PGDMC S2-01

JOURNALISM

SEMESTER- II

Post Graduate Diploma in Mass Communication

KRISHNA KANTA HANDIQUI STATE OPEN UNIVERSITY

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COURSE INTRODUCTION

In the previous course, i.e., Introduction to Mass Communication, you have learnt about the basic concepts of Mass Communication. You may recall from your study of Course 1 that Journalism is one of the most important types of Mass Communication. Now, in this course, 'Journalism' you will learn about the various aspects of this very important field of Mass Communication.

This course has been designed in order to give learners the basic knowledge about the field of journalism. In this course we have discussed the concept of news, news reporting, news writing and news editing. The concept of news agencies and its functioning have also been explained in this course. The Course is divided into seven units, which are as follows –

Unit 1. NEWS

This unit introduces you to the concept, definition, classification and sources of news. It also discusses the concept of news values, objectivity and authenticity.

Unit 2. CONCEPT OF REPORTING

This unit describes the concept and process of news reporting. The qualities and responsibilities of a good reporter have also been discussed here in details.

Unit 3. TYPES OF REPORTING

This unit aims at highlighting the different types of editing – objective, interpretative and investigative. The concept of beat reporting has also been discussed. Some of the important beats have been explained in details in this unit.

Unit 4. NEWS WRITING

This unit introduces you to the concept and process of news writing. Here you will learn about the structure of the news story, the different elements of the news story and how to write a news story.

Unit 5. NEWS EDITING

In this unit you will learn about news editing. The concept and principles of news editing have been discussed in this unit. We have also discussed about the role of editors and the newsroom set up in a news organization. Photo editing has also been discussed in this unit.

Unit 6. EDITNG AND DESIGN

This unit discusses about editing with respect to design. It emphasizes on headlines types and styles, page make up and page layout.

Unit 7. NEWS AGENCIES

The last unit of the course explains to you the concept of news agencies, their role and functions. It also gives an account of the history of news agencies in India and brief descriptions of some important news agencies. Wire editing has also been discussed in this unit.

Post Graduate Diploma in Mass Communication
Journalism

DETAILED SYLLABUS

		Marks	Pages
Unit 1:	**CONCEPT OF ADVERTISING**	**15**	**5-25**
	Concept, definition, classification and sources of news, news values, objectivity and authenticity.		
Unit 2:	**CONCEPT OF REPORTING**	**15**	**26-40**
	Concept of news reporting, qualities and responsibilities reporter, do's and don'ts of good reporting, exclusive news, scoop, breaking news.		
Unit 3:	**TYPES OF REPORTING**	**15**	**41-61**
	Different types of editing – objective, interpretative and investigative, concept of beat reporting, reporting beats – crime, culture, political, business, sports, education, entertainment, science and technology, development, accident/ disaster.		
Unit 4:	**NEWS WRITING**	**15**	**62-78**
	Concept of news writing, structure of news story, headline, byline/ creditline, dateline, lead, body; pyramid style, inverted pyramid style, 5Ws and H.		
Unit 5:	**NEWS EDITING**	**15**	**79-98**
	Editing, meaning, concepts and principles of news editing for print media, newsroom setup, functions at each level, news editor, photo editing, cropping and scaling, caption writing.		
Unit 6:	**EDITNG AND DESIGN**	**15**	**99-119**
	Headlines types and styles, concepts and purpose, page make up and page layout.		
Unit 7:	**NEWS AGENCIES**	**15**	**120-139**
	News Agencies – concept, role and functions, history, important news agencies, editing agency copy.		

UNIT - 1 : NEWS

UNIT STRUCTURE

1.1 Learning Objectives

1.2 Introduction

1.3 Concept of News

1.3.1 Definition

1.3.2 News Values

1.4 Types of News

1.5 Sources of News

1.6 Objectivity and Authenticity

1.7 Let us Sum up

1.8 Further Reading

1.9 Answers to Check Your Progress

1.10 Possible Questions

1.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to:

- define news
- analyze different news values
- classify the different types of news
- name the different sources of news
- explain Objectivity and Authenticity of news

1.2 INTRODUCTION

With the boom of the news media viz. newspapers, news channels and news portals, news has become an important part of our daily lives. The term news must be familiar to all of you. But as a student of Mass Communication, your understanding of the term ‘News’ has to be deeper

and more comprehensive than what the common man understands by this term.

In this unit you will learn about news not just from the point of view of a layman, but from the point of view of a journalist. Here we will introduce you to the concepts of news, the different types of news, qualities of news, sources of news etc.

We hope, after going through this unit, you will be able to have the basic concepts of news clear to your mind. So let us concentrate on the sections given below.

1.3 CONCEPT OF NEWS

"News" is probably one of the most commonly used terminologies in our day to day lives. All of us invariably use this term quite often while talking to our friends, families, relatives and other people, without perhaps, knowing what actually constitute news. Innumerable activities and events are happening simultaneously round the clock across the world. But have you ever thought why the news bulletin of the day carries only a handful of the events or activities that have taken place during the day, which we call as news? Have you ever tried to understand why out of the hundreds only a few items find a place in the newspaper that you read everyday and you invariably call them news? What about the rest of the happenings that fail to make it to the news media?

In a country of billions like India, why your television channel is obsessed with only a few faces, probably a few politicians, a few film stars, models, scientists, bureaucrats, etc. Why only a few people and events get reported, and not the rest? Why don't the media inform us about every little detail of whatever is happening at any place in the world and at any point of time as part of its responsibilities?

Well, in journalistic parlance the word "news" has certain connotations. All events, incidents, activities or happenings around the world cannot qualify as news. In order to call something news there has to be certain elements present in that event or activity or incident. Therefore, let us first understand what can be called news.

1.3.1. Definition of news

It has been impossible to formulate one common and all encompassing definition of news which is universally acceptable. This is because the meaning and scope of news has been changing with the passage of time and also differs according to the political structure of the state.

Perhaps, the simplest way to define news is that, news is all that is happening around us in the different directions, north-east-west-south, and together all these make news. However, if one is to believe this statement then he or she will have to maintain that every incident happening in our society, no matter how big or small or whether emanating from a renowned person or common men, must be considered as news. Yet, when we see the different news media, we can probably question the validity of this statement. Therefore, we need to reconsider this statement and modify it by saying that -

News is something new, something relevant and important, something immediate or something unusual happening in our world that concern us or our society in some way or the other.

Now does this explain all the doubts creeping in your minds? There should be something fresh or new about the event like a discovery, an invention, an innovation, a new project taken by the government for the uplift of people, an impending danger, a natural disaster, an accident, a crime taking place in the society and so on and so forth. They always make good **news stories**. A new fashion in vogue, announcement of new products in the market, a change in habit or in taste of people of the society, etc are also news as they signify changing trends, eventually making them relevant for larger segments of the society.

In fact, everything can be called 'news' provided it holds immense value for or affects the lives of larger masses. An unusual event like the records of the Guinness Book may also qualify for news. The actions and activities of members of Parliament or Legislative



News Story:
News report or material which goes into the newspaper. Not to be confused with tale or novel or fiction.

Assemblies is also of concern to people as they are people's representatives conferred with the power to rule and guide the masses.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines news as 'the report or account of recent events or occurrences, brought or coming to one as new information, new occurrences as a subject of report or talk.

Therefore, having discussed all these we can draw a conclusion by defining news as information about an event that happens in the society, which affects the lives of the people or has the tendency to affect the lives of the people, directly or indirectly, or has immediate value for larger segments of the society.

However, what we have discussed so far are only some of the characteristics of news. Apart from these, there are some other qualities as well, by which we can identify news. In journalistic parlance these qualities are called News Values.



LET US KNOW

Some Interesting Definitions and Quotes

- 'NEWS is what interests a good newspaperman.' - Geraid Johnson, The Sun, Baltimore
- 'When a dog bites a man it is not news, when a man bites a dog it is news.' - John Bogart
- 'News is something someone somewhere wants suppressed. All the rest is advertising.' - William Randolph
- 'For most times no news is good news, for the press, good news is not news.'



ACTIVITY- 1.1

1) Think of 10 major news items that were covered by the media in the past two days and identify which news value or values are found in each of these news items. Note down which news value was found in the maximum no of news items.

2) Open today's newspaper and go through the news items on the first page- Identify the news items having the following new values. Name the news value which is common to all the news items on the first page.

1) Timeliness
2) Conflict
3) Prominence
4) Importance
5) Impact

1.3.2. News values

News values are the characteristics of news. As mentioned earlier they are the qualities by which events qualify as news. And it is expected that all journalists regardless of whether they are involved in on-the-field reporting or placed at the **news desk**, have a clear idea about all the values that constitute news. Therefore, let us now try to understand the characteristics of news one by one.

Timeliness

News essentially has to be new, recent, on time. Old news is stale news and, therefore, of no value. Timeliness, however, is defined by the publication cycle of the news medium in which the information will appear.

- For a weekly news magazine, events that happened during the previous week are timely.
- For a daily newspaper, however, events that happened during the 24 hours since the last edition of the paper are timely.
- For the broadcast media, events that happened during the past few hours upto the last half hour are timely.

A timely presentation of events and happenings is a consideration that every newsman strives to achieve. Otherwise news loses its credibility and essence. Readers do not find it interesting to read stale news. Therefore, it is said that news is the most perishable commodity in the world. And that is the reason why the happenings of the day, including the major events taking place in the evening and late at night, will find a definite place in the morning newspaper.



News Desk: Desk where news is edited and processed. Also known as **Copy Desk**. In Journalism, Copy means the material written by a journalist or news supplied by a news agency or correspondent.

This concern for immediacy has become more prominent in today's era of evolving technology. The television has reduced this time gap to an unbelievable 'news as it is happening now' situation. And the viewers are boggled by watching the seamless unfolding of events taking place at far flung places of the world the moment they break on their television screen. The online newspapers also keep on updating information or the content of the paper as and when events break out and simultaneously more and more information keeps on pouring in throughout the day adding more highlights and insights into a single event. Now-a-days news updates can be received through sms also.

Importance

Significant events that hold importance for the masses must be considered as news. Any important event like the presentation of railway or fiscal budget at the Parliament or in the State Assemblies, announcement of any kind of development project by the government, visits of Foreign ministers to our country or vice versa, a military threat by the neighboring countries, crime related stories etc. are all important events, information about which needs to be delivered immediately to the people.

Conflict

Conflicts are parts of every society. When a society comprises multiple ideologies, multiple organs, innumerable ethnic communities, multiple languages, geographical terrains etc. then conflicts are bound to happen. The entire North east region, including Assam, is a testimony to conflicts of different nature and magnitude plugging at different points of time fueled by innumerable reasons. Nuclear war, terrorist activities, communal clashes, political turmoil, struggles for identities have become cause of concern for every society the world over and there have been excessive reporting about such incidents in every news media. Reports about such happenings are widely covered by local as well as national media because they are news worthy and arouse heightened emotions among masses. One, however, needs to exercise a lot of caution and restrain while reporting conflict as these issues

are very sensitive. Media reports portraying the incident in an improper way can flare up the situation and cause further damage. At times the media also has to hold back from revealing certain information in order to help maintain peace.

Proximity

Similar to relevance the local news is always interesting for the masses, irrespective of where they stay. When a local event is featured in the newspapers or electronic media news bulletins, the readers find it engrossing because local events affect their immediate life and surroundings – weather, events, traffic, communication, market, health facility etc. It is a general tendency of people to remain abreast with what is happening in their locality, in their local markets, in their neighbourhood and with the local people. That is the reason why all the newspapers devote a considerable amount of space for regional affairs. Also, to capitalize on the readership base, there has been a tendency of all the big national newspapers, in the past couple of years, to have local editions in probably every state of the country to cater to the needs and interests of the people of that particular state. Proximity, however, means more than a simple measure of distance. Psychological proximity is also important. So, if, say, an Indian is awarded or gains recognition in a foreign country, it makes important news for us.

Prominence

Prominent persons, prominent events and prominent places always make news. You must have always been wondering as to why you always see the same faces — same politicians, same celebrities or the same places making inroads into the newspaper space and bulletin time. Popular politicians, popular film stars, sports persons, celebrities, socialites—they always make news. This is because the readers or the viewers adore them and want to know more about them, about their life styles, their likes and dislikes. They are the role models for many and hence, when their activities are covered by the media it is bound to draw the attention. Political bigwigs like the President, the

Prime Minister, the Leaders of different political parties, spiritual gurus, sports persons, film stars, business barons etc, are always in the news.

Sometime, even prominent places make news. Like the metros of India-Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata and other major cities of India and abroad, make news. The events happening in these places are matters of concern for many and, hence, they raise curiosity. Prominent events like International Trade Fairs, Expos, Fashion shows, film festivals, international summits and conferences etc also make news.

Impact or consequence

The kind of impact an event is going to have on the minds of the people is also another characteristic of news. An event that causes or is capable of causing a great sequence of events affecting many persons is obviously newsworthy. Massive disasters, earthquake, floods, natural calamities, political debacles, economic turmoil, major accidents, crashes, inflation, hike of fuel prices, political party coming to or moving out of power, union budget, reservation or any shift in policy etc are all able to create greater impact on the lives of the common people. Similarly, consequence may measure disaster or progress. A fire that destroys a private dwelling is of small consequence in comparison to tsunami which killed thousands of lives in the coastal regions of India recently. When news about such incidents appear in the newspaper pages people become emotionally aroused and such incidents affects the lives of the people in more ways than one.

Progress

Information relating to a country's development and prosperity always makes news. Every society has problems and issues that need to be highlighted by the media. Such information is always newsworthy. Therefore, success stories of individual or the society, victories and progress- they all make news.

Disaster

Any kind of disaster makes news. Disasters like earthquakes, flood, fire, erosions, volcanic eruptions, cyclones, etc. make news as such occurrences affect the lives of the majority. When such incidents occur they take away human lives, damages property and break the ecological balance. Such incidents stir the emotions of the larger segments of the society.

Human Interest:

These are stories that arouse some emotions in the audience - stories that are ironic, bizarre, uplifting or dramatic. For example, when a person saves another's life risking his own, it becomes news worthy or when a person achieves something big despite being a handicap it makes news.

Novelty

Stories that are unique, something that is new or unusual make news. For instance, when a couple got married underwater, it created news. Similarly Guinness world record events make news.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.1: Define 'news'.

_____

_____

_____

Q.2: What do you mean by news values? Name some important news values.

_____

_____

_____

Q.3: Which of the following events have no news value for the media-

i) Indian Prime Minister visits China

_____

ii) Foreign tourists visit India

iii) Price of commodities increase in Assam

iv) India wins football match against Pakistan

v) Your elder sister gives birth to a child

vi) Aishwarya Rai gives birth to a child

vii) You go to watch a football match

viii) Boy dies in Juvenile home

ix) Prime Minister goes to watch cricket match

x) HSLC examination begins

1.4 TYPES OF NEWS

Having discussed about the characteristics of news let us now understand the different types of news found in news media. News is basically of two types-Hard News and Soft News.

1. **Hard News:** Hard news is a news item which states plain, simple facts as it has happened. It usually answers the basic questions of 5W's and 1H.
   - ✓ Who
   - ✓ What
   - ✓ When
   - ✓ Where
   - ✓ Why
   - ✓ How

   Normally, a standard technique is followed while writing hard news. In case of print media, the inverted pyramid style is followed, i.e., the most important information is placed towards the beginning of the story and the less important ones are placed thereafter. In the broadcast media, the less important information are simply left out. The hard news writing style is usually followed while writing news about important public events, government actions, international events, economic and social affairs, crime, science and technology, environment etc.

   If a fire breaks out in any part of Guwahati causing considerable damage to the property of the dwellers, including human lives, the information about this unprecedented devastation needs to be given immediately in the form of Who, what, when, where, why, how and how.

   Similarly when a bomb blast takes place, the news about it would be immediately flashed in the news media in the form of hard news stating straight facts like where it happened, casualty, action taken etc. .

   In today's parlance Hard news are also called spot news or breaking news, because the news organizations break out the news as soon as it happens, without delaying.

   2. **Soft News:** Soft news includes a wide variety of news items. **Features**, editorials, articles, etc fall under this category. Reactions and views are included in soft news apart from the plain facts. Stories that deal with human interest angles can rightly be termed as soft news. Soft news mostly emanates from the hard news. Normally the **follow up stories** of a major event, highlighting the angles not covered



Feature: A story with news value, but not hard core news. It gives new dimension to news, examines and dissects news giving opinions and comments



Follow up stories: A sequence of news events that follows after a news break. Also known as Folo.

in the hard news items, mostly the human interest angle are such type of news.

The idea of such news stories is to arouse curiosity among the readers or viewers and heighten emotional appeal by presenting it in an interesting manner. Therefore the conventional news writing formula is not applied while dealing with soft news stories. The writer has the liberty to be extremely innovative and create an item that would attract as many readers as possible and at the same time create an impact in the minds of the people.

Let us take the example of a plane crash, say, in India. The media would definitely cover the event with due emphasis on the number of deaths, time, place and a narration of how the crash may have taken place and, if possible, also highlighting the cause of the crash. All this information will be immediately covered in the form of hard news. However, as the days progress, a newer set of information may surface and reach the hands of a reporter working on the story. After investigating on the incident the reporter may find out there was a child of, say 3 years, who was travelling with his parents, and the child has survived the crash and could escape with minor injuries. Such news will be covered as Soft news.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.4: What is the difference between hard news and soft news? Answer in about 50 words.

_____

_____

Q.5: What are the other terms by which hard news is also known?

_____

_____

_____

Q.6: What are the 5Ws and H.

_____

_____

_____



ACTIVITY 1.2

1) Read todays newspaper and identify:
   i) Five hard news items.
   ii) Five soft news items.

1.5 SOURCES OF NEWS

Source in journalistic parlance means the contacts or the people from whom the reporter receives valuable information for news. It is impossible for a reporter to keep track of every activity or happening in and around him and also collect the information for reporting in the media. In such a situation the reporter has to rely on people outside the periphery of the media organization he/she is working for to retrieve information. These people supply information and facts about events to the reporter, which is otherwise impossible for the reporter to dig out. Normally the reporters have reliable people at different places like the government or other offices, hospitals, municipal body offices, state secretariats, assemblies, Deputy Commissioner's office, police headquarters, educational institutes and so on and so forth. The sources may range from politicians, government officials, Public Relations Officers, police personnel to even the peons or other junior employees of different organizations.

The sources can be of different types – primary or secondary, official or unofficial. When the news organisation's own set of reporters or correspondents collect the news from the sources or go to the spot and cover the event, then the news can be said to have come from primary sources. On the other hand, news coming in from news agencies can be said to be coming from secondary sources. Sometimes broadcast media use newspaper reports also as sources of information to supplement their

own information or the print media may supplement their information about an event with what has been shown in the broadcast media. In such cases the print media becomes a secondary source of information for the broadcast media and vice-versa.

When the media receives information directly from the organization in the form of official **briefing, press release, press note, press communiqué', handout** etc, then we say that the news has come from official sources. (You will learn about all these terms in detail in your course on Public Relations). On the other hand, if the news is received from the **grapevine**, and is not confirmed by any official source and the source cannot be disclosed then the source is said to be unofficial.



Grapevine:
The informal transmission of information, gossip, or rumor from person to person

Sources are not built in a day or two. It takes time to develop sources, bring them to your confidence and elicit correct response in the time of need. With experience and time these sources are built. And with time the network of sources also widens. It is said that a reporter is known by the volume of sources he keeps. Sources are considered to be the reporter's prized possessions. Therefore it becomes extremely important for the reporter to maintain a good vibe and rapport with the network of sources he or she has.

However, it is important to mention here that the reporter should be careful while building contacts. In the pursuit of developing a strong chain of sources the reporter should not forget that the sources should be reliable ones. They should be able to provide you authentic information. There should not be any malice or personal bias acting behind the sources willingness of the sources to share information with the reporter.

Another important aspect is that the sources are for keeps, not for destroying after he or she has given a piece of information to the reporter. So the reporter should be able to keep them in good faith and shoulder their responsibilities in the truest possible manner. This, in turn would take the reporter a long way in future.

How To Judge Source Credibility:

Previous Reliability: Past track record goes a long way to show if a source is reliable or not. If he has been a good source earlier, he has good chance

of being a reliable source now.

Confirmability: If the information which has been passed on by the source can be confirmed by other sources then the source can be said to be credible.

Proximity: The proximity of the source to the place of event determines the credibility of the source to a certain extent. The more proximate he is to the event, greater is his credibility as a source.

Motive: The credibility of a source can also be judged from his motive of passing on the information. A source may pass on wrong information in order to fulfill his own selfish motives. As such it is advisable to find out the motive.

Contextuality: The credibility of the source also depends on the contextuality of the information. If it fits into the context in which it has been said, then it is credible or else the credibility of the source is questionable.

Believability: Believability of the information also determines the credibility of the source. The information that the source passes on must be believable and as such must seem possible to happen.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.7: What is news source? Why is it important to have a good network of reliable sources?

_____

_____

Q.8: What are the criteria by which one can judge source credibility?

_____

_____

1.6 OBJECTIVITY AND AUTHENTICITY OF NEWS

Journalism is a profession of news and news is a serious business. Newsmen, therefore, are required to present facts as they happen without tampering or adding any personal views or opinions. News means factual presentation of information without being judgmental. Objectivity is of prime

importance in journalism. Objectivity in reporting and objectivity in news presentation is a virtue that every professional in this field should strive to achieve. One needs to remain cautious and well guarded against any kind of personal bias or opinions that might creep in while dealing with news.



Editorial:
The newspaper's opinion and comment on current news published every day along with the news.



Editorial Page:
Page which carries the editorial along with articles features and letters to the editor. Also known as Edit Page.

The reporter has to remain more objective while reporting. Because when an incident occurs, it is the reporter who is sent first to the field to collect information. He not only gathers first hand information at the field, but also interviews people who have probably witnessed the incident and investigates by going deeper into the event in the pursuit of unearthing any hidden facts. Therefore, it is expected that the reporter does not temper with facts and figures and also remains cautious against biased opinions of the interviewees. He or she should not, at any cost, let his/her personal opinion to be reflected in the report.

There are specific columns in the newspaper such as the **editorial page** where comments or views of writers find place. If the reporter wants to give any personal judgment on any event he or she can very well write an opinionated piece for the editorial page. The reporter should not inter-mix news and views while making his report. If the reporter deviates, ethically, from his objectivity, the image of the newspaper gets diluted. Therefore, the reporter should strive to attain complete objectivity in reporting.

