

## UNIT

# 2

## REPORTING

### STRUCTURE

- Introduction
- Definition of News
- Concept of News
- Values of News
- Sources of News
- Summary
- Key Words
- Answers to Check Your Progress
- Terminal Questions
- Further Readings

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ❖ After Reading this unit, you will be able to :
- ❖ Know the definitions of news
- ❖ Describe the concept of news
- ❖ Discuss the values of news
- ❖ Explain the sources of news.

### • INTRODUCTION

Journalism is a discipline of gathering, writing and reporting news, and broadly it includes the process of editing and presenting the news articles. Journalism applies to various media, like newspaper, magazines, radio and television.

Journalism arouses people's interest in day-to-day social and political events. It reflects their feelings and thoughts. It informs interests, entertains and educates the society at large. Journalism renders self-less service to the needs of society in the modern world. Journalism is basically the communication of news. It comprises news and views, information and instruction, entertainment and enlightenment.

### • DEFINITION OF NEWS

News focuses on people placed in important positions, which are people differ widely as to what constitutes news. Some of the well-known definitions given for news by different eminents of various categories in the field of mass communication are as follows:

- News is an accurate, balanced, brief and fair-minded account of happenings which factual information of names and action in which the public has a interest

- News stands for
- ❖ (N)-North
- ❖ (E)-East
- ❖ (W)-West
- ❖ (S)-South
- According to Ben Bradlee, "News is the first rough draft of history".
- According to Charles Dana, "When a dog bites a man, that is not news but when a man bites a dog, which is news".
- A popular sociological concept about news is the "Gatekeeper Theory". According to this, what is not given does not become news, as the reader is unaware of it. An event which no one knows about, like the secret marriage of a famous person does not become news. Only when the public become aware of it, then it becomes news.
- Freda Morris defines news as, News is the immediate, the important. The things that have impact on our lives.
- News has been defined as "anything we didn't know yesterday".
- An American editor, Daniel Boorstin in his book entitled "The Image" point out the definition which lay stress on the element of novelty in news. "News is anything that makes a reader says "gee whizz".
- News may define as "whatever interest the reader".
- Harold Evans defines news thus: "News is People".
- News is a timely, factual report of events, ideas and situations that interested the public.
- The definition given by the Concise Oxford Dictionary is as follows: "Tidings, new information, fresh events reported".

### Check your Progress

1. Define News.

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2. What is the focus of News?

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### • 1.3. CONCEPT OF NEWS

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News is a report of any event, idea or opinion which affects a large number of people. News is a compilation of facts and happenings, which will be interesting to readers. News is exciting information about activities regarding sex, money, crime and politics. News is what the newspaper prints, what the radio and television announce from time to time. News consists of all activities, which are of human interest, and the best news is that, which excites the interest of many people.

The editorial study of t' a Thomas foundation outlines 20 categories of news.

## Human Interest

Unnatural or rare events other than the natural happenings are served as human interest stories of news. For example, a child born with four hands etc.

## Social Work

Normal or casual events but with greater importance is come under this category of news. For example, a freedom fighter gets his pension after a long time and struggle.

## Mythical Stories

Stories without clear conclusion but with lots of confusion are named as news of mystery. For example, stories about ethics, and a police investigation about a case of murder.

## Scientific Development

News about the development of scientific activities, it includes space research, medicine, electronics, computer science etc. For example, about the noble prize winner in the field of science; hitting of flights become headlines mostly.

## Entertainment

News about entertaining events such as cinema, film, festivals, award functions, circus, game shows, dance shows, sports activities like cricket, tennis, Olympic games etc. For example, India won gold medal for shooting in Olympics draws instant attraction & attention among the readers.

## Famous Persons or Celebrities

Well known personalities or celebrities and some-important persons of a society are always be the centre of attraction to this kind of news items. The power, fame, position and their actions private and personal affairs are the major sources of this news item.

## Weather

News concerned with weather reports has its own importance. It is very useful and important news item among others. Weather condition news items are useful to fishermen, flight operations etc.

## Food

It is news of universal attraction. Shortage or overproduction of food grains are sources of this news item. For example, famine due to shortage of food grains in a particular region.

## Minorities

The news about minorities according to their caste, race, religion etc, is always considered as more striking and power pact news among the public. For example, the black people in the United States, Tamils in Srilanka.

