning process in the workplace as it consists of providing data and information to specific audiences.
- **Sports Journalism:** Sports journalism is a form of writing that reports on sporting topics and competitions. Sports journalism is the essential element of many news media organizations.

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## 6.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

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### Short-Answer Questions

1. List some disadvantages of political reporting.
2. What is the role of business and economy reports?

3. What is the role of sport reporters?
4. Mention some of the issues for science and technology coverage.
5. List the various writing rules for science and technology reporting.

### Long-Answer Questions

1. Summarize the domain of business reporting.
2. Discuss the various qualities of a business and economy reporter.
3. Explain some tips for efficiently covering the business beat better.
4. Describe the basic qualities of a good sport reporter.
5. Write an essay on education reporting.

### NOTES

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## 6.8 FURTHER READINGS

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## UNIT 7 KINDS OF REPORTING

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### NOTES

#### Structure

- 7.0 Introduction
- 7.1 Objectives
- 7.2 Interpretative, Investigative and Development Reporting
  - 7.2.1 Investigative Reporting
  - 7.2.2 Development Reporting
- 7.3 Reporting with New Technologies
- 7.4 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
- 7.5 Summary
- 7.6 Key Words
- 7.7 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 7.8 Further Readings

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### 7.0 INTRODUCTION

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News stories are written in inverted pyramid structure. This structure has become popular because it allows editors to cut the last paragraphs out for want of space. Thus, the story is written in such a way that even when the last paragraphs are deleted, it makes no difference to the reader. The paragraphs are written in the descending order of importance.

Since all the news stories are written in this format, they appear as if all of them have machine common source. On many occasions, it becomes monotonous. At times, the news stories may seem boring as well. So, reporters have invented a new way. They write their news stories in a story telling, narrative and featurish way. This enhances the readability of the story and almost guarantees that the piece in question will hold the readers' attention. So, in this unit we shall discuss the storytelling and narrative writing techniques of news writing. The types of reporting will remain incomplete without knowing about the interpretative and investigative reporting. In this unit, you shall also learn about these two types of reporting.

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### 7.1 OBJECTIVES

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After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Define interpretative reporting
- Explain investigative reporting



- Describe development reporting
- Discuss reporting with new technologies

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## 7.2 INTERPRETATIVE, INVESTIGATIVE AND DEVELOPMENT REPORTING

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### NOTES

In this section, you will learn about interpretative, investigative and development reporting.

#### **Interpretative Reporting**

The term interpretative reporting means that the reporter seeks to find the implications of an event. S/he puts the event in the perspective and tries to bring the story in the stream of events. S/he explains, interprets and analyses the event, which goes beyond the stereotype of his duty as a reporter.

As the word ‘interpretative’ suggests, facts and interpretation are stitched together in this kind of reporting. It leaves a wide scope for the facts to be interpreted in accordance with the perception of the reporter. It digs deeper into the reasons and meanings of a development.

It is the interpretative reporter’s task to give the information along with an interpretation of its significance. He has to seek shelter in his knowledge and experience to give the reader an idea of the background of an event and explain the consequences it could lead to. Apart from his own knowledge and research in the subject, he often has to seek the opinions of specialists to incorporate in his story. Interpretative reporting goes behind the news, brings out the hidden significance of an event and separates truth from falsehood.

Curtis D. MacDougall was the first person to give important inputs to interpretative reporting in the USA. He writes in his book *Interpretative Reporting* that the First World War took Americans by surprise. They were totally in the dark about its causes. This brought changes in the style of reporting. The result was that when in 1939 the Second World War broke out, a considerable majority of the Americans expected it or least knew it was possible.

MacDougall says that a successful journalist is usually more than a thoroughly educated person. He knows that a news item is not an isolated incident but it links an entire chain of important events.

With his reading of different subjects including history, economics, sociology, political science and other academic streams, an interpretative reporter presents a report which benefits the reader thus enabling him to visualize the shape of things to come. An interpretative reporter should leave no stone unturned to avoid prejudices and stereotyped attitudes, which would bias his perception of human affairs. Following is a sample story.

## NOTES

### **Bill on corruption likely in Budget session: Moily**

Express News Service

Mumbai, January 22.

Battling a string of scams, the UPA government is likely to introduce a bill in the Budget session of Parliament to rein in corruption.

“We are bringing a separate bill on corruption in accordance with the UN convention,” Law Minister M Veerappa Moily told reporters here.

He said the government intended to bring the legislation in the next session itself. “In that direction, we are proceeding,” he said.

“We have agreed to the convention but it was not ratified. The NDA government did not take any stand. Now, a couple of days back, a Group of Ministers (GoM) considered the UN convention and mooted the ratification. Thereafter, we will be bound by it,” he said.

Maintaining that the government would like to fast-track corruption cases, Moily said the GoM is expected to submit its report to the prime minister within 60 days.

On black money stashed abroad, Moily said, “You know there are treaties between countries. They are done mutually by each country. We have to abide by the treaty. The Finance Minister has made it clear that this is meant for evasion of tax...only to the extent of taxation. Disclosure of names, unfortunately, the treaty doesn’t permit.

“We don’t want to hide anything. But the question is, there are certain binding principles of the treaty which inhibit us from disclosing it (the names),” he said.

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### **Chill to spill over into the Budget session?**

Times News Network

NEW DELHI: Parliament’s budget session will begin on February 21 and end on April 21, an official announcement said on Monday, even as indications emerge that it could be stormy.

The Lok Sabha secretariat said in a statement that the seventh session of the 15th Lok Sabha will begin on February 21 and carry on until April 21 “subject to exigencies of government business”. The President will address both houses of Parliament on February 21 at 11 am. The House will adjourn on March 16 to meet again on April 4.

Indications emerging from various quarters indicate that the budget session too may not witness much peaceful proceedings. The opposition and ruling front continue their stand-off over the demand for a Joint Parliamentary Committee to investigate the 2G scam, which pushed the winter session into turmoil.

The opposition continues with its demand for a JPC, while the government believes that the Public Accounts Committee headed by senior BJP leader Murli Manohar Joshi is sufficiently empowered to look at all aspects of allegations. The prime minister has formally offered to appear before PAC, comprising of members from both sides, for questioning on the allocation of 2G spectrum at throwaway prices by then telecom minister A Raja.

Clear indications are emerging that fresh trouble could break out for the government during the coming session. The Comptroller and Auditor General is now running against time to complete its report on the Commonwealth Games and activities surrounding it. The audit covers Organising Committee for the games, Delhi government, sports ministry, CPWD, DDA and others. While CAG officials maintain a steady silence, indications emerging from various departments show that the final audit report could be a ringing indictment of all the departments over the way they went about spending hundreds of thousands of crores.

Most departments have replied to the CAG memos that have raised questions over the way contracts were awarded, tenders violated and firms favoured. The misdeeds of the OC are mostly well known

and CAG has graphically captured outrageous acts such as the exaggerated overlays contract, if the memos are anything to go by. But what is not so well known is the severe audit indictment of central agencies such as CPWD besides the sports ministry and Delhi government.

Indications are that the CAG would try and be ready with the final report in time for placing it before Parliament during the budget session. If the report is tabled as projected then the government would have another front to fight on.

## NOTES

### 7.2.1 Investigative Reporting

The work of a newspaper reporter always involves certain amount of investigation, enquiry or examination of facts and details. He has to explore and get into various aspects of an incident or occurrence. More often than not, reporting and researching become synonymous.

William Randolph Hearst has defined investigative journalism as ‘a news is what somebody, somewhere is trying to suppress. Everything else is advertising’.

However, the job of an investigative reporter is to dig deeply beyond the facts stated in the hard news. Many journalism students like you have an ambition to become ‘investigative’ reporters. An ‘investigative’ journalist sees himself as the conscience of the society, pursuing corruption in high places without fear or favour. In his book *Press and Law*, Justice A.N. Grover has quoted from the forward of *Investigative Reporting* by Clark R. Mollevhogg. According to the forward, investigative reporting has three elements:

- It has to be the original work of reporter. Under no circumstances should it be of others.
- The subject of the reporting should be such that it is of importance for the readers to know or affects all of them in some way or other.
- There must not be any attempt made to hide the truth from people.

Investigative reporting has grown by leaps and bounds in Western countries. In India, it is still in the womb. Most Indian newspapers despite having all the resources to their disposal do not spare the manpower and spend money for a first-rate investigative job.

## NOTES

Attempts at investigative reporting, to quote an eminent Indian editor, are like drilling for oil. A fair amount of effort gets wasted and it has to be taken into stride. However, when finally the oil is extracted and made marketable, the sense of achievement is usually more than any other sector of journalistic enterprise.

The best example of investigative reporting is the Watergate scandal of the seventies. Such was the impact of the scandal when it appeared in black golden print that it led to the disgrace and downfall of the then U.S. President Richard Nixon. The two young reporters of *The Washington Post*, Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, started digging into the arrest of four men for a burglary at Watergate, the Democratic Party's national headquarters on 17 June 1972. They had no idea that their inquiry would lead to such an expose of events with devastating impact.

The duo kept their investigation to the highest standards of professional journalism. The reporters did not start gunning for Nixon from the beginning. They merely pursued the burglary attempt and only later came up with startling facts linking the White House with it. 'We did not go after the President, we went after the story,' they explained.

In India, investigative reporting started making a mark after the end of the Internal Emergency in 1977, particularly through the reports published in the *Indian Express*. Since then investigative reporters have brought to light a number of scandals—the Bhagalpur blinding incident by the police, Kamala case, A.R. Antulay's private trusts, Kuo Oil deal, the securities scam involving Indian and foreign banks and stock brokers, etc. An enterprising reporter Ashwini Sarin once got himself arrested so that he could give a first-hand account of life in Delhi's Tihar jail.

With successive governments increasingly becoming secretive and corruption spreading its tentacles far and wide, the need for investigative reporting cannot be overemphasized. Yet we must remember that investigative reporting is not everybody's cup of tea. It requires hard and sustained work. The investigative reporter should be a combination of a crusader, super-detective and blood hound. He should have the necessary courage, integrity, time and finance to carry out his work.

The best kind of investigative reporting is that which keeps the public interest in mind. It may highlight an injustice, expose corrupt practices or unmask dishonest politicians and bureaucrats.

Experience has shown that unless an investigative reporter or a crusading reporter gets the support of judiciary, the executive or legislature cannot bring his reports to logical ends. The Bhagalpur blinding report would have ended like any other report if public interest litigation would not have been filed against the police. In the USA, the Watergate stories would not have produced any result if they had not received the support of legislature which threatened the impeachment of President Richard Nixon.

## 7.2.2 Development Reporting

As the issues faced by the developing world grow more and more complex with each passing day, the task of good journalism is to highlight these issues and ensure that they receive considerable media attention. Merely drawing attention will not do. The media should encourage action and positive changes, especially where it is strongly needed.

## NOTES

### Exhibit 7.1

There was a brief report on an inside page of *The Times of India* of June 1, on a hunger strike by hundreds of farmers and widows of farmers at Pandharkawda in Yavatmal district of Maharashtra (also known as the suicide capital of the country).

The farmers were trying to draw attention to their desperate situation, which the ‘relief’ doled out to them by the government had done little to alleviate. They had two demands — an official probe into the reasons for the failure of the Rs 370 crore special relief package from the PMO (in which a CAG audit had found several irregularities), and fresh crop loans for the kharif season, with ‘sustainable crop alternatives’ rather than the high-tech and high-risk crops promoted by American MNCs.

The item had all the ingredients required for a perfect news story — new information, human interest, pathos, controversy. Yet, most newspapers gave the story a miss, or covered it so poorly that most readers missed it anyway.

Every village has a story that needs to be told. Stories of the dying farmers of Vidarbha; stories of villages without electricity, drinking water, schools or health care; stories of the new generation, disillusioned with farming and hooking their aspirations to what they are fed on TV, turning to petty crime for want of other options; stories of communities losing their faith in our supposedly democratic systems, and looking for other ways to get justice.

It’s not so much the reporter as the publishers who must accept the larger share of the blame for this blocking out of rural realities in the mainstream media. Most publishers imagine that their readers would find rural stories dull and weepy, and would instantly connect with racy urban stories. Thus, readers are fed a Bollywood-enhanced diet with Sunday supplements full of stories on which Khan does what to whom, while rural news is hidden in a tiny corner of an inside page. Why can’t media houses print the story of the farmers of Vidarbha on the front page with banner headlines, scream out their questions to the government, keep up a relentless coverage on the unseen and ongoing disaster of hunger, tell people the truth behind the bland government statistics, give voices and faces to the voiceless and faceless people who live and die in our villages?’

**Source:** Extracted from ‘When the hungry go on strike’ – by Seema Kamdar  
<http://www.thehoot.org/web/home/story.php?storyid=4631&mod=1&pg=1&sectionId=20> (accessed on 15.09.11)

The story given as Exhibit 7.1 captures the meaning and objective of Development Journalism which as the aforementioned content implies is completely lacking in mainstream Indian journalistic practices.

**NOTES**

Development journalism comprises reporting on ideas, programmes, activities and events that will help improve the standard of living of the people, especially those residing in the rural areas. It results from the assumption that journalism is capable of critically examining and evaluating a development project. In other words it tries to find out whether a certain project is relevant to the needs of the local population or the country as a whole. Development journalists try to find out whether the project has been implemented as per the original plan. Development journalism studies the difference between the effect of the project on the population as per governmental claims and as per the claims of the concerned population. Reports on national and international events are carried only if they are thought to be of any value to the development and improvement of the living standards.

Development journalism presumes that:

1. Development is a central social objective
2. The mass media play a decisive role in development

The following are precisely the topical categories in development journalism:

1. Administrative reforms
2. Agricultural development and food production
3. Economic activity
4. Education and literacy
5. Employment and labour welfare



**Fig. 7.1** Areas Concerning Development Journalism

6. Family planning
7. Health, hygiene and medicine
8. Housing
9. Industrial, scientific and technological development
10. Mass media
11. National Integration
12. Rural and urban development
13. Social change
14. Telecommunication, tourism and transport development
15. Women/children/youth
16. Environment

Development journalists should ideally perform their roles as:

1. Nation builders
2. Government partners
3. Agents of empowerment
4. Watchdogs
5. Guardians of transparency

### **Objectives of Development Journalism**

The primary objectives of development journalism are as follows:

1. To focus on a nation-building approach
2. To ensure that news reporting not only builds social stability and social harmony but also strengthens the national economy
3. To ensure that news reporting is solution oriented and not sensational
4. To empower the ordinary people and not the elite
5. To monitor governmental policies and bring forth the analysis to the public by being as transparent as possible.
6. To convey all information in simple language and a humanizing manner
7. To educate people instead of merely entertaining them

Case Study

#### **Brief Profile of P. Sainath, veteran Indian development journalist**

Palagummi Sainath (P. Sainath), former Rural Affairs Editor of *The Hindu* was born in Andhra Pradesh in the year 1957. He is regarded as the voice of rural India, spending nearly 270-280 days annually in the remote Indian villages in an attempt to study and highlight their realities. He published more than eighty reports reflecting harsh realities of rural India. In 1993, he received the Times of India fellowship and focussed on rural Journalism.

### **NOTES**

## NOTES

A collection of selected stories from those got published in the form of a book titled 'Everybody loves a good Drought'. He won many awards for his unique effort of using journalism for the development of people. Though the list of awards is quite long, but prominent among them are the 'Ramon Magsaysay Award for Journalism and Literature in 2007, B.D. Goenka Award for Excellence in Journalism in 2000, PUCL Human Rights Journalism Award, Amnesty International Global Award for Human Rights Journalism in 2000. A film based on his life made by Canadian documentary film-maker Joe Moulin received an award at the Edmonton Film festival.

The following extracts from an article by P. Sainath is an example of a development journalism report, retrieved from the website [indiatgether.com](http://indiatgether.com):

### **Food security, by definition**

Maybe the government, the National Advisory Council and other assorted enthusiasts of the Food Security Bill can learn from Maharashtra about moving towards ending hunger altogether.

In 1963, the Government of Maharashtra ended famine forever in the State. It did this without adding a morsel to anyone's diet. It did so simply by passing an Act in the Legislature that deleted the word 'famine' from all laws of the State. No kidding. This was called 'The Maharashtra Deletion of The Term "Famine" Act, 1963' (And was dug up after decades by an independent researcher from Bangalore.)

The Act asserts that 'there is now no scope for famine conditions to develop' because 'the agricultural situation in the State is constantly watched by the State government.' 'Relief measures' as warranted by the situation are provided as soon as signs of scarcity conditions are apparent.' Goodbye Famine.

The next para says the term 'famine' has now become obsolete, and requires to be deleted 'from' other laws on the subject in their application to the State. It decrees that for the words 'famine or acute scarcity' the word 'scarcity' shall be substituted, in all laws of the State. Lucky Maharashtra - it can't even have acute scarcity either.

By slaying famine and acute scarcity on paper, a government kills its own responsibility towards citizens, mainly poor and hungry ones, in times of crisis. Its burden becomes less. It can concentrate (especially in Maharashtra) on boosting the Indian Premier League and its billionaires.

This approach essentially defines a problem out of existence. You can't fight famine - so abolish it. Can't stop farmers' suicides, so redefine who a farmer is. Then redefine 'suicide'. Maharashtra has done both. Why not have a law banning the word 'farmer' or 'suicide' or both? Solves an annoying problem in a State that has seen, in official count, over 44,000 farm suicides since 1995.

This act is in a State which has an awful record in food production for years. This includes a 24 per cent fall in 2008-09. A rich State that has seen far more child hunger deaths than many poorer states in the country. A State that added greatly to its hungry numbers. 2 million people have lost their jobs between 2005-06 and 2007-08. That's over 1800 each day - and this was before the global meltdown of September 2008, according to the State's own economic survey.

The 1963 Act casts its shadow to this day. By legal definition, we cannot have a serious crisis in Maharashtra. So when there is one, we respond to it on a much lower scale than needed. No matter how deadly the crisis, relief work will never be up to the mark because it is not required by law.



The Union government and the NAC can learn from this. Why not just abolish the word 'hunger' by law? Replace it, maybe, with 'a mild craving for calories' (mild, not 'acute,'). Or words to that effect. End of hunger. We've started down that road. The NAC's idea of 'universal PDS in 150 districts' is similar. It re-defines the word "universal." Death by definition has been routine for decades in India - consider the poverty line debates, for instance.

Meanwhile, say the "experts," the millions of tonnes of grain rotting in open yards present a "golden opportunity" for India to export this in bulk "and seize on the high prevailing global prices of grain." That is also what the government hopes to do. Its affidavit in response to a slap from the Supreme Court speaks of liquidating the excess stocks by open market sale (read exports).

Leave aside for a moment the appalling insensitivity of exporting grain, as the Supreme Court says, when there are many "admittedly starving people" at home. Just look at the logic of it. You have a gigantic pile of grain. You have these admittedly starving people. You say the production is not enough to go for a universal system in PDS - even while boasting we have so much grain, we can cash in on high global prices. Remember that the government has bragged of "recording the highest ever production of about 235 million tonnes of food grains in 2008-09 ..." So much so that we cannot store half of it and it is rotting.

Who will you export it to? Are there good global prices for rotting grain? Grain that even when in best condition was not of superior quality; What you will do is flog it at rock bottom prices to traders who know you won't consider any other option - like letting the hungry eat it - and can knock your prices through the floor. And then the traders can export it as cattle feed - like India has done before in this very decade. About the only thing Iran and Iraq could agree on in 30 years was that the grain exported to them from India was unfit for human consumption. Both rejected shipments early this decade. But there are always, never fear, European cattle. Talk of sacred cows - these will be subsidised by some of the hungriest humans on the planet.

The government knows this is how it will end up - and is not at all averse to that happening. Apart from the juicy avenues of corruption it presents to many connected to the Food Ministry and the trader lobbies linked to them, it makes "sound economic sense" in their worldview. One in which the hungry count for little. The National Democratic Alliance did the same thing in 2001-03 and paid the price for it in 2004. The United Progressive Alliance feels confident the elections are far off. And there are no pesky Leftists to restrain them in this innings. This is the time to ram through 'hard decisions.'

Meanwhile, even as we talk of 'exportable surpluses,' we look around for ways to make up our production shortfall. Indian companies are buying land in parts of Africa to grow foodgrain. This finds approval with the Working Group on Agricultural Production set up by the Prime Minister and chaired by Haryana Chief Minister B S Hooda. Its report says "We should seriously consider these options for at least 2 million tonnes of pulses and 5 million tonnes of edible oil for 15-20 years."

Indeed, the Hooda report wants us to spread our net further. It says "Indian companies can be encouraged to buy lands in countries like Canada, Myanmar, Australia and Argentina for producing pulses under long-term supply contracts to Indian canalizing agencies." (Thereby eyeing four continents besides Africa). So as we convert more food crop land to cash crop or to non-farm use at home, Indian companies (doubtless with handsome government support) will buy land

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and grow grain in poorer countries (which is where it will mainly happen). Why? So we can create worse food crises in even poorer nations? But what if the locals get restless? They might resent the food they hunger for being shipped to India? No worries. What are we building a Blue Water Navy for, anyway?

A dismal debate all around. Yet, in the next few weeks, the government, the NAC, Parliament, and the judiciary will all be called upon to take major decisions, even vital steps, on the food security of the Indian people. They might want to remember that there is existing legislation to draw from. Legislation far superior to and of a very different kidney from the “Maharashtra Deletion of the Term ‘Famine’ Act, 1963.” That is, the Directive Principles of State Policy - that give us the vision and soul of the Indian Constitution.

Of course, the moment we speak of the Directive Principles, up pops the point: “but these are not enforceable!” Yet, the line of the Constitution which says they are not enforceable goes on to say they are “fundamental in the governance of the country and it shall be the duty of the state to apply these principles in making laws.” How the state - and others - perform their duties will be on display in the next fortnight.

Will the courts say anything about the notion of shipping grain abroad when millions go hungry at home? Will the government say something other than ‘no’ to the needs of the hungry? Will the NAC rethink its stand on a universal PDS? Will Parliament accept fraudulent definitions of food security? Will anyone speak for the Directive Principles of State Policy and how policy must work towards strengthening them? It would, of course, be silly to expect a government of this sensitivity to care a fig for the Directive Principles. But perhaps we can hope that the Supreme Court does?

**Source:** Adapted from: <http://www.orissadiary.com/inerview/Sainath.asp>

The UN Millennium Development Goals aim to eradicate poverty in the world by 2015. The media can play a pivotal role in this global fight against poverty by practicing the tenets of development journalism.

### Check Your Progress

1. Why are some people opposed to the concept of investigative reporting?
2. Name the US and Indian newspapers which gave a big thrust to investigative reporting in their respective countries.

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## 7.3 REPORTING WITH NEW TECHNOLOGIES

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We are living in an age where speed matters. The print journalism, in spite of being analytical, used to appear stale in comparison to the news breaking style of television, a few years back. Today, even the television news looks slower than SMS messaging or the various news services incorporated by mobile service providers.

The information technology revolution has changed the world dramatically in the past two decades. From slow word processing computers, the IT has moved towards faster processors, increased bus speed and bus width to allow audio and video to be played at real time. The communication technology has also moved away from the slow and narrow copper lines to optical cable capable of carrying various signals at the same time more efficiently. The widening of pathways has become possible due to the conversion of signals from analogue to digital. The Information Super Highway works on broadband connectivity of ever increasing bites.

This has brought online journalism to the forefront. Newspapers have responded well to the new culture of paperless world and have started moving in a direction that is not only convenient but economical. Many newspapers have already started their online editions that could be accessed on the Internet by paying a certain amount as subscription fee. In order to keep the conventional layout of the newspaper that has become a matter of habit for many of us, they also have the replica of the hard copy on the Internet. This combination of Web journalism and mobile news services is the most recent trend of journalism.

Online reporting presents a revolutionary departure from conventional journalism. It uses advanced technological tools such as the Internet for gathering information and disseminating it through these tools. It is a one-stop reporting. You require a smart laptop with wireless Internet connectivity and some advance search program software and you possess an online newspaper right on your lap.

Online reporting possesses unimaginable potential. Its reach is almost fathomless and its audience unquantifiable. We can say that 'it is newspaper without borders'. Its basic challenge is credibility because there is hardly any official restriction on entry requirements and monitoring capacity. Anybody possessing even scant resources for the fundamental requirements may easily start Online Journalism. It is the major risk involved in this field. Nonetheless, the above risks do not curtail its potentials and advantages particularly regarding the way it has revolutionized journalism during the present century.

### **Qualities of Online Reporters**

According to Philip Meyer cited in Mencher (2010) and Dominick (2002) cited in Obe (2005), the following are the basic qualities of online reporters:

- Online reporters must normally possess the qualities of a reporter which has been treated in detail earlier. These qualities are basic. The other ones following these are additional because of the demands of online reporting.
- Ordinarily, online reporters must be vast in the use of computer and the Internet resources. They should understand most computer software packages required for internet operations. They should also be able to integrate hypertext links to related topics, sound and video clips that are relevant to spice up a story.

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- The online reporter must also be familiar if not at home with the tools for today’s new media journalist. In the normal sense, the online reporter is a new media journalist, so, he should be able to work with some or all of these tools.
- The online reporter should a research savvy person. His primary assignment may entail searching and researching online resources for information. So, he must be familiar with research methods and research sites for his reportorial duties.
- The online reporter is not just a nimble wordsmith, in today’s information society he has to be a database manager, a data processor and a data analyst.

**Tools for Today’s New Media Journalist**

According to Mencher (2010), the expansion of multimedia ownership has brought about multimedia journalist also known as new media journalist. According to him some of the tools essential to function at this level comprise:

- A digital camera that can take high resolution still photos and video.
- A laptop with wireless internet access.
- A handheld computer such as Palm personal digital assistant.
- A digital audio recorder for recording interviews.
- A mobile Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) receiver for location finding.
- A digital cell or smart phone.
- A high capacity flash-drive for storage purposes.
- A variety of software packages installed in the laptop.
- Instant Messenger and Voice over IP (VoIP) software for real-time, no cost communications over the Internet.
- A handheld scanner for digitizing documents on the spot.
- A satellite telephone for making calls when cell phone service is not operational.

**Check Your Progress**

3. What is the basic challenge of online reporting?
4. List any two basic qualities of online reporters.

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## 7.4 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

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1. The opposition to the concept of investigative reporting is because of the fact that such reporting does involve some kind of investigation into critical issues and may give rise to a trail of unexpected events.
2. Washington Post and Indian Express are the US and Indian newspapers respectively.
3. The basic challenge of online reporting is credibility because there is hardly any official restriction on entry requirements and monitoring capacity.
4. The two basic qualities of online reporters are as follows:
  - The online reporter must also be familiar if not at home with the tools for today's new media journalist.
  - The online reporter should be a research savvy person. His primary assignment may entail searching and researching online resources for information.

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## 7.5 SUMMARY

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- The term interpretative reporting means that the reporter seeks to find the implications of an event.
- As the word 'interpretative' suggests, facts and interpretation are stitched together in this kind of reporting.
- It is the interpretative reporter's task to give the information along with an interpretation of its significance.
- The work of a newspaper reporter always involves certain amount of investigation, enquiry or examination of facts and details.
- William Randolph Hearst has defined investigative journalism as 'a news is what somebody, somewhere is trying to suppress. Everything else is advertising'.
- The job of an investigative reporter is to dig deeply beyond the facts stated in the hard news.
- In India, investigative reporting started making a mark after the end of the Internal Emergency in 1977, particularly through the reports published in the Indian Express.
- The best kind of investigative reporting is that which keeps the public interest in mind. It may highlight an injustice, expose corrupt practices or unmask dishonest politicians and bureaucrats.

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- Development journalism comprises reporting on ideas, programmes, activities and events that will help improve the standard of living of the people, especially those residing in the rural areas.
- The information technology revolution has changed the world dramatically in the past two decades.
- Online reporting presents a revolutionary departure from conventional journalism.
- It uses advanced technological tools such as the Internet for gathering information and disseminating it through these tools.
- Online reporting possesses unimaginable potential. Its reach is almost fathomless and its audience unquantifiable.

