

COMPLEMENTARY COURSE: ***Journalism***

Paper II: ***Print Media Journalism***

For BA ENGLISH/MALAYALAM

IV Semester

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UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT

SCHOOL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

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Paper II: *Print Media Journalism*

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IV SEMESTER

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Module I: Introduction to Journalism

What is journalism?

Journalism is both an art and a profession which records events and opinions and seeks to interpret and mould them for the benefit of the educated public. Journalism is anything that contributes in some way in gathering, selection, processing of news and current affairs for the press, radio, television, film, cable, internet, etc. It is a discipline of collecting, analyzing, verifying and presenting news regarding current events, trends, issues and people. Those who practice journalism are known as journalists. Journalism is defined by Denis McQuail as paid writing for public media with reference to actual and ongoing events of public relevance.

Principles and functions of journalism

The central purpose of journalism is to provide citizens with accurate and reliable information they need to function in a free society. This purpose also involves other requirements such as being entertaining, serving as watchdog and offering voice to the voiceless.

Journalism has developed nine core ideals to meet the task.

- 1. Journalism's first obligation is to the truth:** Journalism does not pursue truth in an absolute or philosophical sense, but it can and must pursue it in a practical sense. This journalistic truth is a process that begins with the professional discipline of assembling and verifying facts.
- 2. Its first loyalty is to citizens:** Journalists must maintain loyalty to citizens and the larger public interest above any other if they are to provide the news without fear or favour. This commitment to citizens first is the basis of news organizations credibility; to tell audience that news coverage is not slanted for friends or advertisers. Commitment to citizens also means journalism should present a representative picture of all constituent groups in society.
- 3. Its essence is disciplines of verification:** Journalists rely on professional discipline for verifying information. It called for a consistent method of testing information- a transparent approach to evidence- precisely so that personal and cultural biases would not undermine the accuracy of their work.
- 4. Its practitioners must maintain an independence from those they cover:** Independence is an underlying requirement of journalism, a cornerstone of its reliability. Independence of spirit and mind rather than neutrality is the principle journalists must keep in focus.
- 5. It must serve as an independent monitor of power:** Journalism has an unusual capacity to serve as watchdog over those whose power and position most affects citizens. As journalists, one has an obligation to protect this watchdog freedom by not demeaning it in frivolous use or exploiting it for commercial gains.
- 6. It must provide a forum for public criticism and compromise:** The news media are the common carriers of public discussion. This discussion serves society best when it is informed by facts rather than prejudice and supposition. Accuracy and truthfulness requires that as framers of the public discussion journalists do not neglect the points of common ground where problem solving occurs.

7. **It must strive to make the significant interesting and relevant:** Journalism is storytelling with a purpose. It must strive to make the significant interesting and relevant. The effectiveness of a piece of journalism is measured both by how much a work engages its audience and enlightens it. This means journalists must continually ask what information has most value to citizens and in what form.
8. **It must keep the news comprehensive and proportional:** Keeping news in proportion and not leaving important things out are also cornerstones of truthfulness. Inflating events for sensation, neglecting others, stereo typing or being disproportionately negative all makes it less reliable. It should also include news of all communities, not just those with attractive demographics.
9. **Its practitioners must be allowed to exercise their personal conscience:** Every journalist must have a personal sense of ethics and responsibility- a moral compass. Each of them must be willing if fairness and accuracy requires, to voice differences with colleagues, whether in the newsroom or the executive suite.

Journalism as a profession

Print media journalism

Print media journalism presents various information through newspapers, magazines and books. Professionals of this stream are – staff correspondents, special correspondents, news editors, chief-editors, political commentators, cartoonists, columnists, feature writers, content writers for magazine etc.

Radio journalism

Radio journalism works for broadcasting news and various information through an important medium of mass communication among workers and householders. Radio journalists are well versed with the operations of sound recording equipments, microphones and public address systems. They must also be efficient in digital data recording, operations of the net, audio systems and computers

TV journalism

TV is an audiovisual communication tool. It requires the attention of two senses of the targeted individual- audio and visual. Hence the TV journalist has not only to give pleasing music, voice, or other audio signals to the targeted audience but also has to mesmerize them with the help of his personality, mannerism, video footage and appropriate colour combinations.