However, it may not always be possible for the reporter to remain absolutely unbiased or objective. As a human being, the reporter is vulnerable to various kinds of emotional as well as professional hazards, and can easily fall victim to subjectivity. And more often than not the reporter's personal opinion or bias is reflected in the newspaper. On some such occasions, the reporter's authenticity and even the reputation of the entire newspaper might be at stake. Nevertheless, the reporter should, as much as possible, try to achieve objectivity in his work.

Sometimes it may happen that when the reporter is investigating a particular happening and requires views of other people who may have been witness to that particular incident, the other person may try to pass his own judgment. In such cases the reporter should always check and cross check information, probably verify it from other sources so that the readers receive

the truth and only the truth. Thus, objectivity is maintained at any cost. Being objective also helps in being authentic. Facts are supposed to be authentic information. If the reporter, or for that matter any person in the news business, strives to achieve maximum objectivity, then this, in turn, also helps in being authentic as far as information is concerned. Facts are sacred in journalism. So the journalist should not try to dilute it by mixing it with personal opinions.

In today's era of profit driven media domain, there is an increasing tendency of the media organizations to try and influence the presentation of facts or news. The owners of the media houses always look at profit while dealing with news. They do not want to sacrifice their sources of profit generators by writing against them, even if they have proper proof of their involvement in any kind of mischievous activities. The media organizations may also have a favored brigade of people in the society, whom they do not want to offend at any cost, crucifying the concept of objectivity. On the other hand, the news organizations may also attempt to nullify the image of the people who do dot come under their good book by writing maliciously against them. This kind of action on the part of the organizations sends a very bad message across to the people and in the long run there is every possibility of losing faith in the society.

Therefore, objectivity and authenticity are the virtues that every media organizations and also the professionals working in this field should try to achieve if they are looking for long time sustenance in the field.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.9: What is Objectivity in news?

_____

_____

Q.10: How can the authenticity of a news item be ascertained. In a media house, whose responsibility it is to ensure that the news which are carried are authentic?

_____

_____



1.7 LET US SUM UP

In this unit you have been introduced to the basic concepts of news. Let us quickly recapitulate these concepts once.

- News is a true account of events, happenings and incident. News is something which has an immediate value for the larger segment of the society.
- There are some basic qualities by which we can identify news. They include prominence, proximity, disaster, progress, impact, importance etc.
- There are two types of news, hard-news and soft-news. A news item which states plain, simple facts as it has happened is called hard news. Features, editorials, articles, etc fall under the category of soft news. Reactions and views are included in soft news apart from the plain facts. Human interest is an important concern in soft news.
- A news report should basically have six basic elements-who, what, when, why, where and how, popularly called 5 W's and 1 H.
- News sources can be primary or secondary, official or unofficial.



1.8 FURTHER READING

(1) Aggarwal, Vir Bala, Gupta, V.S. (2000) *Handbook of Journalism and Mass Communication*. New Delhi : Concept of Publishing Company.

(2) Kamath, M.V. (2006). *The Journalists Handbook*. New Delhi : Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd.

(3) Kamath, M.V. (2013). *Professional Journalism*. New Delhi : Vikas Publising House Pvt. Ltd.

1.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans. to Q.No. 1: News is information about an event that happens in the society, which affects the lives of the people or has the tendency to affect the lives of the people, directly or indirectly, or has immediate value for the people at large.

Ans. to Q.No. 2: News values are the qualities by the presence of which an event qualifies as news. They are the basic characteristics of any news item.

The news values are- timeliness, importance, conflict, relevance, proximity, prominence, impact or consequence, progress, disaster, human interest and novelty.

Ans. to Q.No. 3:

i) Yes
ii) No
iii) Yes
iv) Yes
v) No
vi) Yes
vii) No
viii) Yes
ix) No
x) Yes

Ans. to Q.No. 4: A news item which states plain, simple facts as it has happened. It usually answers the basic questions of 5W's and 1H. On the other hand, reactions and views are included in soft news apart from the plain facts. Features, editorials, articles, etc fall under the category of soft news. Human interest is an important concern in soft news.

Ans. to Q.No. 5: Spot news or breaking news.

Ans. to Q.No. 6: 5Ws- Who, What, Where, When, Why 1H- How.

Ans. to Q.No. 7: News source means the contacts or the sources from which a news reporter gets valuable information for news.

It is important for a reporter to have a good network of reliable sources because news can happen anywhere, but it is not possible for a reporter to be present at all places at all times. Moreover, it may not be possible for the reporter to have direct access to all places. So reporters usually build up some contacts in important places like govt. departments, secretariat, court, police stations, hospitals etc so that they can regularly get information about what is happening there.

Ans. to Q.No. 8: The different criteria by which one can judge source credibility are- previous reliability, confirmability, proximity, motive, contenterability and believility ability.

Ans. to Q.No. 9: In news, objectivity is presentation of news as it has happened without the addition of any colour or personal opinion to it, so that the audience is left to form their opinion and an opinion is not imposed on the audience.

Ans. to Q.No. 10: Authenticity of a news item can be ascertained in the following ways-

- Collecting first hand information instead of relying on rumours.
- Taking the information from reliable and credible source only.
- Checking and cross- checking the given information with other sources also.

In a media house, the entire news team is responsible for ensuring the authenticity of the news. It includes the reporter, the sub-editor, the editor and in case of radio and TV, the news producer and to a certain extent the news presenters also have to bear a part of the responsibility.



1.10 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

A. Short Questions :

Q.1. "What are the basic differences between hard and soft news?

Q.2. What are follow up stories? What do they highlight?

B. Long Questions :

Q.1. "When a dog bites a man it is not news, when a man bites a dog it is news" – discuss.

Q.2. What do you mean by the sources of news? Briefly discuss various sources of news.

Q.3. Explain the concept of news value.

Q.4. What is the importance of objectivity and authenticity in news?

*** ***** ***

UNIT - 2 : CONCEPT OF REPORTING

UNIT STRUCTURE

2.1 Learning Objectives

2.2 Introduction

2.3 Concept of Reporting

2.4 The News Reporter

2.4.1 Qualities

2.4.2 Responsibilities

2.5 Let us Sum up

2.6 Further Reading

2.7 Answers to Check Your Progress

2.8 Possible Questions

2.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to:

- define reporting
- describe the qualities of a good reporter.
- describe the responsibilities of a good reporter.

2.2 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit you have learnt about news and the basic concepts related to news. In this unit you will learn about news gathering and its presentation, i.e., news reporting.

As you already know, it is the reporter who reports. But reporting is not a very simple task. A reporter needs to be well versed in the concept and process of reporting and should possess certain qualities to be able to fulfill the task with ease and efficiency. It is also important for a good reporter to be aware of his responsibilities. So in this unit, you will be introduced to the

concept of reporting and the qualities and responsibilities of a good reporter. I hope that after going through this unit you will not only know what reporting is all about, but also be able to judge for yourself whether you have the qualities necessary to become a good reporter and be encouraged to inculcate those qualities in you.

2.3 CONCEPT OF REPORTING

Reporting is the journalist's word for research, for the collection of data, for the gathering of facts. In every news organization, there are reporters whose task is to go to the field and collect information. When an incident occurs in a place, the reporter is sent to gather facts relating to that incident. He then comes back to the office and finally makes a report or news story by compiling the gathered information.

The reporter, while on field, collects information that he or she finds on the spot, interviews the people who probably have seen the event that happened and if the need be, goes deeper to find out more information so that an interesting news report can be produced. Therefore, in other words, reporting may also mean an act of research. The way a researcher does extensive study on any given topic and finally comes to a conclusion, the reporter, too, has to make an exhaustive study of the event before coming to a conclusion in the form of news. But what is important to remember is that this research has to be manifold. Until the facts are rigged out and all the points are established the reporter must carry out his or her investigation before arriving at a finality.

WHERE REPORTERS WORK

Reporters can be employed in a number of different organizations. The important amongst them are:

1. Newspapers: Newspapers employ reporters to gather news for their own use and deliver the news directly to the readers.
2. Wire Services/ News agencies/ News Bureaus: Wire services or news agencies like the Associated Press, Reuters, UNI, PTI etc.

also employ reporters. These reporters gather news on behalf of the agency which distributes it to media houses that subscribe to its services.

3. Broadcasters: Broadcasters like TV and radio networks employ reporters for gathering news for distribution to network affiliates. Local radio and TV stations also employ their own news reporters for covering different news events.
4. Supplemental News services: Some newspapers have supplemental news services which apart from gathering news for their parent organization, also gather news for distribution to other newspapers. For example The New York Times News Service, Washington Post News Service etc. This concept is relatively new to India.
5. Magazines and periodicals: News magazines and periodicals also employ a large number of reporters.
6. Public Relation Firms and Corporate Communication wings of different agencies: This is another field which requires a huge news-gathering and news distribution network. Business, industry, Government, social service agencies, associations, special interest groups and educational institutions employ reporters for gathering news and writing stories about their own activities for distribution to newspapers.



Scoop : a news story, particularly a new or developing story with aspects of importance and excitement, and certainly an exclusive for the newspaper involved. Remember that all scoops are exclusive but all exclusives are not necessarily scoops. Exclusives are more concerned about immediacy and the term is used for managing to get a special fact about some ongoing issue. Scoops on the other hand, can be out of nowhere, like sudden interesting discoveries.

Exclusive news:

Exclusive news is the news published in only one newspaper or broadcast by only one radio or television channel, which the other newspapers or other channels are yet to pick up. Exclusive news is the credibility of the newsmen as well as the media organizations. If a newspaper is able get a **scoop** or exclusive news, which other news organizations have failed to manage, then the credibility of the newspaper increases. It also enhances the credibility of the reporter in the organization itself, who has netted the scoop in the air before it could nestle in the hands of other reporters working for other media organizations.

Exclusive news is really an added feather in the hat of the reporter. In contemporary situation, when every media organization is vying for achieving niche in the market, the concept of exclusivity earns more prominence. Because, it is only through publishing or broadcasting more and more exclusive news that the news organizations can enhance their image. And in the process it ensures their place in the market. Otherwise, it becomes difficult for the news organizations to survive in the rat race, where there are too many competitors levering for success and making a name of its own.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.1: Define the terms:

a. Reporter

b. Reporting

c. Exclusive News



ACTIVITY 2.1

1. Meet a staff reporter of a local newspaper and find out (about his job profile) from him what does the job of a reporter involve?
2. Set up an appointment with a newspaper reporter and accompany him for a day as he goes about carrying out his assignments. Observe his activities and make a note of it at the end of the day.

2.4 THE NEWS REPORTER

Reporters are the first infantry men, who go to the field to gather information in order to compile news. They are the foot soldiers of the news world. They are the representatives of newspapers, news magazines, wire services, radio and television stations and the networks. They are the primary news source for the media organizations. They go out to the world and

bring back the news of the day. They are the eyes and ears of the media organizations. They have to remain alert and keep their eyes and ears open to spot any development taking place in the society. Therefore, in addition to what we have discussed above, there are other qualities expected of reporters so that they can serve the organization they are working for better and also the society of which they are a part.

2.4.1 Qualities

News sense :

The first and foremost requirement of a reporter is news sense. He or she should be able to distinguish between news and non news. The quality of news sense should prevail all the time, both when he is on the field hunting for information and also when he is preparing the news while in office. He should be able to churn out public interests from publicity stunts. For instance on many occasions the business entities call for press conferences to ensure their visibility in the media and to promote their sale. But they often do so in the guise of indulging in a social cause so that their image is projected positively before the people while at the same time their sale is boosted. Therefore, ultimately it turns out to be a publicity stunt rather than a case of larger public interest and a clever reporter can easily find it out. He can distinguish a news from a non-news if he possesses the required news sense.

Clarity of expression :

Clarity of expression comes with clarity of mind. If the reporter is himself confused, there is every possibility that he may confuse others. Therefore, the reporter should be clear about what he has in his hands in terms of facts. The golden rule is that 'whenever in doubt just leave it out'.

Having clarified the facts and figures collected from the field the reporter should be capable of bringing out a clear copy, without leaving any doubts in the minds of the readers. Adhering to a logical sequence

is very important while dealing with copies. The reporter may have bundles of ideas woven in his mind, but giving a clear expression to those ideas are also equally important so that meanings may be perceived by the readers in the best comprehensible manner.

Objectivity :

We have already discussed the importance of being objective. Objectivity counts in the profession of journalism. It is the duty of the reporter to present the truth for the people. This holds true equally for the news organizations, whose responsibility lies in digging out the truth for the society. But if the reporter becomes biased and does malicious reporting by diluting it with personal views and partial comments then the entire mission of journalism as a profession becomes a failure.

Accuracy :

Being accurate in terms of facts is of utmost importance in the profession of journalism. Tampering with facts is considered to be a moral crime in this profession. People have every right to know the truth and it is the duty of the reporter to bring it out for them, the way it exists. Therefore, the reporter should be careful while dealing with facts and figures. So truthfulness and moral integrity are necessary if one wants to become a journalist in the truest spirit of the term. Sometime, the reporter may unconsciously make silly errors while writing the copy although he may have collected correct information from the field. This could mislead the public. Therefore, he should be extremely cautious about what he is writing and double check for errors so that accurate information can be imparted to the people.

Alertness:

The reporter has to remain alert presumably in all situations. It helps to catch the scoop before it reaches the fin of another reporter. It also helps to keep abreast with all the happenings that are taking place in the jurisdiction of the **beat** one is working in.



Beat :

A particular area of news assigned to a reporter, for example, the culture beat or the courtroom beat.



Deadline :
The stipulated time during which the assigned work should be finished at all accounts by the professionals.

Speed :

The journalists always have to work under tremendous pressure. On the one hand there is a pressure of meeting the **deadline** of submitting the copy and on the other hand there is the pressure of being completely objective, unbiased and accurate. The pressure also mounts when the reporter has to submit many stories within the deadline. Being lazy will definitely hamper his effective delivering of the assigned jobs. Therefore, the reporter should be able to work fast under any kind of situation.

Calmness :

This is also another quality that helps the reporter to serve better in any kind of situations. The reporter should be able withstand the mounting pressure of long and erratic work schedules and maintain his cool even amidst trying conditions. He or she should be able to handle any kind of professional hazards and maintain composure.

Curiosity :

Journalism is a profession where one deals with new happenings and developments all the time. Unless one has the lust for information he/she can not dig out good stories. A curious mind enables one to unearth facts on the basis of which he may produce authentic reports. Remember that news stories are not made in the air and they need an ever curious reporter to bring them before the readers. Only a curious mind can grasp good stories, supplement it with proper investigation and make interesting reports.

Punctuality :

Reaching on time or, in fact, before time is very important in this profession. When news breaks out, the reporter should be able to reach the spot instantly. This enables him to catch the event better, without missing out on relevant facts. Punctuality also helps in building a faithful bondage with the sources. Sources are to be groomed with great care. If the reporter fails the sources by reaching late on a number of occasions, the chances are that the reporter will have to lose the trust vested upon him by his source and in the

process also dilute his credibility. Reaching the office on time and submitting copies on time may help the reporter earn a good image among the fellow employees in the office as well.

Patience :

As mentioned earlier the reporter has to work at odd hours and under odd working environment and most of the time under loads of pressure. Therefore, keeping cool, and not losing patience would definitely help him to discharge his duties and responsibilities in the best professional manner.

Imagination :

A reporter is a real story teller and he should have the skill to narrate the story for the readers in the most interesting manner. For this he has to be extremely creative and imaginative. Imagination helps in proper creation. As a journalist you will have to design your story in a clever manner so that the reader's curiosity and attention remain intact till the last breath of the story.

Farsightedness :

A reporter with farsightedness can envisage the future. It helps the reporters to identify the processes and people that will be important in future. It is one quality that helps in determining the importance of an event and enables him to think ahead of time and prepare accordingly.

Self-discipline :

Imposing self discipline while at work helps the reporter in many ways. It enhances his rapport in the office, on the field and also among his sources.

Integrity :

It implies strong sense of honesty and strict adherence to a stern code of ethics. Since the reporters are more exposed to unethical practices and temptations in the field as compared to other professionals, therefore, this quality helps the reporter to do away with all the immoral influences prevailing in the field.

Fearlessness and frankness :

The professions of journalism demands fearless and frank reporters, who are willing to go anywhere, face anybody and ask any kind of questions (even unpleasant ones) to get the information right and expose wrong do ers in front of the people with proper grit and frankness.

Tactfulness :

The reporters should be capable of handling any kind of situation skillfully and deal with all kinds of people. A reporter should have flexible and sociable personality and should have a nature that relishes a variety of experiences. He should have an understanding of human behavior and emotions. This will help him/her in developing contacts that are so essential for news gathering.



Breaking News/ Flash News: Unexpected, unplanned occurrences, a train accident for instance. A story that has to be covered urgently, quickly and without any advance preparation.

Mobility and outgoing nature:

The mobility should come with ease for a reporter as it is the job of a reporter to move around in search of news. The lust for news may require him/her to move along the gruesome terrains, climb the steepest mountains, journey past the deepest jungles, plunge into the ocean, walk along the hottest desert, or for that matter go to any corner above the ground. Therefore, the reporter should love to travel or love to move around. This will really help him to go anywhere to spot news, especially **breaking news or news flash**.

Diligence :

The reporters have to be diligent workers. Their jobs require painstaking exertion of effort, alertness and dedication. They should seek perfection, love their jobs and work hard to deliver spotless pieces of work.



News Bulletin : A brief update or summary of current news, as on television or radio or in a newspaper.

Team spirit :

A newspaper is a product of contribution of many people. The same goes for a television or radio **news bulletin.** Therefore, the reporter should have the zeal to work in a team. As a member of the team he/she should know in clear terms, the role and responsibilities vested upon him and deliver them in the best way possible. All his actions

should be oriented towards strengthening the output of the team, in the process ensuring individual as well as collective growth of the entire organization.

Well read :

A reporter must have adequate knowledge about the surroundings and the society he lives in. Especially in contemporary scenario one has to be better read or well informed about the surroundings in order to tap the changing attitudes of the society and changing media situation. He/she should be aware of the past, present and also should be able to predict upcoming social trends.

Command over the language :

To be a good reporter one needs to have a good grasp over the language. In fact, this is the most essential requirement for everybody working in the field of journalism, not only the reporters. Because journalism is the profession in which control over the 'pen' counts the most, no matter whether you are working in print or electronic media and in whichever language media you are working. Needless to mention that since the reporters are all the time writing news stories, they should have commendable hold over language in order to create worthy copies.

2.4.2 Responsibilities

As a member of the press, certain responsibilities are vested on the shoulders of the reporter. And the reporters are expected to carry them out in the finest manner. Now, let us discuss about the responsibilities that lie on the reporters.

In all respect a reporter has three types of responsibilities.

1. Responsibilities towards the organization
2. Responsibilities towards the source and
3. Responsibilities towards the society

Responsibility towards the organization :

Like any other organizations media houses are also bound by policies,

rules and regulations. All the members of the organization, including the reporters, are supposed to follow the organizational dictum. As an employee of the organization the reporter has the mammoth responsibility to reflect the organizational behavior through his dedication towards work and loyalty towards the organization.

Responsibility towards the sources :

A reporter's responsibility towards his source lies in keeping them in good faith, maintaining a cordial relationship and shouldering their responsibilities when asked for. It may not always be an easy task, since the reporter has to maintain a huge network of sources. However, the reporter has to do his best to keep their trust. Once the source loses faith on the reporter, he/she will never come again to help in future. Therefore, utmost care is to be taken while dealing with sources.

Responsibility towards the society :

In this field of journalism one works for the larger interest of the society. And as a member of the media, a reporter should pay utmost importance to serve the society better in the true sense of the term. It is his duty to maintain the trust and credibility imposed upon him by the readers. Therefore, as a reporter, one should always attempt to reflect his sense of responsibility towards his readers and the society through his credible and authentic work. As a reporter your responsibility towards the society lies in being accurate, unbiased and factual. Apart from that, the reporter should also try to create awareness by coming up with good stories on development issues.



LET US KNOW

There are different types of reporters:

1. Beat Reporter : assigned to cover a particular beat or place such as police station, court, hospital, secretariat, stock market etc.
2. General Assignment Reporter – waits in the newspaper office

for news breaks like speeches, interviews with visiting celebrities, a development relayed by a beat reporter etc. and reports as and when assigned.

3. Special Assignment reporters : given a specific assignment to conduct an investigation or develop a series of articles.
4. Rewrite Reporter : duties include taking notes from another reporter over phone and writing the story or rewriting another reporter's poorly written story etc.



LET US KNOW

The terms **'reporter'** and **'correspondent'** are often used interchangeably. However, there is a difference between the two terms. Reporters of staff reporters are regular employees who locally cover news and write the news for a publication or a broadcast outlet. Correspondents on the other hand are regular employees of a publication or any agency who are stationed in different locations of the state or the country or eve the world for gathering news and they deliver the copy of the editor by wire, fax or e-mail.

A **stringer** is someone who reports or writes for a newspaper on an assignment basis, i.e. paid for what is published rather than as a full time salaried member. The term 'stringer' comes from the old time custom of measuring a correspondent's total inches or stories with a string a certain length to determine the pay.

Another related tem is **liner**. The liner lives in a small town and is not a full time journalist. While his main profession is sometimes else, he also sends reports to a newspaper which pays him on the basis of the number of lines of the news item published in the newspaper.

Then there are the **freelancers** who, like stringers and liners, are also part time journalists who are paid on assignments basis, but they have the freedom to supply the news reporter to more than one

newspaper. Stringers and liners, on the other hand, have to maintain their loyalty to a single client alone.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.1: Enlist the qualities required for becoming a good reporter?

_____

_____

_____

Q.2: What do you mean by news sense?

_____

_____

_____

Q.3: What are the three basic responsibilities of a reporter?

_____

_____

_____



ACTIVITY – 2.2

1. Read through the list of qualities of a good reporter. As you read, stop after each point to analyze which qualities you have in yourself and which you will have to cultivate. Make a note of your analysis.



2.5 LET US SUM UP

In this unit you have been introduced to the concept of news reporting. Let us go over to what we have learnt in this unit once again:

- News is collected from the field by the newsmen, who are called **reporters** and the process is called **reporting**. Reporters are skilled people who move around the field and gather information.

- There are certain qualities required to become a reporter. News sense, objectivity, discipline, swiftness, command over the language, patience, diligence, punctuality, integrity, mobility, tactfulness, creativity, etc. are a few of the qualities that the reporter should posses.
- Another important thing a reporter should have is a sense of responsibility towards the organization he/she is working for, towards the society he/she belongs to or serving for and towards the sources he/she builds in due course of time, who share valuable information with him/her.