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### 7.6 KEY WORDS

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- **Interpretative Reporting:** The term interpretative reporting means that the reporter seeks to find the implications of an event. S/he puts the event in the perspective and tries to bring the story in the stream of events.
- **Investigative Journalism:** William Randolph Hearst has defined investigative journalism as 'a news is what somebody, somewhere is trying to suppress. Everything else is advertising'.
- **Development Journalism:** It refers to the communication process that is used to serve the development goals of the government.

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### 7.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

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#### Short-Answer Questions

1. What are the three elements of investigative reporting?
2. Write a short note on development reporting.
3. Mention some of the topical categories in development journalism.
4. What are the primary objectives of development journalism?
5. Identify the basic qualities of online reporters.

#### Long-Answer Questions

1. What is interpretative reporting? Write a detailed note on its role and significance.
2. Describe the art and techniques of investigative reporting.
3. Explain the job of an investigative reporter.

4. 'Online reporting presents a revolutionary departure from conventional journalism. 'Discuss.
5. Describe some tools for today's new media journalist.

*Kinds of Reporting*

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## 7.8 FURTHER READINGS

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## UNIT 8 JOURNALISTIC WRITING TECHNIQUES

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### NOTES

#### Structure

- 8.0 Introduction
- 8.1 Objectives
- 8.2 Journalistic Writing Techniques
  - 8.2.1 Writing Book Reviews
- 8.3 Film and Sports Review
  - 8.3.1 Sports Review
- 8.4 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
- 8.5 Summary
- 8.6 Key Words
- 8.7 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 8.8 Further Readings

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### 8.0 INTRODUCTION

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Simply speaking, a ‘review’ is an assessment written by someone to give the reader an outline or guideline about what a particular piece of work, be it a painting, a poem, a movie, a book, an article, a dance performance, a restaurant, some gourmet or a symphony is like, in his expert opinion and eyes. When you read or talk about a new movie or a book you may have recently read, to a friend, you actually become a reviewer yourself.

A professional reviewer is any person who looks back on something in retrospect, using skills and expertise in that specialized line, keeping in mind the quality, essence, strengths and weaknesses of that piece of work. The reviewer, in other words, provides a critical evaluation of that work, in turn, guiding the readers in their process of choice. In this unit, you will learn journalistic writing techniques, such as writing book reviews, film and sports reviews.

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### 8.1 OBJECTIVES

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After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Explain some journalistic writing techniques
- Discuss writing book reviews
- Explain film and sports reviews



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## 8.2 JOURNALISTIC WRITING TECHNIQUES

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The reporter or news writer moves to the lead or intro after the focus is perceived. In the last units, we have studied about the different types of leads. There are some special leads as well, that we go through in the coming units while studying features.

A news story is fine-tuned after it is written. All reporters or news writers do this to make their focus and the message clear. They make it a point to revise after they write the first draft of the story. The story is revised, and changes are made into it till a point is reached when the reporters or news writers are fully satisfied with what they have written. A news story has to be flawless in logic, beautiful in its composition and sound in its ethical standards. The reporters or news writers ask themselves how sound the story is, and if it is capable of standing logical scrutiny.

To ensure this, what has been prescribed is a fine blend of logic between the first paragraph and the second paragraph, between the second paragraph and the third, between the third paragraph and the fourth and so on. The same is applicable between first sentence and the second, between second sentence and the third, and between the third sentence and the fourth and so on. This is the secret of good reporting.

The writing of the reporters and news writers is a projection of their mind and if their thinking is clear, so will be their writing. In writers' parlance, ambiguity in communication is a cardinal sin. Your each word and each sentence should communicate as this is a standard measure of efficient and proper communication.

The question arises – why is all this required in the first place? In fact, the whole exercise is meant for getting a reader's attention. For this, you require readability. So, it has to be ensured. This is done through short sentences and short paragraphs which are easy to read. Long sentences and longer paragraphs can dissuade the readers, and they can leave your story half way and switch to some other news item which could be better written.

### **Storytelling and News**

There is an oft repeated anecdote behind the birth of this style of reporting or news writing. There was a blind editor once. His reporters had no option but to read out the story to him as he could not read. Instead, he listened. After he listened to every story, he would yell, 'I can't see a thing, I can't see a thing... I can't see anything.'

The reporters who worked under this blind editor had to make their stories more descriptive so as to show him something in their respective stories. And surprisingly, they became well-known within a short span of time. The sentence, 'I can't see a thing', went so deep in their minds that they typed and re-typed their stories till they themselves were able to see a lot of things in their stories. They

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began to illustrate them with the help of word pictures. In the process, the stories became memorable.

Consider the following example—

‘Two people sustained serious injuries in a car crash at Hill Road at 6am today. The collision happened when Mr. Smith swerved into the opposite lane to avoid a dog in the road. Ms Jones, who was in that lane, was unable to stop in time. Both Mr. Smith and Ms Jones have been taken to the local hospital.’

This is the lead or intro of a news story about an accident. The news could very well have covered only the news about the accident in a sentence.

But then, would anybody have taken a second glance at the story? It is doubtful, indeed. But you go through the first intro and you are compelled to read the full story. Because, then you would have been able to visualize the entire sequence of events. The complete scenario would have come alive before your eyes. This is called ‘Show, don’t tell’. It is also known as Show-in-Action technique.

### **The Art of Storytelling**

Reporters or news writers who want to be read have to develop the instincts of a storyteller. They should be able to find extraordinary angles in ordinary events. This becomes possible when the reporters develop a keen sense of observation—such that nothing escapes their attention, then suddenly they come across an extraordinary angle. The basic idea is that if you see something that fascinates you, it probably will fascinate the readers.

That is just one of the ways to find either the theme or just an idea for a story. The key to good writing is to get good details and then selecting the one that could be the unique selling proposition (USP) of your story.

As Mary Ann Lickteig, the feature writer of *The Des Moines Register*, an Iowa newspaper in the US put it— ‘you want people to be able to see your story, choose the details that stick out in your mind, the ones you remember when you run back to the office and tell somebody what you’ve found.’

These observations techniques are crucial tools for a storyteller. William Ruehlmann, author of *Stalking the Feature Story*, says that writers must concentrate when they observe and then analyse what they observe.

During the reporting process, reporters do not always know what details they will need when they are writing a story. So, they should gather all the details that they can. They should ask what were people thinking, saying, hearing, wearing and feeling.

To gather specific details, the reporters can envision a ladder with steps leading from general to specific. They can start with the broadest noun, take it to the most specific level, and then use the details to write.

Once reporters have gathered all the details, the question arises what they should do with them. The better one is as a reporter, the more he/she will have to

struggle as a writer deciding what information to use. The three basic tools of storytelling are as follows:

1. Theme
2. Descriptive writing technique
3. Narrative writing technique

### **Theme**

In order to make a reader see and make a reader care, reporters should develop a theme before they begin writing a feature story. The theme is a concept that gives the story its meaning. As David Maraniss, an American journalist and author, puts it: ‘the theme is why readers want to read the story ... To write something universal ... death, life, fear, joy ... that every person can connect to it in some way is what is looked for in every story.’

### **Descriptive writing technique**

Like too many cooks spoil the broth, too much description also spoils – rather clutters a story. At the same time, too little or too meagre a description will leave the reader blank. So, there has to be a fine sense of balance between the two – too much and too little. The reporter should first decide if the story is fit for the description of the person or the scene. It should always advance the meaning of the story. Details should be used in order of importance, not because a reporter wants to show off his knowledge of details. Besides, words should be economically used in a description.

The following are some tips for the techniques of good descriptive writing:

#### **(i) Avoid adjectives**

Specific details should be written with vivid nouns and verbs. Modifiers should be avoided. When the adjectives are used, the reporters run the risk of imposing his or her opinions into the story.

#### **(ii) Use analogies**

A good analogy compares a vague concept to something that is familiar to readers.

#### **(iii) Limit physical descriptions**

The physical descriptions should be used only when they are relevant to the context. Physical descriptions work well in profiles; in stories about crime, court and disasters and whenever they fit with the context. When tacked onto impersonal quotes, they don’t work.

Stage directions like the descriptions of people’s gestures, facial expressions and physical characteristics seem to be inserted artificially as though the reporter is directing a play. Reporters don’t need to describe what officials were wearing at a meeting, or how they gestured unless their clothing and movements enhance

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what they were saying or doing. For example, if something about the presentation of a research is being written, the colour of the researcher's eyes or his/her hand motions have nothing to do with the content of and comments about the study.

### (iv) Avoid sexist/racist descriptions

When the reporters or news writers decide to include descriptions of people, they should be aware of sexism, racism or other biased writing. Writers often describe men with action verbs showing what they are doing, and women with adjective showing what they are wearing and how they looked. One way to avoid such kind of prejudices is that the reporters should ask themselves if they are using similar description for both men and women, or are meting out equal treatment for all racial and ethnic groups in their writings.

### (v) Show people in action

One of the most effective ways to describe people or places is to show action. Reporters should not only write the news, but should make good use of the show-in-action technique. It makes the story very lively and highly readable.

### (vi) Use lively verbs

Lively or action verbs make the story lively. For example, Mercury *soars* is a better expression than mercury *rises*. Similarly, mercury *plummets* instead of *drops* is a far better choice.

### (vii) Set the scene

The reporters or the news writers have to set the scene by establishing the 'where' and 'when' of the event that they are covering and relating. Although, it is common to establish the time and weather of a story – often a lead – they should use the technique only if factors such as these are relevant to their story.

## Narrative Writing

Basically, narrative writing is a dramatic account of a fiction or non-fiction story. In this style, news writing requires thorough reporting and descriptive detail. In western countries, the practitioners of this style of news writing also use dialogues, which enhance storytelling. But in India, dialogues are not used as widely in reporting. Narrative writing resembles the style of writing that is used in a novel or a play, rather than in a hard-news story. In this style, sources are like characters who relive the events in their lives. The story still includes the basic factual elements of news but the presentation is different.

The five *Ws* are also there in this style of writing, but their meaning changes slightly. *Who* is the character, *what* is the plot, *when* is the chronology, *why* is the motive and *where* is the place.

Reporters cannot adapt to this mode of news writing unless and until they read a lot of fiction. Tom French, an expert at narrative writing, was inspired to do

narrative writing after he read a book by the acclaimed Latin American writer Gabriel Garcia Marquez. The book titled as *The Story of a Shipwrecked Sailor* is a riveting story about a man who survived ten days at sea without food and water.

Many journalists who adapt to such style – a style that gives a reporter unimaginable readership – are usually influenced by literary journalists as they themselves have a literary bent of mind. During 1960s and 70s, a group of writers used the storytelling techniques of fiction for non-fiction newspaper and magazine stories. The journalists – Tom Wolfe, Tracy Kidder, John McPhee and Joan Didian – had a deep influence of Truman Capote’s non-fiction book called *In Cold Blood*. The literary journalists immersed themselves in a subject, and wrote their stories with characters, scene, dialogue and plot. They used to be factual stories that were written like fiction.

A number of journalists think that storytelling techniques are limited to feature stories, but this is not true. A reporter can apply this kind of writing to news about crime and courts and many other daily news stories.

### **Narrative Techniques**

This type of writing combines show-in-action description, dialogue, plot and reconstruction of an event as it occurred. Narrative writing needs a bond of faith with the reader, because attribution is limited. The reporters or news writers have to make it clear where they got the information from, but they don’t need to attribute repeatedly. They can also use an overview attribution for portions of the story, and then attribute periodically, especially when they are quoting sources.

Before reporters or news writers can do narrative writing, they need to do thorough reporting. It takes a different kind of questioning to gather the information that they will need to reconstruct a scene with dialogue and detail. It must be noted, however, that narrative writing is not fiction. The reporters must stick to the facts even though the story may read like a novel. They need to ask in-depth and probing questions such as the following:

- What were you thinking at the time?
- What were your feelings?
- What did you say?
- What were you wearing?
- What were you doing?

The reporters need to get details about colours, sounds, sights, smells, sizes, shapes, times, places, etc.

If reporters are witnessing the event, they would see, hear, smell and feel – perhaps event taste – the experiences of their subject. Here, subject means the person about whom the story is being written. Since they are reconstructing the event, they need to ask the questions that will evoke all these images.

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### 8.2.1 Writing Book Reviews

As is said, ‘Don’t judge a book by its cover’. Read it thoroughly first. Like reviewing a movie, reviewing a book is also a specialized art. It involves loads of concentration, extensive reading, intensive scrutiny, deep understanding and sound interpretation by the reviewer of the book.

Reviewing a book requires the reviewer to minutely study the subject-matter of the book and methodically examine and interpret the storyline, narrative or the message it intends to express.

A reviewer may require being very seasoned or practiced, to be able to review a book to perfection. Immaculate skills and knowledge on the subject, as well as, linguistic expertise are important attributes a book reviewer should possess because eventually the review of the book would have to comment on its possible impact on the society. Thus, a book reviewer should be very careful and responsible.

There are various reasons why a book is reviewed in the first place. It is primarily done to help its potential readers get an insight into the broad concept, subject, merits and demerits of the book. This is done with a perspective to recommend them either to read a certain book or avoid it.

The ‘book business’ revolves around circulation figures; both the publisher as well as the author wish to sell more and more copies of their book and increase the readership, in turn increasing their profits. A good book review helps attain this to a certain extent. This is why a book is always reviewed before it reaches the stands for its readers to pick and read. Further, it needs to be understood that while a good review can increase circulations, a ‘not so up to the mark’ one can adversely affect its circulation (sale) and readership. Despite this knowledge a reviewer needs to be unbiased and review the book.

Book reviews are generally published either in feature page or in special column or pages dedicated to new book arrivals mostly in popular newspapers or even magazines and journals catering to specialized subjects or themes.

#### **Types of Book Reviews**

Book reviews cannot be distinctively categorized; they are usually segregated based on generalized criteria, as below:

1. Book review done by a subject expert for a specialized magazine catering to that subject or topic.
2. Book review done by a subject expert for a popular newspaper.
3. Book review done by a regular (non-specialized) reviewer for a popular magazine or a newspaper.
4. A brief / introduction done by a regular (non-specialized) reviewer simply to outline or summarize the book.

5. A small highlight done by a newspaper or a magazine about the cover of the book i.e. its title, author's name, publishers' name and the price.

In fact the last two types should not be categorized as book review in true sense, but as introductions to the books. But due to lack of space and specialist book reviewers, the trend is very popular these days in prominent magazines like India Today and Frontline.

### **How to Review a Book?**

Reviewing a book carries with it a very big responsibility. A book reviewer's writings can either make or mar the circulation figures and readership of the book. Thus, while giving his verdict the book reviewer must clearly understand his position and deal with the review with care and caution. As a reviewer, you need to understand that your writing is not merely a retelling of the story of the book but a critical assessment of the quality, essence, and implication of the book. Thus, it is essential for you to be focused on not just its contents, but also the book's purpose, pitch and authority on the subject it addresses.

A book reviewer should always read the book twice before penning his comments, first as a common reader and then as a critic. This may be time consuming but results in an effective summation of the book.

Sometimes book reviewers adopt undesirable practices in attempting to review a book, for instance, some decide to judge the book by its cover jacket and go so far as reading just the words written in the sleeve and pronounce their comments in the review; others adopt shortcuts by browsing through random pages in the process displaying their hop, skip, and jump skills; while there are still others who decide to just read broad points in big bold fonts to come to a conclusion about the contents of the book they are designated to review. Such run-through reviews are neither fair to the author who toils day and night to script the book, nor to the readers who genuinely looks forward to the reviewer's assessment before picking the book of the shelf. As a good reviewer, you must remember to be just and fair. It is a sad reality that today due to the fast marketization of book selling; these trends are on the rise. They should be strictly discouraged.

Other key features to keep in mind while reviewing a book are as follows:

1. The essence/crux of the book should be the prime highlight of a reviewer's book review.
2. The reviewer needs to sum up how well a book measures up to its reader's expectations and aptly integrate it in words.
3. The novelty or freshness, if any, in the book needs to be sensed and highlighted in the review.
4. The reviewer needs to be suitably skilled to assess and bring to the foreground the literary style and technical handling of the subject by the author; and also list its goods and bads, in a critical yet constructive way.

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5. Any path breaking or scholastic milestone achieved by the book, in the eyes and opinion of the reviewer, needs to get a mention in the book review.
6. A reviewer needs to put on paper the social relevance of the book, if any; and also handle the sensitivities of the subject carefully while trying to predict the impact it would have on the society.
7. He must ardently study the book and if relevant, draw suitable comparisons of it with any accountable work of a similar nature done in the past. Comparisons should be done with caution, and only 'like-minded' and concurring level books should be picked for comparisons with each other. Comparing a general interest book, with a special interest book would be unfair.
8. Readers could broadly be categorized as general or specialist. A good reviewer needs to cater to the likes of both of these in his review, and also the medium the review is going to be written for. If the review is to be published in a specialized magazine or journal, it should come across as a mature serious and intense piece of work; while if a popular newspaper is the carrier, then a light- hearted humorous and spirited review would be loved by the readers.
9. A book should be judged by its reviewer on the basis of the facts it offers, awareness it creates, as well as its entertainment and scholastic value.
10. Adhering to the fundamentals of writing book reviews are essential requisites for the book reviewer.
11. Lastly, the book review should be unbiased, judicious and responsible; it should be a critical assessment of the book but should not offend the sensibilities of its readers and in no way be derogatory to the author's personal image.
12. Finally a book review must also mention the name of the author, publisher and the price of the book

### Example 8.1

The following review has appeared in The Times of India on October 5, 2012. The reviewer is Asha Chowdhary.

Book review: Danielle Steel's Friends Forever

Asha Chowdhary

TNN

October 5, 2012

Can you really be friends forever? Read this tragic tale to find out...

If you are following the life story of five friends right from their days in kindergarten, you expect to be taken gently through their lives, as they face their ups and downs, first as children and later as adults. Whether you live vicariously through them in their successful moments or whether you empathize with them as they go through some hurtful circumstances, you imagine that the book will



be a light hearted read, with some gems of wisdom thrown in. But what you don't expect is a book where you are swept from one tragedy to another, till you being to wonder if this is the saddest book in the world. The story begins with five children joining Atwood School (which is like the Harvard and Yale of kindergarten). These kids are truly lucky because it is believed that those who graduate from Atwood are almost always accepted into the Ivy League colleges and other fine institutions. But in Steel's lexicon, getting a head start in life does not always guarantee success. We meet the five protagonists, Gabby, Izzie, Sean, Andy and Billy, and after the initial introductions, we are then led into their growing up years, where life happens and they have to cope, whether it is parents divorcing, siblings misbehaving or facing exam pressures. And so, the story ambles along at a steady pace with a few curve balls thrown in. But suddenly, like a tornado, a spate of tragedies begins and we are hurled right into the middle of one dismal scenario after another. If Steel thought this was what meant by writing an exciting novel, she might need a rethink, because each twist in the book leaves the reader with little desire to read any further.

There are a few touching moments, but even these are few and far between. However, the one redeeming note in the book lies in the message – of never taking people for granted, holding on to precious friendships, and understanding the sheer brevity of life.

Should you read the book? Yes, if you are fan of Danielle Steel, but no, if you are expecting it to be anything like some of her earliest books that kept you going back for more and more of her stories and never getting enough of them, no matter how many novels she wrote every year.

## NOTES

### Check Your Progress

1. Which of the following is one of the three basic tools of storytelling?
  - (a) A journalism degree
  - (b) A knowledge of the laws of the country
  - (c) Narrative writing technique
2. Who is a professional reviewer?

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## 8.3 FILM AND SPORTS REVIEW

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In this section, you will study about film and sports review.

### Film Review

A movie is definitely the most enticing and absorbing medium of showcasing creativity, spreading a message or simply entertaining the audiences. Indian movies, especially, enjoy three long hours of viewer time and try and engage the audiences to the fullest in this duration. As a reviewer of movies, you have to thus understand, the complexities that come with reviewing such an exciting medium of ingenuity. As is said, it is twice as challenging to review a movie, as is leisurely to watch and enjoy it.

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Movies come in various makes, flavours and styles. Each movie caters to a certain kind of film goers. There may be the overzealous, couldn't care much, fun-seeking kinds, who enjoy any bit of the romantic comedies or comedy genre of movies, there may be others who enjoy action and adventure to add a little spice in their lives, while the intellectual elite may, on the other hand, like to view the 'arty-kinds' to strike a chord.

A film thus, is a heady mix of creative ideas-original or inspired, complex execution, theatric direction, human-psyche, technology, and stylized narration made with the aim to capture the interest of its target audience with commercialism in the hind side. Thus, it is natural that reviewing such a piece of art made by ingenious people with loads of skill, flair and expertise, needs some doing.

Interpreting from the above, you would agree that writing a film review definitely is an uphill task. A reviewer should be very accomplished and skilled to be able to balance all the multifaceted elements present in a movie working simultaneously at a given point of time. Writing a film review requires a lot of understanding of the idea and the plot of the movie; it needs the reviewer to be able to reflect, analyze and interpret the film in the right manner. As a reviewer, you should be a gifted observer and should be able to minutely study the tiniest detail, simultaneously making methodical comments, as you proceed with your job. The impact the film might make or the message the film is trying to convey to the society also needs to be foreseen and summarized by a skilled reviewer.

As noted film director Shekhar Kapoor, who has directed movies like *Masoom*, *Mr. India* and *Bandit Queen*, puts it, 'first it is the subject's or topic's interpretation of the author which a director has to study, then it becomes the interpretation of the director while making the movie.' In the similar manner, it further becomes the interpretation of the critic or the reviewer while assessing a film. This interpretation assumes considerable importance as it takes the message of the movie to the common viewer who is either compelled to rush to a cinema hall or out rightly rejects the movie.

In order to review a film, you as a reviewer should have considerable expertise about the concept of the film and the subject addressed. A sound awareness about the people behind the making of the film, i.e., the producer(s), the director, technicians and the various actors and artists comes in handy; furthermore, it is also good to be in the know-how of their previous works.

To write a good film review, the following guidelines could be taken into account:

1. **Keenly observe the storyline:** The lifeline of any movie is its storyline. This needs to be observed minutely to write a good review. A reviewer firstly needs to understand the story, then assess the storyline on the basis of its logic, style, sensitivity, uniqueness and sensible handling.
2. **Assess viewer expectation:** The sensibilities of today's movie-going audiences are very developed. They fancy seeing new out-of-the-box

movies, with interesting castings, direction, visual effects and the likes. They are very aware, and have a certain expectation towards any new film release. The reviewer must be judicious enough to be able to measure the film against this ‘viewer-expectation’ while writing its review.

3. **Reviewer’s individual ability to judge:** Being a skilled reviewer with considerable knowledge and background about films and filming, you need to compare the film you are reviewing with similar films made in the past, with either relatively similar subject matter or in the same league. You should be able to point out its ingenuity, if any, and comment upon its style, unique or the regular run of the mill. In a nutshell, you as a reviewer need to pin down and pen the creative value of the film.
4. **Attention to the environment:** It is seldom said, that movies are a reflection of the society they represent. Sometimes movies try to capture the attention of its viewers by showcasing the attributes of the present day society; thus, a smart reviewer needs to account for the impact-be it socio, political or cultural, that a certain movie makes via its message and responsibly handle and pen their review about issues that may be volatile or sensitive in nature to the audiences.
5. **Weighing the pros and cons:** As a reviewer, you should definitely remember to highlight the merits and demerit of the film in the review.
6. **Reviewing the technical side:** In a review, the technical aspect is also of paramount importance. The style of direction, the suave handling of the theme by the director, the film’s production staff, their skills, expertise and treatment, all play a significant role in contributing to its success. The reviewer is supposed to discuss all these.
7. **Theme vs. sensitivity:** Does the subject around which the movie revolves touch the nerve of its audiences; does it leave them with goose bumps, or teary eyes or brash grinny smiles? All these need to be scripted by you as a reviewer in the review you put forth to your readers. Addressing the level of sensitivity towards the issue of the theme, in your review is thus, important.
8. **Assessing the dialogues:** A film is incomplete without the dialogues it’s accomplished artists deliver on screen. Be it the weighty ones like, ‘Dhai kilo ka haath’ from the popular Bollywood flick starring Sunny Deol; or the ‘Aall ijj well’ pitched by Aamir Khan in the recent Bollywood blockbuster ‘Three Idiots’; dialogues, sometimes, go beyond the movie and become a colloquial in the conversation of the masses, well after the movie has come and gone. Thus, as a reviewer you must critically weigh the literary levels, style, spirit and the intensity of the dialogues and the role they play in the movies narration.

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9. **Gauging the cinematography:** Cinematography plays an important role in a film review. A reviewer should be well-versed and should have enough know-how to explicitly explain this side of film making to its readers. He should be able to communicate what is good and bad; what shots are impressive and why? As a reviewer, you are thus, expected to keenly study the cinematography of the film, and in suitable words, explain the merits or demerits of it to the readers through your review.

10. **Considering other important factors:** The star cast, locales in which the movie has been shot, its skilful editing, musical composition, lyrics and the revenues it generates at the box office all are essentially important parameters that you as a reviewer need to mention to your readers and consider in your review.

11. **Capturing the interest of its readers:** Movies are made to cater to its audiences. Audiences vary in their tastes and likings and could fall into two apparent categories- the general 'masses' or the expert 'classes'. A good reviewer should remember this while writing the review. Additionally, as a reviewer, one also has to keep in mind the medium he is writing for; is it an elite publication catering to the Savvy upper crest or is it the weekly column of a popular newspaper? After assessing this and keeping the palates of its readers in the perspective, a reviewer should script his review. This increases the readability and likeability of his column. Thus, a good reviewer focuses on generating interest from its readers and catering to their needs.

12. **Sum up the movie:** For a reviewer, summarizing the film and commenting on its effectiveness is important. This gives the reader a clear insight into the relevance of the movie and its levels of view ability. The reader gets a perspective to either go for the movie or not.

13. **Basics are important:** The reviewer must follow basic principles of sources, medium, message and receiver.

14. **Unbiased verdict:** The Review needs to be unbiased, judicious and balanced in pronouncing his views on a film; being over critical, frizzed, vague or personally biased towards the director, artists, producers or technicians is in bad taste, and should strictly be avoided. A movie should be viewed in its isolation and the review the reviewer presents should be honest, constructive, rich and resourceful.

Finally, it must be kept in mind that a review of a film must contain a short synopsis of the film; however, it must never reveal the climax of the film.

**Example:** This review has appeared in Indian Express on Friday, September 28, 2012 when the movie was released in Indian theatres. The reviewer is Shubhra Gupta.

Movie : Oh My God

Cast: Paresh Rawal, Akshay Kumar, Om Puri, Mithun Chakraborty, Govind Namdeo

Director: Umesh Shukla

Indian Express Rating:\*\*\*

Oh. My.God. I said this aloud when the film began, my reaction one of blank surprise and then delight. In the current atmosphere of rising conservatism and religious extremism, was it really possible to have a film which would talk up the ills attached to religious practices? Could a filmmaker be brave enough, and that's the only word that comes to mind, to take on all those thousands of outraged souls who'd be shown up for what they indulge in daily: doing all sorts of immoral things and then demanding expiation from their deities? 'Oh My God' does this, and we commend the film, adapted from the popular Gujarati play, 'Krishan vs. Kanhaiya', for its subject and treatment.

Kanjilal Mehta (Rawal) is a self-proclaimed atheist. He is a man who doesn't believe there is a God. Much to all-round horror, he drags his family off from a function which is bursting with 'bhakts' and saffron-clad 'swamis' and political hangers-on. In what is seen an act of divine retribution, his shop is destroyed, leaving him facing near ruin. Tsk, says everyone, it an 'act of god', serve the heathen right. But Kanjibhai decides to make a fight of it, and demands divine justice, and that's what the rest of it is about.