Cyber journalism

Internet is a source of all kind of information. Internet journalist is a person who creates messages to be displayed on the web sites that are to be read, viewed or listened to by a very large audience. Professionals of this new stream are web masters; multimedia specialists, HTML and XHTML programmers, Java specialists and other professionals who create and modify advertisements for the NET. They also create web sites which are mass communication tools.

Role and responsibilities of a journalist

The main duty of a journalist is to act as an interpreter of the world around. The journalist observes the events, transmits facts about the event and act as an interpreter of these events and happenings.

A journalist performs the following roles:

1. Make people aware of the contemporary world.
2. Inform and educate the audience.
3. Promote art and culture.
4. Entertain the mass.
5. Help people in decision making.
6. Make people sensitive to burning issues.
7. Instill good moral values.
8. Make people aware of their rights.
9. Help people in comparative study of past and present and in predicting future.

The MacBride report spells out journalistic responsibilities as:

1. Contractual responsibility in relation to their media and their internal organization.
2. A social responsibility entailing obligations towards public opinion and society as a whole
3. Responsibility or liability deriving from the obligation to comply with the law.
4. Responsibility towards the international community relating to respect for human values.

Ethics of journalism

It includes principles of ethics and of good practice to address the specific challenges faced by professional journalists. The basic codes and canons commonly appear in statements drafted by professional journalism association and individual print, broadcast and online news organizations.

While various existing codes have some differences, most share common elements including the principles of- truthfulness, accuracy, objectivity, impartiality, fairness and public accountability- as these apply to the acquisition of newsworthy information and its subsequent reportage to the public.

Professional and ethical standards for journalists

1. As the press is a primary instrument in the creation of public opinion, journalist should regard their calling as a trust and be eager to serve and guard their public interest.
2. In discharge of their duties, journalists should attach due value to fundamental human and social rights and shall hold good faith and fair play in news reports and comments as essential professional obligations.
3. Journalists should observe special restraint in reports and comments dealing with tensions, likely to lead, or leading to civil disorder.

4. Journalists should endeavour to ensure that information dissemination is factually accurate
5. Responsibility shall be assumed for all information and comments published. If responsibility is disclaimed, this will be explicitly stated.
6. Confidences shall always be respected. Professional secrecy must be preserved.
7. Any report found to be inaccurate and any comment on inaccurate reports shall be voluntarily rectified
8. Journalists shall not exploit their status for non-journalistic purposes.
9. Journalists shall not allow personal interest to influence professional conduct.
10. Journalists shall not accept or demand bribe to give or delay publicity to news or comments.
11. Freedom in the honest collection and publication of news and facts and the rights of their comments and criticism and principles which every journalists should always defend
12. Journalists shall be conscious of their obligation to their fellows in the profession and shall not seek to deprive fellow journalists of their livelihood by unfair means.
13. The carrying on of personal controversies in the press in which no public interest is involved shall be regarded as derogatory to the dignity of the profession
14. It is unprofessional to give currency to rumours or loose talk affecting the private life of individuals.
15. The press shall refrain from publishing matters likely to encourage vice and crime.

How to start a publication?

A person interested in starting a new newspaper (daily or periodical) is required to contact the District Magistrate or Sub-Divisional Magistrate, in whose jurisdiction the place of the proposed newspaper is situated, and file a declaration before him in the prescribed form. In the declaration, the publisher is to mention the title, language, periodicity and such other particulars of the proposed newspaper as asked for. He is also required to give a list of alternative titles in the order of preference.

The Magistrate, before authenticating the declaration has to make an enquiry from the Registrar of Newspaper for India. After obtaining clearances from the Registrar of Newspapers for India, the district magistrate authenticates the declaration and sends an authenticated copy to the office of the registrar of the newspapers for India.

Each issue of the newspaper is to have an imprint line containing the name of the publisher, printer, owner, editor, and the place of printing and publication of the paper. The name of the editor is necessarily to be given separately.

MODULE II: PRESS LAWS

Freedom of press-Provisions in the Indian Constitution

To preserve the democratic way of life it is essential that people should have the freedom to express their feelings and to make their views known to people at large. The press a powerful medium of mass communication should be free to play its role in building a strong viable society. Denial of freedom of the press to citizens would necessarily undermine the power to influence public opinion and be counter to democracy.