2.6 FURTHER READING

(1) Aggarwal, Vir Bala, Gupta, V.S. (2002). *Handbook of Journalism and Mass Communication*. New Delhi : Concept Publishing Company.

(2) Aggarwal, Vir Bala (2006). *Essentials of Practical Journalism*. New Delhi : Concept Publishing Company.

(3) Kamath, M.V. (2006). *The Journalists' Handbook*. New Delhi : Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd.



2.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans. to Q.No. 1 :

a. A reporter is a person who gathers information from different fields and writes reports for publication in a newspaper, magazine, etc.

b. Reporting simply means to report. Reporting is the journalistic term for research in which the reporter has to deal with an event, investigate on it and find out the relevant information surrounding that particular event.

c. Exclusive news is the news published in only one newspaper or broadcast by only one radio or television channel, which the other newspapers or other channels in the race have failed to catch.

Ans. to Q.No. 2 : The qualities required for becoming a good news reporter are — News sense, objectivity, discipline, swiftness, command over the language, patience, diligence, punctuality, integrity, mobility, tactfulness, creativity, etc.

Ans. to Q.No. 3 : News Sense is the basic quality of a reporter by virtue of which a journalist can identify an event having news value and differentiate between news items and non-news items.

Ans. to Q.No. 4 : The three basic responsibilities of a reporter are towards his

a. Organisation b. Society c. Sources.



2.8 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

A. Short Questions :

Q.1. What are the different places where reporters can be employed?

Q.2. What is the difference between the terms reporter, correspondent and stringer?

Q.3. Is it correct to use the terms reporter and correspondent interchangeably? Why?

B. Long Questions :

Q.1. What do you mean by reporting? What is its significance for a media organization?

Q.2. 'The news reporter has to inculcate a number of qualities in order to qualify as a good reporter.' Justify.

Q.3. What are the qualities of a good news reporter?

Q.4. The job of a news reporter brings along with it a host of responsibilities. Explain.

*** ***** ***

UNIT - 3 : TYPES OF REPORTING

UNIT STRUCTURE

3.1 Learning Objectives

3.2 Introduction

3.3 Types of Reporting

- 3.3.1 Objective
- 3.3.2 Interpretative
- 3.3.3 Investigative

3.4 Beat Reporting

3.5 Some Important Beats

3.6 Let Us Sum Up

3.7 Further Readings

3.8 Answers To Check Your Progress

3.9 Possible Questions

3.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to:

- explain the different types of reporting.
- define Beat reporting
- name the important beats

3.2 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, you have been introduced to the concept of reporting and the qualities, duties and responsibilities of a reporter. In this unit we shall go a little deeper into another dimension of reporting, i.e., the different types of reporting.

Whether it is a newspaper or news agency, no media house can do away with reporters. And it is one activity where, even in this highly

mechanized age of news production, human beings cannot be replaced by machines. Therefore, it is very important for aspiring journalists like you to understand this field very well. Reporting is basically of three types – **objective, interpretative and investigative**. Apart from that there is another concept called **beat reporting**. You will be familiarized with all of these concepts in this unit.

This unit will be your first step towards practical journalism and will help you understand the reporting field in detail. So, let us first start with the different types of reporting.

3.3 TYPES OF REPORTING

3.3.1 Objective Reporting

Objective reporting refers to the plain presentation of facts as they have happened. Objective reporting does not involve contextualizing, backgrounding, analyzing or opinionating. Here the reporter only reports what he has seen or observed without any kind of subjective inputs.

The following points can well summarize the concept of objective reporting:

- Balance and even handedness in presenting different sides of an issue
- Accuracy and realism in reporting
- Presenting all main relevant points
- Separating facts from opinions, but treating opinion as relevant
- Minimizing the influence of the writer's own opinions, attitudes or involvement.
- Avoiding slant, malicious or devious purposes.

Here is an example of a typical objective report: This report was published in *The Assam Tribune*, April 8, 2008.

AAU scientists probing mushroom deaths

By a City Reporter

GUWAHATI, April 7 : The team of scientists from the Assam Agricultural University probing into the poisonous mushroom case in Golaghat and other districts found that the mushroom consumed by the affected people was of a very poisonous variety named Amanita Phalloides Vaill.

The State Minister for Agriculture, Pramila Rani Brahma instructed the Vice Chancellor of the Assam Agriculture University SS Baghel a few days back to conduct an enquiry into the Golaghat incident, where seven people died eating poisonous mushroom obtained from the Jungles of Bahupathar.

While questioning the people of the village and examining the quality of mushroom consumed by them, the team of experts comprising scientists and officials of the State Agriculture Department and the Health Department found that this poisonous variety, flourished after the season's first showers, was the cause of the deaths.

3.3.2 Interpretative Reporting

Interpretative reporting combines facts with interpretation. Many a time the reporter has to interpret certain events for better understanding of the readers. It means providing background information relating to a particular incident or happening. Apart from the facts gathered from the field, the reporter, sometimes, needs to make the news more illuminating by providing background information so that the readers can perceive it better and understand the meaning of it. As such, the reporter delves into reasons and meanings of a certain development and gives information along with an interpretation of its significance.

The entire event may not unfold in a day. It is a continuous process and often one event leads to another. In order to understand the occurrence of an event we need to understand the previous, or the course of events that led to the latest one. And it is the reporter, who interprets the event by telling the readers about the past history or the course of action that led to the happening of the event. This adds more insights into events and the reporter has to keep a track of all

the events of the past, present and also at times should be able to forecast the future. Thus, interpretative reporting brings out the hidden significance of an event and separates truth from falsehood.

Let us go through an example to clarify this point. This report was published in the news portal ibnlive.com on June 27, 2008.

Cong-SP look for mutual benefits, set for alliance

Sumit Pande/ CNN-IBN

New Delhi: In what is rapidly developing as one of the biggest political crisis for the Congress-led UPA Government, there has been no breakthrough in the negotiations over the Indo-US Nuclear deal.

The Left parties have rejected last ditch attempts by the UPA to allow the deal to go through and a break up seems inevitable.

Preparing for it's separation plan with the Left, the Congress-led UPA Government is now on the lookout for new allies. And there are enough indications that the Congress' former adversary, Mulayam Singh Yadav is slowly drifting towards the UPA.

He is a product of the famous JP Movement against the imposition of Emergency. Thirty years after the Emergency, Samajwadi Party President Mulayam Singh Yadav was seen sharing a platform with others who had struggled against Emergency. He shared his experiences with the crowd, but conspicuously missing in his speech were the names of then prime minister, Indira Gandhi and the Congress party.

Unlike the other United National Progressive Alliance (UNPA) partners - like the Telegu Desam Party and the Asom Gana Parishad - the Samajwadi Party has not committed itself to the nuclear deal. Mulayam Singh is keeping his cards close to his chest and thereby keeping the Government on tenterhooks.

"The final draft is not yet ready. Let the Congress complete the draft. The UNPA will meet on July 3 to take a final decision on whether we will be supporting the nuclear deal or not. Whatever decision will be taken, it will be taken keeping UNPA in mind not just Samajwadi Party," Mulayam Singh said.

Cornered by Mayawati in Uttar Pradesh, Mulayam Singh needs allies to take on the BSP in UP in the next general elections and for him, Congress, with Ajit Singh's RLD, could form a formidable combination againt Mayawati.

In return, the Congress could get support from the 39 SP Lok Sabha MPs to save the Government and the nuclear deal. The Samajwadi Party's 39 MPs could bail the Government out in Parliament in case the Left withdraws support.

UPA leader, Ram Vilas Paswan says that they would like to keep the Samajwadi as an option because in his words: "We don't want to lose wickets, but at the same time we want to score runs."

Meanwhile, Samajwadi Party General Secretary, Amar Singh, is returning from his trip to the US on Sunday. Next week, after the UNPA meet, Mulayam Singh is likely to announce his decision on the issue, perhaps, just before the Prime Minister's departure for the proposed G8 summit.

3.3.3 Investigative Reporting

When a news reporter has to dig deeply beyond what is stated in the hard news in order to find out the exact facts of an event, or, in short, investigates beyond what meets the naked eye, then it is called investigative reporting. Investigative reporting means investigating on any happening. Investigative journalism is in-depth and involves long-term research and reporting. It reveals information not known to the public and which others want to keep secret. Mostly investigation is done in case of major happening or when larger public concern is involved or in matters that involve public figures or celebrities. In any kind of reporting, the reporter does some sort of investigation to dig out information which otherwise is not available. Without preliminary investigation the reporter cannot make a sound copy or report. However, in case of some stories, especially relating to certain scams or misappropriation of public money, the reporter has to investigate

properly to get the relevant information in order to come out with a good copy. Also, in such cases, information is difficult to come by and the reporter has to invest both time and energy to dig out facts.

Renowned American journalist Robert Parry says, "Investigative reporting is to journalism what theoretical research is to science, having the potential to present new realities and shatter old paradigms – how people see and understand the world around them – which, in turn, can transform politics."

True enough, the significance of investigative journalism in today's world is great. The unearthing of a dramatic set of new facts can overcome long-maintained lies, can expose deceptive leaders and shake a corrupt government to its foundation. Done right, investigative journalism is a huge threat to powerful elites trying to manipulate a population. Modern journalism, despite its many anomalies, is considered the most effective monitor and upholder of democratic values. And investigative reporting is certainly the most powerful instrument to fulfill this obligation. Investigative reporting believes in the watchdog role of the media and focuses on the accountability of institutions and individuals wielding power.

The seeds of investigative journalism in India were sown by Arun Shourie, after he was appointed as the executive editor of *The Indian Express* in 1979. He was well known to have introduced a new style of aggressive, independent investigative journalism in our country. In a series of remarkable exposes, Shourie and the Indian Express uncovered corruption in the highest echelons of the government and exposed several major scandals.

This kind of reporting is now-a-days seen more frequently in the audio-visual medium than in the print medium, particularly in the form of **sting operations** carried out by under cover reporters.

One, however, has to exercise great caution while engaging in investigative journalism. One of the most important requirements of this type of journalism is that the effort has to be determined, patient,



Sting Operation: Originally a legal term meaning a deceptive operation designed to catch a person committing a crime. A typical sting will have a law-enforcement officer or cooperative member of the public to play a role as criminal partner or potential victim and go along with a suspect's actions to gather evidence of the suspect's wrongdoing. Now a days it is a device commonly used by journalists to gather evidence to support investigative stories.

careful and fair. It is also important for investigative reporters to maintain a high level of ethical conduct. Or else investigative journalism can do more harm than good. They should seek the truth and report it as fully as possible. Investigation should be done with the intent to catalyse reforms and never with malicious intent. If it is done only to create sensation or get hold of a scoop or simply to defame anyone, then it can greatly endanger journalistic credibility.

As well-known free lance journalist and media educationist Arun Sadhu puts it, "For investigative reporting to flourish, what is required is: an independent and pluralistic media which is fearless, committed to democracy, universal human values; journalists with commitment who can identify problems and have the grit, perseverance, patience and skills to do research, and owners and editors professionally non-partisan and without vested interests."

It also involves a great deal of risk as one may have to face dangerous situations, and go to dangerous places in order to get to the heart of the story – terrorist camps, brothels, war scenes, jungles and at times even engage in illegal activities and suffer the consequences.

All of you must be aware about American journalist Daniel Pearl who was kidnapped and later murderer by terrorists when he was in Pakistan investigating the case of **Richard Reid**, the shoe bomber, and alleged links between Al Qaeda and Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) in January 2002. He was on his way to interview a radical Islamic leader Mubarak Ali Shah Gilani when he was kidnapped.



Richard Reid:
Al-Qaeda member convicted on charges of terrorism and currently serving a life sentence in the United States for attempting to destroy a commercial aircraft in-flight by detonating plastic explosives contained in his shoes.

The reporter may have to take recourse to deception, hidden camera and **entrapment** also to uncover facts. Here, mention may be made of the portal tehelka dot com which ushered in a new era of investigative journalism in India by the use of sting operations for the first time in 2000. It broke new grounds when by meticulous probing, the portal uncovered the corruption in cricket and India's defence establishment. The use of secret cameras to record illegal deals and the exposure brought down the reputation of even those who played as captain for the country. Though it brought down the celebrities from their pedestals



Entrapment:
the illegal act of tricking someone into committing a crime so that they can be arrested for it

and, in the process, dismayed millions of cricket lovers, it showed the extent of rot in the sport.

When Tehelka exposed the level of corruption in the defence establishment, talking to politicians, army officers and some fixers of arms deals, it shocked the public. The visuals of party leaders, and senior army officers eager to take bribes from a fictitious company, whose antecedents were not even verified created a storm in Parliament. An inquiry commission was set up to probe the charges levelled by the portal, which was asked to submit all the evidence it had to the retired judge heading the commission.

Another such instance is the 'Operation Duryodhan', a sting operation lasting nine months carried out by the news channel AAJ-TAK and investigative portal Cobrapost in 2005. It captured on camera eleven members of Parliament of India accepting money to table questions on the floor of the Parliament. This was the first such sting operation in the history of Republic of India, and all the members were expelled from the parliament. Ten of them belonged to 14th Lok Sabha while one was from Rajya Sabha.

Another important sting operation which deserves mention is Aaj Tak's expose of bribe-taking by several personnel of Tihar Jail in 2005. The Aaj Tak expose revealed how in violation of the Jail Manual, unauthorised persons could easily gain admission into the high-security prison; information could be obtained about the inmates and money and other goods could be passed on to them. It just showed "how easy it was for inmates to obtain various favours and what makes the stay in Tihar Jail one of the most comfortable prison experiences anywhere in the world".

Consequent to the expose, two Deputy Superintendents, four Assistant Superintendents, three Head Warders and four Warders of Tihar Jail were suspended and the entire jail went through a massive security overhaul.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.1: What are the three different types of reporting?

_____

_____

_____

Q.2: Define the following:

a. Objective Reporting

b. Interpretative Reporting

c. Investigative Reporting

_____

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_____



ACTIVITY 3.1

1. Read today's newspaper and identify the objective reports on the front page. Note down the topic of each of them.
2. Similarly identify all the interpretative reports published in the newspaper and note down the topics. Now try to rewrite each of them as objective news reports stating only bare facts.
3. Go over the newspaper for an entire week and find out the investigative reports. How many did you find?

3.4 BEAT REPORTING

One very common word you might hear in the news room is 'beat'. As a reporter many people will ask you which 'beat' you cover. Reporters always have to work in beats. Beats are the specialized areas of operation for the reporters assigned by the organization in which the reporter works.

Since it is not humanly and physically possible for a single reporter to cover multiple areas, each reporter may be assigned a single or couple of beats. And the reporter is expected to cover all the developments or happenings taking place under the jurisdiction of his beat. The reporter cannot afford to miss any significant or insignificant event falling under his assigned beat/ beats. If the reporter working in a particular organization by chance fails to spot a significant event falling under his/her purview, which the other reporters working for other news organizations have managed to cover, it amounts to the loss of credibility, not only for the reporter, but also for the newspaper or news channel as a whole.

The classification into beats is compulsory for every news organization. In every newspaper there is a variety of news items that are published in a day. One may find news related to economics, health and hygiene, education, environment, art-culture-literature, trade and commerce, women and child, sports, science and technology, crime, social issues etc. Moreover, newspapers also have specialized columns and supplements on special issues and subjects. For all these the services of the reporters are essential to fill up both the regular and special columns. Reporters are placed at the city or place from where the publication is carried out or correspondents are located at various places in order to report events taking place at centers other than the one where the newspaper is published.

Moreover, in many other large organizations further classifications are made, depending upon the requirements like local, regional, national and international news. The reporters are supposed to operate in selected areas assigned by the senior person, usually by the chief of bureau or any senior person like the editor or news editor. A single reporter may be given to handle more than one beat and on many occasions an important beat may be shared by many. This varies from organization to organization. Therefore the task of the reporter is enormous and very crucial for the organization.



LET US KNOW

Here are some important tips for a beat reporter:

1. Learn how things work in your own beat.
2. Cultivate sources. Never betray their confidence.
3. Keep abreast of all recent developments in your beat.
4. Be persistent. Push your sources for more information.
5. Anticipate developments.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.3: What is a beat?

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_____

_____

Q.4: What is the reason behind assigning different beats to different reporters?

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_____



ACTIVITY 3.1

1. Visit a local newspaper office and meet a senior journalist. Find out from him what kind of beat division is followed by his newspaper. Also find out the criteria based on which the beats are assigned to the individual reporters.

3.5 SOME IMPORTANT BEATS

Crime/ Police :

Crime is a usual phenomenon that takes place in every society. And the newspapers or the news channels are supposed to report about any kind of crime taking place in the society.

When working under this beat the reporter should keep good contacts with police stations, police officers and also with the crime branches of the different investigating agencies, both Government and non-governmental organizations, operating in the society. The crime reporter should also have good contacts in the state and district level courts where the legal course of action takes place against the different types of crimes.

Legal/ Court :

The court beat is a major beat for any newspaper as it is the source of a great number of stories. The court beat is allied to the crime/police beat since criminal cases are tried in the courts. But court reporting is not about crime alone. Many civil or non-criminal cases are also tried in the courts. A reporter who is assigned the court beat has to cover all cases whether civil or criminal and has to look after both the lower court and the higher court.

A court reporter needs to have a good understanding of the judicial system and should know the hierarchy of the courts. Developing a good network of sources in the court and among the police is very essential for a court reporter. He has to be fully aware of all important ongoing cases and keep a file of arrests. He has to understand what goes on in the **grapevine** but should have the ability to differentiate between official records and grapevine rumours.

Another important thing a court reporter needs to keep in mind is that he has to remain within the rules and regulations of the legal system and learn

to respect the sanctity of the court. He has to be careful not to commit **contempt of court** and thus avoid punishment.

Culture/ Entertainment :

Culture is a part of every society and without a distinct and individual culture a society can not exist. And media, being a part of a society, has to give due importance to the cultural aspect of the society that it belongs to. Media has to highlight the courses of culture, its process, its developments and many other issues related to it so that people remain abreast and understand their own culture. And now with the emergence of what we call the 'global village', the importance of cultural reporting has increased manifold. People want to know not just about their own culture, but also about foreign cultures. People are also hugely influenced by foreign cultures and often sprinkle their own lives with elements from other cultures. The entire world has changed today as a result of intermingling of cultures and the mass media can be attributed with a major part of the credit for this.

Today the media devotes considerable space to covering this area. Hence, it has become a very important beat for every media entity. Now a days the newspapers also publish separate pages and also supplements devoting to many areas of culture like songs, drama, cinema, folk songs, dance, folklore, language, behaviour, food habits, life styles, fashion, ethnic materials, norms, ethics, values and so on and so forth.

Normally, anybody who has interest, good contacts in the field of culture and has good understanding of his or her own cultural way of life, is assigned with this beat.

Political:

This is also another important beat for every newspaper and electronic news bulletin. Especially considering the Indian media scenario, all the Indian media are obsessed with political news. Most of their newspaper pages and bulletin time is occupied by political news. Political activities and political discourses do hold coveted positions in every society and hence even the media across the world do give emphasis on covering political matters with serious intent.

So much so that there has been a tendency to undermine all other important matters confronting the society.

However, political beat in this situation, becomes one of the most important beats for every media house. Therefore, usually a senior reporter is assigned this task of covering this beat. The person who handles this beat, must be a senior man, having long years of experience of working in the field of media and who understands the political situations and happenings well. He should have better grasp and reflexes over political matters and course of action. He also should have good contacts in the political field, in State Legislative Assemblies, Parliament etc.

Business:

Now-a-days, business plays a crucial role in every society. There has been a surge in activities everywhere around the world related to business, trade, commerce, finance, etc. Especially in today's globalized world, business and financial matters have occupied centre stage. With the emergence of free market economy, 'business' has become everybody's business rather than being confined to a few financial experts. There has been so much in the offing in regards to all these areas that it becomes overtly necessary for people to broaden their knowledge and strengthen their understanding about the issues and processes that surround these areas in a way not done before. Therefore, media has also started taking these issues seriously and with a lot of emphasis. In this connection the business beat is considered to be an extremely responsible and serious one.

The person who is willing to take the responsibility of this important beat upon his shoulder should keep this in mind that he must have clear understanding about the matters related to business and finance, the dynamics of the stock market etc. He should have up to date information about the business activities taking place not only in his own society but also else where. He should have proper knowledge about the dynamics of business and also have a network of reliable sources in Government and non government organizations, corporate bodies, political circles and every where.

Sports:

Sports is also one of the most coveted beats in every media organization. Every media organization gives due weightage to covering the areas of games and sports. All the newspapers devote one or two pages of a total newspaper to sports related news. Therefore, anybody covering this beat holds mammoth responsibility. The person who has some understanding about the rules and tactics of different games and sports is normally assigned with this beat. The person handling this beat must be aware of the sporting scenario of the country and of other countries as well and also should be able to understand the issues and problems engulfing the sports scenario the world over. It is expected that he also knows about the players and has good contacts with the players as well as the people and different organizations related with sports.

Education:

Education is another important beat due to the sheer number of people that are involved in this field — students, teachers, guardians, researchers and, of course, policy makers. News about the different schools, colleges, universities, and other institutions of technical and higher learning and the educational scenario in general make very good, important and relevant news content. A good education reporter will cover important activities in different educational institutions and will try to bring out stories about the unusual developments, if any, in the field to education. Government policies on education are very important issues that need to be covered. New trends and problems pertaining to the field are also important topics for news.

A person who covers the education beat needs to have a good understanding of the education scenario, and must have good contacts in different educational institutions and in the education department.

Science and Technology:

Science and technology is increasingly shaping and revolutionizing our lives everyday. We cannot possibly think of our lives without the contributions of scientific and technological developments. Therefore, understanding science is a cultural necessity and is a part of general cultural knowledge as art and

drama. The public needs to know what scientists are doing and how their work is influencing the society. Science reporting intends to inculcate a scientific temperament among the readers and to encourage them to have a rational and analytical mindset in explaining various phenomena in their everyday life.

Science and technology news includes noteworthy scientific discoveries about nature and all major advancements that take place in the field of technology. Discovery about stars, atoms or about human body or mind, discovery of major drugs, breakthrough in fusion research, space shots, etc make good science reports. What a science reporter usually looks for are the milestones in the progress of science and technology.

Specialization in the field of science is often an advantage for a science reporter, but a science reporter need not necessarily be a specialist. What is essential is a background in science and a scientific temperament. Since science is not something static and new things are developed everyday, so a science reporter should have the willingness and zeal to make himself a student of science everyday and update himself about the new developments. A science reporter should also be aware of the major areas of ongoing scientific research. But perhaps the most important quality of a science reporter is the ability to write the highly technical scientific news for the common readers in an understandable way. He should be able to digest an abstract theory and express it in a readable and understandable form.