The way the film pans out is mostly a lot of fun. And almost all the credit for that goes to the terrific Paresh Rawal who single-handedly makes us gloss over the weaker parts. His character could have been heavy and pedantic but Rawal who also stars in the theatrical version makes sure that he invests it with a steady lightness of touch. He needed to have done that to offset Akshay's likeable but bland playing of Krishna Vasudev Yadav, who steals 'makhan' and plays the flute just in case we didn't get it. Some of the lines hammer it in: "Bhaiya bhi keh sakte ho, Kanhaiya bhi", says this modern-day Kaanha. But it's all right, there are enough smiles to keep us going even when things get a tad repetitive and start bowing to cliched representations of greedy godmen (Namdeo), effeminate swamis (Chakraborty) and sultry sadhvis.

One way to keep the occasional dullness at bay is to trying twiggling on to who these filmi characters are imitating. Not too hard to do if you've been following the news for the last year or so, full as it has been with rich religious trusts, globe-trotting 'swamis', and the kind of under-the-table stuff that goes on in the name of religion. 'Oh My God' gets a tad schmaltzy towards the end, but I suppose that was the only way this piece of mildly irreverent tongue-in-cheek look at 'ishwar-paigambar-isaah masih' could close. But it also stays the course with Kanjibhai making a significant shift on the 'naastik-aastik' scale: he couldn't have been left the same sort of disbeliever he was right in the beginning of the film, could he? And learning the profound lesson that makes this film worth your time: God is everywhere.

Good stuff.

— Shubhra Gupta

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### 8.3.1 Sports Review

A review of an event which is related to the sport is known as a sports review. Sports writing can either take the shape of a news piece that reports on a recent game or a feature article that features a team or player. By appealing to both, sports fans and other readers, sports articles capture emotions and action through interviews and descriptions, while also presenting objective statistics about the subject. A good sports writing combines strong research with vivid detail to bring the personalities and the drama of athletics to life. Following are the key details of writing a sports review:

- **Craft an eye-catching opening:** The first paragraph of the review should grab the audience's attention and disclose the article's genre to readers. If you're writing a feature article about a team or player, you can start your sentence that shows something about the subject's accomplishments or personality. For instance, you can give a physical description of the person, use a quote from the coach or player or paint a picture of what it's like to watch the team play.
- **Find the story:** Although, the majority of your readers most likely will be sports fans, a good sports article offers a human interest link that will draw other readers as well. Look for a narrative that will appeal to readers' emotions. If the team you're profiling is experiencing their first season after the loss of a star player, for example, the story might be how they're forging a new identity for themselves.
- **Use direct quotes:** Conducting the interviews with the players and coaches are some of the most important research you'll do for your sports article. Well-placed quotes from a variety of sources can create a fuller, richer portrait of the team and illustrate their personalities for readers.
- **Avoid clichés:** Using cliché expressions instead of original, vivid language can drain a powerful sports story of its energy and lose readers' interests. Rather than resorting to tired expressions like 'gave it their all', 'blazing speed' and words like 'athleticism', come up with fresh ways to showcase the team's perseverance and skill.
- **Give statistics:** While audiences read sports articles for the inside story behind a game or the details of a player's life, they'll also expect concrete data about their favorite teams' scores and records.

#### Check Your Progress

3. Define the term 'film'.
4. In order to review a film, what should a reviewer have?

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## 8.4 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

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1. (c) Narrative writing technique
2. A professional reviewer is any person who looks back on something in retrospection, using skills and expertise in that specialized line, keeping in mind the quality, essence, strengths and weaknesses of that piece of work.
3. A film, is a heady mix of creative ideas-original or inspired, complex execution, theatric direction, human–psyche, technology, and stylized narration made with the aim to capture the interest of its target audience with commercialism in the hind side.
4. In order to review a film, you as a reviewer should have considerable expertise about the concept of the film and the subject addressed. A sound awareness about the people behind the making of the film, i.e., the producer(s), the director, technicians and the various actors and artists comes in handy; furthermore, it is also good to be in the know-how of their previous works.

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## 8.5 SUMMARY

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- The reporter or news writer moves to the lead or intro after the focus is perceived. In the last units, we have studied about the different types of leads.
- A news story is fine-tuned after it is written. All reporters or news writers do this to make their focus and the message clear.
- The writing of the reporters and news writers is a projection of their mind and if their thinking is clear, so will be their writing.
- Reporters or news writers who want to be read have to develop the instincts of a storyteller. They should be able to find extraordinary angles in ordinary events.
- In order to make a reader see and make a reader care, reporters should develop a theme before they begin writing a feature story. The theme is a concept that gives the story its meaning.
- When the reporters or news writers decide to include descriptions of people, they should be aware of sexism, racism or other biased writing.
- The reporters or the news writers have to set the scene by establishing the ‘where’ and ‘when’ of the event that they are covering and relating.
- Basically, narrative writing is a dramatic account of a fiction or non-fiction story. In this style, news writing requires thorough reporting and descriptive detail.

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- The five *Ws* are also there in this style of writing, but their meaning changes slightly. *Who* is the character, *what* is the plot, *when* is the chronology, *why* is the motive and *where* is the place.
- Reviewing a book requires the reviewer to minutely study the subject- matter of the book and methodically examine and interpret the storyline, narrative or the message it intends to express.
- The ‘book business’ revolves around circulation figures; both the publisher as well as the author wish to sell more and more copies of their book and increase the readership, in turn increasing their profits.
- A book reviewer should always read the book twice before penning his comments, first as a common reader and then as a critic. This may be time consuming but results in an effective summation of the book.
- A movie is definitely the most enticing and absorbing medium of showcasing creativity, spreading a message or simply entertaining the audiences.
- A reviewer should be very accomplished and skilled to be able to balance all the multifaceted elements present in a movie working simultaneously at a given point of time.
- Writing a film review requires a lot of understanding of the idea and the plot of the movie; it needs the reviewer to be able to reflect, analyze and interpret the film in the right manner.
- A review of an event which is related to the sport is known as a sports review. Sports writing can either take the shape of a news piece that reports on a recent game or a feature article that features a team or player.

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## 8.6 KEY WORDS

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- **Review:** A ‘review’ is an assessment written by someone to give the reader an outline or guideline about what a particular piece of work, be it a painting, a poem, a movie, a book, an article, a dance performance, a restaurant, some gourmet or a symphony is like, in his expert opinion and eyes.
- **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.
- **Storytelling:** Storytelling describes the social and cultural activity of sharing stories, sometimes with improvisation, theatrics, or embellishment.
- **Descriptive Writing:** Descriptive writing is a literary device in which the author uses details to paint a picture with their words.
- **Theme:** A theme can be an underlying topic of a discussion or a recurring idea in an artistic work.



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## 8.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

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### Short-Answer Questions

1. What is the idea behind fine-tuning a news story after it has been written?
2. How does being adept at the art of storytelling prove advantageous to the news writers and reporters?
3. Enumerate the three basic tools of story writing.
4. Suggest some ways of writing good descriptive writing.
5. What do you understand by narrative writing?

### Long-Answer Questions

1. Elaborate on the different types of book reviews.
2. List and explain some narrative techniques that reporters can make use of.
3. Differentiate between descriptive and narrative writing technique.
4. Discuss the various guidelines that should be taken into account to write a good film review.
5. Describe the important parameters to be followed to write a good sports review.

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## 8.8 FURTHER READINGS

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### NOTES

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**BLOCK - III**  
**EDITING AND STRUCTURE OF NEWSPAPER**

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**UNIT 9 EDITING**

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**Structure**

- 9.0 Introduction
- 9.1 Objectives
- 9.2 Editing: Meaning and Concept
  - 9.2.1 Significance of Editing
  - 9.2.2 Role and Importance of Editing in the New Media
- 9.3 Contemporary Trends in Print Journalism
  - 9.3.1 Convergence: Origin and Types
- 9.4 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
- 9.5 Summary
- 9.6 Key Words
- 9.7 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 9.8 Further Readings

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**9.0 INTRODUCTION**

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Many people believe that editing is an unexciting job and that newsrooms are drab places where employees hardly enjoy themselves. It is believed that editors cut and chop any text that comes to them, whimsically and with a vengeance, and after pasting any odd headline to their version, feel that their life's work is done. In fact, most of the authors would also agree that quite often editors undermine the authority of a writer.

However, before arriving at an opinion, it must be understood that editing is an art that has taken more than 150 years to develop into what it is today. True to the contrary, editors are skilled and crafted henchmen with a zeal for writing and a nose for errors. They toil ceaselessly against steep deadlines and pinching criticism to make a piece of writing look good, read better, sound crisp and appear error free; this without taking even a zilch of credit for polishing the sometimes crudest written pieces.

Newsrooms have always been places that are full of excitement and are buzzing with activity accompanied by the tut-tut sounds of keyboards of the computers on which ever so vigilant editors grind away to create the near perfect draft without any misses.

With the dawn of the present day computer era, editors have global access to any information they seek at the mere click of a button, and hence, they remain connected with their counterparts across the world till their bulletins are ready, or the journal is sent for publication. In this era of wire services and strong news

networks, editing is a lot of hard work, and to be an efficient editor, one would require creative skills, public relations and a clear-cut set of methods to master.

This unit aims to highlight the need and purpose of editing. It also explains to the media scholar how editing does wonders at the levels of idea, structure and design.

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### 9.1 OBJECTIVES

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After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Define the concept of editing
- Explain the significance of editing
- Discuss the role and importance of editing in the new media
- List the contemporary trends in print journalism

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### 9.2 EDITING: MEANING AND CONCEPT

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Perhaps the story of editing dates back to many centuries ago when the term ‘editor’ first appeared in the 1770s in the *Johnson’s Dictionary* where the meaning was ‘publisher’. With the growth in the print media and the publishing industry, editing later began to be defined as a stage in the process of writing where a writer or an editor decided to mend or refine a certain piece of writing by rectifying gaffes that appeared in the text in the form of incorrect or unclear sentences, grammatical or other scripting errors to make a piece of work more understandable, interesting, and linguistically correct to its reader.

Today, years later, especially after the advent of the new age media, the term editing has once again undergone a metamorphosis, and encompasses wider objectives and purpose. It is today seen as a skilled process of adding, adjusting, altering and organizing written, visual, audio and film-related material to effectively convey clear, authentic, precise and comprehensive information to its audiences. The core objectives of editing are as follows:

- Removal of grammatical and typographical errors
- Crisper interpretation of ambiguous or vague sounding matter
- Deletion of repetitive or unapt parts of the passage in line with the sensibilities of the target audience
- Creating flawless, organized and interest-generating narrative

#### Forms of Editing

Editing plays an integral part in the art of creation of any media product. We unknowingly and informally work through the process of editing on numerous occasions, sometimes consciously, at other times not. For instance, when a four-

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year old composes his first poem and jangles along repeatedly and rhythmically fine tuning his 'sun-bun-fun' and checking them for rhyming words, he is editing; as the young recruit rehearses a zillionth time, his facial expressions, before being confronted by his superior for uninformed absence from work, he is editing; when a young receptionist practices voice modulation and greetings protocol over and over again, trying to meet perfection she is editing; and so is the old professor, recalculating all the figures and going over the numerous formulae before submitting his crucial paper on trigonometric sciences for that eminent journal.

Sometimes, editing is more formally engaged for, by say, an author who has just drafted a book; or a creative producer who is about to invest money in a new musical on TV. Articles written for magazines, journals and newspapers generally require editorial inputs to ensure a consistent format and style. Corporate clients regularly engage freelance writers to rewrite and better phrase their content relating to marketing flyers, brochures and other paraphernalia.

Thus, when the process of correction is consciously undertaken by an author on self, it is defined as *self-editing*; but when he decides to outsource his work to external experts it comes under the umbrella of *professional editing*.

Editing may be categorized variedly based on the author's requirement, the structure of the passage and its design:

**I. Content editing:** This may further be divided into developmental/project editing or substantive/structural editing based on the nature of work to be done.

- *Developmental editing*, also known as project editing, is done when an author engages an editor right from the inception of an idea to develop a manuscript or draft from the initial stages about the concept. The editor is also required to make appropriate suggestions about its content, presentation and body, sometimes using tools like research and analysis to make the contents more impressive, crisp and authentic.
- *Structural or substantive editing* is done when an author seeks the help of an editor to better his already existing manuscript or passage. The aim is to improve clarity and the flow of thoughts by rephrasing or reorganizing a few lines or paragraphs, adding some more text, correcting typos and rectifying other general mistakes.

**II. Copy editing:** Also called line, mechanical or stylistic editing; it is primarily done by an editor when he simply checks any passage for grammar, punctuation and text style. Here an editor systematically reviews the text for appropriate word usage and voice of text, re-checks tabulated information and references, and gauges the contents against defined formats, grammatical rules, spellings and syntax errors.

**III. Proof editing:** This is simply a process where an editor checks a piece of writing for typographic errors, spelling mistakes, and minor inconsistencies. Here, the editor makes no stylistic changes at all.

### 9.2.1 Significance of Editing

A detailed study of the growth of newspapers and periodicals will enable us to understand the need and perspective of editing better. During the past two hundred years, the advent of technology has revolutionized the composing and printing processes. Earlier, all the publications depended on hand-composing. Metal types were used. There were limited fonts. As people began accepting this mode of receiving and reading information, the flat-bed printing machines were replaced by high-speed rotary units enabling newspapers to publish large number of copies with an hour or so. It enabled newspapers to have large circulation. Thus, by the middle of the 20th century, the popularity of newspapers had grown exponentially, and people banked on them for national, international and regional news. Soon, the newspaper became an inseparable part and routine in the daily lives of the masses and classes alike.

With the growth in technology, rising number of copies and printing costs, it became mandatory for newspapers to factor their high costs of production through advertisements. With the arrival of television and radio channels, competition became tougher. Soon, the thick and dense news contents gave way to crisper, sharper, more precise articles to accommodate the revenue spinning advertisements. It was a relationship of convenience where the advertiser got the reach for his products, and the newspaper publisher or broadcaster the much wanted revenue. But everyone soon realized that to attract lucrative ad revenues they couldn't let their circulation figures drop and only good linguistic and classy content could ensure circulation and TRP's. Thus, the art of editing came into being where the job of the editor became to roll out interesting, enriching and informative content in the confines of defined space and word counts, within a stipulated amount of time, maintaining the style, structure, standard and image of the said publication or channel.

### 9.2.2 Role and Importance of Editing in the New Media

Today, with the advent of the information age and internet, the speed with which information travels is tremendous. A new term called '*New Media*' has surfaced which is primarily the convergence of all three media vehicles namely- audio, video and print.

When the 20th century moved into its third quarter, a sea of change hit the print industry. With fiercely growing competition from the broadcast media, in the form of 24X7 news channels and communication satellites, it now had another smart competitor in the form of internet. As the popularity of the satellite channels grew, the print industry decided to take this challenge head-on. The writing style of the print media underwent changes to keep the news readable even next day,

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though it has already been broadcast by the electronic media. In the world of ‘hot headlines’ and ‘breaking news’ the job of the editors became more skilful and tough.

Further, the intrusion of high speed information highways was so much so that printing and publication houses came up with their own e-copies, internet editions and news portals. Today, major newspaper publications routinely update information and news in their internet editions just like the live media (i.e., television or radio). All this has made the need of cutting and chopping information to a shorter and sharper format, even faster. The desk people, however, continue the deadline schedules for the conventional print media and have suitably adjusted their old writing styles and adopted new ones so as to engage the readers’ interest till the next morning when the publication is distributed. For the internet editions, a new effective writing style is quietly being evolved.

Since all the receiver needs to do is to click a button to roll out loads of information on his 17<sup>2</sup> computer screen or a smart handheld device, some of the leading newspapers have already embarked upon remodelling their Internet editions to suit these electronic tablets and smart phones. In fact, with their multiple functions, these tablets are quietly replacing the big computers and laptops. The new high speed access of Internet being offered through 3G or 4G spectrums, a reader may be able to subscribe his favourite daily through a tablet saving huge quantities of paper.

Nowadays, editors are skilled in using the internet as a source of information. Now that the social media has embedded into our daily lives, it is important for the editors to stay ahead in terms of technology. Digital publishing workflows have reduced costs, while saving time.

Editing or writing for the digital media, or the new media is especially challenging with the increasing competition among the various media units. The editors have to ensure that the news story is compelling enough to draw people’s attention since the readers are spoilt for choices when it comes to the media platform that they want to choose. New words are added so frequently in the new media that it is impossible to keep track of all of them. The content should always be fresh and updated. Further, the trends change as frequently. The editors have to keep themselves up-to-date regarding any such changes. In fact, editors are often required to create content. The new media combines audio, video, text and images, thus creating it more challenging for the editors who have to navigate HTML, publishing tools and several page elements in addition to the basic copy. While generating and editing content for online media, editors should supervise the site designer to ensure that they navigate the readers to the right pages and the right information.

The new printing and communication technologies have dismantled the traditional barriers separating the print, audio and video media and bringing about radical changes in the writing style in the age of this new media.

Earlier, it was adequate for a journalist to have writing skills to edit and re-write raw copies of content before it was sent to the press. But today, with the convergence of the three media-print, audio and video, a journalist needs to acquire thorough knowledge of computers, use of still and video cameras as well as good writing skill to process the copy or the feed before it is sent for printing, aired or telecast. All this has to be handled with extreme caution, care and zeal. Unless, a journalist is full of enthusiasm and is able to feel at home around the electrifying environment of the newsroom, neither can he produce a good copy, nor an effective audio or video newsreel. Thus, one has to be addicted to and ceaselessly hum the musical tune of today's newsrooms.

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### Check Your Progress

1. What are the core objectives of editing?
2. What do you understand by the term 'proof editing'?

## 9.3 CONTEMPORARY TRENDS IN PRINT JOURNALISM

The amount of information and variety of news reports available on the Web to a surfer have increased immensely. Today, almost anyone with a digital device can access the Internet and news can be disseminated at once on the Web. Today, news reports are published as soon as they are written and edited. In fact, most of the newspapers these days are expanding into new media because of the Internet. The Websites include movies, podcasts, blogs, slide-shows, etc. Interactivity is the call of the day as story chats have become popular, with readers being able to post comments on an article. In the past, readers were confined to the opinion section as letters to the editor. These were not only time consuming but they also did not guarantee inclusion in the newspaper. However, story chats have allowed readers the freedom of expression without the time lag of a letter or even the approval of an editor. The development of blogs and the comments on the news have eternally modified reporting. Now, it is possible for blogs to not only make news but also report it. This has blurred the line separating news and opinion. In fact, the fact the debate on blogging being true journalism still continues.

*Nando*, owned by *The News & Observer* in Raleigh, North Carolina, was probably the first professional news site on the Internet, started in the early 1990s.

This Online News Association or ONA founded in 1999, comprises more than 1800 members who are engaged in gathering and producing news for digital presentation. Its members consist of writers, producers, photographers and technologists who produce news for the Internet and other digital delivery systems. The organization encourages innovation in storytelling across all platforms.

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The Internet has also started challenging traditional news organizations in different ways. Newspapers are afraid of losing classified advertising to Websites where the driving factor is interest. In fact, newspaper organizations are concerned about real and perceived loss of viewers and circulation to the Internet.

### **Work outside Traditional Press**

The Website has given an opportunity for participation to non-journalists. Since 2005, blogging and social networking have gained more attention and have impacted mainstream journalism in a very big way. Other significant instruments of online journalism are Internet forums, discussion boards and chats, especially those representing the Internet version of official media. Most users in the Virtual world are of the opinion that online sources are generally less influenced and more informative than other media. This assertion is backed by the fact that online writers are merely volunteers and freelancers who do not get paid, and are therefore not bothered or tied down by corporate morals. At the same time, these days, several online forums have begun imposing restrictions on their boards and chat rooms for fear of cyber vandalism. There are certain digital columnists who aspire to swap the mainstream media in the long run. Certain independent forums and discussion boards have already become as prominent as mainstream news bureaus. Internet radio and podcasts are other growing independent Internet-based media.

### **Legal Issues**

The legal aspect of cyber journalism is yet another ensuing problem. It is believed by some experts that the existing law is completely incompatible with new media and will have to be eventually replaced. Online publishing allows too many rights to users and most of the comments are anonymous. It is a general and strong opinion that strong protection measures should exist for news organizations who only host journalists. Anonymity can lead to even criminal abuses, and therefore, should be avoided even if it affects other rights.

### **News Collections**

In the cyber media there are personalized news feeds and aggregators, which compile news from different Websites into one site. Google News is one such popular news aggregator. The other names include:

- Newsfeedmaker.com
- Topix.net
- TheFreeLibrary.com
- mangrova.com

New media journalism is not only competitive but also combative. With the 24×7 news cycle, there are obvious doubts as to the standards of journalism. Some mainstream news organizations, which are still trying to apply traditional news standards like accuracy, balance and clarity to new media and finding it extremely challenging.



The power to search archives and documents, compile background and historical context and identify reliable and authoritative sources has widened the reporter's toolbox. Additionally, it has presented an essentially different society based on interactivity, absence of rigidity, lesser rules and lesser restrictions. Rapidity and timeliness, which were the strength of newspapers, were taken over by the wire services and then the electronic media took that advantage from the printed press. Now with the emergence of new media, newspapers have started posting breaking news and extending their brand identities through innovations like the online afternoon editions. At this crucial cross-section of traditional media and new media, the standards of the converged newsroom like freedom, irreverence, advocacy and attitude are also applied.

Of course, the depth that is there in the cyber media cannot be achieved on television. New media and newspapers can also be compared in the same way. However, the depth should be seen in harmony with the highest standards of journalism. The process of establishing high standards of journalism online is progressing rapidly under the influence of the following developments:

1. Dominant news Websites are run by traditional media such as newspapers, newsmagazines and major cable television outlets. However, organizations with small capital or even lesser journalistic reputations and fragile marketing strategies are being wiped out. The survivors, that is, the mainstream news organizations end up building powerful Websites. It is their responsibility to ensure that the writing and editing standards of their Websites are as high as that of their print publications.
2. Cyber journalists are making a lot of effort to come up with standards for the new media journalism. The Online News Association (ONA) mentioned earlier in this unit, is launching a project to develop strong guidelines, including recommendations for how they can be applied and monitored.
3. The biggest influence on journalistic standards is perhaps the interactive elements such as the sections requesting feedback and comments in a story. Journalists put in their e-mail addresses along with their byline. This not only increases transparency but also makes them more accountable. The fact that it is a public wall makes the journalists more responsible writers. The interactivity that this allows helps raise the level of journalistic achievements.

### **Revolution in New Media Technologies**

Technological innovation is essential for human development. In the twenty first century, we are on the verge of total digitization of all forms of information transmission, except at an individual-to-individual level. Digital technologies are bringing about major changes in the economy and society at large. It has increased the speed of work, facilitated borderless financial transactions, and transported

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worldwide news and entertainment to boundless crowds. The innovations have allowed the combination of telecommunications, PC and entertainment enterprises, supporting a battle right around some of the biggest corporations in the globe for control of a consolidated information industry.

In the contemporary Web world, new media is used extensively in mobile devices. The biggest advantages of the mobile are as follows:

- (i) Its ability to use technology.
- (ii) Its ability to wirelessly connect to and use centrally located information and/or application software.

All this is achieved through the application of small, portable, and wireless computing and communication devices. Some of the examples of Mobile Technology are as follows:

- Laptop
- Cell Phone
- Personal Data Assistant (PDA)
- GPS
- IPOD

Some more New Media communication technologies which will shape our future are as follows:

**VR World:** A virtual world is a computer simulation, displayed as a three-dimensional environment on the computer's monitor/screen. It is meant to allow users to not just interact but actually inhabit via graphical avatar representations of themselves. Second Life or SL is one of the best known 3D virtual-reality environments. There are more than 15 million residents with avatars representing themselves. They build and create objects and attires. They also interact with each other in a user-created virtual world that even has its own economy where it is possible for them to own land. SL is not really a game but a social networking environment popularly used for recreation, commerce and education. Other virtual worlds include the following:

- There
- Kaneva
- Whyville
- LinkedIn
- IMVU
- Moove

The virtual worlds are sometimes referred to as Collaborative Virtual Environments (CVEs) or Multi-User Virtual Environments (MUVES) because they involve more than one person's avatar. They are also called Immersive Virtual Environments (IVEs) because the user is actually able to sense being within the world.

Yet another important virtual reality tool is Google Earth, which creates a blend of satellite imagery, maps, terrain and 3D buildings.

It makes it possible for you to explore the sky in addition to the earth's surface. Google Earth is complemented by GoogleSketchUp and Google3D Warehouse. A virtual reality tool from Microsoft built on Google Earth Sky is World Wide Telescope. It is a data mashup that creates a visualization environment in which a personal computer can be used to visualize arbitrary or abstract data sets and time series data. It is a program that displays the Sky as maps, the 3D universe and earth science data.

**Wiki:** In the Hawaiian language, the word wiki means 'rapidly'. A wiki is an online resource functioning as a virtual telescope. It allows users to add and edit content collectively. Through the use of hypertext, a wiki's collection of Web pages can be navigated and edited by anyone. The fact that anyone can edit, delete, or modify its content makes a wiki the collaborative work of several authors. The best known of this informative type of Website is Wikipedia. It is a research resource like an encyclopaedia or database that covers a wide variety of topics. The English-language Wikipedia has the largest user base among all wikis and ranks in the top twenty among all Websites in terms of traffic. On the other hand, many wikis are narrow and focussed on a defined range of topics. Wikis can be set up for free with the help of providers such as Wetpaint and Wikidot.

**Blogs:** Blog is short for Web log, a form of online journal. The best known services are offered by:

- WordPress
- Blogger
- Typepad
- LiveJournal
- Squarespace

A blog can have a single author or several. Most blogs allow readers to post comments in response to an article or post. Bloglines is an RSS reader—a service that collects updates from your favourite blogs so that you can read them in one place.

**Microblogs:** This is a cross between instant messaging and blogging. Twitter is a microblogging system that allows a user to send short, 140-character informational updates. Users can also follow the updates of selected friends.

**Photo Sharing:** Flickr is the best known online photo sharing site. Users are able to upload digital still photographs. It is possible for browsers to view public photos and also comment on them. Other photo sharing sites include Photobucket, Snapzilla, Ringo, Buzznet, Picturetrail, Dotphoto, Fotki, Faces and ImageShack. There are also sites that allow embedded slideshows such as Slide and OneTrueMedia.

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**Video Sharing:** An online video sharing site is YouTube, which is owned by Google. Videos are uploaded by users and can be viewed free by others. Users can leave comments on video pages. Other examples are:

- Video Egg
- Jumpcut.com
- Google Video
- Eyespot
- Vimeo
- Sony's Crackle
- Revver
- Ourmedia
- vSocial
- Bright Cove

**Data Sharing:** It is a facility that facilitates discovering, reading, organizing and sharing of valuable personally-selected data and information on the Internet. An example is Pageflakes. The tool creates a Web start page for blogs and news sources that are read daily. The page is personalized with photos, videos, a calendar, e-mail, to-do list and more. Pageflakes is a free service, which offers thousands of Flakes (widgets or modules) including Facebook, a universal News Search, YouTube, Twitter, message board, blog, and hundreds of RSS feeds to choose from.

**Digital Storytelling:** Digital storytelling is mediated mass communication, which combines traditional techniques from television, video production, radio, newspapers and magazines with contemporary multimedia tools. The product that it delivers as a result is in the form of informative and entertaining short productions with text, still images, motion images, sound, music and voice. These productions are script-driven and supported by the voice of the narrator.

**Machinima:** The skill of making a real movie in a virtual world is called machinima. It is a term derived from 'machine cinema'. It is a video production shot in a 3D virtual reality world, such as Second Life, and produced with real life tools and techniques.

**Social Bookmarks:** It is a tool that helps users on the Internet to organize, store, manage and search for bookmarks of online resources. The social-bookmarking site Delicious, which was once 'del.icio.us', helps users to add, categorize and manage social bookmarks for storing, sharing and discovering Web pages. Delicious permits users to group links with similar topics to create a 'Stack'. It is possible to include title and descriptions for the Stack page. Another bookmarking system is Furl.