Freedom of the press is not specifically mentioned in Article 19(1) (a) of the Constitution and what is mentioned there is only freedom of speech and expression. In the Constituent Assembly debates it was made clear by Dr. Ambedkar, Chairman of the Drafting Committee, that no special mention of the freedom of the press was necessary at all as the press and an individual or a citizen were the same as far as their rights of expression was concerned.

The framers of the Indian Constitution considered freedom of the press as an essential part of the freedom of speech and expression as guaranteed in Article 19(1) (a) of the constitution.

However, the freedom of the press is not absolute, just as the freedom of expression is not. Public interest has to be safeguarded by Article 19 (2) which lays down reasonable limitations to the freedom of expression in matters affecting:

- a) Sovereignty and integrity of the state
- b) Security of the state
- c) Friendly relations with foreign countries
- d) Public order
- e) Decency and morality
- f) Contempt of court
- g) Defamation
- h) Incitement to an offence

Besides the restrictions imposed in the press by the Constitution, there exist various other laws which further curtail press freedom and the right of the citizens to information as well as the right to freedom of speech and expression. They are all in force in the interest of public order of the sovereignty and security of the state.

Official Secrets Act, 1923

As per the Official Secrets Act, no editor, publisher, author or journalist should:

- I. Make any sketch, plan or a note which is or may be useful to any enemy.
- II. Obtain, collect, record, or publish or communicate to any other person any secret official code or pass word or any sketch, article or note or other document or information which may be directly or indirectly useful to an enemy or to a foreign agent, or which relates to a matter the disclosure of which is likely to affect the sovereignty and integrity of India, the security of the state or friendly relations with foreign states (Sections 3-5).

In case of infringement of these provisions, the act provides for punishment with imprisonment for a period which may extend to three years or fourteen years, depending upon the offence committed, as per Section 3.

Contempt of Court Act

Contempt of court was enacted for the first time in the year 1952. Later on, contempt of court was again enacted in 1971 which was further amended in 1976.

According to this act, a person is said to be offender of contempt of courts under following circumstances:

1. Charging the judge with inability.
2. Expressing doubts on the prestige, status, rights or fairness of judiciary.
3. Publication of any comment on the matters which are under the proceedings of the court and which may mislead the general public and which lead them to be prejudiced.
4. To cast aspersions or to attempt to influence the judge, jury, advocates or witness of any matters which are under the proceedings of the court.
5. To interfere in the judicial administration.
6. To threaten the witnesses
7. To attempt to obstruct the police inquiry
8. Against the order of the judge, publication of the proceedings of the court or the publication of the picture of the accused.
9. Publication of the report of the proceedings of the court and distorting the facts.
10. Wrongful publication of the proceedings of the courts and distorting the facts.

For contempt of court, the punishment is simple imprisonment for a term which may extend to six months or fine which may extend to two thousand rupees or with both.

The Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986

This act prohibits indecent representation of women through advertisements or in publications. Indecent representation of women means the depiction in any manner of the figure of a woman, her form or body or any part thereof in a way as to have the effect of being indecent or derogatory to women or is likely to injure public morality.

As per Section 3 of the act, no person shall publish advertisements which contain indecent representation of women in form. Further Section 4 prohibits publication or sending by post of books, papers, etc. which contains indecent representation of women in any form.

As per section 6, any person who contravenes these provisions shall be punishable on first conviction with imprisonment up to two years and fine not exceeding two thousand rupees, and on subsequent conviction with imprisonment for a term of not less than six months but which may extend to five years and a fine between ten thousand rupees and one lakh rupees.

Laws of libel/defamation

Defamation simply means tarnishing somebody's image. There are two types of defamation- libel and slander.

1. Libel: It is written form of defamation.
2. Slander: It is spoken form of defamation.

The defenses usually put up are justification, privilege, fair comment and innocent dissemination. To impute a truth about a person for public good, or to express in good faith any opinion respecting the conduct of public servant in discharge of his public function, or of any person in touching any public question is not libel. Similarly, to publish a substantially true report of the proceedings of a court of justice, or to comment in good faith on merits of civil and criminal cases is not considered defamatory.

The remedies available to the aggrieved person in India are two kinds- civil action under the common law, or criminal proceedings for the defamation. In the first, the claim is essentially for damages by monetary compensation. In criminal proceedings, it is punishment with fine and/or imprisonment.