## Check your Progress

3. What are the elements of News?

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4. Mention any five category of News.

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• **VALUES OF NEWS**

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Into the editor's room of every newspaper, news reaches from different sources. But it is impossible to publish all the news that comes to a newspaper. Moreover, what is news in the morning may not be so by the afternoon. News editors have a difficult job to select the items to be printed in a paper or broad-cast through other media. They have to look on the account of the value of a particular news item before selecting the items to be printed. For attaining the news value, certain factors are taken in to consideration. Here, there are some important factors on the basis of news value is assessed.

**Geographical Factor**

The geographical factor or proximity factor is of prime importance when judging the news value. What takes place in the distribution area of a newspaper is more important than what takes place a hundred miles away. A change of government in a foreign country will be the front page 'lead' story in the country's newspaper while it may find a place only in the inside pages of a newspaper in our country. A newspaper provides to the needs of a particular area. Therefore what happens in that area is of profound interest to its readers.

**The Personal Factor**

Almost all the news items that appear in the newspaper are about the famous celebrities. What they do and say becomes instant news. An ordinary man has to do something unusual will not become news, but an ordinary thing done by a known personality becomes news. The most ordinary things become news when done by an extraordinary man. Thus, we select the 'who said' becomes more important than 'what is said'.

**Special Interest**

In concluding the value of a news article, editors very often take in to consideration the special interest of the newspaper. When reporting the rise of price in fuel goods, some newspapers will look at its impact or reaction on common man. But the newspapers whose special interest is in financial matters will look at its impact on stock-markets. In our country, several newspapers and magazines that take special interest in certain areas like finance, entertainment, sports etc.

**Human Interest**

Human interest stories usually appear in boxes. It may not have any significance as a special news item. But when the reporter highlights it in a particular angle it becomes a highly readable news story, Therefore many editors insist on including at least one or two human interest stories. It includes all sorts of accidents and calamities touch the reader's emotion and appeal to their sympathy. They give pep to a newspaper.

## Timeliness

News should be fresh, new and hot. Nobody wants stale news. Stale news, like stale food, is only fit for the dust-bin. Every medium tries to be the first to give the latest news; it has its own value.

## Entertainment

Along with serious reading, people need entertainment and pleasure. Light articles, write-ups, car-toons, reviews, crosswords, film news, anecdotes, etc. offer relief from the daily tension full of life.

## Check your Progress

5. Write about the Human Interest stories.

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## • SOURCES OF NEWS

The most important job of newspapers and newsmen are to collect news from all possible sources process it and give it to the public or society. Newspapers collect news through various sources such as full time and part-time reporters and correspondents. Large scale or big newspapers maintain their own national and international correspondents.

## Hard and Weak Sources

News sources are normally classified in to two categories - Hard and Weak sources. Some news items may come straight from the concerned person or place. For example, a statement from the Head of the state, Prime minister, Parliament and even from State Legislatures is considered to be hard news. Be-cause, its truthfulness and authenticity cannot be questioned, official press releases and handouts by "spokesman" are also equally dependable and come under this category. News given by diplomatic sources belongs to this category. Such sources said to be called as hard sources.

On the other hand, if the news item is obtained from a general environment or local circle, its authenticity will become doubtful one. Such stories can casually denied by the same source afterwards and the reporter will not get anyone to authenticate or prove his source. In such cases the sources are certainly weak. An overdose of news items from weak sources will not add credit to any newspaper and also its credibility among the public will be spoiled.

## Special Correspondents

Special Correspondent of a newspaper is an important source of news. The duty of special correspondent is to get news items for the newspaper and to make it clear and meaningful to the reader. Once James Gordon Bennett described a special correspondent should be "half diplomat and half detective".

The special correspondent is well known better to the reader than the editor of a newspaper, because, it is his name that appears as a by-line under the lead story on the front page. However, the life of a special correspondent is not an easy one. He has to come up through the hard path, by reporting the police and courts etc. he has to deal with lot of people, who are of different and various

backgrounds, tastes and he has to adjust the likes and dislikes of these various groups is itself a difficult task for anybody.