**Tag Clouds:** A cloud of tags is a visual list of weighted keywords on a Web page – usually hyperlinked single words listed alphabetically with their importance

shown in font size or color. They can be created at TagCrowd and Tag Cloud Generator and TagCloud Generator and TagCloud.

**Content Sharing:** This facility allows users to collectively determine the value of the content. The moment something is submitted, browsers view it and vote by going to/browsing through it. An example of an online content sharing site is Digg. It surfaces the best stuff on the Web from news to videos to images to Podcasts as voted by its users. There are no editors involved in content sharing.

**Cloud Computing:** The traditional practice was for users run software on their own computers and store all their data on their own computer disk drives. However, with faster and more reliable Internet connections, cloud computing offers application software on Web servers that allow storage of information on these very remote servers. The service company delivers software applications as an online service using the computing power of its network of powerful computer servers accessed via the Web. That network of servers is the cloud. In the past, cloud computing has been known as client-server architecture, thin client, and software as a service. Cloud computing makes it possible to access documents from anywhere and collaborate with co-authors. Examples of companies delivering applications online include Google Apps, Adobe Buzzword word processor and Photoshop Express, Amazon.com Web Services, Salesforce.com, Microsoft Windows Azure, Hewlett-Packard, IBM, Oracle and SAP. Users must trust placing all their personal, family, corporate and strategic data on computers operated by others. Of course, this is already being done with such Websites as Facebook, Flickr or Gmail. Notably, the Free Software Foundation is against the idea of trusting for profit corporations.

**Google Tools:** Since 1998, Google has come a long way and is now the largest search engine on the Web, indexing a large proportion of all pages on the Web. The various services offered by Google handle several hundred million queries each day. The main function is Google Search.

Google Trends allows users to view underlying numerical data on the popularity of any particular search in Google's vast database of search terms, relative to others. Other Google services include Google Language Tools, Google Toolbar and Google Clock, and numerous others.

**Conversion Tools:** There are several useful new conversion and building tools appearing on the Web. These tools or applications are capable of converting content existing in one format into another format, say a markup language. For instance, the free Online PDF Converter and Document Creator. VIXY is also a similar free service for the conversion of YouTube videos to QuickTime-playable MP4 files. Another tool, Videobox, converts Flash from most video sites to Quicktime.

**Podcasts:** A podcast is a multimedia digital file, which is made available on the Internet for downloading to a portable media player, computer, etc. It comprises an episodic series of audio, video, PDF or ePub files that can be subscribed to

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and downloaded through Web syndication. It can also be streamed online to any mobile device or computer. The term 'podcast' has been derived from 'broadcast' and 'pod' (iPod). The content can be accessed using any computer that can play media files and not just portable music players.

Long lists of podcasts can be found at Podcasting Station, Podcast Alley, Digital Podcasts and Podcast Central. Podcasts can also be downloaded from iTunes.

**Writing Communities:** Ever since the 4th millennium BC, people have been writing. Printing has been around for a thousand years too. However, with new technologies individuals are able to not only publish their writings readily and rapidly but they are able to do it frequently, and repeatedly. Naturally, we have communities of writers. One of the popular ones is Lulu. Such low-cost, on-demand publishers facilitate dissemination of ideas with the support and feedback of a large online writing community.

**Digital Scrapbooking:** Also referred to as digi-scrappping or computer scrapbooking, digital scrapbooking uses a computer and graphics software to create visual layouts to preserve memories. Traditional scrapbookers paste photographs on paper alongside hand-written journal notes and various small embellishment objects and memorabilia such as stickers, buttons and ribbons. Digital scrapbooking uses digital photos, clip art, and graphic textures as embellishment. The ultimate objective remains the same—preservation of memories. Digital scrapbook layouts can be printed for an album, or left as computer files shared via Web pages or e-mail. The software available include Picaboo, Smilebox, Two Peas in a Bucket and Memory Mixer.

**Internet Calling:** Like the telephone, an Internet calling service enables two-party audio and video chat and multi-party audioconferencing. An example of such a service is Skype. It facilitates computer-to-computer calls as well as computer-to-land or mobile phone calls. Yahoo! Voice is another Internet calling service capable of assigning a phone number to your computer so that it can be called from any land line or mobile phone. Computer-to-computer calls from within Yahoo! Messenger and computer-to-phone calls are also possible.

**Rich Media:** The term is commonly used in the business of advertising referring to the use of the latest technology in creating Web advertising content. It refers to ads on Web pages containing interactive elements, which allow active participation by consumers in a Website audience. Advertisements with this kind of interactivity are also referred to as interactive media. The digital files comprising the new rich-media advertisements have richer graphics, better animation, audio, streaming video as well as applets that facilitate user interaction, special multimedia effects, hypertext, pull-down menus and fill-in forms for greater transaction behaviour. They make use of enhanced technologies like Flash, Shockwave and Java.

### 9.3.1 Convergence: Origin and Types

It all began with the arrival of digital communication, which shortened information into discrete, identifiable and easily transferable bits of informative data. In addition, it amplified the transfer of information by allowing more signals to move through a lone communication path. This feature of digital communication can be used to proficiently disseminate information — sound, video and information on the same communication system. Network convergence also reduces the inefficient flow of sound, video, and data whose special attributes led to the growth of a separate communication network designed distinctively, and often incompatible.

Technological convergence takes place when different technological systems evolve to be able to perform similar tasks. The act can refer to technologies that once existed separately, such as voice (and telephony features), data (and productivity applications), and video but now share resources and interact with each other synergistically. In other words, they function together to produce something which could not have been done independently.

Today, we are surrounded by a multi-level convergent media universe where all modes of communication and information are continuously transforming to adjust to and accommodate the demands of technologies changing the methods we create, consume, learn and share with each other.

#### Types of Convergence

Let us now look at the various types of convergence:

- *Technology Convergence* – This type of convergence has seen digitization of all content of media. When text, visuals and sound are converted to digital signals, the possible relationship between them is also developed. This allows cross-platform usage.
- *Economic Convergence* – This type of convergence refers to the parallel synthesis of the entertainment industry. This means, a single media organization can control and have a stake in movies, television, publishing, entertainment, Internet, music, property and many different sectors. The result is that cultural production has been reorganized around ‘synergies’. There are several examples where a company primarily into printing newspapers has ventured into many different sectors not necessary always related to the media, for example, the Times Group. Other examples include India Today, Deccan Herald and Salgaocar (Goa).
- *Social or Organic Convergence* – This type of convergence takes place when the user is watching a cricket match on an LED, enjoying music on the stereo, word processing some text and at the same time writing an e-mail to his friends simultaneously. Basically, this is an instance of an individual multitasking to make maximum use of the new information environment. Ultimately, it is the user who is in control.

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- *Cultural Convergence* – Media convergence develops a new participatory culture by lending the normal person the instruments to not just chronicle and explain but also recirculate information or matter. Some organizations are smart enough to tap this culture and produce content which is not too expensive. Media convergence, additionally supports trans-media storytelling and the growth of content across multiple channels. As producers more fully exploit organic convergence, storytellers utilize each and every channel to communicate different kinds and levels of narrative information, using each medium to do what it does best.

### **Historic Channels for Public Distribution of Information**

- *The First Age-Interpersonal/Scribal*: The first age was more of interpersonal communication and also scribal. There were scribes in the courts of kings who were noting down information. However, the distribution was limited. It was dominant until the end of the 15th Century. The audience was limited and accuracy was lacking. At that time, there was no economic basis for a media industry. Not only did the public have limited access to content at that time, but there was no consumer power either.
- *The Second Age-Mass Media*: The second age was marked by the impact of technology in communication. It provided an economic basis for industry. There was mass production which reduced regulatory influences. The results were as follows:
  - o Feedback process was eliminated.
  - o Mass production became possible.
  - o There was more noise.
  - o Fidelity of delivery increased.
- *The Third Age-Mass Media*: The third age was enabled by digital technology. It fundamentally altered mass media powers. Content generation is the key in this age. Consumer is the king. The consumer has absolute power over:
  - o What is consumed?
  - o When it is consumed?
  - o How it is consumed?

The content can be generated by almost anyone through Websites with streaming audio and video. With geographical boundaries getting blurred, most of the communication is taking place over digital transmission of voice, data and video to or from anyone, anywhere and anytime.

People require a combination of sound, information and movie in the right blend. This connotes the accessibility of numerous technology-related decisions to satisfy people's wish for round-the-clock access to fellow beings, informative content and business.



The old technology does not die. It leaves enough space for a large number of innovations to exist together. It cannot replace the old technology straightaway. One technology can never fulfil the prerequisites of any commercial venture. Therefore, each technology will identify its specialty and revamp new and old classes of service and user terminals.

Convergence is the key today. The essential element during convergence is the transformation of the desktop computer through speedier processors supporting advanced graphics and multimedia capabilities. The PC today is a collaborative communication and media device. One more factor promoting convergence is the expensive proposition of maintaining three different networks for sound, video and data. Organizations can save substantially in terms of equipment, staff, and services by using converged networks. Enterprises running on WAN are realizing cost savings. Using Voice-over-Frame Relay, VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) and Voice-over-ATM, it is possible to use the same WAN lines for voice as well as information, which in turn brings about significant cost investment funds. Companies also wish to install the LAN and WAN infrastructure exchange video and audio information in real-time. In teaching, an educator's session can be transported to distant places live or as recorded video-on-demand files on Web servers. Converged networks can in addition be utilized to transport corporate communications, presentations, and training to employees directly at their computer screen.

Convergence is not just a technology, it is a basic change in the relation between content producers and consumers with economic, social and political implications. New Media, in its simplest form, can be defined as interactive forms of communication. It uses the Internet and Information Communication Technologies (ICT) including podcasts, RSS feeds, social networks, text messaging, blogs, wikis, virtual worlds and other similar technologies.

Using new media, users can create, modify and share content with other users, using relatively simple tools that are generally free. All that is required by new media is a computer, a mobile phone or any other digital device with Internet access. New media helps users to:

- Communicate with people.
- Share information and services.
- Collaborate with other people within an organization, community or any other part of the world.
- Create new content, services, communities and channels of communication that help people to deliver information and services.

New media emerged in the last part of the last century when the World Wide Web came into existence. The main feature of new media is interactivity and user feedback. New media is mostly in digital form, which can be managed, changed and edited. Furthermore, new media has extensively impacted journalism. Anybody who is techno-savvy can be a new media journalist.

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In journalism, there has always been a tussle between getting it first and getting it right. Today, where old news is cold news, new media journalism is quickly turning into a cornerstone in the media industry carrying news from anywhere to everywhere. While traditional media is linear, new media journalism takes a non-linear approach to news. Print media has always focussed more on urban news coverage while the other areas have remained largely neglected. Any news coverage of suburban and rural events, by traditional media has worked on pre-arranged procedures only.

### Recent Issues

The entry of digital technology combined with advancements in the field of telecommunications has disrupted the global news industry. In 2016, the World Press Trends survey was released. The survey stated that in 2016, at least 40 per cent of internet users around the world read newspapers online and that in most developed countries, readership on digital platforms has surpassed that in print. Although revenue from print is decreasing, it still makes up for more than 92 per cent of all newspapers revenues. At the same time, circulation increased by 4.9 per cent globally, mostly owing to the 7.8 per cent growth in numbers from India, China and other parts of Asia which made up 62% of the average daily print unit circulation globally. According to the report, this surge in circulation in India and China is due to low prices and expanding literacy in these markets.

While newspapers are a flourishing industry in India, newspaper organizations and journalists are embracing new technology in order to remain relevant in a fast changing environment. On the one hand, they are swept up in the disruptive shifts in the global media economy, while on the other, they are in a unique position to translate this disruption into an opportunity.

The World Press Trends report also states that revenue from paid digital circulation has increased 30 per cent in 2015 and that one in five readers from the countries studied are willing to pay for online news. Revenue from digital advertising, on the other hand, is growing at the slower pace of 7.3 per cent. The report also suggests that there is a huge growth opportunity in the mobile news market, with over 70 per cent of the people in countries such as the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom, reading newspapers via a mobile device. Similar trends will be seen in India as internet connectivity expands. The fact that many digital-born news sites are adopting a mobile-first strategy reflects this. More recently, Hindustan Times has hired a mobile editor to build a team of over 700 journalists specializing in mobile journalism.

In 2016, the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism released a report on digital news start-ups in India which explored how digital-born news start-ups are developing new editorial priorities, funding models and distribution strategies for news in the Indian digital media market. The study, which included observing the practices of The Quint, Scroll, The Wire, and others, concluded that India was

not short of noteworthy experiments in journalism and online news. It also found that more news publishers were embracing mobile-first approaches, given that Internet penetration was increasing rapidly in the country. More relevant to this study, the report established that social media had emerged as a tool for distribution and also stated that digital news start-ups were turning their focus to Hindi and local language content, in order to serve new audiences.

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### Check Your Progress

3. List some of the significant instruments of online journalism.
4. What are the biggest advantages of the mobile?

## 9.4 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. The core objectives of editing are as follows:
  - Removal of grammatical and typographical errors
  - Crisper interpretation of ambiguous or vague sounding matter
  - Deletion of repetitive or unapt parts of the passage in line with the sensibilities of the target audience
  - Creating flawless, organized and interest-generating narrative
2. Proof editing is a process where an editor checks a piece of writing for typographic errors, spelling mistakes, and minor inconsistencies. Here, the editor makes no stylistic changes at all.
3. Some of the significant instruments of online journalism are Internet forums, discussion boards and chats, especially those representing the Internet version of official media.
4. The biggest advantages of the mobile are as follows:
  - (i) Its ability to use technology.
  - (ii) Its ability to wirelessly connect to and use centrally located information and/or application software.

## 9.5 SUMMARY

- Editing plays an integral part in the art of creation of any media product.
- Sometimes, editing is more formally engaged for, by say, an author who has just drafted a book; or a creative producer who is about to invest money in a new musical on TV.

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- Developmental editing, also known as project editing, is done when an author engages an editor right from the inception of an idea to develop a manuscript or draft from the initial stages about the concept.
- Nowadays, editors are skilled in using the internet as a source of information.
- Editing or writing for the digital media, or the new media is especially challenging with the increasing competition among the various media units.
- The editors have to ensure that the news story is compelling enough to draw people's attention since the readers are spoilt for choices when it comes to the media platform that they want to choose.
- The new printing and communication technologies have dismantled the traditional barriers separating the print, audio and video media and bringing about radical changes in the writing style in the age of this new media.
- This Online News Association or ONA founded in 1999, comprises more than 1800 members who are engaged in gathering and producing news for digital presentation.
- The legal aspect of cyber journalism is yet another ensuing problem. It is believed by some experts that the existing law is completely incompatible with new media and will have to be eventually replaced.
- Digital technologies are bringing about major changes in the economy and society at large.
- Technological convergence takes place when different technological systems evolve to be able to perform similar tasks.
- Convergence is the key today. The essential element during convergence is the transformation of the desktop computer through speedier processors supporting advanced graphics and multimedia capabilities.
- While newspapers are a flourishing industry in India, newspaper organizations and journalists are embracing new technology in order to remain relevant in a fast changing environment.

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## 9.6 KEY WORDS

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- **Editing:** Editing is a skilled process of adding, adjusting, altering and organizing written, visual, audio and film related material to effectively convey clear, authentic, precise and comprehensive information to its audiences.
- **New Media:** New media is the convergence of all three media vehicles namely, audio, video and print.
- **Developmental Editing:** Developmental editing, also known as project editing, is done when an author engages an editor right from the inception of an idea to develop a manuscript or draft from the initial stages about the concept.

- **Editor:** Editor is a person who is in charge of and determines the final content of a newspaper, magazine, or multi-author book.
- **VR World:** A virtual world is a computer simulation, displayed as a three-dimensional environment on the computer's monitor/screen.

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## 9.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

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### Short-Answer Questions

1. Why is it said that editing can do wonders with the reporter's copy?
2. Write a short note on the need for editing.
3. Why is the role of the news desk crucial in a publication?
4. Write a short note of the following:
  - (i) Digital storytelling
  - (ii) Machinima
  - (iii) Social bookmarks
  - (iv) Tag clouds
  - (v) Cloud computing
5. What are the types of convergence?

### Long-Answer Questions

1. Discuss why has editing gained so much importance in the age of the new media.
2. Explain the various forms of editing.
3. Describe the significance of editing.
4. Between self-editing your new book and hiring professional help for it, what would you choose and why?
5. 'New media journalism is not only competitive but also combative.' Do you agree? Give reasons for your answers.

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## 9.8 FURTHER READINGS

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*Editing*

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# **UNIT 10 INTRODUCTION TO EDITING OF NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES**

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## **NOTES**

### **Structure**

- 10.0 Introduction
- 10.1 Objectives
- 10.2 Contemporary Presentation Styles
- 10.3 Editing of Newspapers and Magazines
  - 10.3.1 Editing of Magazines
- 10.4 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
- 10.5 Summary
- 10.6 Key Words
- 10.7 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
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## **10.0 INTRODUCTION**

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The concepts of layout designs have undergone several changes due to the new technologies available in newspaper production. The newspapers were first developed in the United Kingdom, and were later produced in other parts of the English-speaking world from India to the US and even in the African countries. By presenting the essentials of layouts, this unit throws light on the fact that a balanced amalgamation of creativity and technology can bring about a major change in a newspaper. This unit will give an introduction to editing of newspapers and magazines.

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## **10.1 OBJECTIVES**

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After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Define the concept of layout
- Enumerate the principles of design in newspaper make up
- List the basic guidelines to be followed for a newspaper page layout
- Describe how to design newspaper and magazine pages

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## 10.2 CONTEMPORARY PRESENTATION STYLES

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The arrangement of content on the page of a newspaper in accordance with the editorial and graphical guidelines and goals is termed as the layout or news design. The chief objective of editing is to arrange news stories in the order of their importance. The graphical considerations include readability and balanced, unobtrusive incorporation of advertisements. The principles of graphic design are integrated within it. The meaning of the words such as words layout, make up or paste up are almost the same.

The present day modern newspapers actually started during the middle of the 19th century. The Industrial Revolution, the spread of democracy and the emergence of newspaper publications began around the same period.

The Industrial Revolution, the colonialism of Asia and Africa and the decline of the feudal order provided a suitable environment for the media. Better road transport and printing machinery enabled the newspapers to be published and distributed easily.

The overall appearance and readability of newspapers have improved immensely in the course of time due to advancement in printing technology, graphical design and editorial standards. The newspapers of the 19th century were characterized as being densely packed with type, often arranged vertically, with multiple headlines for each article. Before the arrival of digital typesetting and graphic help in layout designing, the newspapers suffered from numerous technological glitches.

Now, software have been developed with the help of which newspapers are being printed using a desktop. The various components on the newspaper pages can be easily arranged directly. Earlier, in the past, before digital pre-press pagination, designers used precise ‘layout dummies’ to direct the exact layout of elements for each page.

A complete layout dummy was required for designating proper column widths by which a typesetter would set type, and arrange columns of text. Layout also required the calculation of lengths of copy (text in ‘column inches’), for any chosen width.

Much of the variance and incoherence of early newspapers was due to the fact that last minute corrections were exclusively handled by typesetters. With a photographic printing process, typesetting gave way to paste-up, whereby columns of type were printed by the typesetters, which were mostly linotype or monotype formats. The news items were then transferred to a high-resolution film for paste-up on photographed final prints. These prints, in turn, were ‘shot to negative’ with a large format production camera—directly to steel-emulsion photographic plates.



Though paste-up put an end to cumbersome typesetting, this still required planned layouts and set column widths. Photographic plates are (still) wrapped on printing drums to directly apply ink to the newsprint (paper). In the mid 1990s, the paste-up process gave way to the direct-to-plate process, where computer-prepared pages were optically transmitted directly to the photographic plate. It has replaced several in-between steps in newspaper production. Direct-to-plate pages have allowed for much more flexibility and precision than before. Designers today still use column grid layouts only with layout software, such as Adobe InDesign or Quark.

A media scholar should be aware of the layout designs. During the early years, the limitation of the printing press had forced the desk persons to follow the constraints of the types and space on the pages. However, with the computers and off-set printing processes, the scope of page layout has undergone numerous changes in the recent years. Nowadays, there is an exclusive department in the newspaper office for preparing the layout, but the editors on the desk remain the main players in producing a daily.

The Indian-owned newspapers and periodicals have grown over a period of 200 years as an instrument for campaigning the country's freedom. But now the situation has changed. With the opening up of the market and globalization, newspapers have not remained just a mouthpiece for the underdog, or a medium to register protest and present a probable solution.

Today, newspapers are also a means of entertainment, a product in the market competing with hundreds of other products. When we look at a newspaper as a product, we are bound to pay attention to its packaging and presentation simply because we have to make it attractive enough to be able to draw the attention of the buyers.

The layout and designing of a newspaper helps in making the newspaper attractive. Therefore, it is an important aspect of the process of newspaper making. No matter how rich the content of a newspaper, it fails drastically if it is not able to draw buyers at the stands.

Broadly speaking, a newspaper may be called a collection of news stories, articles, features, editorials, etc., of various shades. If these news items are arranged in a disorganized manner, it will become difficult and confusing for the reader to browse through them. Hence, the content of a newspaper should be arranged in an attractive and easy-to-read manner. This arrangement of the content is known as newspaper layout or page design. The objectives of a page make-up are as follows:

- (i) The most important objective of page designing in a newspaper is to arrange various news items in a proper, organized and easy-to-read manner.

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- (ii) The newspaper make up gives a newspaper its own distinct personality and helps in either strengthening it or changing it with the passage of time. *The Times of India* is a brilliant example of how a newspaper goes through a successful transition of personality with the changing times.
- (iii) One major task of newspaper make up is to present it in an attractive package so that it can draw the attention of the buyers.
- (iv) Newspaper designing also aims at creating the product which gels well with the culture of the target audience and also portrays the content in a suitable light. It aims at communicating through appearance and arrangement on all the pages.

### Principles of Design in Newspaper Make-Up

Newspaper make-up involves a lot of creativity and a deft use of technology in designing a newspaper successfully. For this purpose, the basic principles of designing are put to use — balance, contrast, proportion and unity.

**1. Balance:** In a newspaper, balance means balancing the weight of a story, headline graphic or visuals. A newspaper page should look balanced in all aspects when one looks at it. It should not be photo heavy or text heavy. Rather, it should be a balanced blend of both. Bad designing results in making a newspaper either top heavy, bottom heavy or side heavy. If the balance is lost, the page will look crammed on one side and empty on the other. Headlines, visuals, size of the stories, the boxes and screens and use of bold texts are the elements which make a page heavy. By visually weighing these elements on both sides of a page, balance is maintained in a newspaper design. A precise mathematical weighing is not required, but a sense of appreciating a visually attractive page is very important. This is where creativity and aesthetics come into use.

All the afore-mentioned elements should be distributed in the page so as to give it a pleasant look (refer to Figure 10.1). Formal or symmetrical balance involves placing equal sized objects on either side of the page to form a mirror image. But this can result in an unbalanced look from top to bottom. However, most newspapers use the informal balance. In informal balance, the top and the bottom and two sides of the page are not mirror image of each other, but there is a feeling of equilibrium when one looks at it.



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Fig. 10.1 Balance in a Newspaper Design

2. **Contrast:** When two or more elements that are dramatically different from each other are used opposite each other, it is called contrast in designing. This difference could be in size, shade, shape and colour. For example, a headline set in lighter type is in contrast with a headline in bold. A bigger picture will be in contrast with a smaller one. Black and white would be contrast in colour. Contrast generally is used for highlighting certain elements in page designing. Look at Figure 10.2. It uses contrast in colour and font size to make the newspaper design stand out.

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Fig. 10.2 Use of Contrast in a Newspaper Design

- 3. Proportion:** Proportion refers to the comparative relationship in terms of length, size and shape. In newspaper designing, unequal proportions are often found more attractive than the equal ones because the equal proportions are monotonous and drab. Therefore, the most widely used shape in designing is rectangle. The outer shape of a newspaper, the shape of most news stories and the shape of photographs are usually rectangular (refer to Figure 10.3). The most common proportions used in newspapers are 2:3 and 3:5 proportions.



Fig. 10.3 Overall look of Proportionality in a Newspaper

- 4. Unity:** The page should convey an overall unity in design. If it conveys multiple impressions, it won't contribute to the single and distinct personality of the newspaper as a whole. Therefore, it is essential that a newspaper page creates a single impression. This way, the page does not only look pleasant, it also looks organized and contributes to strengthening of newspaper's personality. Refer to Figure 10.4 to see how unity impacts the overall look of the newspaper.



Fig. 10.4 A Newspaper Design should Display Unity

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Direction, rhythm and harmony are some of the other design principles that are deployed to create an effective newspaper page. If one looks at it, these words sound as if we are talking about music composition. This in fact is the aesthetic aspect of newspaper designing. Like music, the newspaper page should also have an organized rhythm. Like a good song, it should look well arranged and spontaneous both. It should have a certain personality and should appear pleasant to the eyes.

Newspaper make up is a tough task as people are always working on strict deadlines, and being consistent in the designing every day is a challenge. Earlier, it was more difficult since the designing was done manually by copying and pasting the bromides in hand drawn columns and lines. Nowadays, computers have made page designing very simple. Many software packages have been designed for this purpose. QuarkXpress is the most popular among these software, and has been exclusively created for newspaper page make up. The page designers can now change the placement and arrangement of the newspaper by pressing a few keys.

### **Visualizing the Page**

We have discussed the basics of page designing, but it is very difficult for a beginner to understand and visualize the structure of a newspaper page. For this, one has to conduct a practical exercise. Take a newspaper page and draw thick lines around each story on the page. Now, the bare structure of the page will become clear. You can repeat this exercise as many times with different newspapers in order to understand the different designs that each newspaper follows.

You can also copy the design of a newspaper page on a plain sheet of paper, marking it with thin pencil lines. Then, mark the space covered by stories and pictures on the plain sheet and fill it with the cuttings. This process will make you understand the design of that particular page. During this exercise, you can also experiment and create your own page.

### **Basics of Newspaper Page Layout**

The basic guidelines for a newspaper page layout are as follows:

- Right at the top of the front page of a newspaper, the amount of space for the name plate is specified. The name plate usually appears at the top centre. It is called a masthead or flag.
- Stories and spaces are usually assigned corresponding numbers to make the sorting of stories and headlines easy. The number of columns each story would fill should also be specified (S/C for single column, 2/c or D/c for double column and 3/C or T/C for triple column).
- With multiple column stories, an arrow for continuity covering all the columns should be marked to avoid confusion and to show where the story is continued.

- Carryovers or jumps should be marked properly along with the page number which is carrying the rest of the story.
- There should not be an S/C adjacent to an S/C or below S/C. The same goes for D/Cs and T/Cs.
- The various visuals—cartoons, pictures, graph or illustrations—have to be properly labelled. The common practice is to put a large cross covering the entire space assigned to the visual.
- Boxed items are also properly marked by drawing rectangles. These are labelled with the word ‘box’.
- Column rules and special marks should be used judiciously to distinguish columns from each other, or to highlight some part of the story.
- The designer should always remember that the primary objective of a newspaper is to disseminate information and not look overtly creative and loud. The effort should be to arrange the stories in a way that it attracts the readers’ attention and makes it a comfortable reading. Therefore, artistic decorations should give way to editorial content. A well designed newspaper will present information through a series of organized visual signals like photos, charts, graphs, headlines, summaries or blurbs.
- The newspaper designing should be an attempt to help the text become more visible with the help of visuals or photographs. The visuals should be merged with the text in an organic manner instead of emphasizing on visuals undermining the written text. The effort should be to merge the text with the visuals. Designers need to select the right type faces, type sizes lines and spacing so that the legibility and comfort level of the reader is consistently maintained.
- A well-designed newspaper surprises the readers, too. If one keeps following the same pattern of make up over the years, it can bring about monotony and dullness. Comfort level with the familiar keeps readers loyal to a newspaper, but the element of surprise keeps them away from even experimenting with the new ones. This can come in form of a large picture or dramatic use of colours. Surprise in the form of page designing delights the readers, and the routine job of newspaper reading becomes interesting.