Development:

A very important beat in the present context of media coverage is development reporting. By development report we mean a report in which development or underdevelopment in a particular field is highlighted. Development is measured in terms of improvement in the living conditions of the people, of the society, of the nation. As such, development includes issues like removal of poverty, lessening of disparity between religions and classes, building up of technological infrastructure, modernization of society through shedding feudalism, tribalism and superstition, and gradual achievement of economic self-reliance. A development reporter will be

required to cover all such developments and also the lack of it. Rural reporting is a very important aspect of development reporting. Development reporters should also pay due importance to issues relating to social evils, deprivations and try to represent the unrepresented sections of the society.

A development reporter needs to maintain regular contacts with different organizations and institutions, government departments, development agencies, NGOs, voluntary organizations etc. It is absolutely necessary for a development reporter to acquire basic understanding of terms used in agriculture, environment, science, economics and other related subjects. A development reporter cannot afford to be guided by personal prejudices, likes and dislikes. Also he should never rewrite official handouts, but use them as his raw material and develop a well researched story on his own.

The most important aspect of development reporting is human development reporting. It must concern itself with people since it is the people who are building the nation. It must show them how to improve their condition in the society.

Disaster/ Accidents/ Fires:

Stories about accidents, fires and disasters are very common and form a major part of news content. Major accidents, fires and disasters almost always make front page headlines.

Beginners in the field are most often assigned this beat. These are hard core hard news stories and are relatively easy to cover in the sense that they do not require any specialized knowledge on the part of the reporter. It is enough for the reporter to have the basic reporting skills. A keen power of observation and the ability to interview people to find out details is necessary. Eye witness accounts are very important for these kinds of stories.



CHECK YOUR PRGRESS

Q5. Name ten important reporting beats.

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_____

_____

Q6. Write down the basic qualities of a beat reporter?

_____

_____

_____



ACTIVITY 3.2

1. Consider your own skills and qualities and think which beat you would be suitable for. Also write why you think you are suitable for that particular beat.
2. Collect and study the structure of five news stories each from the following beats:
   a. Sports
   b. Business
   c. Science and Technology
   d. Crime/ Police
   e. Court/ Legal
   f. Development
   g. Education
   h. Politics



3.6 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have learnt about the different types of reporting and the different reporting beats. Here is a quick recap:

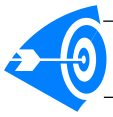
- There are three types of reporting – objective, investigative and interpretative reporting.

- When a reporter reports an event in an objective way, i.e., representing only the truth as he has seen it without adding any personal colour to it, it is called Objective reporting.
- When the reporter has to interpret the news for better understanding of the readers by providing more facts, especially background information, it is called interpretative reporting.
- When a news reporter has to dig deeply beyond what is stated in the hard news in order to find out the exact facts of an event, or, in short, investigate beyond what meets the naked eye, then it is called investigative reporting.
- Reporters have to work in specialized areas of interest, called beats. When a reporter is assigned with a certain beat or beats, he/she is expected not to miss any event, whether big or small falling under the purview of that particular beat.



3.7 FURTHER READINGS

- **Essentials of practical journalism** — *Vir Bala Agarwal, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi*
- **Fundamentals of Journalism –** *K.B. Dutta, Akansha Publishing House, New Delhi*



3.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q. No 1 : The three different types of reporting are – objective reporting, interpretative reporting and investigative reporting.

Ans to Q. No 2 : a. Objective Reporting: When a reporter reports an event in an objective way, i.e., representing only the truth as he has seen it without adding any personal colour to it, it is called Objective reporting.

b. Interpretative Reporting: When the reporter has to interpret the news

for better understanding of the readers by providing more facts, especially background information, it is called interpretative reporting.

c. Investigative Reporting: When a news reporter has to dig deeply beyond what is stated in the hard news in order to find out the exact facts of an event, or in short investigate beyond what meets the naked eye, then it is called investigative reporting.

Ans to Q. No 3 : Beats are the specialized areas of operation for the reporters assigned by the organization in which the reporter works. For example, Sports beat, science beat, crime beat etc.

Ans to Q. No 4 : There are numerous areas that a newspaper has to cover in a day. And it is not humanly and physically possible for a single reporter to cover multiple areas. So different reporters may be assigned with a single or couple of beats. And the reporter is expected to cover all the developments or happenings taking place under the jurisdiction of his beat or beats. The reporter can not afford to miss any significant or insignificant event falling under his assigned beat/beats.

Ans to Q. No 5 : Ten important beats – Sports, Crime, Legal, Business, Education, Development, Health, Science and Technology, Entertainment, Politics.

Ans to Q. No 6 : The basic qualities of a beat reporter are:

i. Thorough Knowledge about his own beat.

ii. Ability to cultivate and maintain sources in important areas.

iii. Willingness to continuously update oneself about recent happenings in his beat.

iv. Ability to write simply and understandably for the common man who may not be an expert in that area.



3.9 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

Q 1. What are the different types of reporting? Explain giving examples.

Q 2. Discuss the significance of objective reporting?

Q 3. 'No news can be completely objective'. Comment.

Q 4. 'Investigative journalism is the most challenging form of journalism'. Do you agree with this statement? Give reasons for your answer.

Q 5. When does the need for interpretative journalism arise? Explain giving examples.

Q 6. What do you mean by beat reporting? What is its significance?

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UNIT - 4 : NEWS WRITING

UNIT STRUCTURE

4.1 Learning Objectives

4.2 Introduction

4.3 Structure of a News Story

4.4 How to Write The Copy

4.5 Let Us Sum Up

4.6 Further Readings

4.7 Answers To Check Your Progress

4.8 Possible Questions

4.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to:

- Explain the structure of a news story
- Define the significance of each element of a news story
- Enlist the rules for writing each element of a news story
- Write a news story

4.2 INTRODUCTION

In the previous three units, you have been introduced to the concepts of news and news reporting. In this unit we shall go a step further and learn about news writing.

As you have already learnt, the duty of a journalist does not end with reporting alone. A good journalist should also be well versed in the skills of news writing and should be able to present the news for the readers in a simple and understandable manner. In this unit we shall learn how to write a good news story. A news story has different elements and each element has its own place and significance. Also, news writing is very different from other creative writing and there are different principles to be followed while writing a news report. All of these will be dealt with in this unit.

This unit will serve as your guide to the basics of news writing. A thorough understanding of these basic concepts along with regular reading of newspapers and ample practice of news writing will definitely sharpen your news writing skills and contribute towards making you a complete journalist. So, let us go into the first section of this unit, i.e., structure of a news story.

4.3 STRUCTURE OF A NEWS STORY

News writing is a skill that every journalist is required to develop and hone with experience. There are certain techniques or parameters upon which news writing is based. And every news organization follows these basic techniques despite the fact they may all have individual styles of news presentation. The very first step towards learning this technique is to learn the structure of a news story or news report. In the most basic sense, a news report has the following elements:

- ✓ Headline
- ✓ Byline/ Credit line
- ✓ Dateline
- ✓ Lead
- ✓ Body
- ✓ Conclusion

The last element, i.e., conclusion is present in case of soft news stories only. Hard news reports do not have conclusion. Now consider the following two news reports. The different elements have been marked with arrows for your benefit.





In the above examples, all the elements of a news story have been identified for you. Let us now learn about these elements in detail and understand the significance of each of them.

Headline:

You all must be familiar with the term headline. It is that part of a news story which first catches the eye of the reader. As you can see in the examples, it is the title of the news story and it is the most visible element. It is always written in a font few sizes bigger than the rest of the news story. The headline identifies the reader's area of interest and introduces and summarizes the story. It is usually after reading the headline that the reader decides whether or not to read the rest of the story. Sometimes headlines try to create curiosity through interesting use of language and prompt the reader to read the full story. There are different types of headlines based on nature and significance of the story. We will be discussing these in later units.

Byline/ Creditline:

You must have seen that below the headline, on the left hand side, it is written 'From Sobhapati Samom' in the first example and in the second example it is written 'by a staff reporter'. This is called the byline or the credit line and it identifies the source of the story. In the first example where the person's name is written, it is called the byline. In the second example, there is no mention of the person's name, but simply that it is from a staff

reporter. This is called the credit line. It could also be 'by our correspondent' or 'our bureau' or 'by our special correspondent' etc as applicable.

Dateline:

Below the credit line or byline, just before the actual news story begins, you would have seen the date of the story along with the name of a place. This is the dateline. The date mentioned is the date on which the event has taken place and on which the reporter has filed the story and the place mentioned is the place from where the reporter has filed the story.

Lead:

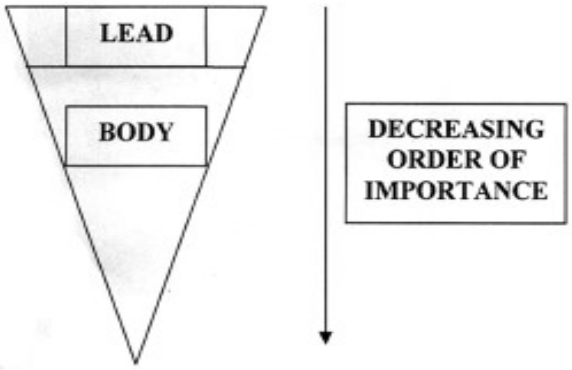
Just where the dateline ends, starts the main part of the report. The first paragraph of the news story is called the lead. It is usually written in bold or in a font larger than that used in the rest part of the story. However, this varies from publication to publication. The lead usually tells the story in a nutshell and gives the important information, particularly the most important of the 5W's and H.

Body:

It gives the elaborate details of the event including all the 5W's and H and the related explanations of the event. The body is the part where the actual story is narrated. The body describes what the story is all about. Usually the lead provides just the gist of the actual event, the body gives a description in order of importance of information and finally the story is drawn to an end with a concluding paragraph, probably threading the important parts of the story or giving a general conclusion.

News stories are constructed in the **Inverted Pyramid style** in order of importances. This is a formula used by all media organization. Inverted Pyramid style is mostly applicable to hard news stories and most hard news stories follow this structure religiously. However, on rare occasions feature stories and other soft stories can be written in this style as well. In this style the most important points of a story are told in the beginning, that is, in the lead itself. It is followed by the body in which the rest of the relevant information are presented in descending order of interest or order of

importance. Of course in this style there is no conclusion. The most important or interesting facts are arranged in the lead or immediately after the lead. The least important points are narrated in the end.



Reasons for applying Inverted Pyramid style:

In fact, there are reasons for following this formula by news organizations.

From reader's point of view:

The main reason for writing the story in this fashion is consideration of a reader's convenience. Many a time the reader does not have enough time to go through the entire story or for that matter all the stories published in a day's newspaper. They just scan the first few paragraphs of all the news items, mostly the important ones, published in the front page and then turn to the other pages in accordance with their interests.

If the stories are written in such a manner that the information is scattered all throughout the story and the readers have to struggle to find out the most important ones, the reader's concentration is reduced and they leave the story half way. Many a time, even important stories are ignored by readers for this reason. On the other hand, if the stories are written in the inverted pyramid style, then even if the readers leave the story midway, probably after reading the first or second paragraph at the most, they are still able to get the most important points.

From editing point of view:

Editing of stories is a must exercise as the stories are required to be brought to shape and size in accordance with the available space and style of the

newspaper. Reporters always write their stories in a hurried situation as they have to meet the stipulated deadline for submission of reports. Therefore, their reports are bound to carry errors, which need to be corrected later at the desk. Also in most of the cases, the reporters have the general tendency to include all the facts and figures they have found in the field while writing the copy, without taking into account the limited space specified for their stories.

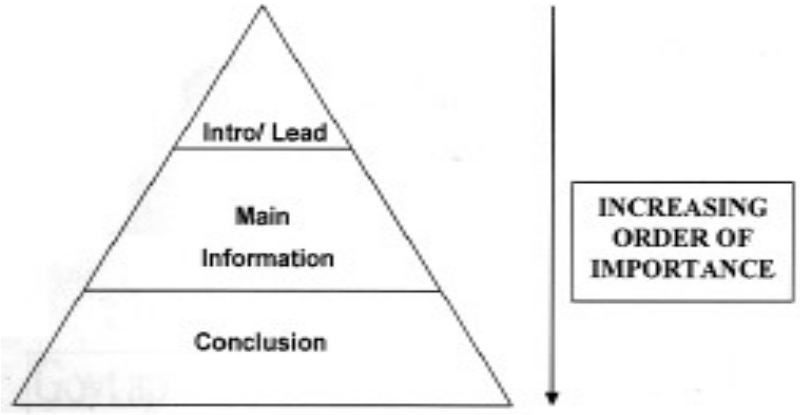
In such situations following the inverted pyramid style helps in many ways. If the story is written in inverted pyramid style, then most of the important points are carried in the beginning. So when the desk people take the copy for editing they may do so by **cropping** the story from below so that the more important points remain intact. Only the lesser important details are eliminated in the editing process, as in the inverted style, the facts are presented in order of importance.



Cropping:
Editing or deleting portions of a news story or a photograph.

Therefore, for all these reasons the inverted pyramid style is a very effective technique of news presentation.

For features and other soft news items, the style mostly used is the **Pyramid style** of writing. Pyramid style is the classic style for academic writing. It starts by laying the foundations. It starts with less significant details and the story building towards a climax, leaving the most important information for the end. Finally, it caps the work off with a brief conclusion.





CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q1. What are the main parts of a news story?

Q2. What is the significance of the

a. Headline

b. Credit line

c. Dateline

d. Lead

Q3. Explain the following:

a. Inverted Pyramid Style

b. Pyramid Style

Q4. Which style of writing is used for news writing?

Q5. Which part of the news story contains the maximum and the most important information?



ACTIVITY 4.1

1. Cut out five leads from newspapers. Identify what questions of the 5Ws and H are answered. Also identify which question is not answered.

4.4 HOW TO WRITE THE COPY

Now that we have learnt about the structure of a news story, let us now deal with actual news writing, which is, in journalistic terms, called 'writing the copy' or 'copy writing'. If we understand the basic principles for writing each of the elements that make a news story, we will be able to write the entire news story easily and with confidence. So, let us deal with them one by one. But, before that, let us recall one of the basic concepts of news, the **5Ws and H**.

In Unit 1 of this course, you have been briefly told about the six important questions that every news report has to answer — the 5Ws and 1H. Let us recapitulate them one again in this unit.

- ✓ What
- ✓ Why
- ✓ Where
- ✓ When
- ✓ Who
- ✓ How

5Ws and H

As such a news item should answer these questions.

- ✓ What happened?
- ✓ Why did it happen?
- ✓ Where did it happen?
- ✓ When did it happen?
- ✓ Who was involved?
- ✓ How did it happen?

'What' is the first element that deciphers what is the news all about. What did happen? Is it an accident, a blast, a fair, a crime or what? Ideally the 'what' element should appear in the beginning.

The element **'why'** delves into the reasons behind the happening of any event. It tells us about why the incident occurred. If it was a case of accident, then what are the reasons behind it? Was it due to reckless driving or brake failure or poor condition of the road or foggy weather, if not, then what? Was the driver in a drunken state? All these questions should be answered by this element—why.

The element **'where'** talks about the place of occurrence of the event. If it was a case of accident, then in which place did the accident take place—in Assam? In Guwahati? At Chandmari? It tells about the specific location of the event.

The **'when'** element tells us about the time of occurrence of the event, like morning, evening, night, mid-night or exactly at what time of the day? It should also specify on which day-Monday, Tuesday, Thursday……today, tomorrow or any other day. Without specification of time and day news remains incomplete. The readers should be aware as to when did the incident occur and at what time the reportage has been carried. As such the 'when' element also establishes the immediacy of the event.

The **'Who'** element tells us about the people who are involved in an incident. It gives the actual profile of the people involved, their names, age, sex, place of habitat etc. Bigger the names, bigger would be the importance and size of the news.

Lastly, there should be a narration as to '**how'** the incident has occurred. The elements stated above only gives the readers a glimpse of the story, highlighting the major points. But the story needs further elaboration, taking the readers to the situations that led to the occurrence. So, here comes the element of 'How' which attempts to detail the event for the readers.

Principles of News Writing:

Headline:

The headline has to be written keeping in mind that it not only introduces and summarizes the news story, but also serves the purpose of attracting the reader's attention. As such it has to be crisp and precise. It must clearly give an appropriate perception of the story, and should also convey the maximum meaning by using the least number of words. Here are a few basic rules for writing good headlines:

1. Build the headline around a strong verb
2. Avoid articles and helping verbs like a, an, the, is are, were etc.
3. Never give the feel of the past. Use present tense and future tense
4. Use active voice. It helps cut out extra words and also helps give the feel of the present.
5. Do not over abbreviate. Although headlines permit limited space, do not in any case use arbitrary or rare abbreviations.
6. Mention the subject in the headline wherever it is known. If the name is known, then use the name, otherwise another title that identifies the subject.
7. When certain parts of direct speech are significant enough to be used in the headline, then it is put in quotes. Unlike the use of double quotes in the main body of the news story, in the headline only single quotes are used.
8. The 'period' or 'full stop' is not used at the end of the headline.
9. The headline should always try to summarize the story and highlight the most important/striking element in it.
10. While attempting to write attractive/smart headlines, clarity of information should not be compromised.

(For more details and examples, please refer to Unit-3 of your Course-5)



Style Book:
A booklet or list of rules stating a newspaper's preference, where there are choices, of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, abbreviations and use of numerals.

Byline/ Credit Line:

Different newspapers follow different rules for writing the byline or credit line depending on their own **style book**. Credit lines within the same newspaper may also vary. Some of the common styles are – 'by a staff reporter', 'from

a staff reporter', 'from a correspondent', 'by our special correspondent', 'by our reporter', 'from our correspondent', 'by Manosh Das', 'from Bikram Mitra' etc. Some newspapers omit the words 'by', 'from' etc. They simply write 'our correspondent', 'Manosh Das', 'Bikram Mitra' etc.

Usually, it is placed on the left hand side of the report, below the headline. In some cases it is kept left aligned, while sometimes it may be aligned center above the first paragraph.

Dateline:

In almost all cases, the dateline has two parts — the place and the date. The place comes first, and then comes the date. For instance, 'Guwahati, April 7'. However, some newspapers now-a-days have started omitting the dateline also, or only mentioning the place in the dateline. This is done mainly in case of feature news or other soft news stories where the time element may not be very significant. It is also done when there are multiple editions of the same paper where the news item may be carried on a different date.

Lead:

Usually the lead should possibly be containing all the elements-five Ws and an H. However, in some cases when it is impossible to club all the elements in the lead then the rest of the elements should be carried in the next paragraph. But the reporter must try to include as many elements as possible in the first paragraph itself. If the incident is big in terms of effect and importance then it becomes difficult to incorporate all the elements in the lead itself, as it may end up cluttering of the lead. In such a situation, the body should deal with the rest of the elements, mostly the 'why' and 'how' elements.

However, when it comes to detailing the event in the body of the news story then the inverted pyramid style is followed invariably, where the more important points are told in the beginning, followed by the lesser important details.

Therefore, in a way, the lead summarizes the story in three to four sentences. Ideally, the lead should not contain more than 30 to 40 words, within which the summary of the event should be given. And within those 30 to 40 words the lead should attempt to contain all the five Ws and an H as much as possible. Otherwise normally the 'how' element is carried forward to the following paragraphs in the body as it deals with detailing of the story.

Body:

As stated earlier, the body is the middle part of a story and it deals with the detailing of events. After having summarized the story in the lead, still many relevant points are left to be elaborated regarding the story which the readers might be interested to know about. And this is done in the body part.

Similar to the lead, the body is designed using the inverted pyramid style. That is, playing down the facts in chronological order of importance and relevance. The most necessary aspects are highlighted in the beginning of the body followed by the lesser essential facts, in a descending order.

However, since the body deals with the description of the event, most of the readers get wary of reading the whole detail and skip to other news item, having skimmed through the lead. But a clever writer would know how to retain the interest of the readers until the last line of the story. For that the writing should be interesting and beautifully treated so that the readers find it hard to leave it half way through. Also the reporter should always attempt to say more with fewer words due to space restriction in newspapers.

One has to remember that one basic feature that differentiates news from other write ups is its language. Here are a few very basic guidelines to be followed in case of the language of news.

1. Always use very simple language and short sentences.
2. Avoid the use of complicated words, metaphors, figures of speech, adjectives and clichés. Explain technical jargons.
3. Write in active voice wherever possible. It makes sentences shorter and direct.

4. Spell numerals up to 9 and beyond that write in numerals.

5. Identification that follows a name, viz., age, address, job description or other information are to be set off by paired commas. Honorific titles like Mr., Mrs., Dr. etc are not to be used.

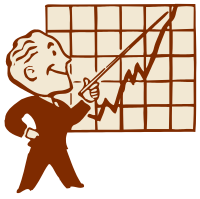
6. While reproducing speech directly, place it within double quotes unlike in the headline where it is placed in single quotes. Sometimes you can write full sentences in direct speech or also write just significant words or phrases in direct speech.

7. The time element in a news story is very important. News stories about events that have already taken place are written in the past tense. As such they use active verbs like *elected, injured, killed, damaged, awarded* etc. or passive verbs *like was elected, was injured, was killed, was damaged, was awarded* etc.

8. Present tense is often used in order to emphasize timeliness. E.g. *Refusing to lie down, Avian Flu, that bounced back in parts of West Bengal for the second time in a month, has broken out in Jalpaiguri district prompting the aurhorities today to order mass culling.*

9. In stories where the actual time of an event is not known or is not important, the present perfect form of the verb is used. Say, *has been named, has said, has announced* etc.

10. News stories that speak about events that will take place in the future are expressed by the use of the auxiliary verb 'will' – *will come, will speak, will arrive etc.*



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q6. What are the six basic questions every news story has to answer?

_____

_____

_____

Q7. Which part of the news story answers most of the basic questions?

_____

_____

_____

Q8. Mention five important points to be followed while writing headline.

_____

_____

_____

Q9. Mention five important points to be followed while writing a news story.

_____

_____

_____



ACTIVITY 4.2

1. Develop a news story from the points given below. The news story should be complete with all the different elements and following all the principles of news writing.

- Road accident on highway
- 4.30 pm, Dec 6
- Head-on collision between truck and over speeding motor cyclist
- Motor cyclist dead on the spot
- Truck lost control and stopped after hitting a tree. Front part of truck damaged.
- Truck driver badly injured but alive, taken to hospital.



4.5 LET US SUM UP

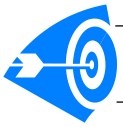
In this unit you have learnt about the basics of news writing. Let's have a quick recap of the details.