Parliamentary Privilege

Journalists have to take care while reporting proceedings of Parliament or state legislatures. The Parliamentary Proceedings (Protection of Publication) Act 1956, which is popularly known as Feroze Gandhi Act, provides that no person should be liable to any proceedings- civil or criminal in respect of a publication in a newspaper of a substantially true report of any proceedings of either house of Parliament.

The Constitution (45th Amendment) act, 1978, passed by Parliament, provides constitutional authority to Feroze Gandhi Act and extends protection to publication of state legislatures proceedings.

MODULE III: NEWS AGENCIES

International new agencies

A news agency, according to UNESCO is “an undertaking of which the principal objective, whatever its legal form, is to gather news and news material of which the sole purpose is to express or present facts, and to distribute this to a group of news enterprises, and in exceptional circumstances to private individuals with a view to providing them with as complete and impartial a news service as possible against payment, and under conditions compatible with business laws and usage”.

Agence France Presse (AFP)

AFP, founded in 1835, has the maximum representation on its board of directors. Although AFP is described as an unsubsidized autonomous organization, in effect, the French Government and various agencies under its control subscribed to AFP, and provided good support. AFP is regarded as one of the major global news agencies. It has more than 10,000 newspapers and 70 agencies as its subscribers. Its operations are in more than 150 countries with a network of 110 foreign bureaus.

Associated Press (AP)

The impetus to provide speedy transmission of news was given by the telegraph invented by Samuel F.B. Morse in 1844. The telegraph enables many small town newspapers in the US to get their news. The meeting of the leading New York publishers was held in this context in 1848. Although a decision was made to start a news agency, the name AP was not used till about 1860. AP took a concrete form in 1900 as a modern news gathering association.

AP with its wide communications network using modern technology has bureaus in more than 100 countries. Its 5000 plus correspondents and a host of stringers cater to about 1300 newspapers, 3400 broadcasters in the US and 1000 private subscribers.

Reuters

The news agency takes its name after its founder Paul Julius Reuter. Around 1850, he set up a carrier pigeon service. Initially his services were confined to commercial information. His first major breakthrough came in 1859, when he sent a dispatch for shadowing a war in Italy. Since then the agency has expanded. Reuters supplies news to its media clients such as other news agencies, newspapers, the radio and television stations. Under its present form of ownership Reuters claim that it can ensure that no particular group or faction can have control. Consequently, it hopes to preserve its integrity and freedom from bias.

Tass- Itar

Often it was customary to exclude Tass from the ‘globals’ as the transnational news agencies are called. However, in terms of influence, impact and coverage, Tass was in no way different from the other agencies.

Tass began on the foundation of what was known as the Petrograd Telegraph Agency, in 1917. It supplied news through a network of correspondents in all regional and territorial centers. Tass has approximately 20,000 subscribers both domestic and foreign.

The work of Tass was complemented by another information agency, Novosti Press Agency (APN) established in 1961 by the Union of Soviet journalists, the Union of Soviet Writers. Tass and APN merged to form a new Russian information agency called ITAR- Information Telegraph Agency of Russia.

Other major agencies are United Press International (UPI) of USA, Deutsche Press Agentur (DPA) of Germany, Kyodo of Japan and Xinhua of China.

Indian news agencies

K.C Roy an Indian journalist during the early years of this century, set up the first Indian news agency called the Press News Bureau (PNB). S. Sadanand established a nationalistic news agency in the 1930's known as the Free Press Of India (FPI) but could not afford to keep it going for more than a couple of years.

Press Trust of India (PTI)

Press Trust of India is a non-profit co-operative among the Indian newspapers. It took over the operations of the Associated Press of India and the Indian operations of Reuters soon after India's independence on August 27, 1947. It provides news coverage and information of the region in both English and Hindi.

India's largest news agency, Press Trust of India is a non-profit sharing co-operative 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, including BBC in London receive the PTI service. With a staff of over 1300 including 400 journalists, PTI has over 80 bureaus across the country and foreign correspondents in major cities of the world.

United News of India (UNI)

Before long, however, United News of India (UNI), a competitive news agency was set up by Dr. B.C. Roy and sponsored by eight national dailies. Within a decade it could match the services of PTI in the collection and distribution of news. It now has correspondents in over 200 Indian towns and cities and around a hundred bureaus across the nation. The various services it offers to its over a thousand subscribers in India (and 30 abroad), include UNIFIN, a finance and banking service, UNISTOCK, a service for stock exchanges, and UNISCAN a news service fed directly into television sets. Besides, it has a national photo service and supplies computer-designed graphics in ready to use form on economics and other topics. UNI has started a TV wing to provide news features, news clips and documentaries to Doordarshan.