Newspaper page designing has come a long way from simply placing the pictures and stories together to becoming a highly intricate graphic art. The following factors have contributed to the growth and evolution of designing in print journalism:

- Spectacular growth of graphic designing
- Technical advancement particularly in computer technology
- Better printing presses
- Opening up of the market
- Reader becoming a consumer and the newspaper becoming a product

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Indeed, the opening up of the market has changed the scenario of media business tremendously. The process of turning a newspaper into a product started two decades ago, and it has changed our perception of the media. It is no more a social service or just a voice of the underdog. Newspapers have also become an effective tool for entertainment, information and motivation. In a market driven situation, there is this urgent need to study the reading habits and designing tastes of target readers so that a newspaper can be accepted by the masses, and thus, becomes commercially viable.

An ideal newspaper page will be simple and designed-to-communicate. It will not look crammed and the design would follow the mood of the content. For achieving this, Total Page Concept (TPC) is used extensively. TPC is exciting because it involves the dramatization of content presentation. This solves the problems of grid concept which is mostly dull.

The grid is used to structure content. It serves as the framework for page layout dividing the page horizontally and vertically into columns and rows to order the elements of the design in literally a grid of X and Y pixels. The elements are then placed on the cell border lines and overall aligned on horizontal and vertical lines, and the items of equal hierarchical importance reside within columns of the same width.

In Total Page Concept, the page is divided into broad portions that are pleasingly proportional. Only rectangles of different shapes sizes and weight are used here. It uses a lot of white space to enable different stories to stand out without competing with each other for attention.

At times, the designer lets the story decide its place and format. Dramatic stories require dramatic presentation, whereas sober stories need sober treatment. Nowadays, newspapers are increasingly using mixed concept in designing which is liberal and gives more scope for experimentation. Mixed concept makes use of the best elements of grid concept, the modular concept and the total page concept.

### **Designing Various Newspaper Pages**

A newspaper has a personality of its own which is built by the pages that it carries. Each page has distinct content, and hence, a distinct personality. That is why they are designed differently. The following section highlights the need for observing different directives in designing the different types of newspaper pages:

#### **1. Front Page**

The front page is like a window to the entire newspaper. A lot of importance is given to this page. Its design conveys what kind of newspaper it is and the target readers that it is catering to. The front page is usually designed in a traditional and old fashioned way. Though modern day front page is functional and flexible, it still retains some of the traditional aspects such as the placement of masthead, dateline



and lead story. The front page should be orderly, attractive and inviting; and should have a strong personality of its own conveying the persona of the entire newspaper.

Creating a well designed front page often depends on the principle of artistic dominance. Since the front page is the showcase of the newspaper, hence, there are a lot many stories vying for the readers' attention. This situation may lead to confusion among readers. Therefore, the page should have a point of dominance which could be a story, a picture with a story or a few stories of the similar kind clubbed together. Dominance can be achieved by way of size, shape, placement, etc.

The front page can be made more interesting by:

- Using news summaries than having many small stories on the front page
- Creating an open page with lots of white space between columns, stories and pictures
- Making the bottom half as interesting as the top half by using large pictures and boxed stories and using easy-to-read typefaces
- Avoiding too many boxes, lines or other such devices which can divert the reader's attention from the stories
- Creating and maintaining a different and charming look with the help of columns of different width

## **2. Editorial Page**

Often the editorial page is designed in a very dull manner. It is at times shabby too. It is so primarily because the page carries sober and serious content. The designers, therefore, do not make an effort in inducing life and brightness in it. But the fact is that the editorial page is the soul of a newspaper; and it should look impressive, strong and emphatic. We can make editorial page impressive and distinct by:

- Using the editorials in larger types than the type size used for news
- Creating wider columns for editorials
- Using photographs on the editorial page
- Using flush-left-and right-ragged style of setting
- Placing the masthead a little lower than its position on the other pages
- Using white space creatively

## **3. Feature Pages**

The lifestyle and feature pages are an interesting amalgamation of the serious and not-so-serious topics, hard news and soft ones, information and entertainment. The effort in these pages is to attract the readers by coloured photographs, interesting quotes, subheads and boxes. Here, the designers' real creativity and aesthetic sense comes in handy. The objective remains to stop the readers, sustain their interest and surprise them.

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### 4. Sports Pages

Sports page should convey speed, motion and game. For this purpose, large photographs are used. The cropping of photographs is also done extensively to creatively add photo to story. Mostly, the grid concept of page designing is used while making a sports page. Nowadays, a lot of experimentation is done in the make up of these pages because sports news always has a very loyal readership.

#### Designing Magazine Pages

Magazines are not just a storehouse of information on various topics. There is always a special bond between a reader and the magazine. Therefore, page designing and editing are done to strengthen this relationship. Modern day magazines exist in a visual age wherein they compete with the highly visual and entertaining medium of television. Magazines are also competing with the Internet and mobile phones. It has now become imperative that the magazine page designers should be experts in communication through pictures, layouts and illustrations.

Using illustrations and pictures have an important function to play. They attract attention, illustrate a point, give visual relief in design, tell a story by itself and corroborate the story with which they are attached.

A discreet and deft use of colours also plays a significant role in designing magazine pages. The following are the areas where designers pay attention to creative use of colours in a magazine:

- Display types (headlines, subheads, etc.)
- Lines and borders used to separate and bring in dramatic element in typographical dingbats, like initial letters, etc.
- Colour enhancement of graphs and charts
- Use of duotone photos instead of black and white photos
- Use of coloured screens

The designs of magazines keep changing in regular intervals to keep pace with the change in time and interest of the readers. These changes are usually very subtle so as to maintain familiarity which loyal readers identify with. But at times, bold changes are introduced to either attract larger readership or introduce a surprise and dramatic element. One of the most important redesign practices is to provide more graphic power to the pages but that is not done at the cost of editorial content.

The following are the various magazine formats and for a long time now, there has not been any change in these formats:

- Miniature:  $4^2 \times 6^2$
- Books:  $6^2 \times 9^2$
- Basic: 8 and a half<sup>2</sup> x 11<sup>2</sup>

- Pictorials: 10 and a half x 13<sup>2</sup>
- Sunday Supplement: 11<sup>2</sup> x 13<sup>2</sup>

The most common among the preceding formats is the basic format that is 8 and half<sup>2</sup> x 11<sup>2</sup>.

While designing a magazine page, certain basic things are to be kept in mind. These are as follows:

- Deciding the number of columns to be used
- Determining the exact space assigned to a particular story
- Deciding how much space should be used for the text and how much space is to be used for visuals in a story
- Positioning of body text and illustrations
- Designing and positioning display types for headlines, etc.
- Deciding upon typographical devices

With the rapid advancement of technologies and new software being evolved, it becomes a professional requirement for journalists and designers to be aware of these changes so that the changes could be used positively and effectively.

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### CASE STUDY

#### Why are Established Newspapers Losing Colour?

Media scholars should study why the best layout daily of the 1960s and the 1970s, *The Statesman* of Kolkata has lost its shine in the 21st century. They should find out the reasons as to why the oldest daily of the region, *The Tribune* published from Chandigarh is facing challenge from the newcomers in the city such as *The Times of India* or *The Indian Express*.

There are two reasons for undermining the news. Firstly, the newspaper editors are trying to compete with television by providing more visuals, and secondly, those who manage the desk lack the news sense. It is not limited one specific daily, but many dailies are suffering because of these misplaced perceptions.

Newspapers have to be extra cautious while selecting layout or designing. The news desk and graphic artistes should be acclimatized before new software is selected by the publisher of a newspaper. The common software such as Quark and InDesign have almost become dated, but before introducing a new software, adequate training and precautions are needed.

The growth of the Indian newspapers resemble with the early British and American publications. The first British publication, *Coranto*, had started in 1621, exactly 205 years before the first Hindi journal, *UddantMartand* in 1826. In production quality, it was much inferior to the Hindi publication, because the printing technology had improved during this period. In 1628, the dirunals were started to give news of the parliamentary proceedings. It created people's interest in the struggle of power between the King and House of Commons. It enjoyed adequate press freedom, because both sides were too weak to take any punitive action against the publication. While *UddantMartand* had a mission to re-awaken the

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people the country and reform the society, there were also three early publications in the Southern languages, Kannada, Tamil and Telugu called *Mangalore Samachar*, *Tamil Patrika* and *SatyaDoota* respectively. Another difference is that the early Indian publications were about social reforms, while the British were political in content.

Also, there are several implications of having multiple editions of the newspapers. Earlier, due to logistic reasons, district papers could survive and flourish in their respective geographical areas. In the big cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata and Chennai, they had their own giant publications houses like *Hindustan Times*, (Delhi), *The Times of India* (Mumbai), *The Statesman* (Kolkata) *The Hindu* (Chennai). In Kolkata, however, *The Statesman* has been replaced by *The Telegraph*. The country's main national dailies were coming out from these centres only. The state-of-the art technologies in the field of printing have changed the media scenario. All the national dailies have now multiple editions, and the regional dailies too have expanded their editions.

The national dailies like *The Hindu* have editions in Delhi and Bangalore; *The Times of India* too have multiple editions including Kolkata and Chennai. The multiple editions have helped them to generate higher incomes from advertisements. *The Deccan Herald*, a regional newspaper from Bangalore, has also started its edition from Delhi.

It has been noticed that in these multiple region-specific editions, the news of one region is not published in the editions published in the other areas. Therefore, much important news of a region—which may attract readership in other areas—is just missed due to the multiple editions.

The language dailies, too, have expanded their centres of printing. For example, the Hindi newspapers, *Jagran*, *Amar Ujala*, *Bhaskar*, *NayiDuniya* and a few other dailies have multiple centres of publication, including their respective editions in Delhi, giving them a national presence.

It has also enabled the district or small town dailies to fathom uncharted waters thousands of kilometres away. For example, *Rajasthan Patrika*, a regional Hindi daily from Jaipur, the capital city of Rajasthan, has started its edition from Chennai, nearly 2000 kilometres away, and that too in a non-Hindi region. Similarly, a Hindi daily from Madhya Pradesh, *Bhaskar*, has already become a multi-state edition daily carving its unenviable position in the ever-expanding market of the Hindi dailies. It has also forayed into English journalism by starting an English daily, *DNA (Daily News and Analysis)* that too in the country's most challenging media hub of Mumbai.

All these media initiatives could be possible because of the rapid strides in the field of media related technologies, be it communication or printing or electronics. The advent of these new technologies has also scripted a common media platform. It is now an era of convergence of audio, video and print.

It should be noted that to a certain extent, the new media affects newspapers or periodicals. During the past three decades, if the printing technologies were revolutionized so was the electronics media. With the advent of communication, satellites in the geo-stationary orbits have given access to people to watch or listen to any television or radio programme beamed from any part of the earth. The internet has further augmented this global access. It has converged all the three mediums—print, audio and video. The penetration of the internet has added a new dimension to the media. The internet, popularly called the new media, is

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bringing all the mediums on a single platform. However, its impact will depend upon its contents.

Therefore, determining the quality of any media product is now based only on the strength of its content. The main competition among various media institutions has now zeroed on to the contents and how it could focus the issues being handled on a given day.

The 21st century journalists are facing unprecedented challenge to present their copy in such a way that it could survive a global scrutiny. Almost all the print media could be accessed through internet anywhere on this planet. Journalists, who were nicknamed as the soldiers of pen, have to be on a constant vigil. Another factor which had led to this fierce competition is due to a continuous round-the-clock bombardment of information through electronic, print and internet. It has made the task of editors irrespective of the medium they serve, much more difficult. In the case of 24X7 electronic media channels, it is possible to update information regularly. But in the case of print media, the information is to be presented or packaged in such a way that it remains relevant till its next edition. The new media has an advantageous position, because it has no deadlines. News can be uploaded anytime from anywhere.

Perhaps, this is the reason that all the newspapers and electronic channels now have a solid internet presence. It is true that in comparison to the television or radio, the print media is no more glamorous as it used to be, but it continues to be a provider of the basic framework of functioning of news desk. Unlike radio and television, which have mushroomed only during the past fifty years, the print media has evolved during the past two and a half centuries. However, the new media provides the convergence of audio, video and print.

### **Check Your Progress**

1. What is the chief objective of editing?
2. What are the most common proportions used in newspapers?

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## **10.3 EDITING OF NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES**

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In this section, we will explain the role of editing in newspapers and magazines.

### **Editing in Newspapers**

Today newspaper publications are fighting a raging battle between their competitive peers as well as the electronic media to retain their circulation figures, revenues and ranking. The readers are spoilt for choices; they have the power to switch from one channel to the other by just a click of their remotes.

To retain the audiences and keep them glued to their product, media houses bank upon a team of highly skilled journalists as well as a competent and dynamic management. Since a media product is to be made available to its patrons much below the actual cost of its production, the cost of the production is to be met by

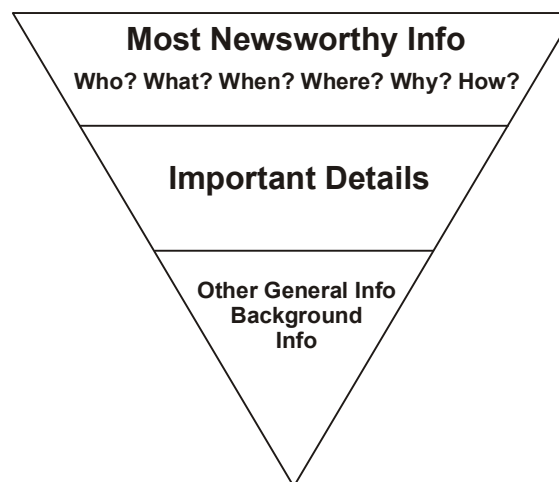
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selling space both in the print as well as electronic media. This means showing the advertisers higher circulation figures and reach. Thus, to increase circulation and add more readers to its bandwagon, a media house tries to churn out some spell bounding content to lure these fickle minded shifting audiences and newspaper readers.

Media scholars have to understand the various facets of the difficult profession that they are embarking upon, and have to deal rationally with this piquant situation, specific to media products, that has led to a cut-throat competition among media houses to sell space in a highly competitive media market.

Around the beginning of the 20th century, an innate editorial style was developed in American newspapers' to competently corner the tussle between ad space and editorial content or news story. It is aptly named as the inverted pyramid.

The inverted pyramid has a fairly simple concept. The information that an editor deems more important and relevant is mentioned at the beginning of the news story with the least important piece of information getting mention at the base or fag end of the article. The lead or the main foremost part of the article addresses the 5 W's about the subject – *who, what, when, where and why* and the rest of the information follows in the body later. This gives the article an inverted pyramid sort of a look (more information at the top base with least at the fag tip), hence the name.



**Fig. 10.5** *Inverted Pyramid Style of Writing News*

This style was developed and soon got wide acceptance because it made it easy for an editor to chop words and information in order to fit the article to size, in the confines of the space eventually allotted to it. Look at Figure 10.5. It clearly demonstrates that the news story should begin by relating the most important information, followed by other important details and other background information. It is important to come to the point immediately so as to arrest the attention of the readers to the story. The most compelling and attention-grabbing details are added

in the beginning. The next piece of information performs the supportive or summarizing role in the news story. The least important facts are kept at the end of the story so that readers who have less time are able to get the gist of the story by reading less than half of the news story or article.

Today, this inverted pyramid is actively used in content writings especially in the print media. This style of writing gives a lot of strength to the editor and saves crucial time. To become accomplished in the art of inverted pyramid writing, a media scholar must heed to the following points:

- Practice the use of clear and expressive headings.
- Formulate paragraphs to express separate points.
- Always emphasize your main point with clarity at the beginning of the article.

### **10.3.1 Editing of Magazines**

Magazine publication has its own style and pace. Unlike newspapers, which usually carry reports on daily events taking place within a time span of 24 hours, magazines carry specific information through articles and commentaries gathered over a period of time. The pace of work in a newspaper is a lot faster as it has to come out every morning. On the other hand, magazines have more time at their disposal as far as planning and publishing is concerned.

Magazine content requires to be designed to reach out to a variety of readers. Mix of high quality publishing supported by strong visual treats, creative writing and entertainment alongside informative subject matter are the stimulating factors that form the crux of strong and diverse magazine readership.

#### **Features of Magazines**

When one asks what a magazine is, the picture that comes to us is that of either a glossy or non-glossy, side stitched or centre stitched paperback, with an eye-catching cover page containing articles written by various writers. Aided by modern and advanced printing technologies, magazines are the star attractions in book stores, on the roadside, on pavements and in libraries. Along with books, magazines are one of the most popular travelling companions.

Traditionally a source for light reading, a magazine's content may range from factual reporting to commentaries, personal accounts and events to information pertaining to readers' interests. Many of them have pictorial representation in the form of visuals (photographs) and coloured illustrations accompanying articles. At times these visuals form the crux of the magazine content. A magazine's content also includes editorials, letters to editor, advice columns, etc. The periodicity, that is the interval at which the magazine is published, can be weekly, fortnightly, monthly, quarterly or half-yearly. Even annuals are included among magazines.

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### **Magazine—Television of the Print Media**

Magazine is like the television of print media. Like television, magazines bank a lot on visuals, colours and themes to attract and hold attention of readers. Vibrant colour schemes, well edited and attractive pictures and photographs, catchy headlines, cryptic captions, illustrations and typographical variety are the tools with which magazines create a visual treat for their readers. Similar to television, magazines focus on current trends, controversies, events and information. Like television, magazines use entertainment for gaining wide readership. Free style writing and easily readable language make magazines a popular choice of entertainment.

Magazines, just like television, sport advertisements as a source of income. Many top brands and products use magazines for their publicity and sales campaign. Like television channels, publishers have a cut-throat competition among themselves to lure as many readers as possible by making their magazines more and more trendy, savvy, informative and up-to-date.

### **Magazine Boom**

Post-independence, the pace at which the periodical press in India has expanded, diversified and professionalized has left everyone in awe of this media explosion.

The independence era had the whole nation in a developmental mode. Popular media like cinema and radio were also a part of this. People did not have much to entertain themselves and reading was the only option. This is when magazines started becoming popular.

Post emergency, when the censorship on press was lifted and the nod from the Press Information Bureau (PIB) was no longer needed, magazines started mushrooming rapidly to meet the lack of content that the emergency had left on the newspaper. Magazines and periodicals on a variety of subjects started coming up and there was a boom in magazine readership. They were not much by way of production but were rich in content and over the passage of time diversified into a variety of publications and enriching subject matters.

During the period 2000–2009, the circulation of magazines of all categories and periodicity rose from 6.70 crore to a whopping 14.58 crore. Currently, there are 9,199 magazines in India. Of these 4797 are weeklies, 1388 fortnightlies, 2334 monthlies, 321 quarterlies and 81 annuals. There are about 278 magazines which have been put in other categories of varied periodicities like bi-weekly or tri-weekly.

### **The Fifth Estate**

Magazines are soon proving to become the fifth estate. Focus on important events, in-depth stories, personal narrations, sensational revelations and investigative exposes moves them into the realm of original journalism meant to provide



information and create change. As a result they generate a clientele that is also seeking a difference. In India too, magazines are proving to be the fifth estate as they are gradually catering to a specific clientele.

### Advantages of Magazines

Today, nearly 9 crore people in India purchase magazines. Magazines hold certain advantage over newspapers. Some being:

- Magazines cover an array of topics from current affairs, business and fine arts to philosophy, religion and science; from reality stories films, fiction, comics, humour and satire to fashion and cookery. The range is expansive and caters to personal interests of readers.
- In comparison to dailies, which are constrained by time, magazines have the advantage of time as well as space for including diverse topics and opinions in their content. This gives the reader a more critical, inclusive as well as exclusive range of dialogues and debates to engage with.
- The publication quality and easy handling of magazines allow readers to preserve them for future reference for a longer time than daily newspapers.

### Types of Magazines

Magazines can be broadly classified into two categories. They are as follows:

- (a) General Interest magazines:** These cater to a wide variety of reading interests. For example, *India Today*, *Outlook*, *Frontline* and *The Week*. It can be argued that they are basically news-magazines but at the same time, carry feature articles on a variety of subject other than news. They carry articles on economics, business, films, environment, ecology, science, IT, etc.
- (b) Special Interest Niche magazines:** These cater to the interest of specific professions or interest groups. Business magazines like *Business Today*, *Business India* or *Outlook Business* are of special interest for the corporate world in general and for business and finance professionals in particular. Magazines like *Money* and *Investment* cater to the interests of investors and those interested in the stock market.

Other examples in this category are as follows:

- Film magazines like *Movie*, *Filmfare*, *Stardust* and *Cine Blitz*.
- Women's magazines like *Women's era*, *Femina*, *Savvy* and *Celebrity*.
- IT magazines like *Chip*, *Digit*, *Computers Today* and *Computer Express*. Cyber Media group is the largest player in this category and has till date published 15 such magazines. Some of which are: Dataquest, PC Quest, Living Digital, Bio Spectrum, Voice and Data, Global Services etc. These are in addition to a dozen websites.

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- Environmental magazines like *Down to Earth and Sanctuary*.
- Career and Competition magazines like *Career and Competition Times*.
- *Lifestyle Magazines* such as *Society, Good Housekeeping and Interiors*.

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These are just a few examples. There are a variety of magazines on targeted readers such as on:

- *Sports, Health and Fitness*
- *Astrology*
- *Agriculture*
- *Trade (occupational) and Technical Skill* magazines catering to different occupations such as medicine, engineering, architecture, management, mass communication, advertising and marketing. There are magazines on defence too. Such as *Strategic Affairs* and *Indian Defence Review*.

### Writing for Magazines

Readership and popularity of any mass media depends on the richness, originality and depth of the content, along with how the stories, articles and issues have been laid out to its readers. No matter how new the theme of a magazine is, if its content is not chosen rightly and delivered properly, the magazine will not fare well.

Every medium of information and communication has its own delivery style. Newspapers have their own style, television has a different style of writing scripts for programmes, web pages, blogs etc. have styles specific to them. Similar is the case with magazines.

Writing for magazines requires certain skills and techniques. These are as follows:

- Searching for ideas and developing imagination skills.
- Preparing background material, data and outline before the actual writing.
- Developing keen observation faculty.
- Adopting an engaging writing style.
- Building a structure for the feature/article.

### Searching for Ideas and Developing Imagination Skills

Any form of creative writing requires the power of imagination. Imagination and developing ideas for writing is the first skill that a magazine reporter has to develop. It is not an easy task. However practice and concentration can help in developing this skill. There are certain methods to aid the imagination skills that lay dormant in all of us. Some of these methods are as follows:

#### (i) Brainstorming

Brainstorming sessions with those working or studying with you and with other people in your surroundings. Such sessions can throw up various ideas and set the

imagination running. Topics in the neighbourhood, friends' circle often contain interesting matter for feature articles. Consumer stories such as how to get best buys in clothes or how to go about online shopping, which part of the town or city has the best restaurants etc also make good reads. Real life stories of Samaritans can often be heard among friends and in local newspapers. You will be surprised at the speed with which ideas for stories flow out of these topics!

### **(ii) Ideas from College Campus**

University or college campuses can be an incomparable source of information and ideas for magazine features and articles. University/college elections and campaigns are of interest to the student as well as for the local community. Student unions, student leaders, election candidates, role of teachers and the administration- all of these can provide excellent matter for articles in youth magazines, political magazines, general interest magazines and local periodicals.

If you are alert, there could be several interesting or intriguing episodes that will come to your notice. A colourful description of these episodes is bound to make a remarkable piece, which readers are bound to enjoy. If you have a keen eye, you may notice groupism among teachers either in favour of or against some student, student leader or election candidate. Even a whisper about some appointment or some termination can make a good magazine piece.

Other topics of interest that can form good idea for magazine articles are announcement or shifting of examination dates, reasons behind them, leakage of exam paper and the nexus behind it, college festivals, college talent, college alumni who have made it big or are into community service and development. The stock is unending if thoroughly looked into.

Several weekly papers do this and in turn, become quite popular with the student community. Many great magazine reporters have started with campus reporting and writing. You can also be one of them!

### **(iii) Ideas from Newspapers**

It is absolutely imperative for a magazine writer to go through daily newspaper. Not just reading it but scanning it. Most of the newspaper content is designed for a hurried reading and they give just the necessary information. If you thoroughly scan a story, you will find many unanswered questions and many angles to it, which you can utilize for the magazine story.

Here are a few instances where newspaper stories inspired journalists to write feature articles that made news.

A few years back, a town paper carried a small news item. It was about the image of a key inscribed on a recently discovered grave. It caught the eye of a magazine reporter. When he dug deeper, it turned out to be the image of a key from a missing bunch of keys linked to the history of the Nawabs of Oudh. The reporter found out that according to a legend the keys belonged to the famous

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Bahu Begum of Oudh. She had thrown them into a well inside the Bara Imambara in Lucknow. The Sunday Times of India carried the story on its front page with a beautiful calligraphic headline and photographs. If the magazine reporter had ignored the news item, it would have faded into oblivion and the world would have missed out on a fascinating historical discovery!

Here is another example. A small town newspaper carried a single column news item about four youths, who were tortured by the police into impotence. The youngsters had been arrested for some petty theft. The police had administered electric shock to their genitals in order to extract confessions. A magazine reporter saw the news item and decided to dig deeper. He visited the place and was shocked to find that it was a routine way of torture by the local police. While collecting information, the reporter also discovered that the local police carried out other forms of human violations to extract information and confessions. He found that the local police would erect a sharpened bamboo in the middle of the ground and make the accused sit on it. They would then apply force on the shoulders of the victims! The reporter recorded the statements of the victims and got them to sign affidavits. Secondly he got those affidavits attested from the Chief Judicial Magistrate of the area. It became the cover story of a leading magazine. The Delhi unit of People's Union for Civil Liberty (PUCL) awarded the reporter for doing a story on violation of human rights.

Daily scanning of different newspapers is a must for a magazine reporter or writer. Many professional magazine writers keep a notebook by their side and keep jotting down the notes about promising ideas from newspapers. With majority of the newspapers being available online newspaper scanning has become an easy task today.

While scanning the newspapers, keeping the following in mind will help ideas emerge. You should ask yourself these questions:

- Does a news story suggest angles that could be developed into a separate story?
- Does the story name people who have been affected by the event and could be profiled?
- Are there experts who can be interviewed for their views on the issue?
- Are there other larger issues that are connected with the main story and can be linked and developed into a feature article?

Almost all the stories affecting our towns, cities and its people, whether it is disasters, strikes or crimes; social, political, cultural or religious events, need follow up stories. You will be surprised as to how many different angles and parallel story ideas will come up from the original story!

### **(iv) Ideas from Directories and Databases**

Government offices, agencies, PSUs (Public Sector Undertakings), universities have directories listing departments and personnels. Look out for something that

is strikingly different from the usual. For instance you may come across an unusual department or a person. You may come across some bureaucrat who is also a well known writer, poet or an artist. Such a department or person might be worthy of being profiled.

You can also check yellow pages directory (online or offline) for ideas about interesting services or places. For example, how many escort services are listed in the city? A prominent reporter came across a very good story simply by checking the escort services. There were as many as 12 escort services listed in Delhi. When the reporter began to check them out, she discovered, that some of the escort services were actually a cover up for prostitution racket. The reporter used her findings for a good investigative article.

Sometimes you might come up with services and places that can be of help to many people. For instance you might across someone who is a dog trainer specializing in training dogs for the blind and handicapped. This can lead you to a story on the difficulties faced by differently-abled people and how animals can help in making a difference in their lives. Someone else can take this as a cue for another story on policies and infrastructure requirements for the differently-abled.

Similarly you can also check the clipping files or computer databases of other stories. When you go through the background material for the topic that you have chosen for your magazine article, check for sources and angles on the same in other newspapers and magazines. But do not copy the information or quotes because that is plagiarism.