1. A news story has six basic elements – headline, dateline, credit line/ byline, lead, body and conclusion.
2. Headline is that part of a news story which first catches the eye of the reader. It is the title of the news story and is the most visible element.
3. The byline or the credit line identifies the source of the story.
4. The dateline indicates the date on which the event took place and on which the reporter had filed the story and the place from which the reporter had filed the story.
5. The first paragraph of the news story is called the lead. The lead usually tells the story in a nutshell and gives the important information, particularly the most important of the 5W's and H.
6. The body is the part where the actual story is narrated. It gives the elaborate details of the event including all the 5W's and H and the related explanations of the event.
7. News stories are constructed in the **Inverted Pyramid style** in order of importance. This is a formula used by all media organization. Inverted Pyramid style is mostly applicable to hard news stories.



4.6 FURTHER READINGS

- **Essentials of Practical Journalism** — *Vir Bala Agarwal, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi*
- **News Writing –** *George A. Hough, Kanishka Publishers & Distributors, New Delhi*



4.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q. No. 1 : The main parts of a news story are – headline, dateline, credit line/ byline, lead, body and conclusion.

Ans to Q. No. 2 : a. Headline: The significance of a headline is great. The

headline identifies the reader's area of interest and introduces, precedes and summarizes a news story. Most people merely glance at the newspaper headlines and arrive at judgements based on this. The headline is that part of a news story which first catches the eye of the reader.

b. Byline/ Credit line: The byline or the credit line identifies the source of the story.

c. Dateline: The dateline indicates the date on which the event took place and on which the reporter had filed the story and the place from which the reporter had filed the story.

d. Lead: The lead serves as the intro to the news story.The lead usually tells the story in a nutshell and gives the important information, particularly the most important of the 5W's and H.

Ans to Q. No. 3 : a. Inverted Pyramid style: It is the style of writing used for writing news stories. In this style the most important points of a story is told in the beginning that is in the lead itself, followed by the body in which the rest of the relevant information are presented in descending order of interest or order of importance.

b. Pyramid Style: It is the classic style for academic writing. It starts by laying the foundations. It starts with less significant details and builds up the story towards a climax leaving the most important information for the end. It is exactly the opposite of Inverted Pyramid Style.

Ans to Q. No. 4 : Inverted Pyramid Style

Ans to Q. No. 5 : The Lead

Ans to Q. No. 6 : The six basic questions that every news story has to answer are – Who, What. When, Where, Why and How. They are together known as the 5Ws and H.

Ans to Q. No. 7 : The Lead

Ans to Q. No.8 : 5 important points to be remembered while writing 'headline' are:

a. Build the headline around a strong verb.
b. Drop articles and helping verbs like a, an, the, is are, were etc. wherever possible.
c. Try to avoid the feel of the past. Use present tense and future tense.
d. Use active voice. It helps cut out extra words and also helps give the feel of the present.
e. Do not over abbreviate. Although headlines permit limited space, do not in any case use arbitrary or rare abbreviations.

Ans to Q. No. 9 : 5 important points to be remembered while writing a news story are:

a. Always use very simple language and short sentences.
b. Avoid the use of complicated words, metaphors, figures of speech. Explain technical jargons.
c. Write in active voice wherever possible. It makes sentences shorter and direct.
d. Spell numerals up to 9 and beyond that write in numerals.
e. The time element in a news story is very important. News stories about events that have already taken place are written in the past tense. As such they use active verbs like elected, injured, killed, damaged, awarded etc. or passive verbs like was elected, was injured, was killed, was damaged, was awarded etc.



4.8 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

Q1. What are the different parts that make a news story? Explain the significance of each.

Q2. Which part of a news story do you think is the most important? Give reasons for your answer.

Q3. Do you think that the Inverted Pyramid style is the most appropriate style for news writing? Why?

Q4. What is the importance of a headline in a news story?

Q5. A news story will be crippled without a good lead. Comment.

UNIT - 5 : NEWS EDITING

UNIT STRUCTURE

5.1 Learning Objectives
5.2 Introduction
5.3 Concept of News Editing
5.4 Newsroom Set-up
5.5 Role of Editors
5.6 Principles of Copy Editing
5.7 Photo Editing
5.8 Let Us Sum Up
5.9 Further Readings
5.10 Answers To Check Your Progress
5.11 Possible Questions

5.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to:

- define editing
- explain the principles of news editing
- describe the newsroom set up and the newsroom personnel
- analyze the functions of each person
- describe the process of photo editing
- define the photo editing terminologies

5.2 INTRODUCTION

In the previous units we have discussed news reporting and news writing in detail. There is, however, another very important aspect of news publication, which we have not discussed yet. It is the final stage of processing of news, i.e., editing. In this unit we shall introduce you to the concept of news editing. A person enters the journalism profession either as a reporter or as a desk person. While reporters are responsible for the collection of news, the

responsibility of selection and arrangement of news lies with the editorial team. In this unit we will discuss this chunk of people who comprise the editorial desk and their job which we call 'editing'.

Here, we shall discuss what is news editing, why editing of news is necessary and what principles are to be followed while editing news. We shall also learn about the news room set up in a news organization, the different editors and the roles played by the editors in the final presentation of news in a newspaper. Another important aspect of editing – photo editing - will also be discussed in this unit. So let us start with the concept of editing.

5.3 CONCEPT OF NEWS EDITING

In order to understand the term 'editing', we first need to know what we are editing, and why we are doing so. If you think properly, you will realize that all we edit is information. Every information or communication is edited for effect, so that they are better expressed and consequently, better understood. The information can be for publication or for broadcasting. It can be the content of a book, a magazine, a newspaper in case of print media. And in case of electronic media, it can be the content of radio, television, cinema or a website.

The Advanced Learner' Dictionary of Current English defines editing as 'preparing,(another person's writing) for publication (especially in a newspaper or other periodical); doing the work of planning and directing the publication of a newspaper, magazine, encyclopedia etc; preparing a cinema film, tape recording by putting together parts in a suitable sequence. '

Prominent American theorist and Editor-at-large of American monthly magazine 'commentary' Norman Podhoretz says 'editing is to improve an essentially well-written piece or to turn a clumsily written one into, at the very least, a beautifully shaped effective essay which remains true to the author's intention and which realizes that intention more fully than he himself is able to do.'

Here, in this unit, we shall discuss editing only in the context of print media journalism, i.e., we shall discuss news editing in print media. Many people misunderstand the term editing. They think that editing is only removing the typographic mistakes in a text. But news editing is certainly a lot more than this. As veteran journalist Dasu krishnamoorty puts it, 'Editing is a whole concept around which a message is conceived, perceived, designed and communicated.'

It is a chain of activities that starts with the assigning of beats to the reporters and culminates in the final publication of the newspaper. News editing is all about building bridges with mass audiences by eliminating blocks in that process. Editing makes the copy suitable for publication.

The exercise of editing, especially in print media, can broadly be divided into four stages:

- Conceptualisation and planning
- Visualisation
- Dummy Preparation
- Handling of copy

Of the four stages, the most exhaustive stage is the fourth stage, i.e., handling of copy. It involves the following:

1. Selection of news items
2. Cutting and pruning
3. Removal of mistakes
4. Rewriting when necessary
5. Headlining

Newspaper offices receive news from various sources. Reporters and correspondents are positioned at various important places by the organizations for the purpose of collecting news. The newspaper offices also receive a bulk of news from different news agencies whose task is to supply up-to-date information round the clock. Then, there are other sources

as well, from where the newspaper offices get the information. The volume of incoming news items far exceeds what can be actually accommodated in the newspaper and not all of these are truly newsworthy. Therefore, the first activity, i.e., selection, is basically a gatekeeping process. (Gatekeeping function of mass media has been discussed in Course 1 of your BMC programme.) It involves sifting through the entire incoming news items, i.e., the copy and sorting out the newsworthy stories in accordance with the newspaper's editorial policy.

The second, third, fourth and fifth stages together form what is popularly known as copy editing. It includes cutting the news, tailoring and shaping them for publication. It also includes checking for inadequacies in grammar, syntax, facts and figures and, of course, news sense. It is also the job of the copy editor to cross-check facts. If required, corrections are made and at times the story is even rewritten. Finally, the news report is topped with a suitable headline. (Headlining has been discussed in detail in the next unit).

In a publication house, copies are filed by different reporters with ununiform writing skills. Therefore, an important function of copy editing is to bring uniformity of language and style in conformity with the stylebook, so that readers get a uniform reading experience.

The desk people are highly skilled in carrying out this specific job of editing. They sit at the desk or in the office and work in shifts. Their role is very specialized and demands immense creativity and concentration. It is because of their contribution that news becomes worthy of publication. They scan through all the news items, select the ones that are newsworthy and relevant for their readers, look for factual and qualitative errors, correct them, cut them to fit into the limited space without tampering the actual meaning of the news and finally give the news the shape and style that is followed by their newspaper. Therefore, the newsroom is the hub of the entire activities, and the Editorial Desk (also known as the Editorial Department or Copy Desk or News Desk) is the nerve centre of a newsroom.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1. Define the term editing.

_____

_____

_____

Q 2. What are the four stages of news editing?

_____

_____

_____



ACTIVITY 5.1

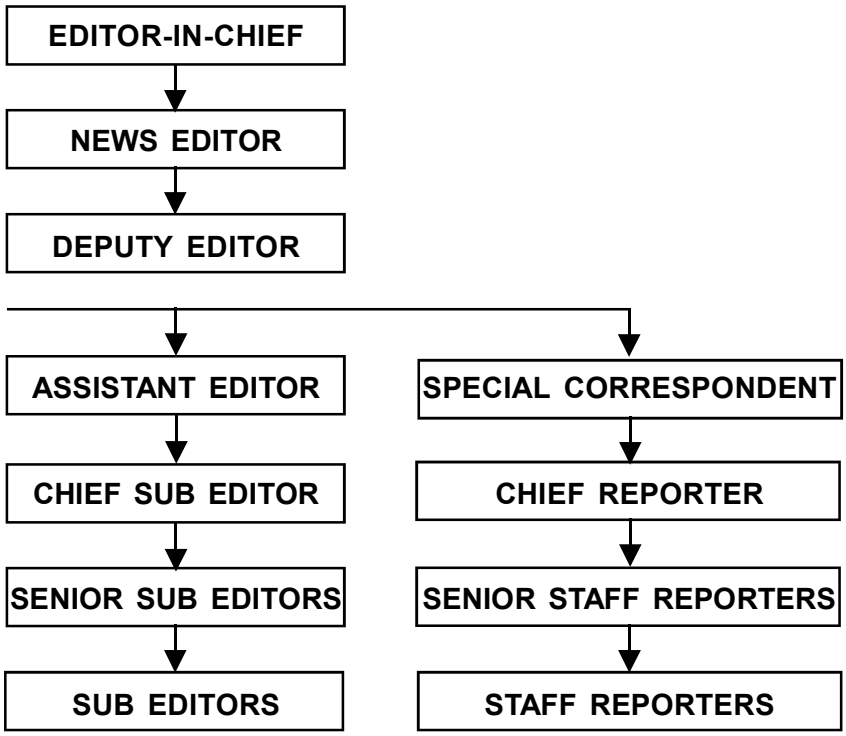
1. Visit a local newspaper office and collect unedited news copies filed by reporters. Identify the flaws in the copies and make a note of them. Now, edit and if necessary edit the copies according to your own understanding.

5.4 NEWSROOM SET UP

The news room is headed by an editor or editor-in-chief or chief editor. The editor-in-chief is the leader of the editorial as well as the reporting team. In addition to the Editor, many news organizations also appoint a Chief Editor, Managing Editor or an Executive Editor to look after important policy decisions of the organization and carry out other important activities that come under the purview of the editor. The person next in line after the editor is the News editor. The News editor is assisted in turn by a number of sub-editors or copy editors. Sometimes there might be senior sub editors also. There are usually different copy editors for different pages like page 1, sports page, international page, national page, city page, business page, entertainment page etc. There are also different sub editors responsible for different editions

of the newspaper and for different supplements. The reporters responsible for different beats report back to the concerned copy editor for their beats.

A flow chart representing the new room set up of 'The Assam Tribune', a leading daily newspaper of Assam, has been provided below for your better understanding.



5.5 ROLE OF EDITORS

The Editor:

It is the editor who is responsible for the entire content of a newspaper. He also takes the responsibilities of planning and directing various operations that are carried out in a day. Being the leader of the entire team of news men, the editor has to shoulder huge responsibilities. He not only has to plan, direct, supervise and take important decisions, but also has to ensure smooth functioning of different activities in a news organization. He also should be aware of the taste of the readers and shape the content of the paper according to the reader's taste and needs. The image creation of the

newspaper is in the hands of the Editor. He should be able to enhance the acceptability, credibility and popularity of the paper and contribute towards increasing the readership base of the newspaper. The editor also writes the editorial for the newspaper through which he needs to reflect the editorial policies and ensure respectability of the paper among the masses. The editor has to strive to create and enhance the newspaper's brand loyalty among its readers and often decide the paper's editorial policy keeping this factor in mind. (Editorial writing has been explained in details in Course 5 of your BMC programme.)



Deadline :
The stipulated time during which the assigned work should be finished at all accounts by the professionals.

The News Editor:

The News Editor plays the most important role in the shaping of a newspaper after the editor. A News Editor's responsibilities are quite important as he or she is supposed to be in the overall charge of making sure that no important item is missing from the newspaper or the bulletin at any cost. He or she is also responsible for maintaining a steady and continuous flow of up-to-the-minute news items. He must get the best out of the news agencies and his own correspondents and see that they do not miss an important news. He has to coordinate the activities of the newspaper in its various sections like reporters, the different news desks and the picture and feature departments. Usually, this position is reserved for someone with long years of experience and a lot of 'connections and sources' in the field of news gathering. This is because he or she bears the ultimate responsibility for adequate coverage of all important news items.



Libel:
The act of publishing material with the intent of damaging a person's reputation. Libel is legally punishable.

The News editor must be able to spot an interesting news item when others may have failed. Then again, even if the reporters or other journalists of that organization miss anything of importance, it is the responsibility of this person to spot it and instruct his or her colleagues for getting the news out from the potential sources. A person in this position has to be literally 'on his toes' round the clock as anything may break out at any moment of the day. He must also keep a watch on what appears in the rival newspapers and evaluate the performance of his newspaper in relation to those newspapers. The news editor has to play the role of the eyes and ears of the Editor and act as a liaison between him and the newsroom.

Sub-Editor / Copy-Editor:

The sub-editor or the copy editor is by far the most hard- working person in a newspaper. It is the sub-editor through whom all news, articles and features meant for the newspaper passes and it is the job of the sub-editor to sift through all the material, discard unnecessary copy, select important and relevant matter and finally edit the copy to create the readable and publishable news content. The sub-editor has to rewrite defective passages, reduce lengthy reports to precise matter, and write proper headlines and leads. The sub-editor has to be well versed with the newspaper's style book and ensure that every news report fits this prescribed style. The sub-editor must have the stamina and the speed to be able to meet **deadlines**. The job of the sub-editor can be summarized in the following points:

1. He reads the story for clarity of language and meaning and rewrites whenever necessary.
2. He shortens the story while retaining the essentials and maintaining consistency.
3. He combines several reports from different sources to produce a single intelligible report.
4. He corrects grammatical mistakes and implements the house style.
5. He checks for errors of facts and figures.
6. He checks for legal errors like **libel**, contempt of court etc which could land the newspaper in trouble.
7. He adds important background information to place the story in a context.
8. He writes headlines and sub-headlines, when necessary,



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 3. Who heads the editorial department in a newspaper organization?

_____

_____

_____

Q 4. Explain the role of the following persons:

a. Editor

b. News Editor

c. Sub-Editor



ACTIVITY 5.2

1. Take an appointment with the editor of a local daily. Find out from him what duties he has to perform. Also find out from him the newsroom structure of the newspaper and the functioning of the editorial department.



Letterpress printing: A method of printing which uses metal type that contacts or presses the paper directly. In this method, printing area is above the non-printing area. Presently it has been replaced by modern printing technology and is almost obsolete.

5.6 PRINCIPLES OF COPY EDITING

In the previous sections, you have received some basic idea about what editing is, who constitutes the editorial team and what is the role of each person. Let us now study the basic principles of editing. We shall begin with the principles of writing headlines.

Headline:

Headline writing is perhaps the most difficult part of news editing. Most stories come without a proper headline, and providing the appropriate headline which not just truly represents the story, but also catches the eye of the reader is indeed a challenge. While explaining the story accurately, the headline must

also fit into a limited space. Some copy editors approach headline writing by looking for a key word or two that expresses the high point of the story. Then they add other words until they have a headline. Other copy editors begin by forming a sentence that contains the essential elements of the story. Then they edit out excess words (adverbs, adjectives, articles, and so forth) and minor details until all that is left is a well-tailored headline that tells the story's essentials.

A headline has to be appropriate not just in terms of sentence construction or being suitable for the news story, but even from the point of view of typography and layout considerations. And it is the copy-editor's responsibility to ensure this. Earlier, during the period of **letterpress printing**, headlines had specific word counts and had to be written and sized keeping in mind the availability of space. However, with the changed scenario of computerized newsroom, the editor is no more faced with such constraints.

We have already discussed the basic rules for writing headlines in the previous unit 'News Writing'. Here are a few more simple points for editors to keep in mind for writing satisfactory headlines:

- It must be appropriate
- It must tell a story
- It must conform to the paper's standard
- It must not just be a label
- It must not commit the paper to an opinion

Lead:

As discussed in the earlier units, the 'lead' is written in an inverted pyramid style, accommodating the most important points in it followed by the lesser important details. No matter how the reporter has written the copy, the sub-editor handling the copy has to arrange the lead in that manner after extracting the main points of the news. The lead should contain all the 5 W's and 1 H that we have discussed in the previous unit. But in case of a major story when it becomes difficult to club all the W's and H, then at least the lead should answer what, when and where. The rest of the elements should be dealt with in the subsequent paragraphs.

In writing the lead, the copy editor has to keep in mind the economy of words. Ideally a lead should not contain more than 30 to 35 words and each sentence should not exceed more than 15 words.

The lead should be short, crisp and precise. It, however, does not mean that the lead should be devoid of facts. The lead should contain limited words within which the most important facts should be carried. Ideally the lead should give the summary of what has happened in a nutshell. The reader should get the entire information in the lead itself, at least the crux of the story. It enables the hurried readers to get the main essence of the story in the first paragraph, without needing to go further. This kind of lead which summarises the story is called the **summary lead** or **news lead** or **multiple element lead**.

A short lead, telling all the vital points, using simplest possible words and maintaining the order of importance, is the key to the success of a story.

Apart from the normal summary lead, the copy editor can also, make use of different other kinds of lead for special impact in case of certain stories. For instance, the **narrative lead** (also known as descriptive lead or picture lead) can be used in order to attract the reader's attention by drawing a vivid picture of a particular situation, place, person, object or unusual phase of action that the story may deal with. Again, if in a news story, the time element consists of fast action or the intervals are separated by a series of related events, which needs to be emphasized, then the **staccato lead** can be used. It consists of several small broken sentences punctuated either by periods or dashes.

Again if the news story deals with a situation that presents some kind of contrast, say a contrast between the present and former situations, two people or say, between two events happening in two different places, then the **contrast lead** can be used. Sometimes, the lead can start with a question **(question lead)** and sometimes the reader can be directly addressed in the lead **(directly addressed lead)**. While reporting important speeches or public statements by important people, the lead may begin with a quote. This is called **quotation lead**. So, in this way, different types of leads can be used to enhance the impact of the story.

Body:

The body elaborates what has been established in the lead. Points which have not been accommodated in the lead are elaborated in the body. Mostly the body deals with the element of 'how'. But while constructing the body the sub editor should remember that he maintains the logical order of facts in the body. Or in other words he has to follow the inverted pyramid style of news writing. In case of features, on the other hand, the pyramid style is used. (You will learn more about feature writing in Course 5 of your BMC programme.)

Conclusion:

As mentioned earlier, a hard news story does not have a conclusion. Mostly, in case of soft news stories the conclusion is an essential element. Nevertheless, in the conclusion part the sub editor should weave out the vital points of the entire story and give a suitable conclusion.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 5. What are the four composing elements of a news report?

_____

_____

_____

Q 6. What are the qualities of a good headline?

_____

_____

_____

Q 7. What are the points to be kept in mind while editing the lead?

_____

_____

_____



ACTIVITY 5.3

1. Take 10 headlines from a newspaper. Analyses whether the headline actually fits the news item? Do you think the headlines could have been improved? Write your own headlines to suit the news stories.

5.7 PHOTO EDITING

Apart from text news content, newspapers also carry news in the form of photographs. Apart from adding validity and emphasis to news stories, a photograph can also stand alone as a news item in itself. Besides, photographs lend variety to a page, attract attention, enhance the look of the page and break the monotony created by the text. **Photo features** are quite popular amongst readers.



Photo features:
A photo feature is a pictorial feature. A series of photos arranged according to a particular pattern to tell a story in an effective manner. There is very little or no write up in such features.

Just as a copy-editor edits the copy by cutting irrelevant portions and highlighting important ones, the photo editor also edits the photos in order to fit them into the layout of the page. Each photograph that reaches the newspaper office needs some amount of editing. Photographs are edited to fit into the specified space, enhance the quality of the photograph and do away with the unnecessary detail. By editing a photograph it is made worthy of publication. For this purpose every media organization keeps a photo editor whose task is to edit the photographs that reach the newspaper office every day.

The Photo Editor:

Like the News editor and other departmental editors, the Photo Editor is responsible for collection of quality photographs of any event happening anywhere and also editing it in order to make it worthy for publication in the newspaper. The photo editor in consultation with the editor or the departmental editors would select appropriate photographs, adequately edit them and decide their position within the layout of the paper. It is the photo

editor's responsibility to select the best picture which tells the story on its own. He has to edit it to properly fit it into the space available in the page without destroying or distorting the essence of the picture. To enhance the look of the paper, the photo editor may opt for horizontal or vertical pictures depending on the page layout and make-up. Here are a few basic requisites of a good photograph:

1. The photo should have the elements essential for news, i.e., it should have the news values.
2. The photo should be an 'action photo or dynamic photo', i.e., it should show some action taking place or show an indication of action. Diagonal elements add the feel of dynamism even to a picture in which no action is shown taking place. For instance, a photograph which shows inanimate objects can also be an action photograph, if the main elements can be traced along imaginary diagonal lines.



This photograph shows action taking place.