Press Council of India

In India, the institution of a Press Council functioned from November 1966 to January 1st, 1976, under the Indian Press Council Act 1965. But the emergency regime wound it up. The short-lived Janata regime reconstituted it in April 1979 under a new Press Council Act, 1978, as it felt that the liberty of the press needed to be upheld by the press itself.

The Press Council of India is a statutory body. It consists of 28 members, headed by a Chairman who is nominated by a committee made up of the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha, the Speaker of the Lok Sabha and an elected representative of the council members. Of the 28 members, 13 are nominated in accordance with the procedure prescribed from among working journalists, of whom six are editors of newspapers and the other seven working journalists other than editors. Six members represent various interests like those of the owners of big, medium and small newspapers, and of news agencies. Besides there are five MPs nominated by the Speaker of the Lok Sabhas, and two from the Rajya Sabha. Representation is also provided to specialists in law, education, literature, science and culture.

This representative body has the power to warn, admonish and censure any editor or journalist who flouts the standards of journalistic ethics or public taste. It has the power of a civil court and can, therefore, summon witnesses, inspect documents and receive evidence. Cases relating to the laws of libel, obscenity and contempt, as also the invasion of privacy can be taken up by it for adjudication. It handles about 500 complaints against newspapers and journalists every year.

The Indian Press Council has, besides, not only to help newspapers and news agencies to maintain independence but also to build up principles for maintenance of high standards of the journalistic profession with a stress on public taste, and fostering a due sense of rights and responsibilities of citizenship. It is for the Press Council to keep under review all developments likely to restrict the supply and dissemination of news of public interest, including the question of concentration of ownership of newspaper and news agencies that may affect the freedom of the press.

Indian Federation of Working Journalists (IFWJ)

The Indian federation of working journalists (IFWJ) (1950) has its headquarters in New Delhi. It deals with the problems of working journalists. IFWJ promote, safeguard and defend professional interests, welfare and status of working journalists and strive to maintain high standards of professional conduct and integrity. The Working Journalist (monthly) is the organ of IFWJ.

Indian Newspaper Society (INS)

The Indian Newspaper Society (INS) New Delhi is an organization of newspapers and periodicals. It is concerned with the business aspects of newspaper industry. The members are not individuals but newspapers. It gives accreditation to advertising agencies, which can place advertisements with member's publications and become entitled to credit and other facilities. It publishes a monthly journal Indian Press. It maintains close liaison with the government departments and advertising agencies and safeguards member's interests.

MODULE IV: NEWSPAPER ORGANISATIONS

Organizational structure of a newspaper

Journalism is not concerned only with writing and editing of newspaper and periodicals. The gathering and transmission of news, business management, advertising and other processes connected with the production of a newspaper also come under the purview of journalism.

The organizational set-up varies from newspaper to newspaper depending upon the size of the newspaper and the different services catered for the readers. Generally speaking, most of the newspapers have three main departments- editorial, business and mechanical.

Editorial wing

The editorial/news department is the heart of a newspaper. It deals with news, features, comments, columns and editorials. At the head of the department is the editor or editor-in-chief. The editor is assisted by the city editor, or chief reporter who has a team of reporters to cover the local events. In some newspapers, there are separate desks for national and foreign news, which are fed by new agencies and also by papers own correspondents. The editor is also assisted by critics in special fields such as theatre, music, films, etc. One important desk and its functionary head, i.e., the copy editor edits the copy and writes headlines.

The editor of a small newspaper combines in himself almost all the functions, i.e., gathering, editing and printing of news. He also solicits advertisements and look after the business side of the paper.

Business department

The second important department in a newspaper is the business department, which earns revenue for the newspaper. It is divided into two main division- advertising and circulation.

The advertisement department may have further sub-divisions such as advertisements for local display, classified advertisements etc. It may also have a research bureau and an art section to help in the preparation of advertisements.

The circulation department deals with the dispatch of copies to the city and beyond the city through road, rail and air. It may also have a promotional wing to boost up the circulation of the paper.