### **Preparation before Actual Writing**

A magazine writer has to prepare background material, data and outline before getting down to the actual writing. Following are some steps that need to be kept in mind in order to prepare for writing a magazine article:

1. Once the subject or topic is finalized, related background material needs to be collected. Earlier reporters used to consult clipping libraries and go through journals, magazines and books on their chosen subject. Today all one has to do is type the topic in any search engine on the internet and the links to all the background materials pop up.
2. After all the material from different sources is collected, outlines for the article need to be drawn.
3. An introduction needs to be written based on the outline and built upon using recognized ideas. Think over if a generalized or personalized anecdote would fit in to add to the interest of the readers.
4. Try to write at least 1000 or 1500 words at one go. Develop only one idea at a time so that the present article has depth. Other ideas may emerge in the process but restrain from developing all of them. Develop them later into separate features.

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5. Don't try to put all the facts into one piece. There will be a lot of information that a reporter will come across and every bit will seem important. But in the interest of readability of the article, one has to withhold a lot of information. The best way to do this is to go for mental editing. While going through the notes, immediately decide what has to be put in the article and what can be avoided. It is best not to try and impress readers with the fact that you are thorough with your investigation and research by giving too much information.
6. Set a deadline for the article which should be two days ahead of the deadline given by the editor. Write the article by this deadline and forget all about it. Before final submission, read it like a dispassionate and critical reader. You will be surprised to find that you are able to make out where the piece is lacking, where it is jarring, where it is loose and what flaws and snags it has. Rewrite the piece. This rewritten piece will be a flawless product, ready to be e-mailed to the editor.

### **Developing Keen Observation Faculty**

In journalism in general and magazine writing in particular, having a powerful faculty of observation is of vital importance. Reporters in general are basically shrewd observant. More so, in magazine journalism. A magazine reporter does not write, s/he shows. S/He creates a picture through his words. The reporter's words are like visuals. And for this s/he has to be descriptive. Which means, being able to draw a picture of the event through words. This will not be possible unless the reporter is a good observer.

The writer, who is truly observant, has a clear vision. She or he can file away several scenes in the mind and combine them with his or her own experiences. For instance, imagine you are a lifestyle or women's magazine writer who travels to office by road every day. If you are a keen observer, you will notice that your city has many baby day care signboards. You will notice the number of pamphlets with your morning newspaper, advertising crèches for children. This observation can help you create a story on the growing number of working couples, growing number of women working in offices, the increase in nuclear families and in non-familial support systems like crèches etc. A number of story ideas can crop up from this observation and lead to a story on changing lifestyles in modern cities and 21st century India.

The faculty of observation has unlimited scope of yielding story ideas. A look at the notice board in the college campus, in the group housing society or in the local government office and around the city can lead to rewarding experiences for the reporter. Are there new stores, malls or buildings coming up? Are there old buildings, landmarks or stores that are closing, such as a famous hangout? Is there a programme or an event that might be converted into an article? All a reporter needs is to be observant and jot down points and see how they can be developed.

## **Adopting an Engaging Writing Style**

Every reporter or writer is known by his or her style. The writing style is so prominent in certain cases that writers are identified with their styles even if they do not get any byline. Some are analytical as S. Nihal Singh is known to be. Some are serious and observant like late Nikhil Chakaravarty. While some are light hearted and humorous like Khushwant Singh. But as a beginner, one is not expected to develop a style overnight. Lots of hard work is required to create a unique writing style. One may have to read a lot and analyse the styles of different writers before developing one's own.

Magazine writing has a distinct structure of prose that is made up of words the reader can understand and absorb. Most magazines follow the general style of crisp original phrases made up of familiar words. Majority magazine articles are sprinkled with pointed quotations that in addition to charging up the piece make the reading lively by presenting the facts clearly and distinctively.

Though long pieces are broken into sub-sections, the rule is that the writing flows in a smooth transition from beginning to the end. If a profile is being written, it should not begin with a bland statement like Mr. A was born on so and so date. A magazine story is not a bio-data. The profile needs to start with some interesting, eye-catching anecdote to begin with. Personal facts can be incorporated anywhere in between.

Below are certain norms that should be adhered to:

- **Avoid jumble up of ideas:** As mentioned earlier, do not try to put too many ideas or facts in a single article. This will make the piece incoherent and result in confusing the reader (read editor). It is possible that your piece may be spiked or rejected.
- **Keep miscellany in mind:** Give a detailed and interesting description. Try to spice it with colourful description and interesting anecdotes. They should be skillfully woven in the body of the piece and should be in the word limit. They should not deviate from the focus of the piece
- **Write facts in fictional style:** This style in magazine journalism attracts readers. Most magazines adopt this style. But for this, the writer should be adept at dramatization. The art of dramatization comes only when the writer reads a lot of fiction and nonfiction. Being well read is the first condition to learn dramatization of events. This is also called narrative style of writing. Basically it is a form of dramatic storytelling that reconstructs the events as though the reader were witnessing them as they happened.

## **Building a Structure for the Feature/Article**

Building a structure for the article is significant because it is like the blue-print of the article. Without a structure the ideas and data are only a bunch of letters and

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words. Here are a few guidelines that need to be kept in mind for building an article:

### **(i) Story Structure**

A lead or an introduction is designed to catch the attention of the reader. It is basically the selling point of a story or article. It introduces the piece to the readers. Since we know that a magazine is meant for a leisurely reading, the introduction has to be catchy. It can be startling, witty, humorous or an attention catching statement. In a nutshell, considerable attention must be paid to the introduction of the story even if it has to be written and rewritten again and again.

### **(ii) Sentence Structure**

Beginners and novices always commit the mistake of trying to impress their readers. For this, they usually twist their sentences. If you do it once for the sake of creating effect, it is permissible. The sentences should be simple and direct. This is the normal rule.

### **(iii) Sentence Length**

The sentences should be as short as possible because shorter the sentence, more readable it is. However, there must be coherence among them. Short sentences also put a lot of punch in the article and compel the reader to go through the entire piece. So when you revise your article, keep this in mind and break your longer sentences into shorter ones.

### **(iv) Concreteness**

The words used in an article must be as concrete as possible instead of being abstract. Abstract words confuse a reader and therefore need to be absolutely avoided in a feature or an article for a magazine.

### **(v) Using Verbs**

Instead of using adjectives, use verbs that serve the purpose. Verbs express action. If it is carefully chosen, it can even describe personality. 'The paper gives expression', can be written as 'The paper expresses'. This uses lesser words and makes the expression an accurate one.

### **(vi) Transitions**

Learning to link paragraphs in a way that keeps the reader's attention is a skill that distinguishes a professional writer from an amateur writer. You have to learn how to sequence the paragraphs to bring about a smooth transition and urge the reader to move from one para to another without losing interest or curiosity to know what follows next. This skill can be learnt by going through the pages of magazines like *India Today*, *Outlook*, *The Week* or *Frontline*.



### **Check Your Progress**

3. What points a media scholar must heed to become accomplished in the art of inverted pyramid writing?
4. Mention the two types of magazines.

### **NOTES**

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## **10.4 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS**

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1. The chief objective of editing is to arrange news stories in the order of their importance.
2. The most common proportions used in newspapers are 2:3 and 3:5 proportions.
3. To become accomplished in the art of inverted pyramid writing, a media scholar must heed to the following points:
  - Practice the use of clear and expressive headings.
  - Formulate paragraphs to express separate points.
  - Always emphasize your main point with clarity at the beginning of the article.
4. Magazines can be broadly classified into two categories, i.e., general interest magazine and special interest niche magazine.

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## **10.5 SUMMARY**

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- The arrangement of content on the page of a newspaper in accordance with the editorial and graphical guidelines and goals is termed as the layout or news design.
- During the early years, the limitation of the printing press had forced the desk persons to follow the constraints of the types and space on the pages. However, with the computers and off-set printing processes, the scope of page layout has undergone numerous changes in the recent years.
- The layout and designing of a newspaper helps in making the newspaper attractive. Therefore, it is an important aspect of the process of newspaper making.
- The most important objective of page designing in a newspaper is to arrange various news items in a proper, organized and easy-to-read manner.
- The basic principles of newspaper designing are balance, contrast, proportion and unity.

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- Newspaper make-up is a tough task as people are always working on strict deadlines, and being consistent in the designing every day is a challenge.
- The following factors have contributed to the growth and evolution of designing in print journalism:
  - o Spectacular growth of graphic designing
  - o Technical advancement particularly in computer technology
  - o Better printing presses
- An ideal newspaper page will be simple and designed-to-communicate. It will not look crammed and the design would follow the mood of the content. For achieving this, Total Page Concept (TPC) is used extensively.
- The grid is used to structure content. It serves as the framework for page layout dividing the page horizontally and vertically into columns and rows to order the elements of the design in literally a grid of X and Y pixels.
- In Total Page Concept, the page is divided into broad portions that are pleasingly proportional. It uses a lot of white space to enable different stories to stand out without competing with each other for attention.
- The design of the front page of a newspaper conveys what kind of newspaper it is and the target readers that it is catering to. The front page is usually designed in a traditional and old fashioned way.
- The editorial page carries sober and serious content. The designers, therefore, do not make an effort in inducing life and brightness in it.
- The lifestyle and feature pages are an interesting amalgamation of the serious and not-so-serious topics, hard news and soft ones, information and entertainment.
- Sports page should convey speed, motion and game. For this purpose, large photographs are used. The cropping of photographs is also done extensively to creatively add photo to story. Mostly, the grid concept of page designing is used while making a sports page.
- The designs of magazines keep changing in regular intervals to keep pace with the change in time and interest of the readers. These changes are usually very subtle so as to maintain the familiarity which loyal readers identify with.
- Today newspaper publications are fighting a raging battle between their competitive peers as well as the electronic media to retain their circulation figures, revenues and ranking.
- To retain the audiences and keep them glued to their product, media houses bank upon a team of highly skilled journalists as well as a competent and dynamic management.
- Around the beginning of the 20th century, an innate editorial style was developed in American newspapers' to competently corner the tussle between ad space and editorial content or news story. It is aptly named as the inverted pyramid.

- Magazine content requires to be designed to reach out to a variety of readers.
- Traditionally a source for light reading, a magazine's content may range from factual reporting to commentaries, personal accounts and events to information pertaining to readers' interests.
- Magazines, just like television, sport advertisements as a source of income. Many top brands and products use magazines for their publicity and sales campaign.

## NOTES

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### 10.6 KEY WORDS

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- **Masthead:** Masthead is the title of a newspaper or magazine at the top of the front page carrying the information like date and day, number of pages in the newspaper, tag line of the newspaper, the places from where the newspaper is published, volume, RNI and ISSN numbers, price of the newspaper and its website address.
- **Blurb:** Blurb is a brief publicity notice, as on a book jacket.
- **Dateline:** Dateline is the date and location of a story, placed at the top of an article.
- **Lead story:** Lead story is a news story of major importance.
- **Dingbat:** Dingbat is a typographical ornament or symbol.

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### 10.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

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#### Short-Answer Questions

1. What do you understand by layout? How has the advent in technology affected the layout and designing of newspapers today?
2. List the objectives of a page make-up.
3. Enumerate the main principles of design in a newspaper make-up.
4. Suggest any ten guidelines to be followed for preparing a newspaper page layout.
5. Write a short note on the total page concept.

#### Long-Answer Questions

1. Suppose you hold an important editorial position in a national daily. You are given the responsibility to train the interns. How will you explain to the interns about the kinds of layout used for the various pages of a newspaper?
2. What are the things that one should keep in mind while planning the layout design of a magazine?

3. Discuss the principles of design in newspaper make-up.
4. Explain the concept of inverted pyramid.
5. Describe the various features of magazine.

## NOTES

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### 10.8 FURTHER READINGS

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# UNIT 11 STRUCTURE OF NEWSPAPER ORGANIZATION

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## NOTES

### Structure

- 11.0 Introduction
- 11.1 Objectives
- 11.2 Structure of Newspaper Organization: An Introduction
- 11.3 Various Departments of an Organization
- 11.4 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
- 11.5 Summary
- 11.6 Key Words
- 11.7 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 11.8 Further Readings

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## 11.0 INTRODUCTION

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In order to comprehend the world of journalism better, it is important that we step into it and understand the hierarchical environment that exists within. For producing a daily, a publication house requires a large staff in all its said departments, i.e., editorial, marketing, circulation and printing press. All these departments work in a synchronized manner to print a quality publication that can be marketed every day. Further, it needs to be noted that journalists are not born scholars or elite members of the academia; they are commoners who develop special skills and evolve their styles of writing by learning the art of writing prose. These writing skills, popularly known as the journalistic style or news writing styles, are widely used in the print as well as electronic media whether it is radio or television.

In this unit, we shall try to unfold and study the structure of a newspaper organization and the editorial pyramid that exists within its hierarchy. The media scholar shall further learn all about the various styles of writing embraced by a media organization in publishing a broadsheet or a book; and understand the reasons for its adoption.

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## 11.1 OBJECTIVES

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After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Explain the structure of a newspaper organization and the editorial pyramid that exists within its hierarchy
- Discuss the various styles of writing embraced by a media organization
- Describe the various departments of a media organization

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## 11.2 STRUCTURE OF NEWSPAPER ORGANIZATION: AN INTRODUCTION

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### NOTES

Media houses are in the business of spinning news. They employ a large workforce of both skilled and unskilled workers to run their operations. In the present times, newspaper houses not only face competition from their peer publications, but also from alternate channels like TV and radio stations. It is needless to say that they need considerable amount of dough to function and operate smoothly, and make some profit in the long run.

An important fact that needs to be remembered in the production of newspapers is that the cost of a newspaper, which includes the inputs of newsprint, printing and content development, is almost ten times more than its printed price. This cost has to be subsidized through intensive marketing of the space. It means, only higher circulation will attract advertisers to a newspaper. Further to this, a newspaper also needs to balance the essence, beliefs and the philosophy of its target audiences, i.e., the readers, both present and future. This is essential to ensure the smooth running of the media house. This is so because only if a newspaper adds up to catering to its readers can it manage to make up to 10–15 per cent of its production costs. So, in order to understand the organizational structure of a newspaper better, it is imperative for a media scholar to understand that a good organizational structure needs to be built around this core requirement of a newspaper house.

While designing a newspaper organization, three points need to be categorically considered. These are enumerated as follows:

- 1. Focus on echoing the characteristics of the marketplace:** In simple words, a newspaper needs to effectively cater to the requirements of its readers and advertisers. This means that the focus of the top brass, the mindset of all its employees, the type of news covered, its writing and presentation styles, should be in accordance with the readers' needs and aspirations.
- 2. Synchronization of the newsroom and the marketing functions:** To do so, a conscious and strategic decision has to be taken by the management. In order to protect the prerogative of the editorial staff in the marketing scheme of things, it is quintessential, for say, the chief of the news bureau to be present in all sales planning meetings. Basically, the hierarchy that flows from top to bottom has to be strategically designed to ensure smooth flow of information, decisions and execution.
- 3. Concentration on optimum utilization of available resources:** Lastly, one needs to optimally use what one has, to the best of one's ability. Thus, people, time and money resources need to be put to good use. Business-like decisions need to be taken across all levels and all departments, whether it is advertising, circulation, sales or editorial.

While designing the organizational structure of a newspaper, several aspects also hold significance, because the nature of their structure, design and size would depend on these factors. Organizational structure of a newspaper can be grouped in the following ways:

**(i) Frequency of newspaper publication:** The organizational structure of a newspaper depends on whether a publication is a daily, fortnightly or monthly. While publications with occasional frequencies may have simpler organizational hierarchies and smaller workforce, morning dailies and eveningers have larger number of people, thus, adding to the complexities of their job roles and more multifaceted and defined organizational structure.

**(ii) Market size:** The organizational structure for a publication having regional or local presence would naturally be different from its national or global counterpart, adding to the complexity of the design and flow of authority. Based on their market size, publications can be categorized as follows:

- *National:* The publication covers the whole nation and not just a particular region or state, like *The Times of India*, *Hindustan Times*, *The Indian Express* or *The Hindu*.
- *Large:* The metropolitan dailies are papers that have their presence in a large city, like the *Mumbai Mirror*, *Telegraph*, etc.
- *Medium:* These are newspapers with circulation figures of about 1,00,000–5,00,000. These may be regional in nature, like *Nayi Duniya* or *Free Press*.
- *Small:* Some small local newspapers can be put under this category.

#### Check Your Progress

1. State an important fact that needs to be remembered in the production of newspapers.
2. What are the three points that need to be categorically considered while designing a newspaper organization?

### 11.3 VARIOUS DEPARTMENTS OF AN ORGANIZATION

While much is appreciated about the noble profession of journalism, and every budding writer with any bit of fire in the belly and a zeal for writing, wants to advent on this voyage of attaining popularity and recognition through it; much

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needs to be understood by a media scholar about the trials and triumphs of the life of a journalist, especially in the Indian context.

There is much ado about the fun and spirit of being a journalist, but despite their growing importance and complexities of roles, there are numerous challenges they face in their profession.

### Open Profession

Journalism is among the few open professions, where one can never really keep skilled inadequacies under wraps. Their continuous exposure has forced journalists—irrespective of the medium they serve—to continue their quest for high professional standards. The quality of writings and the growing market challenges have forced media professionals to be alert and on their toes all the time, for no journalistic endeavour attempted can survive in the market without the stamp of quality.

### Technology and Competition

With the growth in technology and competition, this ever changing world of the journo has become ever more challenging and stiff. Their trials have worsened as they ceaselessly races against time and deadlines to meet their goals chugging away the word-mills to the best of their ability and skills. With a greater need for holding on to circulation figures and satiating the taste buds of the ever flickering reader, they are expected to dole out innovations and quality content day in and day out.

Technology has provided level-playing ground to even small players in this field against their formidable rivals. Even a local daily today can be accessed anywhere in the world through the internet. The big newspapers of metropolises too have launched multi-editions catering even small towns, giving cut-throat competition to local publications or television channels. Before the entry of the present hi-tech era, some of the well-known national dailies also used to represent specific regions. The *Times of India* was known as a ‘Mumbai daily’, a leader in the western India, *Hindustan Times* was considered to be a north-Indian daily published from Delhi. Similarly, *The Hindu* initially published only from Madras (now Chennai) was considered to be a media giant of the South India. *The Hindu* was first Indian daily to introduce the concept of multi-edition daily through facsimile editions. It was much before the advent of the computer and Internet era. Equipped with the state-of-the art technologies, the dailies have their editions even in those areas, where the regional giants had their pre-eminence. For example, the Bangalore and Chennai and Kolkata editions of the *Times of India* have challenged the regional giants such as the *Deccan Herald*, the *Hindu* and the *Telegraph* in their own respective dens. In Bangalore, the *Times of India* has captured the market by becoming the highest circulated English daily. Like TRP’s in a television channel, the circulation of a daily attracts advertisements. *The Times of India* has succeeded in corning much bigger share of the advertising revenue than any other media



house in the country, because it has achieved number one position in the metropolises like Mumbai, Delhi and Ahmedabad.

### **Focus on Marketing**

The focus on marketing has its own implications. The present day tradition of editorial systems in the newspapers is inherited from the British-owned newspapers. During the past three decades, the Indian newspapers have diluted the proven British systems in the editorial management. Earlier newspaper journalists were important people widely respected and acknowledged for their strong content writing skills and fiery and fearless articles. That was the time when newspapers did not back on monetary sponsorships from advertisers or political parties. However, with the fierce competition among the newspaper and periodicals, the ideal role of journalists has been considerably reduced. The journalists are no more insulated from the day to day interference of management. The editors have lost their pre-eminent role as the leader of the team. Their position has now been reduced just like a departmental head manning the circulation department. Mostly, they function under the overall supervision of the marketing or advertisement department.

In a number of publications, the editor functions like a manager of a section such as the advertisement, circulation or printing departments in newspaper offices. The advertisement department has become the back-bone of the newspaper office. In *The Times of India*, the journalists do not decide the content of the newspaper; they have to follow the priorities of the marketing department in selecting news. Even if an important person is to be interviewed, the marketing department decides whether this interview would be beneficial to the newspaper in terms of generating revenue. There are instances, when an interview with a senior official of the government, public sector undertaking or a private sector company is immediately followed with a request for a full page advertisement.

### **Various Departments of a Newspaper Organization**

Though newspapers provide a valuable public service, they are, first and foremost, business enterprises. A newspaper has to routinely cover several institutions and locations. Thus, its organizational structure is complex.

Newspaper organizations involve many departments, each of which performs its own tasks with certain staff taking on multiple jobs.

In a newspaper organization, functions are divided amongst employees in a logical manner. Those with related functions sit together to form a single working unit, pod or department.

The important departments in a newspaper organization and their main functions are listed as follows:

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### 1. Editorial Department

Headed by the editor, this department is where the following activities take place:

- News is collected
- News and features are selected
- News and features are edited
- News is interpreted

The overall responsibility of the working of this department rests with the editor of the newspaper. However, he or she needs the assistance of the chief correspondent (and many types of correspondents who collect and supply news), resident editors, managing editors, deputy editors, assistant editors, news editors, feature writers and reviewers.

### 2. Marketing and Advertising Department

The primary revenue source for a newspaper is of course advertisement. Therefore, one of the most important activities in a newspaper organization is that of collecting and publishing advertisements. The Advertising department comprising different sections is responsible for this function. There are different sections looking after local advertisements, classified advertisements, general/national advertisements, legal advertisements and copy preparation.

Marketing managers come up with promotional methods that would result in higher sales. Additionally, the media is motivated to sell news that gets higher TRPs or which its marketing departments have assessed as popular. Market researches on media habits and audience behaviour help writers to understand the need of a particular kind of writing. They also help them to strategize their writings.

### 3. Circulation Department

A newspaper cannot survive without circulation. Therefore, the circulation department becomes the most important department of a newspaper organization. This department is responsible for newspaper sales, newspaper delivery and subscription collection.

### 4. Printing Department

This department is responsible for printing the newspaper. It looks after everything related to printing including the installation and maintenance of machines, layout of the press, composition, processing, loading and scheduling.

### 5. Administrative Department

This department is responsible for the general administrative work related to personnel, recruitment, training, promotion, work allotment, leave record maintenance, liaison with government departments, general facilities and all kinds of assistance to other departments. If there is no separate legal department, even tasks related to legal issues are handled by the administrative department.

## 6. Accounting Department

Quite evidently, this department looks after all the accounting work like maintaining books of accounts, preparing balance sheet and other financial statements, payment, receipt, preparation of budget, financial planning, cost control etc.

## 7. Stores Department

It is responsible for storing the newsprint, which is the raw material required to print a newspaper. In addition, it also stores all other material required.

## 8. Other Departments

The larger newspapers also maintain separate departments to handle issues related to the personnel, legal, public relations and data processing.

The personnel department handles manpower planning, recruitment, training, promotion, compensation, employee welfare, appraisals, personnel research, retirement and HR policy formulations.

The public relations department plays the important role of promoting the newspaper in the face of stiff competition.

Most big dailies today also have a data processing department comprising a data processing manager, computer supervisors, computer operators, key punch supervisor, programmers, systems analysts and control clerks.

## Introduction of Contract Jobs

The job profile of a journalist has undergone a sea-change in the past two decades. There are no more permanent employees, but journalists are being hired on the contract. It has enabled the newspaper owners to their claim to enjoy unfettered press-freedom without any resistance from the journalists, it also suites the government, powerful political leaders, corporate, because it is much easier to tackle a newspaper owner than a large number of journalists. It has made most of the Indian journalists docile in comparison to their predecessors. The institution of the editors in the media houses too has been compromised in such a way that the owners prefer their own name or the names of their next of kin to be published as the editors. There are many owner-editors who do not write themselves, but employ scribes to write on their behalf to justify their position as editors.

In spite of these unprofessional trends in the Indian media, the professional roles of journalists remain crucial in the media. The editing is the key factor to determine the quality of any media product.

### Check Your Progress

3. Mention any two important departments in a newspaper organization.
4. What is one of the most important activities in a newspaper organization?

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### 11.4 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

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1. An important fact that needs to be remembered in the production of newspapers is that the cost of a newspaper, which includes the inputs of newsprint, printing and content development, is almost ten times more than its printed price. This cost has to be subsidized through intensive marketing of the space.
2. While designing a newspaper organization, three points need to be categorically considered. These are enumerated as follows:
  - Focus on echoing the characteristics of the marketplace
  - Synchronization of the newsroom and the marketing functions
  - Concentration on optimum utilization of available resources
3. Editorial department and marketing and advertising department are the two important departments in a newspaper organization.
4. One of the most important activities in a newspaper organization is that of collecting and publishing advertisements.

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### 11.5 SUMMARY

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- Media houses are in the business of spinning news. They employ a large workforce of both skilled and unskilled workers to run their operations.
- In the present times, newspaper houses not only face competition from their peer publications, but also from alternate channels like TV and radio stations.
- An important fact that needs to be remembered in the production of newspapers is that the cost of a newspaper, which includes the inputs of newsprint, printing and content development, is almost ten times more than its printed price.
- In simple words, a newspaper needs to effectively cater to the requirements of its readers and advertisers.
- The organizational structure of a newspaper depends on whether a publication is a daily, fortnightly or monthly.
- The organizational structure for a publication having regional or local presence would naturally be different from its national or global counterpart, adding to the complexity of the design and flow of authority.

- Journalism is among the few open professions, where one can never really keep skilled inadequacies under wraps.
- With the growth in technology and competition, this ever changing world of the journo has become ever more challenging and stiff.
- The focus on marketing has its own implications. The present day tradition of editorial systems in the newspapers is inherited from the British-owned newspapers.
- In a newspaper organization, functions are divided amongst employees in a logical manner. Those with related functions sit together to form a single working unit, pod or department.
- The primary revenue source for a newspaper is of course advertisement. Therefore, one of the most important activities in a newspaper organization is that of collecting and publishing advertisements.
- A newspaper cannot survive without circulation. Therefore, the circulation department becomes the most important department of a newspaper organization.
- The personnel department handles manpower planning, recruitment, training, promotion, compensation, employee welfare, appraisals, personnel research, retirement and HR policy formulations.
- The job profile of a journalist has undergone a sea-change in the past two decades. There are no more permanent employees, but journalists are being hired on the contract.
- It has enabled the newspaper owners to their claim to enjoy unfettered press-freedom without any resistance from the journalists, it also suites the government, powerful political leaders, corporate, because it is much easier to tackle a newspaper owner than a large number of journalists.

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### 11.6 KEY WORDS

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- **Quintessential:** Quintessential means representing the most perfect or typical example of a quality or class.
- **Resident Editor:** Resident editor means a person who performs the functions of an editor of a newspaper at a centre other than the one from which the newspaper was originally published.
- **Deputy Editor:** The deputy editor is the second-in-command at a newspaper, magazine or website, who takes over the editor's role in the editor's absence.

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## 11.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

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#### Short-Answer Questions

1. What is a newspaper's organizational structure? What does it depend on?
2. How does the frequency of a publication affect its organizational structure? Give examples.
3. Is it tough to be a journalist in today's times? Why, or why not?
4. What are the main functions of the editorial department?

#### Long-Answer Questions

1. 'While designing a newspaper organization, three points need to be categorically considered.' Discuss these three points.
2. Describe the various departments of a newspaper organization.
3. Explain the role of circulation department and printing department.
4. Newspapers only care about advertising revenues. Do you agree? Give reasons for your answer.