Moreover, a special correspondent must bear in his mind that news is not what the minister or anybody tells him. He must look at the emerging situation and it is his duty to reveal the reader the meaning of facts. The special and needed qualities of the special correspondent are as follows:

- Vast and varied contacts with official sources
- Ability to keep their confidence
- A flexibility of mind for research
- The ability to encourage others to speak
- The ability to acquaint with different types of people
- Physical stamina and mental courage
- Creativity and a simple, sparkling style.

### **Local Correspondent**

In a newspaper, the local correspondent is an important connection with the area where it is published, He knows the environment intimately. He is an expert in the happenings of that locality and the news-paper gives much importance to his views. There is no regular routine for him and sometimes he may work on some important or special assignments.

### **Stringers and Freelancers**

Stringers are correspondents who are not employed by the newspapers on a full-time basis. Their pay depends on the quantity of published copy they produce. Stringers include students, managers, house-wives, teachers or employees working in some departments. Stringers may 'string' or work for more than one newspaper.

Freelancers have more importance than stringers. They are self employed journalists; they sell their work to various newspapers. Their main work is on such fields and subjects where a staff reporter is not editor may ask him to work on that particular project, freelancers are employed on a regular contract where their services are valuable to the newspapers.

### **Handouts and Reports**

Another important newspaper sources are handouts and reports. The flow of handout and reports in to newspaper offices from company press offices, public relations agencies, nationalized industries and Government department. If the contents of handouts and reports contain something of news value a reporter may be asked to grow deeper in to it or a sub-editor may be asked to rewrite it.

Public relations people also use handouts to give publicity and most news editors are protected in their response to such handouts. They accept handouts for what they are worth and the reporters go beyond them to write the own stories.

### **News Agencies**

News agencies play a vital role in supplying news articles on a large scale. Just like newspaper, these agencies have also their own teams of reporters and correspondents in different areas all around the country and abroad. News

## Foreign News Agencies

In a newspaper that gives a great deal of coverage for foreign news, for that purpose foreign news agencies hold a place of prime importance. In the local press, foreign news is not considered very important and full-time foreign news agencies are rare.

### Duties and Responsibilities of a Foreign Correspondent

- He must know the language of the country to which he is assigned.
- He may come under pressure to say pleasant things about the host country. Similarly, it is not wise to criticize the host unnecessarily. He has to keep this in his mind.
- A foreign correspondent must not give his own judgment on the affairs of the place he is working.
- He must always remember that different nations have different systems of administration.
- A foreign correspondent must never become impatient with the system of administration of the host nation.
- He has to bear in mind, that international conflicts cannot be resolved overnight.
- It is very risk for a correspondent to break the laws of host nation. He has to keep in mind about the laws of that nation.
- He must not depend too much on the embassy of his country. To pressure one's independence in a foreign country is not easy but a good foreign correspondent will find some means to pressure his independence.

### Some Important Foreign News agencies

1. Associated press of America - API(united state)
2. Reuter (Britain)
3. Agency France Press - AFP (France)
4. TASS (Soviet union)
5. United press international - UPI(united states)
6. Kyodo news service (Japan)
7. British broadcasting corporation - BBC ( England)
8. Deutsche press agenteur - NCNA
9. New China news agency - NCNA
10. Arab news agency - ANA (Egypt)
11. Eraq news agency - INA (Baghdad)
12. Pakistan press international - PPI
13. Polish agency press - PAP ( Poland)

### News Sources of Electronic Media

The primary source of getting news stories for news writers in electronic media is the professional news agencies.

Cable News Network (CNN), Conus, Associated Press (AP), United Press International (UPI) and other such agencies buy and supply to international needs in the task of news gathering and news distribution. TV/ Radio newscast corporations and organizations owned by member stations. For instance, Videsh Sanchar Nigan Limited (VSNL), equipped with computerized news systems, has been distributing centres all over the country and also the centres, which located outside the country.

Government of India, in September 1997, opened an internet services to private service providers in order to strengthen the national information backbone with improved data transmission services. Just as the cellular telephone has made reporting for radio easier, the Satellite News Gathering (SNG) de-vices have come as a compliment to TV reporting. Due to this, agencies such as Reuters TV, ANI and United Press International (UPI) are often referred to as 'town criers'.