No action is seen in this photograph. Yet the diagonal elements across the photograph have added dynamism to the photograph.

3. Clarity is an important consideration while selecting photographs. The main elements in the photo must be clearly visible and never blurred or merged with the background.

The photo editor must also be a person with a comprehensive grasp of current affairs and a nose for news in addition to having adequate aesthetic and technical knowledge about photography.

There are different techniques of photo editing. In most of the cases photo editing involves cropping, scaling and caption writing. To edit a photograph it demands high amount of creativity on the part of the photo editor. In order to render his job in the true spirit of the term, the photo editor should be a photographer himself or at least should know the basics and nuances of photography.

Cropping:

A competent photo editor's job is to see to it that he does not waste space, and trims the picture keeping the main essence of the subject intact. This process of reduction done keeping the essential parts of the picture intact is known as cropping. Simply speaking, cropping is creative cutting of a photograph or a picture. While cropping a photo, the photo editor ensures that the photograph is cut to proper size, giving the right amount of **headroom, nose room/ looking space, walking space** etc. as per necessity. There are different techniques of cropping. When a photograph reaches the hands of the photo editor he first does a mental cropping. It means the photo editor should be able to visualize how the photograph will finally look like and would be able to decipher the meaning best. Then he proceeds with actual cropping of the picture. This, however, does not happen in most cases today, as nearly all newspapers use digital cameras these days. So, photos can be directly cropped on the computer and therefore sized and resized, cropped and uncropped according to convenience. But, in any case, a good photo editor will always be able to visualize the perfect shape and size for the picture almost as soon as he sees it.



Headroom:
A term used with photographs of people. It is the distance between the top of the subject's head and top of the frame. Too less or too much headroom makes a photograph look awkward.

Nose Room/ Looking space:
It is the distance between the eye which is furthest away from the camera and the edge of the frame to which the person is looking.

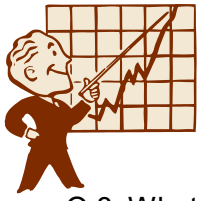
Walking Space:
Distance between a person (who is shown walking/ running) and the edge of the frame towards which the person is walking/ running.

Scaling:

Editing often also involves enlarging (blowing up) or reducing (blowing down) the size of the main image so that it gives a better visual impact or it fits into the available space. This is called scaling. Scaling has to be done proportionately so that the image is not distorted.

Caption writing:

A caption is the description of the content of a photograph. It tells what the photograph is all about. Usually caption is very short. Using minimum words the caption writer attempts how best to describe a photograph. Therefore, it is not an easy task and it demands high amount of creativity. Even though a good picture can express thousands words, yet photographs are always accompanied by a caption. A caption should always carry the elements of 'what', 'where' and 'when'.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 8. What do you mean by the term photo-editing?

_____

_____

_____

Q 9. What is the role of the photo editor?

_____

_____

_____

Q 10. Explain the following terms:

a. Cropping

_____

_____

_____

b. Caption

_____

_____

_____



ACTIVITY 5.4

1. Consider the photographs on the first page of a newspaper. Now, in an attempt to increase their visual impact, if you feel necessary, crop the photos according to your own understanding.
2. Now give each of the photographs a new caption.



5.8 LET US SUM UP

Let us now have a quick recap of what we have learnt in this unit:

1. Editing involves cutting, cropping, shaping, checking for grammatical errors, sizing etc. Every media organization keeps an army of people to render this specialized job of editing. They are called as the desk people or subbing people etc. The desk is also referred to as the news-room.
2. In the editing process the news are first scanned for news worthiness by the desk. The selected news items are then checked for factual and grammatical errors.
3. The hurried reporters in the pursuit of meeting deadlines are bound to make mistakes which needs proper corrections in terms of facts, figures, grammatical mistakes such as sentence construction, usage of words, punctuations etc.
4. Most of the times the desk looks for redundancies and clutter in the news copy. Moreover stories are trimmed in order to fit into the space available.
5. The editorial department consists of both reporting desk and editing desk and is headed by the editor. The editor is the ultimate decision - maker, guide, coordinator, and motivator and he is responsible for all the content of a newspaper.
6. Editorial team is headed by the editor followed by the executive editor, assistant editor(s), deputy editor, news editor, senior sub-editors, and

sub-editors. They all have specialized role to play and help the newspaper achieves its aims and objectives in the finest possible way.

7. Like news, photographs are edited in the news room. This piece of work is carried out by the Photo editor, who is skilled to render this service. There are different techniques that he employs while editing a photo, the most common being cropping and caption writing.



5.9 FURTHER READINGS

- **Essentials of Practical Journalism**, *Vir Bala Agarwal, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi*
- **News Writing,** *George A. Hough, Kanishka Publishers & Distributors, New Delhi*
- **Basic Journalism,** *Rangaswamy Parthasarathy, Macmillan India Ltd., New Delhi*



5.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q. No. 1 : Editing is the process of cutting the news, tailoring and shaping them in order to make them worthy of publishing in the newspapers.

Ans to Q. No. 2 : The four stages of news editing are:

a. Selection of news

b. Evaluation of quality of content

c. Correction and rewriting

d. Final checking to remove redundancies and bringing uniformity of language and style.

Ans to Q. No. 3 : The Editor

Ans to Q. No. 4 : a) The Editor: The editor is responsible for the entire content of a newspaper. He also takes the responsibilities of

planning and directing various operations that are carried out in a day. He not only has to plan, direct, supervise and take important decisions, but also has to ensure smooth functioning of different activities in a news organization.

b) The News Editor: The news editor is responsible for maintaining a steady and continuous flow of up-to-the-minute news items. The News editor must be able to spot an interesting news item when the others may have failed. Then again even if the reporters of other journalists of that organization miss anything of importance it is the responsibility of this person to spot it and instruct his or her colleagues to get the news out from the potential sources.

c) The Sub - editor: All news, articles and features meant for the newspaper pass through the sub-editor and it is the job of the sub-editor to sift through all the material, discard unnecessary copy, select the important and relevant matter and finally edit the copy to create readable, publishable news content. The sub-editor has to rewrite defective passages, reduce lengthy reports to precise matter, and write proper headlines and leads.

Ans to Q. No. 5 : The four composing elements of news are – headline, lead, body and conclusion.

Ans to Q. No. 6 : The qualities of a good headline are:

a. It must be appropriate
b. It must tell a story
c. It must conform to the paper's standard
d. It must not just be a label
e. It must not commit the paper to an opinion.

Ans to Q. No. 7 : The points to be remembered while editing the lead are:

a. It should be written in inverted pyramid style
b. It should contain the most important of the 5Ws and H
c. It should not be more than 30 – 35 words
d. It should be kept short, crisp and informative.

Ans to Q. No. 8 : Photo editing is the process of editing a photograph by cropping it, trimming it, resizing it and improving its quality, thereby making it fit for publication. It also involves giving a proper caption to the photograph.

Ans to Q. No. 9 : The role of the photo editor is to select and edit photographs that land in the media office everyday. He not only has to make the photographs fit for publication by cropping them, trimming them, resizing them and improving their quality but also provides an appropriate caption to the photograph so as to place the photograph in a context.

Ans to Q. No. 10 : a. Cropping is creative cutting and resizing of a photograph or a picture to improve its visual impact and quality.

b. A caption is a short description of the contents of a photograph. It tells what the photograph is all about.



5.11 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

Q1 : Briefly describe the different stages of editing.

Q2 : Describe the newsroom set up in a news organization

Q3 : What are the stages of photo editing?

Q4 : Explain the roles of the different editorial staff in a news organization?

*****

UNIT - 6 : EDITING & DESIGN

UNIT STRUCTURE

6.1 Learning Objectives
6.2 Introduction
6.3 Headline types and styles
6.4 Page layout
6.5 Page make-up
6.6 Let Us Sum Up
6.7 Further Readings
6.8 Answers To Check Your Progress
6.9 Possible Questions

6.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to:

- describe the different types of headlines.
- analyze the importance of page design.
- describe the basics of page layout and page make up.

6.2 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, we have learnt some of the basic concepts of editing. But editing does not only refer to editing the contents of a copy. Editing is a far broader concept. In this unit we shall try to go a little deeper into this.

As we have already learnt, headlining is a very important part of editing. In this unit we shall deal with a few more aspects of headline writing and editing. Another important part of editing is page designing and make-up. Without having a clear picture about these areas the knowledge of editing is truly incomplete. Therefore, in this unit we will learn more about the process of editing and many other important concepts related to the field of journalism, like types of headlines, page make up and design, essential for an editor.



Space: Space in newspaper, is measured in terms of **column centimeter (cc)**. A **column** is the basic division of a newspaper page into vertical lengths of equal width. Usually, a newspaper page is divided into seven, eight or nine columns. **1 cc** is the space occupied by a news story/ advertisement/ photograph (or any other matter in a newspaper page) that has a **depth of 1 cm** and a **breadth of 1 column**. Therefore, the number of columns occupied by the matter multiplied by the depth (in cms) gives the column centimeter measure of the matter. For instance, if the matter is 15 cm deep and runs across 2 columns, then the matter occupies 30 cc space.

This unit will help you get a more complete picture of the editing process. So let us start off by learning a little more about headlines.

6.3 HEADLINE TYPES AND STYLES

The ability to write good, appropriate and catchy headlines is certainly a valuable skill for an editor. However, headline writing is not merely about using the right words in the right order to frame the sentence but also about the physical placement of the headline on the page in the story and distribution of the constituent words, attributing it with the proper length, font, font size etc, keeping in mind the factors like the type of the story (Hard news? Soft news? Feature? Article?) , relative importance of the story compared to other stories, the space the story has occupied etc. As such, there are a number of ways in which a headline can be written. While some of these are stylistic devices (font type, style and size, font colour, use of artwork in headlines etc.) used in order to make the headline catchier, some others are used to make the headline fit within the available **space**. There are some headline styles and types commonly seen in the newspapers. Headlines are classified based on number of lines used, alignment of the lines, and special headlines which use different stylistic devices to achieve different purposes. These categories are not independent of each other and the definitions are overlapping. Almost every headline will have one of the characteristics of each of the categories.

BASED ON NUMBER OF LINES

SINGLE LINE HEADLINE

When the headline contains just one sentence and extends along the same line only, then it is called a single-line headline. Look at the example given below.

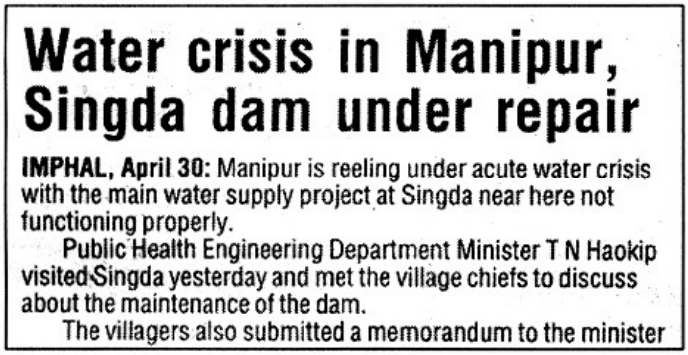


Govt apathy over forest protection flayed

By A Staff Reporter
GUWAHATI, March 25 – Opposition members in the Assembly today alleged apathy in the cut motions on the demand for grant of Rs 20,865.52 lakh for the Forest Department in the State Assembly today, denying by the smugglers has been adding to the problems of rise in the riverbeds and man-animal conflict. But the Government most of the forest officers are lacking in their commitment to their assigned responsibilities, he said.

DOUBLE- LINE HEADLINE

In case of some headline, the sentence extends to two lines. This type of headline is called double-line headline.

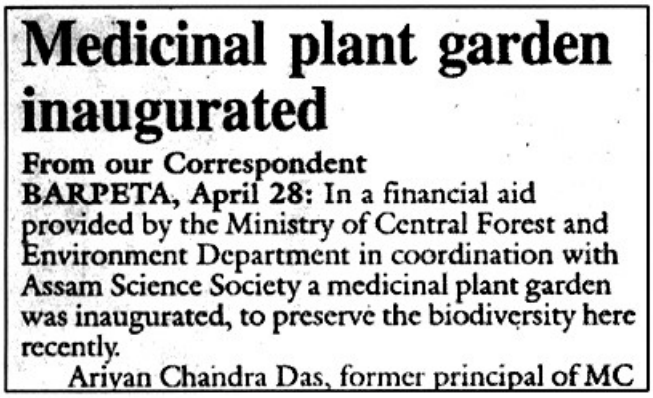


Water crisis in Manipur, Singda dam under repair

IMPHAL, April 30: Manipur is reeling under acute water crisis with the main water supply project at Singda near here not functioning properly.

Public Health Engineering Department Minister T N Haokip visited Singda yesterday and met the village chiefs to discuss about the maintenance of the dam.

The villagers also submitted a memorandum to the minister



Medicinal plant garden inaugurated

From our Correspondent

BARPETA, April 28: In a financial aid provided by the Ministry of Central Forest and Environment Department in coordination with Assam Science Society a medicinal plant garden was inaugurated, to preserve the biodiversity here recently.

Arivan Chandra Das, former principal of MC

MULTIPLE LINE HEADLINE

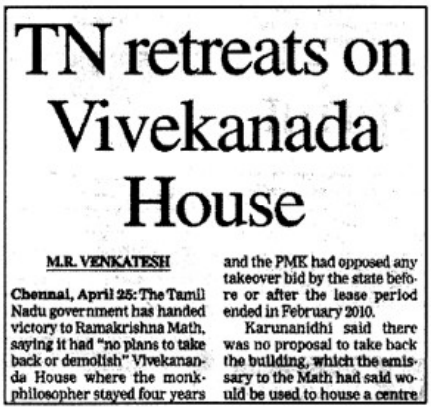
When the same sentence extends to three lines or more, then it is called a multiple line headline.



Sino-Indian trade at Nathu La postponed

GANGTOK, May 1 – The annual Sino-India border trade at Nathu La, which was to be reopened today, has been postponed following the Commerce Ministry's communique to the Sikkim government, official sources said here.

"We have received a fax message from the Union Commerce



TN retreats on Vivekanada House

M.R. VENKATESH

Chennai, April 25: The Tamil Nadu government has handed victory to Ramakrishna Math, saying it had "no plans to take back or demolish" Vivekananda House where the monk-philosopher stayed four years and the PMK had opposed any takeover bid by the state before or after the lease period ended in February 2010.

Karunanidhi said there was no proposal to take back the building, which the emissary to the Math had said would be used to house a centre

BASED ON ALIGNMENT

FLUSH LEFT HEADLINE

When a single or multiple line headline is aligned to the left margin, it is called a flush left headline. The white space at the right is considered enhancing, because it allows "air" into the otherwise stuffy column spaces and makes it more pleasing to the eye. Flush left is the most commonly used headline today. When in a flush left headline, every next line is longer than the previous one, it is called a **stepped headline**.



New HAKP committee formed

From our Correspondent

HATSINGIMARI, April 28: The oath taking ceremony of the newly formed committee of Hatsingimari Anchalik Karmachari Parishad (HAKP) was held in the Press Club, here yesterday.

The meeting was presided over by Abdul

Medicinal plant garden inaugurated

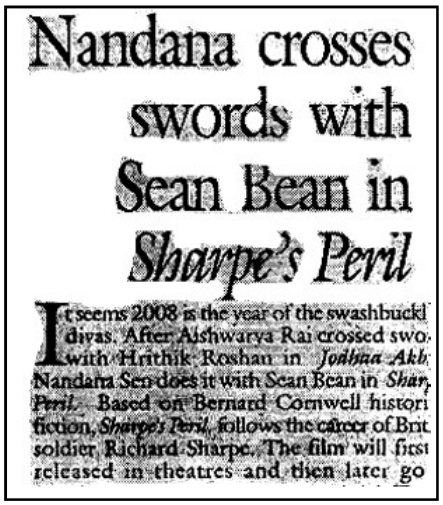
From our Correspondent

BARPETA, April 28: In a financial aid provided by the Ministry of Central Forest and Environment Department in coordination with Assam Science Society a medicinal plant garden was inaugurated, to preserve the biodiversity here recently.

Arivan Chandra Das, former principal of MC

FLUSH RIGHT HEADLINE/ REVERSE STEP HEADLINE

It is reverse of the flush left head. Here the lines are pushed against the right margin to create a stepped effect on the left. It is not a very commonly used headline.



Nandana crosses swords with Sean Bean in *Sharpe's Peril*

It seems 2008 is the year of the swashbuckl divas. After Aishwarya Rai crossed swo with Hrithik Roshan in *Jodhaa Akb* Nandana Sen does it with Sean Bean in *Shar Peril*. Based on Bernard Cornwell histori fiction, *Sharpe's Peril*, follows the career of Brit soldier, Richard Sharpe. The film will first released in theatres and then later go

FLUSH CENTRE HEADLINE/ CENTRED HEADLINE

This is also a headline of more than one line where all the lines are centre aligned.



Sino-Indian trade at Nathu La postponed

GANGTOK, May 1 – The annual Sino-India border trade at Nathu La, which was to be reopened today, has been postponed following the Commerce Ministry's communique to the Sikkim government, official sources said here.

"We have received a fax message from the Union Commerce

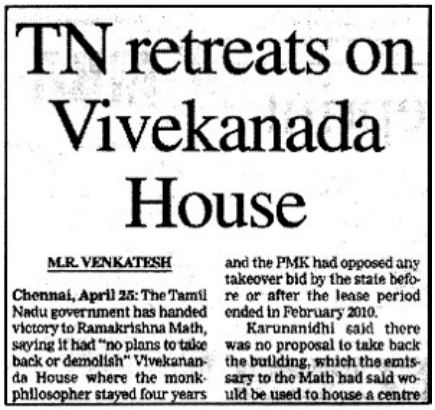


Badrinath to open for visitors on May 9

DEHRA DUN, May 1: A trip to the four most holy pilgrimages in Uttarakhand - the Yamnotri, Gangotri, Kedarnath and Badrinath, collectively referred to as the *Char Dham*, will now be costlier and

INVERTED PYRAMID HEADLINE

This is a headline style of three or four lines aligned centre, where each successive line is shorter than the one above. Its use is relatively less.



TN retreats on Vivekanada House

M.R. VENKATESH

Chennai, April 25: The Tamil Nadu government has handed victory to Ramakrishna Math, saying it had "no plans to take back or demolish" Vivekananda House where the monk-philosopher stayed four years and the PMK had opposed any takeover bid by the state before or after the lease period ended in February 2010.

Karunanidhi said there was no proposal to take back the building, which the emissary to the Math had said would be used to house a centre

SPECIAL HEADLINES

BANNER HEADLINE

The banner headline is a large headline of one or more lines extending across the entire page. It is so called because this headline looks like the **banner or flag** of the newspaper. It is also known as the ***streamer***. It is used only in case of very important news in order to draw attention. Now-a-days some feature stories also use this kind of headline.

In very rare cases the banner headline runs above the flag. It is called the ***skyline***. It is used sparingly and the news has to be really very big to merit such a headline.



Banner/ Flag: The designed title of newspaper. The name of a newspaper or magazine as it appears in large letters on top of the front page or cover.


TIMES NATION

Filmmakers Stay Away From Shooting Outdoors In Mumbai Because Of Red Tape And The Constant Demand For Bribes

A LOT OF TROUBLE SHOOTING

THE RAVE FIVE

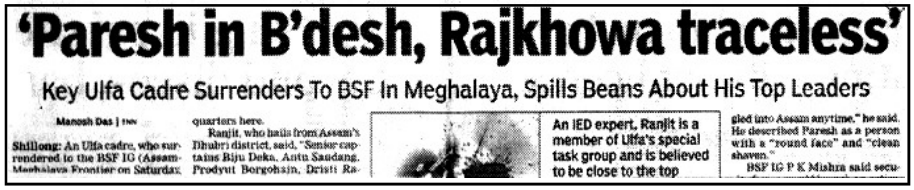
THE RAVE CHART

PERMISSION

INTERMISSION

CROSSLINE OR BLANKET HEADLINE

The cross line head is very similar to a banner headline but it does not cover the full width of the page. It however covers all the columns of the story.


'Paresh in B'desh, Rajkhowa traceless'

Key Ulfa Cadre Surrenders To BSF In Meghalaya, Spills Beans About His Top Leaders

Manosh Das | TNN

Shillong: An Ulfa cadre, who surrendered to the BSF IG (Assam-Meghalaya Frontier on Saturday,

quarters here.

Ranjit, who hails from Assam's Dhubri district, said, "Senior captains Biju Deka, Antu Saudang, Prodyut Borgohain, Dristi Ra-

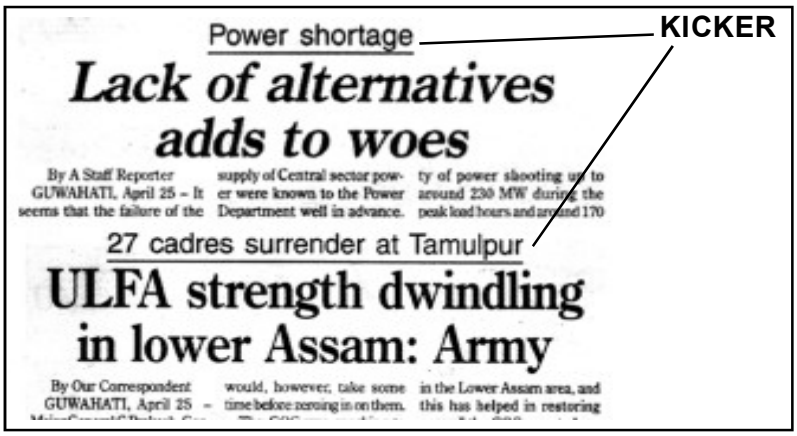
An IED expert, Ranjit is a member of Ulfa's special task group and is believed to be close to the top

gled into Assam anytime," he said. He described Paresh as a person with a "round face" and "clean shaven."

BSF IG P K Mishra said secu-

KICKER

When two important pieces of information are to be carried in the headline, then the headline is broken into two sentences. The second line of the headlines is apparently bolder and bigger in size. Above this there is another sub-ordinate headline which is half the size of the one below and also with different font style. It is called **kicker** or **eyebrow line** or **strapline.** It adds a new thought but does not repeat the words or information in the main line below. To add white space, the kicker is always underlined.