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## 11.8 FURTHER READINGS

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**BLOCK - IV**  
**EDITING PRINCIPLES AND EDITORIAL**  
**DEPARTMENT**

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*Principles of Editing*

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## **UNIT 12 PRINCIPLES OF EDITING**

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### **Structure**

- 12.0 Introduction
- 12.1 Objectives
- 12.2 Editing Principles
  - 12.2.1 Tools and Techniques of Editing
  - 12.2.2 Professional Tools Available for Online Editing
  - 12.2.3 Role and Function of Copy Desk
- 12.3 Art of Copy Editing
  - 12.3.1 Symbols used in Copy Editing
  - 12.3.2 Steps in Editing
  - 12.3.3 Precautions in Editing
- 12.4 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
- 12.5 Summary
- 12.6 Key Words
- 12.7 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 12.8 Further Readings

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### **12.0 INTRODUCTION**

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Perhaps the story of editing dates back to many centuries ago when the term ‘editor’ first appeared in the 1770s in the *Johnson’s Dictionary* where the meaning was ‘publisher’. With the growth in the print media and the publishing industry, editing later began to be defined as a stage in the process of writing where a writer or an editor decided to mend or refine a certain piece of writing by rectifying gaffes that appeared in the text in the form of incorrect or unclear sentences, grammatical or other scripting errors to make a piece of work more understandable, interesting, and linguistically correct to its reader.

Today, years later, especially after the advent of the new age media, the term editing has once again undergone a metamorphosis, and encompasses wider objectives and purpose. It is today seen as a skilled process of adding, adjusting, altering and organizing written, visual, audio and film-related material to effectively convey clear, authentic, precise and comprehensive information to its audiences. The core objectives of editing are as follows:

- Removal of grammatical and typographical errors
- Crisper interpretation of ambiguous or vague sounding matter

- Deletion of repetitive or unapt parts of the passage in line with the sensibilities of the target audience
- Creating flawless, organized and interest-generating narrative

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### 12.1 OBJECTIVES

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After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Identify the various principles of editing
- Define the tools and techniques of editing
- Explain the art of editing
- Discuss the symbols used in editing
- List the steps in editing

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### 12.2 EDITING PRINCIPLES

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It should be noted that there are certain rules by which the craft of copyediting is bound. It is natural that these rules, when followed judiciously, help the Copy editors in streamlining their work and making their lives easier. They work as benchmarks or foundations in organizing a copy in such a way that it makes for an impressive content.

It must be understood that these principles or protocols in editing have been laid out to avoid any conflict of interest between the reporters and the subs, primarily because both do not understand each other's job and have difficulty getting along. The reporters usually feel that subs are mere in-house guys who do nothing but chop, hash and fiddle with their text, hardly making any worthwhile contribution to the publication, unlike their individual selves who toil frantically to put together pieces of information to make news. On the other hand, the subs think that the reporters are brash, unpunctual and always late on submissions leaving them little time to do their job with perfection and making them run against tight timelines in an attempt to polish and review text.

The following are some of the basic principles of copyediting, if practised to the tee. They hugely benefit the process of copyediting:

1. **Copy editors are not mere proof readers:** The job of copyediting requires the editors to use their wisdom along with their immaculate word editing skills to turn out text that is reader-friendly and easy to comprehend. Copy editors don't edit arbitrarily. They edit to improve.
2. **Copy editors are like doctors:** If copy editors cannot help cure the content of its vices, they at least maintain the equilibrium of it by not doing anything detrimental to it.



3. **Copy editors do nothing to disturb the essence and meaning of the article with the changes they make:** They only help the copy look more accurate and emphatic in its being.
4. **Copy writers believe in asking for directions:** Whenever they seem unsure about their actions or path, consultation is always good. If nothing, it just adds to better learning.

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### The 5 C's of Copyediting

The role of the copy editor can be beautifully understood by focussing on the '5 Cs' which is to make sure that the content appears:

- Clear
- Correct
- Concise
- Comprehensible
- Consistent

The copy must have clarity in terms of language and expression. It should be checked for libel, and attempt must be genuinely made to authenticate facts. Too long and lengthy text seems too dull, disinteresting and lackluster to the reader. Hence, the content must be made curt, crisp and colourful. The words used should have an easy flow and should be simple to understand. Finally, the consistency of idea, thought, grammar and style needs to be addressed.

While the job of a copy editor is mostly bound by the shackles of time and space, sometimes these limitations are made fluid to accommodate good work. In some organizations, Copy editors are also given liberty to re-script text. In copyediting, writing means two things: writing headlines and writing captions or cutting lines. But it is a difficult art to master and needs years of seasoned practice.

### Tools of the Trade

Copy editors are mere mortals and while subbing a copy, they may make errors. But these errors can at most times be avoided by being conscious and using some easy tricks of the trade in mind. As a copy editor, you should keep a check on the following:

- *Spelling mistakes:* When in doubt, use a dictionary.
- *Missing words and spaces:* Always a consequence of fast editing and carelessness, double check to avoid.
- *Repeated or extra words:* Have your wits about, use synonyms to replace them.
- *Punctuation errors:* Go back to the basics to refresh them from time to time. Use the in house style sheet/book. Don't shy away to verify.

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- *Grammar error*: Re-check and read before submission.
- *Disagreement*: Review text again, check with source for the intent of meaning.
- *Capitalization*: Go to the basics. Refer to the style book.
- *Numbers*: It can cause a big goof-up. Accurate presentation is most mandatory. Refer to the style book.
- *Stylebook*: Definitely adopt and adhere to one. Keep the in-house style handy. In its absence, fall back on in-house styles pursued by elite publications like *The Times of India* or *The Hindu*.
- *Writing*: Be crisp, clear and precise. Avoid errors in sentence formation like run-on sentences, fragmented text, etc. It is best to work through the content one line at a time.
- *Fact errors*: Fall back on reference books.

### 12.2.1 Tools and Techniques of Editing

Basically, editing is the process of selecting and preparing written media used to convey information. The editing process can involve correction, condensation, organization, and many other modifications performed with an intention of producing a correct, consistent, accurate and complete work. A good dictionary is the first tool that a sub editor should keep by his side. While subbing or editing a story, you have to refer to it whenever required. All newspaper offices are equipped with different types of dictionaries.

Another tool an editor needs is reference books. When stories are edited, you need to refer on various issues. For instance, a report is filed about a new President being elected in a neighbouring country. Along with the news, we have to give a picture and some details about the person. So the sub editor has to look up some reference book and add those details. A sub editor should know where to get the information he wants. Some of these may be available from the reference section of the library. For other details, one has to surf the Internet. Nowadays websites provide a lot of information.

### 12.2.2 Professional Tools Available for Online Editing

Media scholars should have a clear understanding that the software that they can download for personal use cannot be used for large-scale commercial applications.

There seems to be a sudden explosion of video editing innovation. There are software like WeVideo in the cloud, the new YouTube editor and Magisto editing automation that are available in the market.

Two companies have launched notable video sharing services: WeVideo.com and Klip.com. Both have somewhat different approaches, but enhance the overall online video experience, especially for mobile users. WeVideo includes editing and 1 GB of cloud storage for free. You can export your video to Facebook,

YouTube and Vimeo. Fee-based accounts will be available later in the year that increase the resolution to 1080p and up the storage to 50 GB and add other features. YouTube has had very primitive online browser-based editing tools. Klip has some editing capabilities, but its focus is on simplifying the posting of videos from your iPhone and iPads, down to almost a one-tap process. You upload it to their site, and like and tag it similar to how other social media services work. The videos stream start quickly on your iPhone, and you can scroll quickly to particular points in the timeline.

Driven by breakthrough thinking and a wide-open sense of what is possible, Alcatel-Lucent delivers the world's most advanced technologies to companies all across the globe. Their driving motivation is to realize the potential of the connected world - by providing the technologies needed to turn networks into engines of sustainable economic growth, social development and opportunity. They provide a comprehensive suite of software solutions and services offerings designed specifically to meet the needs and demands of communication network operators and strategic industries. These solutions allow our customers to optimize network costs and quickly deploy innovative, value added products and services for their subscribers that increase loyalty and create new revenue streams.

### **The World of SMS**

With each passing day, new tools, technologies and systems overwhelm the users of mobile, tablets and computers. During the year 2012, Kinros, Overtus and Txttools added to our index indicating to a common that it is yet another user effort to provide some texting tool to a user. However, studies reveal that the era of Troppo and Twilio, which were considered the main players in this business now have some new entrants. The common users had assumed that they were the main players with other SMS sites.

### **Twilio**

Twilio provides a simple hosted API (Application Programme Interface) and markup language for businesses to quickly build scalable, reliable and advanced voice and SMS communication applications. It provides a telephony infrastructure web service 'in the cloud', enabling web programmers to integrate real-time phone calls into their applications. Twilio's simple Pay-As-You-Go pricing model means that the customers pay for capacity only when they need it, not before. The voice applications written on Twilio's cloud solution scale transparently, eliminating programming, operational and contractual headaches frequently associated with the rapid growth or traffic spikes. It also provides a cloud API for voice and SMS communications that leverages existing web development skills, resources and infrastructure. It minimizes the learning curve required to build advanced, reliable voice communications applications that solve critical business needs. The syntax and programming model are focussed on making application development as close to the request/response model of web application development as possible. The

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API uses a restful interface, and responses are formatted in XML (Extensible Markup Language) or CSV (Comma Separated Values).

### **Tropo**

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Tropo makes it simple to build phone, SMS and Instant messaging applications. You use the web technologies you already know and Tropo's powerful cloud API to bring real-time communications to your applications.

If you can create a website, you can make and receive phone calls, use voice recognition, interact over SMS, IM or Twitter. You can even create conference calls and transcribe calls. There's no need to learn new languages, wrestle with VoIP software, or learn about telephony. You can host your code with Tropo, or use your existing web server in the language of your choice.

### **AT&T Speech Platform**

AT&T, the US giant, has announced the launch of a new Speech API. It is being powered by the AT&T Watson speech engine. The new Speech API allows developers to integrate speech-to-text functionality in mobile applications. The service works with almost any mobile phone and across all other US wireless carrier services.

There are a variety of speech contexts that can be used to voice-enable applications which includes Web Search, Business Search, Voicemail-to-text, SMS and Generic. According to AT&T, the Generic speech context allows developers to address over 90 per cent of the US customers with a single API.

Using the Speech Service, audio files are sent to AT&T via the mobile application. The transcribed text of what was said by the user is then returned to the application. According to AT&T, the Speech API provides the following benefits:

- No need to build and maintain your own speech libraries.
- It's a cross-carrier solution.
- Simply plug and play: Connect to our Speech API, send them speech, and they send you text.
- AT&T also offers HTML friendly software for the beginners.

### **12.2.3 Role and Function of Copy Desk**

There are three basic methods of handling copy once it gets to the desk.

- The traditional method is to have someone (the chief or acting chief) get stories and parcel them out to rank-and-file copy editors (rim editors).
- Another method is to make this a self-regulating system. The rim editors watch the 'in' basket and jump on stories as they're 'up'. This helps in more efficient flow of the work, but it also intensifies the workload.

- At some papers, copy editors are given entire pages to deal with. That is, instead of taking stories at random, or possibly being assigned a variety of stories for a variety of pages, the editor gets a page layout and handles all stories on that page as they come in.

At some point, the rim editor needs to learn what size of headline the story will get; whether the story needs to be trimmed (or sometimes padded out); and what, if any, other chores will come with the story. If there are photos, there will be captions to be written (in rare cases, this chore rests with the photo desk). There might be a graphic to edit, or at least proofread.

These days, especially at newspapers using pagination, there often is a ‘design desk’ tasked with layout. Or sometimes, especially on less-important “inside” pages or on sections other than the main news section (editorial, sports, business), a rim editor does the layout.

## NOTES

### Check Your Progress

1. What are the core objectives of editing?
2. What are the 5C’s of copyediting?

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## 12.3 ART OF COPY EDITING

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In the age of the new media and digital era, there is an information overload so much so that being able to sieve through relevant bytes is quite a tedious job, especially so with a time restraint and fast-paced lives. In fact, that is precisely why newspaper pages seem crisper and sharper today. News channels have ten-minute bulletins and the breaking news reaches us via SMS. Add to this, a whole lot of competition and you would understand why zealous reporters frantically run around night and day to be the first to receive and break the news to the world.

To chop and cut this information to the required size and shape out of it crisp, meaningful and impressive content is what an editor aims for. The craft of editing does not mean condemning the reporters’ copy, but empowering their copy in such a way that it is fit to be printed in a newspaper with minimalistic changes. The editor further aims to fit the content in the limitations of allotted space and confines of time.

Copyediting, as it is called, may be defined as a simple process of correcting mistakes in a text and making changes based on the adopted style of writing pursued in that publication—called its house style—primarily focussing on spellings, grammar and punctuation. Copyediting is also called line, mechanical or stylistic editing.

Copyediting is different from proofreading. While a proofreader’s job merely involves checking the content for typographical and mechanical errors related to the style of the publication, Copy editors do a bit more to the text to make it more

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meaningful and synchronized. In the editorial cycle, copyediting is done before both typesetting and proofreading of which the latter is the last step in the editorial cycle.

The role of the copy editor, thus, is to scan the content for correct wordusage, punctuations, voice and spellings. Copy editors are required to authenticate information provided in the text in terms of figures, tables, examples or references by running checks on them. Further, they need to chisel the piece with their writing abilities with an intent to produce a polished text based on the house style rules.

Any organization's top most copy editors who supervise other editors of their group are called the copy chiefs, or copy desk chiefs, or news editors. In the UK, too, while the term copy editor is used in most cases; in newspapers, a copy editor is called the sub-editor or the sub. The copy chief is called the chief sub-editor. In India, since our roots somewhere tangle with British colonialism, subs are what we call our copyediting experts. The role of the copy editor varies considerably from one publication to another.

### Aims of Copyediting

The main aims of copyediting are to give a copy more expression, clarity and meaning so that the reader comprehends the message with ease and interest. From the publisher's point of view, content needs to be copyedited to re-check and remove any hitches in voice, grammar, flow of text, syntax, punctuations, etc., before the book/newspaper goes to the typesetter so that the production can go ahead smoothly, and monetary expenses are minimized. The following are some of the important functions that a copy editor has to perform:

- Help to improve the overall coverage and presentation of a piece of writing
- Help in checking for consistency in spelling and punctuation in line with the house style
- Ensure clarity, authenticity, genuineness of content

### The Work of Copy editors

An article, 'Talk to the Newsroom', in the *New York Times*, by Merrill Perlman, very effectively outlines the role and work of Copy editors. The article said:

'Copy editors are the final gatekeepers before an article reaches you, the reader. They have great instincts for sniffing out suspicious or incorrect facts or things that just don't make sense in context. They are also our final line of protection against libel, unfairness and imbalance in an article. If they stumble over anything, they're going to work with the writer or the assigning editor (we call them backfield editors) to make adjustments so you don't stumble. That often involves intensive substantive work on an article. In addition, copy editors write the headlines, captions and other display elements for the articles, edit the article for the space available to it (that usually means trims, for the printed paper) and read the proofs of the printed pages in case something slipped by.'

This paragraph comprehensively describes the worth of Copy editors in a newsroom. It tells us how they try to improve a text that someone else has written without even once grudging about not getting a mention or a passing reference in the publication or the byline of the article or news.

### 12.3.1 Symbols used in Copy Editing












To make the life of the copy editors easy, to help each element in the process of editing and to understand the language of the editor, certain icons or symbols are routinely used world over to communicate. These symbols allow the Copy editors to give adequate directions and provide suggestions for the changes that they suggest in the copy edited by them. These symbols have universal understanding and all typesetters and editors are required to learn them to fine-tune and communicate in this language of editing.

However, with the advent of computers, content copies are no longer presently on paper, i.e., they are no longer on hard copies. Today, content is written, edited as well as processed in its soft copy form, and hence, these symbols are losing their day-to-day relevance.

#### The Common Symbols

The following are some of the most common copyediting symbols. However, these symbols have lost their relevance in the present times. Still, there are many who prefer editing on a hard copy rather than a soft copy.

*Table 12.1 Copy Editing and Proofreading Symbols*

Symbol	Meaning	Example
	Delete	Remove the <del>end</del> fitting.
	Close up	The tolerances are with <u>in</u> the range.
	Delete and Close up	<del>Delete</del> and close up the gap.
	Insert	The box <sup>is not</sup> inserted correctly.
#	Space	The <sup>#</sup> procedure is incorrect.
	Transpose	Remove the <u>fitting</u> <u>end</u> .
/ or lc	Lower case	The <del>E</del> ngineer and manager agreed.
	Capitalize	A representative of <u>nasa</u> was present.
	Capitalize first letter and lower case remainder	<u>G</u> ARRETT <u>P</u> RODUCTS are great.
stet	Let stand	Remove the <del>battery</del> <sup>stet</sup> cables.
¶	New paragraph	The box is full ¶ The meeting will be on Thursday.
no ¶	Remove paragraph break	The meeting will be on Thursday. ¶ <del>no</del> All members must attend.
	Move to a new position	All members <u>attended</u> <u>who were new</u> .
	Move left	<u>Remove the faulty part.</u>
	Flush left	<u>Move left.</u>
	Flush right	<u>Move right.</u>

## NOTES

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	Move right	] Remove the faulty part.
	Center	] Table 4-1 [
	Raise	16 <sub>2</sub>
	Lower	16 <sup>2</sup>
	Superscript	16 <sup>2</sup>
	Subscript	16 <sub>2</sub>
	Period	Rewrite the procedure. Then complete the tasks.
	Apostrophe or single quote	The company's policies were rewritten.
	Semicolon	He left; however, he returned later.

	Colon	I here were three items: nuts, bolts, and screws.
	Comma	Apply pressure to the first, second, and third bolts.
	Hyphen	A valuable byproduct was created.
	Spell out	The info was incorrect. <i>sp</i>
	Abbreviate	The part was twelve feet long.
	Align	Personnel Facilities    Equipment
	Underscore	The part was listed under <u>Electrical</u> .
	Run in with previous line	I rewrote the pages (and went home.)
	Em dash	It was the beginning so I thought.
	En dash	The value is 12-408.
	Set in italics	The book was titled <i>Technical Writing Styles</i> .
	Set in bold	This is the <b>only</b> time we can offer this price.
	Wrong font	This is <b>the first step in the procedure</b> .
	Set in small caps	Set the <u>MFG REGISTER</u> to zero.

Meaning	Symbol	Example
Abbreviate		The part was <del>twelve feet</del> long.
Align	or =	Personnel Facilities    Equipment
Apostrophe or single quote		The company's policies were rewritten.
Capitalize		A representative of <u>nasa</u> was present.
Capitalize first letter and lowercase remainder		<u>G</u> ARRETT <u>P</u> RODUCTS are great.
Center		] Table 4-1 [
Close up		The tolerances are <u>with</u> in the range.
Colon		There were three items: nuts, bolts, and screws.



## Editing in the Digital Age

With the emergence of the digital age, copyediting is now done on-screen. There are certain copy editors who still prefer the hand-marking routine. But editing on-screen is a much feasible and cost-efficient method. It helps save paper, time and cost. The first step in on-screen editing is copying the author's files to your own computer system. This will not only be used as a back-up later, but it is advisable to have the original copies for the copy editor's reference. There is an option in word processing programmes that shows the editor's corrections, revisions, insertions, deletions, etc., with redline marks. The redlined text can also be hidden for the author's convenience, and can be displayed when one wants. However, the mark-revision features should be enabled when the editor wishes to write a query to the author, or is uncertain of some changes that he or she might have made. All word processing programmes have several options for the way the editor's intervention will display on the screen.

### 12.3.2 Steps in Editing

In the world of the print media, their pulsating newsrooms, ceaselessly buzzing with activity, can be called the *Karmabhoomi* or the Mecca of editing. A newsroom is the hub or the central nervous system from where the editorial team operates. It is this place where like a crafted works man; an editor goes about his business of making sense of the news and content collected by him through varied sources. He is like a tailor, snapping and shaping information into an aesthetic garb, or a seasoned sculptor using his hammer and chisel to edge out and create a masterpiece. Thus, editing is a thorough and tough job, that needs to be skilfully executed to make the ultimate statement, or in simple words, to express things in the right light. One may remember the famous saying that a well edited copy may become literature, but a bad piece of literature is not journalism.

### Process of Editing

A media scholar is expected to understand the key-role of the newsroom, the intricacies of newspaper production and the fine points of editing. There is an established practice in the newspaper offices that nothing is sent directly to the press unless it is edited and processed. A scholar has to understand the crucial role of the newsroom in a media office. The newsroom comprises the reporters and the news desk. While the primary role of a reporter is to simply inform the publication about a piece of news, but in order to reach its audience, the news has to be processed and subsequently printed or broadcasted; it is the desk, which performs this duty and gives finishing touches to the content refining it into being a good media product. The newsroom is thus, the place where crude and raw news is rewritten, edited, fine-tuned and polished for presentation in the publication or broadcast.

## NOTES

## Structure of the Editorial Board

Figure 12.1 illustrates the broad structure of an editorial board in a media house.

### NOTES

The editorial board is responsible for the overall editorial direction, promotion, cost control and logistics in a media unit. The following section makes the roles of the various elements of an editorial board clear:

- (a) The Executive Board:** The Executive Board comprises the editor-in-chief, business director, content director and the creative director. The editor-in-chief is at the helm of this board and has to ensure the success of the newspaper, journal or magazine. He/She has to monitor all aspects of the venture such as commercial viability and quality content. His/Her approval is sought before taking any major decisions. The business directors works in tandem with the editor-in-chief to generate revenue for the media house through advertisements and marketing. This is done by proper planning and its implementation. The creative director has to supervise the creative aspects of the media unit. They work in the editorial to bring in new entrants, freelancers, columnists and blog writers. The content director supervises the work of section editors. They have to add the element of a unique style and substance in the media product.



*Fig. 12.1 Structure of an Editorial Board*

- (b) The Managerial Board:** The Managerial Board comprises section editors, content editors, financial managers and PR managers. Section editors create and edit content for various sections, features and columns. Content editors edit all copies and carry out the preliminary work in the editing process. It also includes design editors and

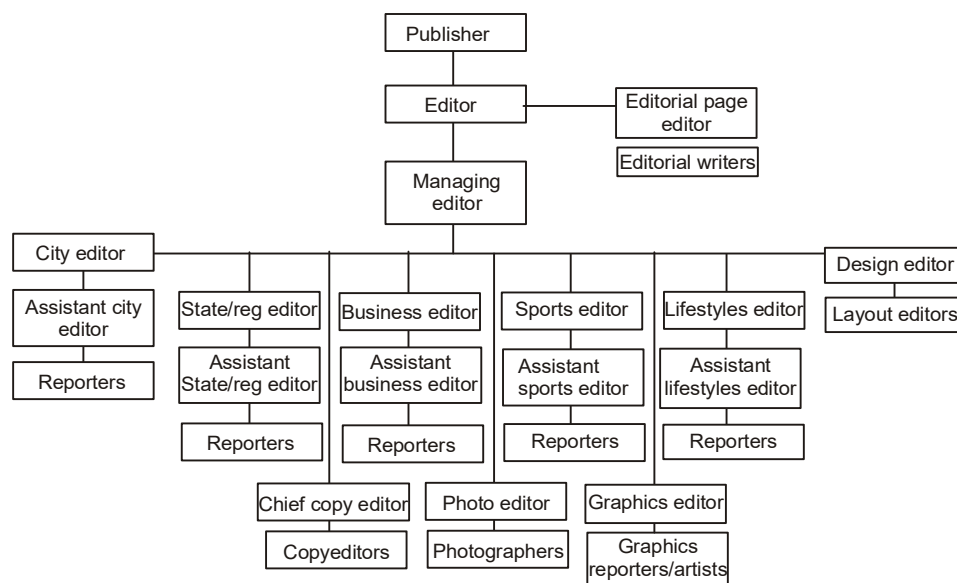
photograph editors. They also correspond with journalists, reporters and writers to improve their piece. Financial managers handle the budgetary requirements to ensure that the media unit does not incur any losses. All revenue and expenditures are reported to them to carry out the accounting work. They also try to solicit advertisements for their media unit. The Public Relations managers try to get as much exposure as they can for the media unit. They try to increase readership and distribution by promoting the media product.

- (c) **The Advisory Board:** The Advisory Board consists of reviewers and scholars to ensure that diversity is maintained in terms of matter and content in the media product.

However, different media units are organized differently. Generally, the editorial office of a newspaper is organized as shown in Figure 12.2.

Let us discuss the functions of important functionaries of a newspaper.

- **Publisher:** He/she is responsible for all the operations of the newspaper—editorial and business.



*Fig. 12.2 Editorial Organization of a Newspaper*

- **Editor:** He/she is responsible for all of the editorial issues of the newspaper.
- **Managing editor:** He/she is in charge of day-to-day production of the newspaper.
- **City editor:** Also sometimes called the metro editor, he/she is responsible for the news coverage of the area in which the newspaper is located.

## NOTES

- **Reporters:** They are assigned to all the sections of the newspaper. They gather information about the incidents the newspaper chooses to cover.

## NOTES

### 12.3.3 Precautions in Editing

Some of the major precautions to be kept in mind while editing are as follows:

- Beware common grammatical errors
- Don't contravene copyright law
- Avoid temporal confusion
- Remove unnecessary formatting
- Try to reference primary sources
- Make it readable
- Check the facts
- Control image size and weight
- Re-read on publication

#### Check Your Progress

3. Define the term 'copyediting'.
4. List some of the major precautions to be kept in mind while editing.

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## 12.4 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

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1. The core objectives of editing are as follows:
  - Removal of grammatical and typographical errors
  - Crisper interpretation of ambiguous or vague sounding matter
2. The 5C's of copyediting are as follows:
  - Clear
  - Correct
  - Concise
  - Comprehensible
  - Consistent
3. Copyediting may be defined as a simple process of correcting mistakes in a text and making changes based on the adopted style of writing pursued in that publication –called its house style–primarily focussing on spellings,

grammar and punctuation. Copyediting is also called line, mechanical or stylistic editing.

4. Some of the major precautions to be kept in mind while editing are as follows:
- Beware common grammatical errors
  - Don't contravene copyright law
  - Avoid temporal confusion
  - Remove unnecessary formatting
  - Try to reference primary sources

## NOTES

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### 12.5 SUMMARY

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- The job of copyediting requires the editors to use their wisdom along with their immaculate word editing skills to turn out text that is reader-friendly and easy to comprehend.
- The copy must have clarity in terms of language and expression. It should be checked for libel, and attempt must be genuinely made to authenticate facts.
- Basically, editing is the process of selecting and preparing written media used to convey information.
- A good dictionary is the first tool that a sub editor should keep by his side.
- Another tool an editor needs is reference books. When stories are edited, you need to refer on various issues.
- Media scholars should have a clear understanding that the software that they can download for personal use cannot be used for large-scale commercial applications.
- Twilio provides a simple hosted API (Application Programme Interface) and markup language for businesses to quickly build scalable, reliable and advanced voice and SMS communication applications.
- Tropo makes it simple to build phone, SMS and Instant messaging applications. You use the web technologies you already know and Tropo's powerful cloud API to bring real-time communications to your applications.
- AT&T, the US giant, has announced the launch of a new Speech API. It is being powered by the AT&T Watson speech engine. The new Speech API allows developers to integrate speech-to-text functionality in mobile applications.
- Copyediting is different from proofreading. While a proofreader's job merely involves checking the content for typographical and mechanical errors related to the style of the publication, Copy editors do a bit more to the text to make it more meaningful and synchronized.

## NOTES

- The main aims of copyediting are to give a copy more expression, clarity and meaning so that the reader comprehends the message with ease and interest. From the publisher's point of view, content needs to be copyedited to re-check and remove any hitches in voice, grammar, flow of text, syntax, punctuations, etc., before the book/newspaper goes to the typesetter so that the production can go ahead smoothly, and monetary expenses are minimized.
- A media scholar is expected to understand the key-role of the newsroom, the intricacies of newspaper production and the fine points of editing.

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### 12.6 KEY WORDS

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- **Editing:** Editing is a skilled process of adding, adjusting, altering and organizing written, visual, audio and film-related material to effectively convey clear, authentic, precise and comprehensive information to its audiences.
- **Proof-Editing:** Proof-editing is a process where an editor checks a piece of writing for typographic errors, spelling mistakes and minor inconsistencies.
- **Copy Chief:** Any organization's topmost copy editor who supervises other editors of his or her group.