Mechanical department

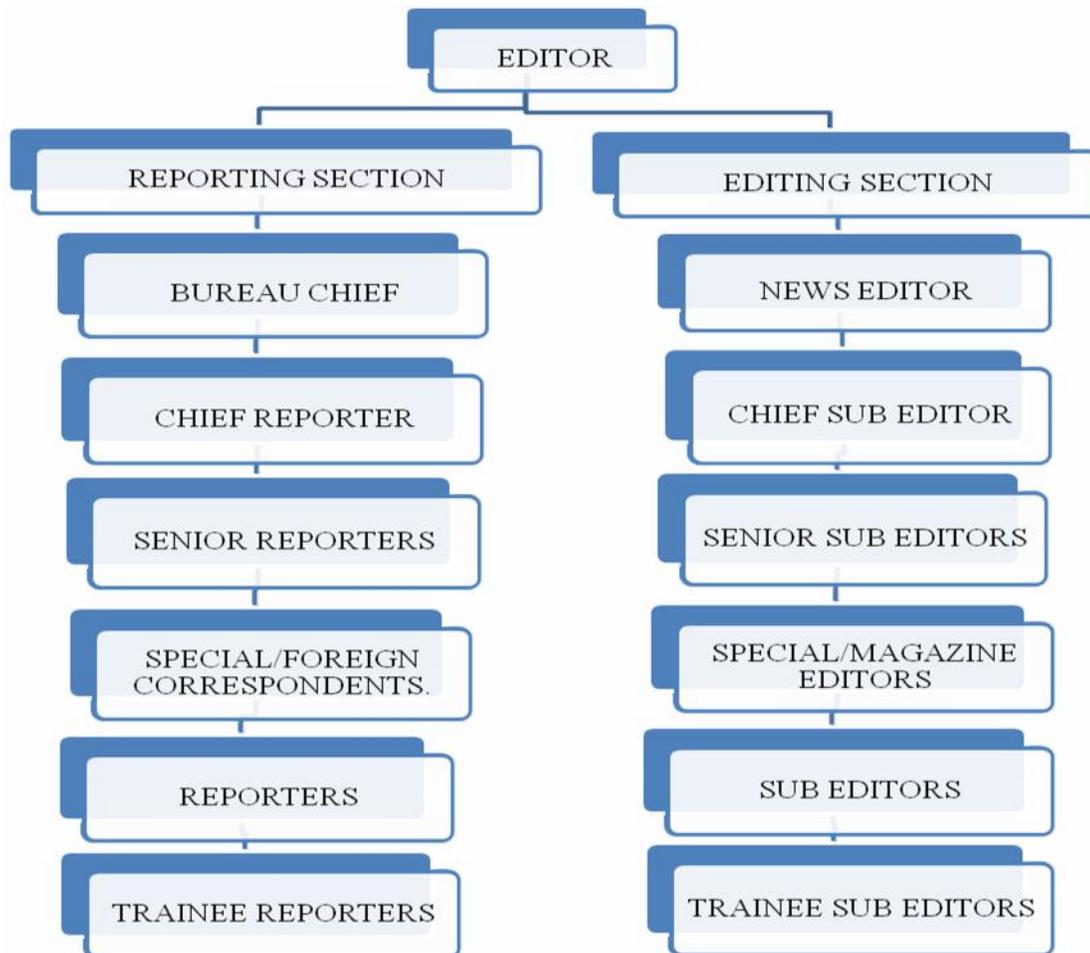
The mechanical department generally is divided into four parts-composing, engraving, stereotyping and press. In the first, the copy is set into type. The engraving wing is concerned with photos and drawings and makes cuts for printing. In the stereotyping room, the plates for the press are cast in the molten metal from the page form. The papers are printed, folded, trimmed, counted and delivered to the mailing section by the press room.

The bigger newspapers have also separated administrative or coordinating as well as promotional departments. The administrative department looks after administration of different departments while the promotional department deals with all the promotional work in respect of

advertisements and circulation. Also it helps to build up the image of the newspaper and endeavours to earn goodwill and understanding of the clientele.

Structure of the Editorial Department

Atop the editorial hierarchy ranks the editor or an editor-in-chief who plans and directs the day to day operations, supported by a team of news editors, chief sub editors, senior sub editors and sub editors. The news desk usually operates in shift and each shift is headed by a chief sub, also called as 'slot man'. Ideally in a newspaper, it is the news editor who plans and directs page making while the chief sub helps implement his decisions. Reporters and sub editors are the pillars of organizational hierarchy. The chief reporter supervises the bureau while the chief sub editor supervises the desk. The hierarchy of authority in the reporting and editing section is given below.