Power shortage

KICKER

Lack of alternatives adds to woes

By A Staff Reporter

GUWAHATI, April 25 – It seems that the failure of the supply of Central sector power were known to the Power Department well in advance. ty of power shooting up to around 230 MW during the peak load hours and around 170

27 cadres surrender at Tamulpur

ULFA strength dwindling in lower Assam: Army

By Our Correspondent

GUWAHATI, April 25 – would, however, take some time before zeroing in on them. in the Lower Assam area, and this has helped in restoring

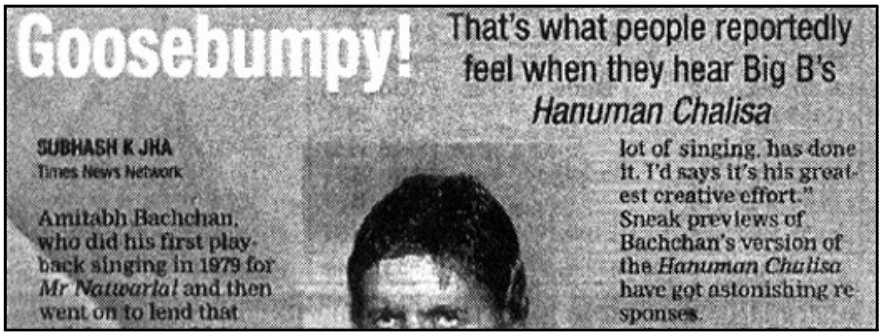
REVERSE KICKER OR HAMMER HEADLINE

As the name suggests, this headline is exactly the reverse of the kicker headline. Here the kicker over line is set twice the size of the hammer headline below. Although the over line is bigger than the hammer, the hammer is still considered to be the main headline. This headline was originally used mainly in feature stories only, but now-a-days it is used for hard news stories as well.



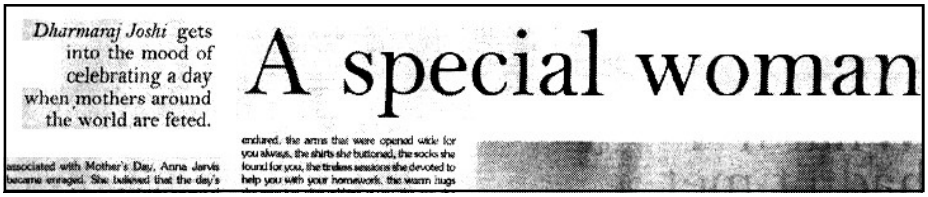
TRIPOD HEADLINE

The tripod head is a single, short line of larger type set to the left of two or three lines of smaller type. The tripod portion (larger wording) should be twice the size of the definition or main headline. For example, a 36-point tripod would dictate that the main head be set in 18-point type to give the true tripod appearance. Punctuation in the form of a colon is required when the tripod conveys a separate thought.



WICKET HEAD

The wicket head is a tripod in reverse — short line of larger type set to the right of two or three (or more) lines of smaller type. The colon is not used in the wicket. This headline is seldom used and its actual design varies from newspaper to newspaper.


Dharmaraj Joshi gets into the mood of celebrating a day when mothers around the world are feted.

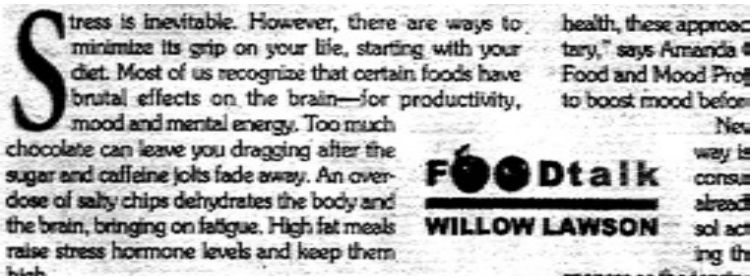
A special woman

associated with Mother's Day, Anna Jarvis became enraged. She believed that the day's

endured, the arms that were opened wide for you always, the shirts she buttoned, the socks she found for you, the tireless sessions she devoted to help you with your homework, the warm hugs

NOVELTY HEAD

The novelty head features typographical tricks, such as setting part of the head upside down, using an ornate typeface or substituting artwork as characters. It is used sparingly and is appropriate for feature articles only.


Stress is inevitable. However, there are ways to minimize its grip on your life, starting with your diet. Most of us recognize that certain foods have brutal effects on the brain—for productivity, mood and mental energy. Too much chocolate can leave you dragging after the sugar and caffeine jolts fade away. An overdose of salty chips dehydrates the body and the brain, bringing on fatigue. High fat meals raise stress hormone levels and keep them

health, these approac
tary," says Amanda
Food and Mood Proj
to boost mood befor
Ne
way is
consu
alread
sol ac
ing th

FOODtalk

WILLOW LAWSON


FEEDBACK

Tease talks

APROPOS of 'Tease talks' (*Horizon*, March 29, 2008), I totally agree with what Dr Jyotsna Bhattacharjee has written about the problem of eve-teasing in our society. It's a fact that we have lost control over

SIDE HEAD

The side head is a headline form that runs alongside a story. It is normally three or four lines and looks best when set flush right. A side head is usually placed slightly above the center of the story.


Are you fighting fit?

JUMP HEAD

This headline is designed to help the reader find a portion of a story continued from another page. The jump head uses one or two key words from the headline that introduced the story. It is set flush left followed by the words "Continued from Page ##," usually set in boldface body type or at times in italics.



Railway recruitment

Disabilities Act provisions flouted

By Our Correspondent

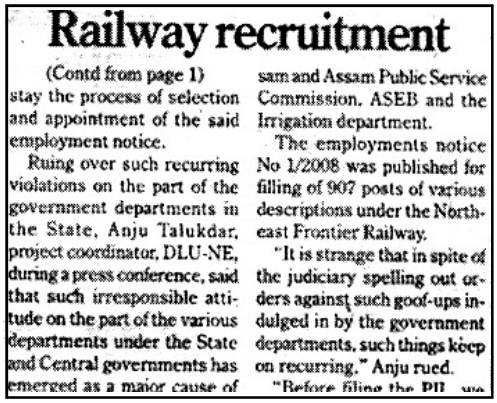
GUWAHATI, May 10 –In yet another major goof-up, the Railway Recruitment Board (RRB), in its latest employment notice, allegedly violated the provisions of the Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995 by overlooking the statutory requirement of at least 3 per cent reservation for persons with disabilities as mandated by the Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995.

Though the employment notice dated March 22, 2008, had the prescribed reservation for the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and the Other Backward Classes (OBC), surprisingly it did not had any reservation for the disabled.

This is the fourth such instance in the last one year, where government departments have been caught on the wrong foot for virtually making a mockery of the Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995.

Following the publication of the notice under RRB, Anju Talukdar, coordinator of the Disability Law Unit (DLU) and Susmita Kaur, assistant project coordinator under Sishu Sarothi, a non-government organisation, filed a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) in the Gauhati High Court, which prompted the court, through an interim order, to

(See page 10)



Railway recruitment

(Contd from page 1)

stay the process of selection and appointment of the said employment notice.

Ruing over such recurring violations on the part of the government departments in the State, Anju Talukdar, project coordinator, DLU-NE, during a press conference, said that such irresponsible attitude on the part of the various departments under the State and Central governments has emerged as a major cause of

sam and Assam Public Service Commission, ASEB and the Irrigation department.

The employments notice No 1/2008 was published for filling of 907 posts of various descriptions under the North-east Frontier Railway.

"It is strange that in spite of the judiciary spelling out orders against such goof-ups indulged in by the government departments, such things keep on recurring," Anju rued.

"Before filing the PIL, we

STANDING HEAD

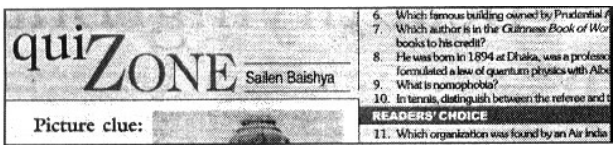
The standing head is essentially a label used for regular or recurring content, such as sports, science columns etc. It does not change from issue to issue.



The Reality of Mumbai

ON THE SPOT

Tavleen Singh



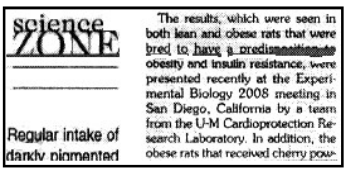
quiZONE Sailen Baishya

Picture clue:

6. Which famous building owned by Prudential
7. Which author is in the *Guinness Book of Wor* books to his credit?
8. He was born in 1894 at Dhaka, was a professo formulated a law of quantum physics with Alb
9. What is nomophobia?
10. In tennis, distinguish between the referee and t

READERS' CHOICE

11. Which organization was found by an Air India



science ZONE

Regular intake of dandy pigmented

The results, which were seen in both lean and obese rats that were bred to have a predisposition to obesity and insulin resistance, were presented recently at the Experimental Biology 2008 meeting in San Diego, California by a team from the U-M Cardioprotection Research Laboratory. In addition, the obese rats that received cherry pow-



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q1. What are the different factors based on which headlines can be classified?

Q2. What are the different types of headlines based on number of lines?

Q3. What are the types of headlines based on alignment?

Q4. Which headline spreads across all the columns of a newspaper?

Q5. Which headline spreads across all the columns occupied by the news?



ACTIVITY 6.1

1. Take any newspaper and make a note of the different types of headlines used on the front page. Identify each headline by its type. Now check which headline has been used the most no. of times.
2. Now compare the headlines on the front page and any of the inside pages. Do you find any difference in the types of headlines used in both the pages? Make a note of your analysis. What do you think is the reason for this difference?

6.4 PAGE LAYOUT

In this age of stiff competition among publications, content alone is not the criterion that makes a newspaper or magazine sell. Newspaper is today like any other commercial product and readers have to be lured into buying the product not simply by giving them good quality of content but also packaging it in an attractive manner. That is why creating an attractive layout and ensuring attractive page make-up for the newspaper is very important for any publication.

The layout is the look of the newspaper page. It is the blue print showing the placement of all the elements of the final product, designed to attract the readers and acquire a position in the market. It is the complete get-up and personality of a newspaper. Hence, it is considered as one of the most vital processes in newspaper production. Whether it is a newspaper or magazine, all publications give due importance to this aspect. Designers in some newspapers are very highly paid professionals. Many publications, particularly the big ones, have an art department where experts and art designers make up the pages with the help of sub-editors.



Ear Panel: Small box in the upper corner of a news page, usually on page 1.



Anchor Story: The news story (usually feature type) carried at the bottom middle position of the front page of newspapers. The position is called the anchor position.

Preparing the layout of a newspaper is not an easy task as it involves many considerations operating upon the person making the layout. It involves judicious placement of news and pictures at the rightful places, so that the value of the news remains intact and pictures supplement and add credibility to the news. Laying out pictures is an art in itself and requires high degree of aesthetics. The right impact of a picture can be created only by the selection of the right picture, proper size, proper cutting and its proper placement within a page. As such, some publications even have picture editors at a very senior level. Layout also means usage of appropriate headline fonts and style so that the news items get properly highlighted. Placement of advertisements also comes under the purview of the layout artist, even though the positions of the advertisements are decided well in advance by the advertising department.

Again, the layout of every page will not be the same. The layout of the first page will be very different from that of the inside pages as the first page will have some additional elements like the flag, **ear panels**, the **anchor story**, and in most newspapers, there is also a cartoon, the weather report, and brief news capsules/snippets. These elements will not be found in the inside pages. Again, the editorial page is also different from the rest of the pages. It has the editorial, letters to the editor and usually two articles. As such the layouts will also be different.

For most readers, ease of reading is very important. No one likes to read a newspaper carelessly crammed with news and pictures. A good, well-planned and well-executed layout is also indication of good and meticulously prepared content inside. For a publication which does not make the effort to present the newspaper properly will most likely do the same to the content inside as well. Again, when one buys a newspaper from the news-stand, he or she first scans the newspapers stocked in the news-stand. He or she would perhaps end up buying the one that stands out among the rest and which catches his attention first with an attractive pleasant design with colors and variety and which, with all the constituent elements, still looks balanced and soothing to the eyes.

Another thing which a layout designer has to keep in mind is the creation of enough breathing space in the pages. White space is very crucial to the look and readability of a newspaper. It not only makes the page look neat and elegant, but also makes it soothing to the eye and increases its readability. Many newspapers ignore this aspect and in their attempt to accommodate maximum matter leave very little white space. The result is a fully packed page which often repels the readers.

A newspaper's layout can be static or dynamic. When a newspaper always uses the same kind of layout everyday, then it is said to have a static layout. On the other hand, if the newspaper experiments with different kinds of layouts all the time, then it is said to have dynamic layout. Both types have their own advantages and disadvantages. While a static layout establishes a style and identity for the newspaper, it can at times become monotonous for the readers who see the same layout day after day. But it can also guide the reader, as the regular reader will know exactly where to look for what, if the layout remains static. The dynamic layout, on the other hand, infuses an element of surprise and consequently expectation and excitement in the reader as they can never predict what is new about the newspaper that will greet the readers the next morning. But, at times, it can be confusing and irritating also, if the newspaper overdoes it. Dynamic layout is good, but within limits.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q6. What do you mean by page layout?

_____

_____

_____

Q7. What are the building blocks of a news page?

_____

_____

_____

Q8. Define the following:

a. Ear panel

_____

_____

_____

b. Anchor position

_____

_____

_____

ACTIVITY 6.2

1. Consider two major regional dailies and make a comparison of their layout. Which one is better and why?
2. Make a comparison between an important regional daily and a national daily. Find out the points of difference in their layout.

6.5 PAGE MAKE-UP

Once the layout is prepared, the layout artist sits to make up the page with pre-conceived design in hand. Preparing the layout of a newspaper page is like preparing the architectural blue print of a house, while the **page make-up** is constructing the house with bricks, cement, sand, tin, stones etc. The only difference, here, is that the layout artist uses news, advertisements, photographs etc as his raw material to construct the real page from the structure he has in hand.

Now with all these materials the layout person attempts to strike a balance between news, photographs, advertisements etc. This balancing act is very important as the look of the newspaper is as vital as its content. The basic objectives of page make-up are to - indicate the importance of the news, make the page easy to read and make the page attractive.

Extensive research has established that the eye enters a newspaper page at the top left corner. It is called the **Primary Optical area**. After entry the reading eye moves downward at a southeasterly incline until it reaches the bottom right of the page. The line that is thus formed from the top left to the bottom right is called the 'Line of Reading.' If this theory is adequately followed while placing the different items, the newspaper can itself act as a guide to the readers and ensure that the news which it wants to be read most are placed in more visible positions. It can emphasize through their placement, the relative importance of stories and photographs in the newspaper. Through its proper placement, the lead news of the day is made to look like the lead news and remain prominent among the rest. It is also important that every news should also get their rightful positions, without any important news getting buried in the process.

In order to achieve this, when he is placing the news, the layout person has to be aware of the practices which readers of every English and other left-to-right languages automatically follow while reading a newspaper. He has to analyze the eye behaviour and decide how he should arrange the different items so that the page is not only balanced, but also dynamic. For instance, each page of a newspaper has a **focal point** - a point on the page to which the reader normally looks for the most important story. Any area can be the focal point, depending on the chosen design. Advertisements can also dictate the focal points of the inside pages of a newspaper.

During the early times, many newspapers placed the focal point in the upper right-hand corner. Through the use of banner headlines that extended more than half the width of the page, readers were trained to seek the upper right-hand corner of the front page. This was based on the assumption that newspaper readers start reading by following the banner headline across the page and continue down the right-hand side of the page. Therefore, it was inferred that newspaper readers came to expect the most important story in each issue to appear or touch in the upper right-hand corner of the front page.

However, the right-hand focal point is not as important to make-up editors today, as in the past, since fewer newspapers use banner headlines on the lead story unless the story is extremely important. But there are still many newspapers which carry the most important story in the upper right-hand corner of the front page because of established practices.

Today, a large number of newspaper editors use the upper left-hand corner as the focal point. These editors think that readers, trained in school to read other literature from left to right, prefer their newspapers to be designed that way too. A few editors still use other areas, such as the upper center of the front page as the focal point.

Choosing the appropriate headline font and font style for each news is also an important consideration for the layout artist. Font size is often an indicator of a story's importance. Even a very important story may get buried if the headline is not significantly played up.

Another important purpose of make-up is to attract the buyer so that he will be impelled to select one newspaper as more appealing over others. The make-up has to be such that there is variety and an artistic appearance so that there is no monotony. For all these acts the layout artist should have the sense of aesthetics and a vision for creativity. Else, he will fail to deliver a beautiful, well-balanced and standard product of newspaper to the people.

Now-a-days, most of the work of layout preparation is done on computer. Two popular editing softwares are Quark Express and Adobe Page Maker.



LET US KNOW

There are four basic types of lines used in make-up. They are vertical, diagonal, circular and horizontal. The vertical line is used to make the reader read up and down the page. The line is carried out on the page by displaying stories, headlines and pictures vertically on the page. The diagonal line makes the reader read through the page. The line is carried

out on the page by displaying headlines and pictures so together they form a diagonal line from the upper left-hand corner to the lower right-hand corner of the page. The circular line gets the reader to read around the page. The line is carried out on the page by displaying stories, headlines and pictures on the page so that the reader can see each as being equally important. This creates a tendency on the reader's part to read all the stories. The horizontal line is used in newspaper make-up to get the reader to read back and forth on the page. The line is carried out by displaying stories, headlines and pictures horizontally on the page. The horizontal line is a post-World War II development and it is probably the most striking change in the appearance of newspapers in this century. It is a characteristic of many present-day newspapers.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q9. Define page make-up.

_____

_____

_____

Q10. What is the relationship between page layout and page make-up?

_____

_____

_____

Q11. What is the importance of page make-up?

_____

_____

_____



6.6 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have learnt about a few more aspects of editing. Let us recall what we have learnt.

1. Headline writing is a specialized skill which involves not only writing the headline but also its placement and arrangement within the news story, and attribution of different stylistic elements to create the desired effect.

2. There are different types of headlines based on the number of lines that constitute the headline, the alignment of the lines and the style used for writing the headline.

3. Preparing the layout of a page is also another part of editing. A ideal layout is that which is balanced in terms of presentation of news, pictures, cartoons, advertisements and judicious use of white space which offer the readers a free flow to their eye movement.

4. Once the layout is prepared by the layout artist, it is then filled up with necessary details. This process is called page make-up and involves making the page look attractive and the different elements stand out.

5. Now-a-days, the entire process, from layout preparation to page making, is accomplished with the help of computers. There are especial software for this purpose like Page Maker, Quark Express etc.



6.7 FURTHER READINGS

- **Essentials of Practical Journalism —** *Vir Bala Agarwal, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi*
- **News Writing –** *George A. Hough, Kanishka Publications and Distributors, New Delhi*
- **Basic Journalism –** *Rangaswamy Parthasarathy, MacMilan India Ltd., New Delhi*

6.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q. No. 1 : The factors based on which headlines are classified are:

a. Number of lines used

b. Alignment of the lines

c. Use of different stylistic devices to achieve different purposes.

Ans to Q. No. 2 : The different types of headlines based on the number of lines are:

a. Single line headline

b. Double line headline

c. Multiple line headline

Ans to Q. No. 3 : The different types of headlines based on alignment are:

a. Left flush headline

b. Right flush headline

c. Centre flush headline. Centre flush headline also has a variant called inverted pyramid headline.

Ans to Q. No. 4 : Banner headline

Ans to Q. No. 5 : Crossline or blanket headline.

Ans to Q. No. 6 : The layout is the look of the newspaper page. It is the way the newspaper page is arranged or laid out complete with news, advertisements, photographs, cartoons etc. so as to attract the readers and acquire a position in the market. It is the complete get-up and personality of a newspaper.

Ans to Q. No. 7 : The building blocks of a newspaper page are:

a. News (including headlines)

b. Photographs

c. Advertisements

d. White space

Ans to Q. No. 8 : a. Ear panel : Ear panel is a small box in the upper corner of a news page, usually on page 1. It is used for advertisements for special columns.

b. Anchor Position: It is the bottom middle position in the front page of a newspaper. The story that is carried in this position, usually a feature or a special regular column, is called the anchor story.

Ans to Q. No. 9 : Page make-up is the process of actual arrangement of all the elements in a news page based on the predetermined layout to compile the final product.

Ans to Q. No. 10 : The relationship between page layout and page make-up is very profound. Once the layout is prepared, the layout artist sits to make up the page with pre-conceived layout in hand. Preparing the layout of a newspaper page is like preparing the architectural blue print of a house, while page make-up is constructing the house with bricks, cement, sand, tin, stones etc. The only difference, here, is that the layout artist uses news, advertisements, photographs etc as his raw material to construct the real page from the structure he has in hand.

Ans to Q. No. 11 : For any newspaper reader two things are very important – that the page should be attractive and that it should be easily readable and not straining to the eye. As such a neatly and attractively made up page is the key to hook the reader. The very purpose of make-up is to achieve this.

The page can be made attractive and balanced by resorting to a judicious blend of news, pictures and advertisements, innovative typefaces in certain places, particularly headlines, to attract attention and use of boxes, colour etc to highlight important news. Readability on the other hand can be achieved by using a good, simple, easily readable font, a standard font size that is neither too big nor too small and the use of the right amount of white space so that the page is neither too crammed up nor too airy.



6.9 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

Q1. Headline writing is a specialized skill. Discuss.

Q2. What are the different types of headlines?

Q3. Why a layout is important for a newspaper?

Q4. What is the relationship between layout and page making?

Q5. What is the difference between page layout and page make-up?

Q6. The layout and make-up of a newspaper can sell or mar a newspaper. Comment.

*****

UNIT - 7 : NEWS AGENCIES

UNIT STRUCTURE

7.1 Learning Objectives

7.2 Introduction

7.3 News Agencies

7.4 Role and Functions

7.5 History of News Agencies in India

7.6 Important News Agencies

7.7 Editing Wire Copy

7.8 Let Us Sum Up

7.9 Further Readings

7.10 Answers To Check Your Progress

7.11 Possible Questions

7.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to:

- Define a news agency.
- Describe the role and functions of a news agency.
- Delineate the history of News Agencies in India.
- Name and describe the important news agencies.
- Explain the concept of editing wire copy.

7.2 INTRODUCTION

In the previous units we have discussed about the various aspects related to news reporting and editing which are considered to be very crucial to the profession of journalism. However, there is another important concept with regards to this profession which we will discuss in this last unit of the course on News. The concept in question is news agencies.

News agencies are integral components of the profession of journalism, without the efficient functioning of which news organizations will find it very difficult to survive. News agencies are one of the major sources of news for newspapers and electronic media organization on whom they rely for authentic and speedy news as well as features. And without knowing about the news agency's operations, our efforts to learn about the profession of journalism will be incomplete.

Let us, therefore, start off by finding out what exactly is a news agency and how it is different from any other media organization.