In addition to the news agencies, various news production bodies employ their own correspondents, staff reporters, camera crews and stringers, to collect news stories. Various studies and stations work in agreement by borrowing and supplying news and stills. Besides, there are also freelancers and the paparazzi.

## **Other Sources**

### **Monitoring**

Monitoring of radio and television stations are also serve as sources of news. Almost every newspapers have a system for monitoring to check whether they have carried all the news stories or not.

### **Telephone**

Telephone also serves as a source of news. Somebody from the site of an accident may ring up to the newspaper office and give them details is also a source. It can be otherwise called as spot sources.

### **Press Conferences**

Press conferences are very important sources of news. The Prime Minister (or) President's Press conference is an event eagerly expected by newspapers. These conferences will certainly become front page news in many newspapers. Every newspaper sends their senior reporters to cover such press conferences.

### **Legislatures and Civic Bodies**

Legislatures are major sources for every paper. When they are in session, the public attention will be more focused on such activities. Whatever happens there becomes news for newspapers.

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## **• SUMMARY**

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Journalism is a discipline of gathering, writing and reporting news, and broadly it includes the process of editing and presenting the news articles. Journalism applies to various media, (ike newspaper, maga-zines, radio and television.

News is a report of any event, idea or opinion which affects a large number of people. News is a compilation of facts and happenings, which will be interesting to readers. News is exciting information about activities regarding sex, money, crime and politics.

Each and Every news story can be divided in to three parts: Starting or beginning of the story, Centre part of the story and the finishing or end of the story. The beginning must be designed to grasp the attention of the reader to the news. It must show some assurance to the reader to give interesting and reliable information. The central part of the story is its detailed form. It should fulfill the assurance with more details. And the end of the story should be short and satisfying.

News agencies play a vital role in supplying news articles on a large scale. Just like newspaper, these agencies have also their own teams of reporters and correspondents in different areas all around the country and abroad. News agencies do not sell newspapers to news agencies collect the news articles edit them and transmit them to various newspapers. Some agencies provide a "news-picture service".

Cable News Network (CNN), Conus, Associated Press (AP), United Press International (UPI) and other such agencies buy and supply to international needs in the task of news gathering and news distribution. TV/ Radio newscast corporations and organizations owned by member stations. For instance, Videsh Sanchar Nigan Limited (VSNL), equipped with computerized news systems, has been distributing centres all over the country and also the centres, which located outside the country.

News editors have a difficult job to select the items to be printed in a paper or broadcast through other media. They have to look on the account of the value of a particular news item before selecting the items to be printed. For attaining the news value, certain factors are taken in to consideration. Here, there are some important factors on the basis of news value is assessed.

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#### • KEY WORDS

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1. Town Criers : Agencies such as Reuters TV, ANI and United Press International (UPI) are often referred to as 'town criers'.
2. CNN : Cable News Network (CNN)
3. AP : Associated Press (AP)
4. UPI: United Press International (UPI)
5. VSNL : Videsh Sanchar Nigan Limited (VSNL)

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#### • ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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1. News is an accurate, balanced, brief and fair-minded account of happenings which factual information of names and action in which the public has a interest

2. News focuses on people placed in important positions, which are people differ widely as to what constitutes news.

3. News is a compilation of facts and happenings, which will be interesting to readers. News is exciting information about activities regarding sex, money, crime and politics. News is what the newspaper prints, what the radio and television announce from time to time. News consists of all activities, which are of human interest, and the best news is that, which excites the interest of many people.

4. Unusual happenings, Health, Religion, Local affairs and weather are some of the categories of News.

5. Human interest stories usually appear in boxes. It may not have any significance as a special news item. But when the reporter highlights it in a particular angle it becomes a highly readable news story.

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#### • TERMINAL QUESTIONS

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1. Describe the characteristics and elements of News.
2. Explain the categories of news with illustrations?
3. Write short note on - (a) Special Correspondent, (b) Local Correspondent.
4. Explain the different sources of news both in print and broadcast media?
5. Write a detailed note on values of news?

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#### • FURTHER READINGS

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1. Mass Communication; Keval J.Kumar
2. The News Paper - An international history; Anthony smith
3. Mass communication and journalism; D.S.Mehta in India.
4. Communication; B.N.Ahuja & S.S. Chabbra
5. History of Indian Press: Growth of News paper in India; B.N.Ahuja