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### 12.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

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#### Short-Answer Questions

1. What is the difference between editing and proofreading a copy?
2. What are the main aims of copy editing?
3. What are copy editing symbols? List a few commonly used ones.
4. Mention some of the professional tools available for online editing.
5. Define the structure of the editorial board.

#### Long-Answer Questions

1. How will you describe the work of copy editors? Why do we need them?
2. Elaborate on the principles of editing and the advantages of using them.
3. What are the common mistakes that a copy editor can commit while editing? Is there a way of avoiding them?
4. What are Twilio and Tropo Applications? Elaborate.
5. Explain the process of editing.

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## 12.8 FURTHER READINGS

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## NOTES

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## **UNIT 13 DIFFERENT KINDS OF EDITING**

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### **NOTES**

#### **Structure**

- 13.0 Introduction
- 13.1 Objectives
- 13.2 Difference between Editing of Newspapers and Magazines
  - 13.2.1 Web Editing and Computerized Editing
- 13.3 Media in the Field of Editing Technology
- 13.4 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
- 13.5 Summary
- 13.6 Key Words
- 13.7 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 13.8 Further Readings

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### **13.0 INTRODUCTION**

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This unit discusses how the present-day media world is driven by technology. With the induction of new technologies, the job of a journalist has become more challenging. It is true that the basic duty of the journalists is to develop content, but without being acclimatized, they may not be able to make use of the new technology protocol which has definitely changed the paradigm of editing and content development. This unit will also discuss the difference between editing of newspapers and magazines, web editing and computerized editing.

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### **13.1 OBJECTIVES**

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After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the difference between editing of newspapers and magazines
- Explain web editing and computerized editing
- Identify the editing software and technologies available for use by media outfits
- Describe the copyright law in India
- Discuss the need for awareness of new technologies and software in the changing media scenario



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## **13.2 DIFFERENCE BETWEEN EDITING OF NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES**

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Magazine journalism is entirely different from newspaper journalism as it has more shelf value and covers a longer period as compared to daily newspapers. A daily newspaper becomes part of the waste by evening and it reports events on daily basis. Magazines have a possibility of looking at and reporting an event in its totality as it has lot of time to prepare and publish the story. The articles in magazines are longer than those which appear in newspapers and even the news magazines try to analyse the story instead of narrating objectively the event in the briefest possible manner. The pictures play a different part in the layout of the magazine. Pictures are used in newspapers to enhance the content of news whereas in magazines the pictures could be used merely for making the page more attractive.

Magazines have seen a great change after the innovation of colour printing. Colour photographs in glossy pages have made them more attractive and impressive, and inspired by this even newspapers have adopted colour printing. Magazine journalism is classified depending upon the periodicity and subject matter. A weekly news magazine has a different objective than the fortnightly or monthly magazine. Similarly, a magazine on fashion or films would be more picturesque than that one on politics, economy, business and agriculture.

Another major difference between newspapers and magazines is the schedule of production. A newspaper has to be published every day and thus involves hectic work on the part of journalists and other people connected with the production of the newspaper. Journalists in a weekly magazine have more time and in a fortnightly or monthly magazine they have comparatively much more time.

### **13.2.1 Web Editing and Computerized Editing**

Web editors initiate, maintain, update, and monitor the content of web pages. Usually, this is done for one company, with the aim of aligning the content on the page with the company's goals. However, one can also work as a web editor for a number of companies, focusing on one main project at a time. Either way, the process is the same. You start by asking questions and gathering information. For example, what image does the company hope to portray? Is it whimsical (such as a company that sells children's room decorations) or informative?

Whatever the tone of the company's website, a web editor makes sure that every article, advertisement, product description, and link represents it. A web editor also looks for accuracy, content, and grammatical errors. Since the content is continually changing, a web editor constantly assesses the data being added.

In addition to the text of the web page, a web editor also observes the activity on social networking sites. Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn are all becoming mainstream components of any company's Internet existence.

## **NOTES**

## Computerized Editing

### NOTES

Computerized editing is competent particularly when the editor and the writer are not working in the same office. It can be defined as a computerized program that permits the user to create or modify data especially on a display screen.

The two main functions of computerized editing are as follows:

- i. Analytical and decision-making
- ii. Clerical (typing in the changes)

With on-paper editing, these two functions are done by different people.

Electronic editors are people who make changes directly into computer documents. They combine these two functions.

### Electronic editing-benefits

Some of the benefits of electronic editing are as follows:

1. Saves time
  - No need to spend time in deciphering the handwriting and typing minor copyediting corrections;
  - Direct corrections;
  - The time the writer spends on a document is reduced.
2. Saves storage space while maintaining archives of spaces.
3. Benefits workgroups situated in different locations.
4. Increases and diversifies editor's skills.
  - Assists inexperienced writers
  - Be better placed to coordinate and manage publication of projects
  - Spot problems in online versions of documents that would not be apparent on paper

#### Check Your Progress

1. What does a web editor do?
2. What are the two main functions of computerized editing?

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## 13.3 MEDIA IN THE FIELD OF EDITING TECHNOLOGY

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The world's major electronic companies are competing with each other to introduce new technology in the field of editing. The new technology also introduces new protocol, for example, someone buys a DVD player under the control of the

Circuit City DIVX, which requires a phone line to dial in and determine whether the buyer has the rights to watch a DVD every time one purchases it.

It is definitely a big business, as the Apple and EMI have announced that EMI would begin releasing music on iTunes for \$1.30 a track at double the sampling rate. With growing digitization, the consumers too want digital music, movies and TV shows. They look for the following products:

- High-quality copy of the content in question.
- Inter-operable with multiple computers, operating systems, playback software and portable devices.
- Standards-based and open so one can play it back on open-source devices and players like a Kubuntu box without having to download proprietary playback codecs.
- The customers should be able to play it back on any device that they choose.
- The consumers are prepared to pay a licensing fee to listen or watch only as long as they keep on playing. They want to own it.
- They are able to archive it and know that in the very distant future, they may still likely play it back even if all of the companies that were involved are out of business.
- They want to be able to move it from system to system and device to device without worrying about ‘authorizing’ those systems or devices.
- They want it in a ubiquitous format so popular that just about every player can play it back.
- They are ready to pay a reasonable a price.

### **DRM Protocol**

The Digital Rights Management (DRM) service was first conceptualized by Microsoft in 2007. It is designed to provide delivery of audio and/or video content over an IP network to a PC or other playback device in such a way that the distributor can control how that content is used.

In May 2007, Microsoft published the network protocol behind its license acquisition mechanism. According to the specification:

- The client software obtains a 7 byte plain-text content key content from the license server.
- The server encrypts the key before transferring it to the client with a globally predefined 160-bit ECC key.
- The server also sends a content key ID, unencrypted. The client then uses the K-content as RC4 key to decrypt the licensed media stream.

### **NOTES**

## NOTES

- As an anti-spoofing measure, additional fields such as playback rights and a random number are encrypted with three more pre-defined ECC key pairs either by the client or server software.

DRM prevents most of the criteria above. It locks a receiver into a forced proprietary playback system. It requires authorization every time one moves it, and it is not likely to restore from a long-term archive.

However, EMI's announcement is only one step in a larger war. The following points outline what needs to occur before we can declare the task as finished:

- All of the other big music companies need to likewise release music without DRM.
- DRM needs to be removed from audio books. At present, audio books also contain DRM, but unlike music files, you cannot burn them to CD and rip them back. The only way to remove DRM from an audible book is to hack it or record it again in analog.
- DRM needs to be removed from TV shows. Like audio CDs, TV shows are sent over the air and through cable without encryption.
- DRM needs to be removed from digital movies. Until DRM is removed, DVD will continue to be the preferred method for movies at home. They are of higher quality, more ubiquitous, play back on the most devices, already come in an archival format, are cheap, and include more features than any digital version.
- YouTube needs to come out victorious, one way or another, in the lawsuit between YouTube and Viacom. The digital distribution of Viacom's television shows helps the business. It needs to learn that customers prefer this method of distribution and will gravitate towards it. Viacom, and the entire media mafia, needs to learn that embracing new technology and creating better products works better than suing everyone and corrupting our legal system.
- The Congress needs to amend or repeal the DMCA. The Digital Millennium Copyright Act makes most consumers of digital content lawbreakers by every day action. If you take a DVD and move it to your iPod, you are breaking the law. Every day convenience should not result in a crime. The DMCA needs to be fixed or removed before total victory in the media war can be reached.

### **Copyright Laws and Need for their Reformation**

The advent of the communication revolution in recent years has resulted in rampant transborder piracy and its impact has been felt most drastically in the entertainment industry, films and music in particular. Advances in technology have led to large scale copying of films and music. Today, India is the world's largest producer of films and has the potential to become an international hub. However, this potential cannot be optimally realized unless piracy is effectively curtailed.

Copyright is a right given by the law to creators of literary, dramatic, musical and artistic works; and producers of cinematograph films and sound recordings. The term ‘literary work’ includes computer programmes, tables and compilation including computer databases. The term ‘dramatic work’ includes any piece of recitation, choreographic work or entertainment in dumb show, the scenic arrangement or acting, the form of which is fixed in writing or otherwise but does not include a cinematograph film. The term ‘musical work’ means a work consisting of music.

Copyright is intended to prevent plagiarism and unfair exploitation of creative work. It is a natural extension of the Freedom of Speech and Expression protected under Article 19 (1) (a) of the Constitution. If an individual enjoys the freedom of speech and expression, he must also be guaranteed protection of the intellectual property in his expression be it in the form of a literary, dramatic, musical or artistic work, a film or a sound recording.

Copyright protection and a guarantee of material benefit to the creator of an original piece of work are essential to ensure encouragement of creative work in all aspects of life so that the society can make cultural progress. Absence of such protection would demoralize creative artists and have an alarming effect on creative activity.

Also, since copyright protection is given not only to authors, but also to publishers of such work, if others were entitled to copy their work and benefit from the sale, such persons would be hesitant to invest resources in publishing and circulating original pieces of work.

Copyright does not subsist in reproductions. It applies only in original works and not in an idea, subject matter, theme, information, news, plots, historical or legendary facts. If an event takes place, no one person will have the right to express information about it in whichever form.

What is protected is not the original thought but the expression of thought in a concrete form. Since there can be no copyright in ideas or information, it is not infringement of copyright to adopt the ideas of another, provided there is no copying of the language in which those ideas have been embodied.

There is a difference between copyright and patents. Under patent law, two persons may have produced the same invention, but it is the inventor who applies for patent first is protected. On the other hand, under copyright if identity is accidental, there is no infringement.

According to Section 51 of the Copyright Act, 1957, copyright in a work shall be deemed to be infringed—

- (a) when any person, without a licence granted by the owner of the copyright or the Registrar of Copyrights under this Act or in contravention of the conditions of a licence so granted or of any condition imposed by a competent authority under this Act –

## NOTES

**NOTES**

- (i) does anything, the exclusive right to do which is by this Act conferred upon the owner of the copyright, or
  - (ii) permits for profit any place to be used for the communication of the work to the public where such communication constitutes an infringement of the copyright in the work, unless he was not aware and had no reasonable ground for believing that such communication to the public would be an infringement of copyright; or
- (b) when any person-
- (i) makes for sale or hire, or sells or lets for hire, or by way of trade displays or offers for sale or hire, or
  - (ii) distributes either for the purpose of trade or to such an extent as to affect prejudicially the owner of the copyright, or
  - (iii) by way of trade exhibits in public, or
  - (iv) imports into India, any infringing copies of the work. Provided that nothing in sub-clause (iv) shall apply to the import of two copies of any work other than a cinematograph film or record, for the private and domestic use of the importer.

Explanation- For the purposes of this section, the reproduction of a literary, dramatic, musical or artistic work in the form of a cinematograph film shall be deemed to be an ‘infringing copy’.

**Check Your Progress**

- 3. Define the term ‘Digital Rights Management (DRM).’
- 4. What do you understand by the term copyright?

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**13.4 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS**

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- 1. Web editors initiate, maintain, update, and monitor the content of web pages. A web editor also looks for accuracy, content, and grammatical errors.
- 2. The two main functions of computerized editing are as follows:
  - Analytical and decision-making
  - Clerical (typing in the changes)
- 3. The Digital Rights Management (DRM) service was first conceptualized by Microsoft in 2007. It is designed to provide delivery of audio and/or video content over an IP network to a PC or other playback device in such a way that the distributor can control how that content is used.

4. Copyright is a right given by the law to creators of literary, dramatic, musical and artistic works; and producers of cinematograph films and sound recordings.

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## 13.5 SUMMARY

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## NOTES

- Magazine journalism is entirely different from newspaper journalism as it has more shelf value and covers a longer period as compared to daily newspapers.
- Magazines have seen a great change after the innovation of colour printing.
- Another major difference between newspapers and magazines is the schedule of production. A newspaper has to be published every day and thus involves hectic work on the part of journalists and other people connected with the production of the newspaper.
- Web editors initiate, maintain, update, and monitor the content of web pages. Usually, this is done for one company, with the aim of aligning the content on the page with the company's goals.
- Whatever the tone of the company's website, a web editor makes sure that every article, advertisement, product description, and link represents it. A web editor also looks for accuracy, content, and grammatical errors.
- Computerized editing is competent particularly when the editor and the writer are not working in the same office.
- With each passing day, new technology is overwhelming the media, whether it is print or electronic.
- A media person has to be ready to adopt the new software and the regulations accompanying them.
- A journalist not only needs to have the capacity to interact with the new hardware as well as the software for better presentation of the media product, but also be aware of the legal hassles involved in the usage of them.
- The world's major electronic companies are vying with each other to introduce new technology in the field of editing.
- The Digital Rights Management (DRM) service was first conceptualized by Microsoft in 2007. It is designed to provide delivery of audio and/or video content over an IP network to a PC or other playback device in such a way that the distributor can control how that content is used.
- DRM locks a receiver into a forced proprietary playback system. It requires authorization every time one moves it, and it is not likely to restore from a long-term archive.
- DRM needs to be removed from TV shows. Like audio CDs, TV shows are sent over the air and through cable without encryption.

## NOTES

- Copyright is a right given by the law to creators of literary, dramatic, musical and artistic works; and producers of cinematograph films and sound recordings.
- Copyright is intended to prevent plagiarism and unfair exploitation of creative work. It is a natural extension of the Freedom of Speech and Expression protected under Article 19 (1) (a) of the Constitution.
- Copyright does not subsist in reproductions. It applies only in original works and not in an idea, subject matter, theme, information, news, plots, historical or legendary facts. If an event takes place, no one person will have the right to express information about it in whichever form.

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### 13.6 KEY WORDS

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- **Digitization:** Digitization is the conversion of analog information into digital information.
- **Codec:** Codec is a set of equipment that encodes an analogue speech or video signal into digital form for transmission purposes and at the receiving end decodes the digital signal into a form close to its original.
- **Anti-Spoofing:** Measures used to prevent unauthorized use of legitimate identification and authentication (I&A) data.
- **Musical Work:** The term ‘musical work’ means a work consisting of music.
- **Dramatic Work:** The term ‘dramatic work’ includes any piece of recitation, choreographic work or entertainment in dumb show, the scenic arrangement or acting, the form of which is fixed in writing or otherwise but does not include a cinematograph film.

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### 13.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

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#### Short-Answer Questions

1. With growing digitization, what should the consumers of today expect from the media?
2. What were the specifications of network protocol published by Microsoft behind its license acquisition mechanism? How does DRM prevent most of the criteria?
3. Why do we need strict copyright laws in our country?
4. What is the difference between copyright and patents?



### Long-Answer Questions

1. Discuss the Indian Copyright Act, 1957.
2. The last hill in the media war is a complete reformation of copyright laws. Elaborate.
3. Advances in technology have led to large scale copying of films and music. Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answers.
4. Explain the concept of computerized editing.
5. Discuss some of the benefits of electronic editing.

### NOTES

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### 13.8 FURTHER READINGS

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- Burns, Lynette Sheridan. 1900. *Understanding Journalism*. New Delhi: Sage Publications.
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## **UNIT 14 FUNCTIONS AND ORGANIZATION OF EDITORIAL IN A NEWSPAPER**

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### **Structure**

- 14.0 Introduction
- 14.1 Objectives
- 14.2 The Functioning of Editorial in a Newspaper
  - 14.2.1 The Challenges of Editing
- 14.3 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
- 14.4 Summary
- 14.5 Key Words
- 14.6 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 14.7 Further Readings

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### **14.0 INTRODUCTION**

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Magazine journalism is entirely different from newspaper journalism as it has more shelf value and covers a longer period as compared to daily newspapers. A daily newspaper becomes part of the waste by evening and it reports events on daily basis. In the previous unit, you learnt the difference between editing of newspapers and magazines. The previous unit also discussed the web editing and computerized editing. However, in this unit, you will go through the functioning of editorial department in a newspaper. This unit will also examine the challenges of editing.

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### **14.1 OBJECTIVES**

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After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Explain the structure of editorial department
- Describe the essential style of a media house
- Discuss the challenges of editing

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### **14.2 THE FUNCTIONING OF EDITORIAL IN A NEWSPAPER**

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The editorial functioning of a daily newspaper resembles in essence with the television news channels. The only difference is that most of the editing work is

done by the journalists themselves. The editorial department is structured in the following manner:

**Editor:** The newspaper editor has an identical role to the news director in a television channel. He has to visualize the entire daily and its contents. He is also entrusted with the responsibility of hiring, firing and setting the tone for news coverage. Under the law, he is responsible for the contents, both news and advertisements, appearing in the publication.

**Assistant editors/Leader writers/Sports editors/Feature editors/Business editors/Editor news service:** These editors are responsible for their specific pages. Assistant editors and leader writers write the edit pages and are responsible for the edit pages and the articles published on such pages. The job of the sports editor is to prepare the sports pages and also coordinate with the sports reporters hired for giving coverage to important sports events. Feature editors write themselves and also organize features for the daily. These features add colour to the publication. The business editor is responsible for the business pages. The person who is assigned this job is considered to be a specialist in commercial news. The 'editor news service' coordinates with the correspondents of the daily posted outside the publication centre. His job is like that of a managing editor of a news channel.

**News editor:** The job profile of the news editor resembles the responsibilities of assistant news director in a television news channel. He is the vital line between the editor and the newsroom. He executes the concepts and plans of the editor. He is also responsible for the timely signing off of the editions; and also ensures that the reporters' stories are submitted to the desk at the appropriate time. Apart from this, he keeps a watch on the content to ensure that the news stories are factually, legally and ethically correct.

**Chief subeditors:** The job of the chief subeditor in a daily newspaper may be compared to the responsibilities of an executive producer in a news channel. He oversees the work of the subeditors and is responsible for the page make-up and editing.

**Subeditors:** The subeditors in a newspaper function like the producers of a television channel. The only difference is that in a newspaper the *subs* edit the copy, but in a television channel, the producer gives the final touches to a programme with the help of reporters, graphic artists and editors.

**Chief of bureau/Chief reporter:** The job of the chief of news bureau or chief reporter is to coordinate and visualize possible news stories expected during the day or in the coming week. While the coordination is necessary for adequate flow of copy, he also ensures adequate visuals by giving assignments to the photographers, etc. In the television channels, this task is assigned to the assignment desk.

**Reporters:** The job of reporters in a newspaper is similar to that of the television reporters. While the reporters in newspapers are expected to write a

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clean copy, a television channel reporter, on the other hand, is expected to be well versed in anchoring and also handling the camera.

Both print and electronic media, including the Internet, need a professional editor for the necessary coordination. The nomenclature may change. There are also different views on the role of editor. Analysts also have different opinions on whether he should be a writer or just a functionary at the apex in the editorial department. A number of scholars are of the view that with the expansion of the editorial, the essential job of an editor is coordination. The success of any media product depends upon the visualization and coordination within the outfit.

A good newspaper always depends upon the quality of its editorial team. Regarding mistakes in the daily, the famous news editor of *Indian Express*, Pilloo Saxena had once told the all-powerful Ramnath Goenka that for quality subbing you cannot depend upon Rs. 350 a month subeditors. Those days, *Indian Express* owner Goenka was keen to have a quality publication which was better than the best produced newspapers of the day. At that time TOI salaries were considered the best in the industry. People say that Goenka's *Indian Express* wages were less than half of the TOI staff. During the eighties, a new generation of journalists joined the newspaper industry. They were educated in highly acclaimed English-medium schools and had a command on the language like the mother tongue. Some of shining stars in English journalism during this era are Inder Badhwar, M.J. Akber, Hari Jaisingh, etc.

A new trend surfaced during this period. Some journalists having top political connections occupied the position of editors in some of the leading dailies. Personalities like Hiranyamay Karlekar, Khushwant Singh. H.K. Dua were tremendously gifted editors having a good rapport with the political class.

### **The Essential Style of a Media House**

The technology has almost changed the entire scenario of the newspaper world. Johann Gutenberg in 14th Century had heralded the printing revolution with the invention of printing press. The next important development was communication through telegraph and telex lines. The use of telephones made it possible for the information to reach the news desk without any delay. However, each newspaper used to process the news received through wire services or reporters according to its own style. For example, the word *rape* which is frequently used in newspapers these days was not allowed to be used in *The Pioneer*. In place of the word *rape*, the daily used to express this outrage through the expression '*criminally assaulted*'. The word *rape* was considered outrageous. The daily like *The Hindu* never allowed the photograph of a girl in its matrimonial columns, though the matrimonial appearing in the daily are paid for.

#### **14.2.1 The Challenges of Editing**

The present day editing and style of presentation in the videos has followed the film world. It has followed the tradition of film world and its professional news

presentation has its roots in the radio and newspaper industry. Interestingly, during the initial years, it evolved under the overall umbrella of the All India Radio (AIR). The government-owned radio and television national channels were restructured under the Prasar Bharti (PB), a corporate body similar to the BBC. However, the practice of appointing non-professionals as its chief executives, especially drawn from the superannuated civil servants, has changed the focus and nature of PB to an extent that some critics dub it as ‘a defunct organization’.

Almost delayed by a quarter century, in 1959, television was introduced in India. It was a part of the AIR and the programmes were basically designed for educational purposes and also provided the farmers necessary technological knowledge on crops. It did not emerge as a news channel till 1976. In 1976, it was separated from the AIR. However, close cooperation continued till eighties. However, under an international cooperation programme, India conducted Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE) during August 1975–July 1976. A core team was created at the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO), Ahmadabad. The contents were developed in close collaboration with the AIR team. It was before the launch of the geostationary satellites. The SITE programme depended on the American satellite, ATS-6, a satellite rotating in an elliptical orbit. It means that the programme could be beamed according to its footprints in India. Therefore, only six states, including Gujarat and Orissa, were selected for this experiment. It is only during the era of the present geostationary satellites that a radio or television can get access to any part of the world. Thus, during the early 1990s when the broadcast industry was liberalized in India, the cable revolution overwhelmed the Indian media industry.

With the arrival of Ku-band, the media scene in India is just ready for yet another revolution. We are at the threshold of the Direct-to-Home television (DTH) services. The symbol K is derived from the German word, *Kurz-unten*—in other words, the band directly below the K-band. In engineering terminology, it is apportion of electromagnetic spectrum in the microwave range of frequencies. Before its use in the media transmission, it was dedicated basically to monitoring through radars.

Earlier, the usage of Ku-band was limited only to the satellite communication. However, with the expansion of this technology, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) has allotted its segments to various geographical regions. The American broadcasting company named National Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) had started the use of this technology in 1983. Its reporters located in different parts of the world could uplink their feeds through the Ku-band. The Ku-band is considered a user-friendly communication system. A smaller dish size and the Ku-band system’s freedom from terrestrial operations make the receiving of the channels hassle-free. It is much easier to install its small antennae in any building. For the users, Ku-band is generally cheaper. It enables smaller antennas (both because of the higher frequency and a more focused beam). Ku-band is also less vulnerable to weather than other systems. However, Ku-band operator’s Earth Station antennas do require more accurate position control in comparison to C-band.

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The satellite television arrived in India with the participation of foreign media giants like Rupert Murdoch's Satellite Television Asia Region (STAR) in 1991. The Sun TV (India) was started in 1992. It has now 20 channels. The Raj Television Network began its broadcast in 1994. It is one of the popular channels in India.

In 1992, the government opened the cable television for private players. Initially, the Hong Kong based STAR TV offered a bouquet of programmes to the Indian viewers. Among the Indian initiatives, ZEE TV was the first private-owned Indian channel to broadcast over cable. A few years later CNN, Discovery and National Geographic too joined the Indian broadcasting scene. The sports as well as regional channels flourished along with a multitude of Hindi channels and some English channels.

### **Check Your Progress**

1. What is the role of a newspaper editor?
2. What is the job of the chief of news bureau or chief reporter?

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## **14.3 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS**

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1. The newspaper editor has an identical role to the news director in a television channel. He has to visualize the entire daily and its contents. He is also entrusted with the responsibility of hiring, firing and setting the tone for news coverage.
2. The job of the chief of news bureau or chief reporter is to coordinate and visualize possible news stories expected during the day or in the coming week.

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## **14.4 SUMMARY**

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- The editorial functioning of a daily newspaper resembles in essence with the television news channels.
- The newspaper editor has an identical role to the news director in a television channel. He has to visualize the entire daily and its contents.
- Assistant editors and leader writers write the edit pages and are responsible for the edit pages and the articles published on such pages.
- The job of the sports editor is to prepare the sports pages and also coordinate with the sports reporters hired for giving coverage to important sports events.
- The business editor is responsible for the business pages. The person who is assigned this job is considered to be a specialist in commercial news.

- The job profile of the news editor resembles the responsibilities of assistant news director in a television news channel. He is the vital line between the editor and the newsroom.
- The job of the chief subeditor in a daily newspaper may be compared to the responsibilities of an executive producer in a news channel. He oversees the work of the subeditors and is responsible for the page make-up and editing.
- The subeditors in a newspaper function like the producers of a television channel.
- The job of the chief of news bureau or chief reporter is to coordinate and visualize possible news stories expected during the day or in the coming week.
- The job of reporters in a newspaper is similar to that of the television reporters. While the reporters in newspapers are expected to write a clean copy, a television channel reporter, on the other hand, is expected to be well versed in anchoring and also handling the camera.
- Almost delayed by a quarter century, in 1959, television was introduced in India. It was a part of the AIR and the programmes were basically designed for educational purposes and also provided the farmers necessary technological knowledge on crops.
- With the arrival of Ku-band, the media scene in India is just ready for yet another revolution.
- The symbol K is derived from the German word, *Kurz-unten*—in other words, the band directly below the K-band.
- Earlier, the usage of Ku-band was limited only to the satellite communication. However, with the expansion of this technology, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) has allotted its segments to various geographical regions.
- In 1992, the government opened the cable television for private players. Initially, the Hong Kong based STAR TV offered a bouquet of programmes to the Indian viewers.

## NOTES

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### 14.5 KEY WORDS

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- **Assistant Editors:** Assistant editors and leader writers write the edit pages and are responsible for the edit pages and the articles published on such pages.
- **Sports Editor:** The job of the sports editor is to prepare the sports pages and also coordinate with the sports reporters hired for giving coverage to important sports events.

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- **Subeditors:** The subeditors in a newspaper function like the producers of a television channel. The only difference is that in a newspaper the *subs* edit the copy, but in a television channel, the producer gives the final touches to a programme with the help of reporters, graphic artists and editors.
- **Reporter:** Reporter is a person who reports, especially one employed to report news or conduct interviews for the press or broadcasting media.

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## 14.6 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISE

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### Short-Answer Questions

1. Distinguish between the news director and newspaper editor.
2. Write a short note on the job profile of the news editor.
3. State some of the advantages of Ku-band.
4. What is the role of a features editor?

### Long-Answer Questions

1. Explain the structure of editorial department in a newspaper.
2. Describe the essential style of a media house
3. Discuss the challenges of editing
4. Explain the job of reporters in a newspaper.

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## 14.7 FURTHER READINGS

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- Burns, Lynette Sheridan. 1900. *Understanding Journalism*. New Delhi: Sage Publications.
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