7.3 NEWS AGENCIES

News agencies form a major source of news for print as well as electronic media, without which media organizations would find it difficult to operate. It is practically not possible for news media to have reporters and correspondents placed in every corner of the world as it would invite unmanageable expenses on the part of the news organisation. As such, to a large extent, even large news organisations depend on news agencies for general news coverage while the newspaper representatives concentrate on important happenings. Smaller newspapers which cannot afford to have more than a few reporters are more dependent on news agencies for news.

Like newspapers, news agencies also gather and process news, but unlike newspapers, they do so for the purpose of disseminating to the various media organizations which subscribe to their services. They distribute the copy to subscribers electronically, as by teletype (telegraph, fax) or the Internet. As such, news agencies are also known as wire services (as they use wire communication, i.e. telegraph, fax etc). Therefore, news agency copies are also called wire copy. Before the advent of the internet, telegraph and fax were the main means of delivering news by the agencies.

The UNESCO has defined news agency as follows:

"News agency is an undertaking of which the principle 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 it to a group of news enterprises and in exceptional circumstances to private individuals with a view to providing them with as complete and impartial news service as possible against payment and under conditions compatible with business laws and usage."



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q1. What is a news agency?

Q2. What is UNESCO's definition of news agency?

Q3. What is the other term for news agency?

Q4. How do news agencies distribute news to its clients?

Q5. What is the basic difference between newspaper and news agency?

7.4 ROLE AND FUNCTIONS

News agencies process information for use by media organisations and not for consumption of the larger masses of people. The subscribers of news agencies include different newspapers, magazines, radio stations, and television channels, media institutes, who have to pay a certain amount as subscription fees on monthly, quarterly or yearly basis.

In addition to news service, news agencies also provide photo service and features service. Today, their services are available to the subscribers through the internet also. In this system, the subscribers are allotted a specific 'password' or 'codeword' and the subscriber can access online the news items, photographs and features from the pool made available by the agency according to its necessity and download whatever is found to be important.

News agencies do not issue customized reports to newspapers or TV channels. They distribute the same account of an event to all its clients. They always try their best to provide demonstrably correct information. Objectivity and neutrality are the two philosophies that form the core of any news agency. Just like any newspaper or broadcast channel, news agencies are also responsible for news credited to their name and can be susceptible to **defamation** or libel.



Defamation:
It is the communication of a statement that makes a false claim, expressively stated or implied to be factual, that may give an individual, business, product, group, government or nation a negative image. Defamation is legally punishable.

Politics and economics usually form the staple of news agency reports. They also provide human interest stories and entertainment news in addition to politics though usually fewer in number. Now-a-days, however, this trend is changing and many news agencies are seen covering such news also with interest. The major news agencies now-a-days have special financial services, stock and market watch, sports services, special services in different languages, international services and a host of other specialized services in other to attract more customers and survive the growing competition. Most news agencies now-a-days cover news for not just print media but also for web and broadcast media. Such news agencies are known as multi media news agencies.

The lifeblood of any news agency is speed and accuracy. In order to survive in the market, they have to try to provide the information ahead of competitors and at the same time ensure accuracy of information.

Here are some of the important recommendations of the Kuldip Nayar Committee on the role and functions of news agencies in India. The committee was constituted in the year 1977 to suggest what the future set up of news agencies in India should be:

1. Objectivity, adequacy and independence are the three main attributes needed for the news agency system of the country.
2. The news agency system should adequately cover all aspects of the country's life and not merely political events and the news from urban areas. The rich milieu of contemporary Indian life should be fully reflected.
3. Consequently, the dissemination of news by the agencies has to take place increasingly through the different Indian languages.
4. Govt. must follow a self-denying policy of not interfering in any way with the work of news agencies.
5. It is necessary that the news agency system also covers news which is not only outside the orbit of government functioning, but which may imply criticism of authority. It is essential in a democracy that dissent should get adequate coverage.
6. The news agency system should not get identified with any vested interests: economic, social, communal or political.
7. The news agencies should maintain a high standard of performance, which would itself be a protection against interference from outside sources, including government.
8. News agencies, even during such situations as hostilities or international tensions and disputes, should strive to keep the people informed of the realities of the situation and not confine themselves only to the so-called popular view of events.

9. Different techniques of internal checks and supervisions, as well as evaluation of the news supplied to the subscribers, should be developed by news agencies in order to maintain a high standard of performance.

10. Programmes for professional training of the staff should be organised on an adequate scale. These should include training in managerial functions also.

11. Since news-reporting is a creative activity, selection of personnel should always be made strictly on merit, and there should be opportunities for promotion of talent.

12. An element of social responsibility in the building and function of a news agency system has to be recognised as a part of the concept of freedom of press.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q6. Why are news agencies important for media organizations?

_____

_____

_____

Q7. What are the main services provided by news agencies?

_____

_____

_____



ACTIVITY 7.1

1. Fix up an appointment with a local correspondent of an important news agency and interview him on how reporting for newspaper or TV is different from reporting for agency. Also find out about the functioning of a news agency.

7.5 HISTORY OF NEWS AGENCIES IN INDIA

The earliest news agencies in India that existed before Independence were the United Press of India (UPI), Free Press News Agency and the Associated Press of India (API), a subsidiary of Reuters, a news agency of Britain. API was founded by K.C. Roy. It was indeed the first Indian news agency and as such K.C. Roy is also known as the father of Indian news agency journalism.

API was acquired by Reuters in 1915. Since India was under the British rule at that time, API dominated the scene for a long time. The UPI and the Free Press News Agency were formed by Indian nationalists who were dissatisfied with the coverage given by the API to the Indian struggle for freedom but could do hardly anything to counter the API monopoly.

After independence, the API was transferred into Indian hands and a new news agency, the Press Trust of India (PTI), which was a cooperative effort of newspaper owners of India, was formed in 1948 after taking over the interest of API completely. In 1961 the United News of India (UNI) was formed. UPI, however, collapsed in 1958.

All of these news agencies were English language agencies and the Indian newspapers translated all agency copies before editing and publishing the news. The first Indian Language news agency was Hindustan Samachar and after that came Samachar Bharati.

When Emergency was declared in our country in 1975, all the four agencies - UNI, PTI, Hindustan Samachar and Samachar Bharati were merged and a new agency Samachar was formed. However, after the emergency was over, the four news agencies became separate again. Hindustan Samachar and Samachar Bharati could not sustain themselves for long and had to be closed down, but PTI and UNI geared themselves up and are the two major news agencies of our country today making their presence felt across the world. PTI's Hindi language service Bhasha and UNI's Hindi service Varta are the major Hindi language News Agencies in India today.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q8. Name India's earliest news agencies?

Q9. Which news agency dominated the scene before Independence?

Q10. Which news agency took over API after Independence?

Q11. Name India's first Hindi language News Agency.

Q12. What was the name of the news agency which was formed during the emergency of 1975 by the amalgamation of the existing news agencies?

7.6 IMPORTANT NEWS AGENCIES

There are a number of small and big news agencies functioning across the world today. The biggest and the most important transnational news agencies are Reuters of U.K., Agence France Press (AFP) of France, Associated Press (AP) of America, and United Press International (UPI) of

America. Apart from these four there are also many other foreign agencies operating in India and accredited to the Government of India. They include Tass of Russia, Kyodo of Japan, Deutsche Presse Agentur of Germany, Ansa of Italy, Central News Agency of China, Bangladesh Sangbad of Dacca among others.

Among the Indian News Agencies, the most important are United News of India (UNI), Press Trust of India (PTI) and their corresponding Hindi services Varta and Bhasha, Asian News International (ANI) and Indo-Asian News Service (IANS). There is also a news agency exclusively covering the North-east named North East News Agency (NENA).

Let us have a quick backgrounder of the important news agencies.

Agence France Presse (AFP):

Agence France-Presse (AFP), founded in 1835 by Charles-Louis Havas under the name of Agence Havas, is the world's oldest news agency and one of the world's top three. At first, Agence Havas used traditional news distribution methods, such as carrier pigeons, horse-drawn carriages and coaches, and mounted couriers to transmit news. The invention of the telegraph in 1845 gave Agence Havas its first taste of modern news transmission and quickly became a primary means of distribution throughout France and across Europe as well. By the end of its first decade, Agence Havas was already an international news distribution service. Today, the company has 200 photographers, 1,200 reporters, and more than 2,000 stringers, located in over 160 countries. Each day the company distributes more than two million words in French, English, German, Spanish, Portuguese, and Arabic. Moreover, AFP is the leading supplier of news and images to the Asian, African, and Middle Eastern regions. Its archive of seven million photographs, dating back to the 1930s, is one of the world's largest.

Reuters:

Reuters was set up in a small room in Paris by Paul Julius Reuter, a German by birth in the 1940s with the help of his wife. In 1950 he moved to London and by 1960 he had established himself as the chief supplier of foreign news to almost every newspaper in Britain and of news from Britain to

newspapers in other countries. From this modest beginning, Reuters has today risen to become the largest international multi-media news agency reporting extensively from around the world on a large variety of topics. But it is a specialist in financial news service, with 90% of its revenue coming from this area. Reuters today has over 50,000 employees in over 93 countries worldwide. In 2008 Reuters merged with another company Thomson Corporation and has been renamed as Thomson Reuters.

Associated Press (AP)

AP was founded in 1948. It is a co-operative, non-profit making cooperation and its entire source of revenue is subscription by members. AP is owned by its 1,500 U.S. daily newspaper members. AP has more than 4,000 employees working in more than 240 worldwide bureaus in 97 countries. 3,000 of AP's worldwide staff are journalists. AP supplies a steady stream of news around the clock to its domestic members, international subscribers and commercial customers.

United Press International (UPI)

UPI was founded in 1907 by E.W. Scripps under the name of United Press (UP). By 1921, UP eroded AP's hold on the European newspaper market and began servicing newspapers in Cologne, Frankfurt and Vienna. In 1922, UP began servicing newspapers on the Asian mainland. In 1935, UP became the first major American news service to supply news to radio stations. Ultimately, UP became the first North American news agency to provide compelling and comprehensive wire copy to newspapers in Europe, South America and the Far East. It became known as UPI when the UP merged with the International News Service in 1958, which was founded in 1909 by William Randolph Hearst. Today, side by side with many of the oldest and emerging media giants, UPI faces a new technological frontier with a passion to preserve the best of journalistic practices while engaging a citizenry of lay reporters, photographers, and videographers, and a plethora of sources to publish and receive information.

Press Trust of India (PTI)

PTI is India's largest news agency. It is a non-profit sharing cooperative owned by the country's newspapers. PTI subscribers include 450 newspapers in India and scores abroad. All major TV/Radio channels in India and several abroad, receive the PTI Service. It has a staff of over 1,300 including 400 journalists. It has over 80 bureaus across the country and foreign correspondents in major cities of the world including Beijing, Dhaka, Jerusalem, Johannesburg, Islamabad, Kathmandu, Kuala Lumpur, London, Moscow, New York, Washington and Sydney. In addition, there are about 475 stringers who contribute to the news file at home. It has arrangements with the Associated Press (AP), Agencies France Presse (AFP) and Bloomberg for distribution of their news in India, and with the Associated Press for its Photo Service and International commercial information. PTI exchanges news with nearly 100 news agencies of the world as part of bilateral and multilateral arrangements, including Non-Aligned News Agencies Pool and the Organization of Asia-Pacific News Agencies.

Bhasha

Bhasha is the Hindi language news service of PTI. With its own network in the Hindi-speaking states and drawing on PTI files, Bhasha puts out about 40,000 words per day.

United News of India (UNI)

UNI was launched in March, 1961, and has grown into one of the largest news agencies in Asia. Apart from news covering a wide range of topics, it also provides subscribers with a rich choice in features, interviews and human interest stories. UNI has more than 1000 subscribers in more than 100 locations in India and abroad. They include newspapers, radio and television networks, web sites, government offices and private and public sector corporations. UNI has more than 325 staff journalists around the country and more than 250 stringers, covering news events from remote corners. It also has correspondents in major world cities such as Washington, London, Dubai, Colombo, Kathmandu, Islamabad, Dhaka, Singapore, Sydney and Vancouver. UNI has collaboration agreements with several foreign news agencies, including Reuters and DPA. It also has news

exchange agreements with Xinhua of China, UNB of Bangladesh, Gulf News Agency of Bahrain, WAM of the United Arab Emirates, KUNA of Kuwait News Agency, ONA of Oman and QNA of Qatar. UNI's wire service is available in three languages — English, Hindi and Urdu.

Varta

Varta is UNI's Hindi news service. It was launched in 1982. It is a complete news service for Hindi newspapers and is today considered to be the biggest and most comprehensive service of its kind in the country, serving nearly 300 newspaper and non-newspaper subscribers in several states across India. Besides spot news, UNIVARTA provides news features on a wide variety of topics, including Art and Culture, Science, Agriculture, Economy, Heritage and India's neighbors.

Asian News International (ANI)

ANI was launched in the year 1975 by Mr. Prem Prakash, a pioneering TV journalist. ANI is today one of South Asia's leading multimedia news agencies with over 100 bureaus in India , South Asia and across the globe. Its range of products encompass loosely edited news feeds and customized programmes for television channels, audio bytes for radio stations, live web casting and streamed multimedia / text content for websites and mobile carriers, and news wire services for newspapers, magazines and websites. It also provides a range of facilities for foreign and domestic channels to package their reports in India and uplink via satellite. These include provision of professional crews, editing and post production facilities, access to our archives, unlinking facilities, coordinators, producers and correspondents, if required. Today's digital era is seeing ANI fast emerging as a 'Complete Content House' providing text, video and picture content for TV, print, mobile and online media, all under one roof.

Indo-Asian News Service (IANS)

Indo-Asian News Service (IANS) - formerly India Abroad News Service - was instituted in 1986 to act as an information bridge between India and North America and chronicle their growing ethnic, business and cultural links. IANS's USP is the coverage of the Indian diaspora, numbering about

25 million in 110 countries. IANS has carved a niche for itself not only in reporting India, South Asia and the large Indian diaspora spread across the world, but also global events that are of interest to and having impact on India, its geopolitics, its economy, its culture, society and national aspirations. Their team of journalists produce a steady output of news, features, analysis and commentaries. The subjects span politics, foreign policy, strategic affairs, corporate affairs, science, health, aviation, energy, technology, environment, the arts, literature, entertainment, social trends, human interest, religion and sports. In 1995 IANS started a Hindi Service. Today its subscriber base encompasses all leading newspapers, websites and other news outlets in Hindi. In 1998 IANS broke new ground with the launch of an Arabic Service for the Gulf and the Middle East.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q13. Name the world's largest 4 news agencies.

Q14. Name 4 important Indian news agencies.

Q15. What is the name of UNI's Hindi Service?

Q16. What is the name of PTI's Hindi Service?

Q17. Name the world's oldest news agency.

Q18. Write the full form of the following:

a. UNI b. PTI c. ANI d. IANS

e. AP f. AFP g. UPI

Q19. Name the founder of the following news agencies.

a. Reuters c. UPI b. APF d. ANI



ACTIVITY 7.2

1. Visit the websites of the mentioned news agencies and find out more about their history, growth and their different services.

7.7 EDITNG WIRE COPY

In the previous units, we have already learnt about copy editing. Just as the copy coming from the reporters and correspondents employed by the newspaper need to be edited for removal of inadequacies and for tailoring to fit the newspaper's style, wire copy too has to be edited. The agencies do some amount of editing, but that editing is usually not adequate to fulfill the newspapers' requirement since it is done in a hurry as the agencies are

very hard pressed to meet the deadlines. Since wire copy usually comes in huge quantities, in order to relieve the pressure of the regular copy editors, most newspapers engage a copy editor for exclusively handling wire copy. He is known as the wire editor.

Besides looking after the normal process of copy editing, the wire editor also has a few other responsibilities. The wire editor has to first filter through the huge quantity of wire copies and separate copies which carry 'publishable' matter'. Apart from the 'very important events that cannot be eliminated' the wire editor should also look for stories that present inspiring features, illuminate social trends, offer clear analysis of complicated issues or of stories that are of particular local interest that's connected in some way to the community. The wire editor also has to select good photographs for publication.

Then comes the actual process of editing the copy. In case the newspaper is subscribing to more than one wire service (which most newspapers do), the wire editor has to compare the copies for the same news sent by different agencies to check for inconsistency of facts, additional information and details. Most certainly the copies will differ to a certain extent in terms of approach, amount of information and even in facts and figures. As per necessity, the wire editor might have to combine two agency copies or compile all the information available from the different copies with more first hand information before structuring a full report.

It is most important for wire editors to remember that wire Information is a first step, not a final say. It must be supplemented, wherever possible, with first hand details from people in the field, and details have to be verified and as much digging to be done as there's time to do it. Sometimes when there is nothing but wire information available, then the only way for the editor to come up with a good copy is to treat the wire story as just a fact sheet arranged in prose form. Once he has understood the facts completely, he can completely forget about the wire copy and write the story in his own way.

A wire editor has to be extra careful not to copy the style of the wire copy. He has to remember that the wire service sends the same copy to scores of other news organizations. Just imagine the embarrassment the newspaper

will have to face if exactly the same copy is reproduced by another newspaper also on the same day. Therefore, the agency copy has to be considered to be an information sheet only. And in case the exact copy/ photo of the wire service is used, the wire editor has to ensure that the copy/ photo is duly credited to the wire service.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q20. What are the responsibilities of the wire editor?

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_____

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Q21. What is the best way to edit wire copy?

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_____



ACTIVITY 7.3

1. Visit a newspaper office and collect some old news agency copies. Now chose a few copies and rewrite the news in your own style to make a proper news report.



7.8 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have learnt about the concept of news agencies. Let us have a quick recap of the important points.

1. News agencies form a major source of news for print as well as electronic media.

2. News agencies also gather and process news exclusively for the purpose of disseminating to the various media organizations who subscribe to their services. They distribute the copy to subscribers electronically or through the Internet. News agencies are also known as wire services.

3. In addition to news service, news agencies also provide photo service and features service.

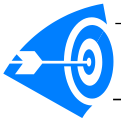
4. The biggest and the most important transnational news agencies are Reuters of U.K., Agence France Press (AFP) of France, Associated Press (AP) of America, and United Press International (UPI) of America.

5. Among the Indian News Agencies, the most important are United News of India (UNI), Press Trust of India (PTI) and their corresponding Hindi services Varta and Bhasha, Asian News International (ANI) and Indo-Asian News Service (IANS).



7.9 FURTHER READINGS

- **Essentials of Practical Journalism —** *Vir Bala Agarwal, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi*
- **Mass Communication and Journalism in India –** *D. S. Mehta*
- **Here is the News! Reporting for the media –** *Rangaswami Parthasarathy*



7.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q. No. 1 : A News agency is an organisation that gathers and processes news exclusively for the purpose of disseminating to the various media organizations who subscribe to their services. They do not publish news for direct consumption by the masses.

Ans to Q. No. 2 : The UNESCO definition of News Agency is:

"News Agency is an undertaking of which the principle 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 it to a group of news enterprises and in exceptional circumstances to private individuals with a view to providing them with as complete and impartial news service as possible against payment and under conditions compatible with business laws and usage."

Ans to Q. No. 3 : News agencies are also known as wire services.

Ans to Q. No. 4 : News agencies distribute news to its clients electronically, i.e., by telegraph, fax or through the Internet.

Ans to Q. No. 5 : The basic difference between newspaper and news agency is that while newspapers gather news for consumption by the people, news agencies gather news for distribution to its client newspapers and other news organizations which publish or broadcast the news.

Ans to Q. No. 6 : It is not possible for news organizations to meet the expense of collecting all the news from every corner of the world by hiring reporters and correspondents. Therefore, in order to get news from fields and places where the news organization cannot place its own correspondents, they use the services of a news agency or several news agencies that collect news from every field across the world.

Ans to Q. No. 7 : The different services provided by News Agencies are news services, feature services and photo services.

Ans to Q. No. 8 : Associated Press of India, United Press of India, Free Press News Agency.

Ans to Q. No. 9 : Associated Press of India (API)

Ans to Q. No. 10 : Press Trust of India (PTI)

Ans to Q. No. 11 : Hindustan Samachar

Ans to Q. No. 12 : Samachar

Ans to Q. No. 13 : Agence France Presse, Reuters, Associated Press and United Press International.

Ans to Q. No. 14 : United News of India, Press Trust of India, Asian News International, Indo-Asian News Service.

Ans to Q. No. 15 : Varta

Ans to Q. No. 16 : Bhasha

Ans to Q. No. 17 : Agence France Presse

Ans to Q. No. 18 : UNI – United News of India

PTI – Press Trust of India

ANI – Asian News International

IANS – Indo Asian News Service

AP – Associated Press

AFP – Agence France Press

UPI – United Press International

Ans to Q. No. 19 : Reuters — Paul Julius Reuter

AFP — Charles-Louis Havas

UPI — E.W. Scripps

ANI – Prem Prakash

Ans to Q. No. 20 : A wire editor has several responsibilities. At first he has to go through all the wire news coming in from the different agencies and separate the important or publishable news. He also has to select from the photographs coming by wire. Then he has to edit or rewrite the news as per necessity. Using the wire copy as the basic information, he has to take more inputs from the field wherever possible, gather first hand comments if necessary and compile the final story. He has to verify facts before getting the story done. At times he also has to combine two or more different stories to make a single story.

Ans to Q. No. 21 : The best way to edit wire copy is to consider the wire copy as just a fact sheet and then write the story in one's own words. The style and language used in the wire copy should never be copied. Instead the information available in the wire copy should be properly utilized to compile a good story.

7.11 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

Q1. News agencies are indispensable sources of news for any new organization. Justify.

Q2. What are the roles and functions of a news agency?

Q3. Write a brief note on the history of news agencies in India.

Q4. Write short notes on:

a. Reuters

b. Press Trust of India

c. Associated Press

Q5. Do you feel the job of a regular copy editor is different from the job of a wire editor? If so how?

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REFERENCES

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(2) Mass Communication and Journalism in India – *D. S. Mehta*

(3) Here is the News!Reporting for the media – *Rangaswami Parthasarathy*

(4) News Writing – *George A. Hough, Kanishka Publications and Distributors, New Delhi*

(5) Basic Journalism – *Rangaswamy Parthasarathy, MacMilan India Ltd., New Delhi*

(6) Fundamentals of Journalism – *K.B. Dutta, Akansha Publishing House, New Delhi*

(7) Handbook of Journalism and Mass Communication — *Vir Bala Agarwal and V.S. Gupta, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi.*

(8) *The Journalist's Handbook –M. V. Kamath, Vikas Publishing Houses, New Delhi.*