Editor

The editor holds the key position in the newspaper organization. He is responsible for the editorial content of the newspaper including everything from comics to news stories to editorials. It is the editor who can be sued for libel, who can be hauled up before Court, Parliament and legislatures for contempt.

A good editor of a newspaper is aware of the scope and interpretation of news. He takes all important decisions connected with the publication of news and expression of opinion on vital national and international issues and events.

News editor

The actual news production process is handled by the news editor in a newspaper. All major decisions regarding coverage of news stories are taken by the news editor in consultations with the bureau chief. The news editor coordinates the news collection process, the editing and the final presentation of news.

Chief sub editor

Chief sub editor ensures that copies are judiciously distributed among the sub editors and also ascertains that the copies are edited properly and that they conform to publication style and editorial policy. He may initiate or reply to correspondence regarding material published or being considered for publication.

Sub editors

The sub editor or copy editor is described as “the mid wife to the story” and “an unsung hero of a newspaper”. Sub editors work on the copy prepared by reporters. They have no direct involvement in news events. Still they make the copy attractive. He/she select news events, remove unnecessary parts and arranges available information in order. He/she has to check and recheck facts, style, grammar, etc. while editing a story in newspaper. They are also required to put suitable headlines for each story. A good copy editor is an intelligent reader, a tactful and sensitive critic. As the saying goes "any fool can write, it needs a heaven born genius to edit”.

Reporters and freelancers

Reporters are people who know how to dig out information whatever the source and no matter how hidden or obscure it is. A reporter gathers news and writes for his/her organization. A newspaper's reputation and credibility depends on the reporters. A reporter should have a nose for news, i.e., an understanding of news and news values and the ability to recognize a story when it comes along.

Reporters should be skilled at:

1. Seeing and hearing.
2. Taking notes.
3. Finding information.
4. Asking questions.
5. Checking and verifying information.
6. Analyzing and interpreting information.

Besides these skills reporters should also possess such qualities as alertness, curiosity, speed, punctuality, integrity, tactfulness, fearlessness and clarity of mind.

Freelancers

Freelance journalists are not attached to any newspapers or magazines. One who writes on all kinds of topics in several newspapers and periodicals without having a regular payroll is known as freelance writers.

Freelancers quite frequently keep in touch with media organizations and do assignments as per their needs. With a view to meeting their needs, freelancers have to complete these assignments as per the schedule of the publications.

Virtually, anybody can be a freelance writer. You must have the grit, determination and willingness to work hard besides possessing a good language.

MODULE V: NEWSPAPER CONTENT

Contents of a newspaper

The contents of a newspaper can be broadly divided into four parts-news, articles, and features, opinion pieces such as editorials, comments, letters to the editor, reviews, columns and advertisements. News constitutes about 60% of the space in a newspaper.

News

Journalists have tried to define news but no single definition has won wide spread acceptance. Typical definitions include:

1. News is anything printable.
2. News is an account of an event or a fact or an opinion that interests people.
3. News is a presentation of a report on a current event in a newspaper or other periodical or on radio and TV.
4. Anything that enough people wants to read is news provided it does not violate the canons of good taste and the laws of libel.
5. News is a timely, concise, accurate report of an event; it is not the event itself.
6. News is an account of a current idea, event, or problem that interest people.

News has also been defined as “anything you didn’t know yesterday” , “what people talk about”, “what readers want to know”, “what a well trained editor decides to put in his or her paper”, “anything timely”, “the report of an event” and “tomorrows history”.

Types of news

There are two major types of news-“hard” and “soft”. The term “hard news” usually refers to serious factual and timely stories about important topics. The stories may describe a major crime, fire, accident, speech, labour dispute or political campaign. Hard news may also be called spot news or straight news. A similar label, “breaking news” refers to events occurring or breaking at the present moment.

The term “soft news” usually refers to features or human interest stories. Their topics may be old and unimportant but never dull. Soft news entertains rather than informs and appeals to the reader’s emotions rather than to their intellect. Such stories may make readers laugh or cry, love or hate, envy or pity. Such stories may also use a more colourful style of writing with more anecdotes, quotations and descriptions.

Scholars have divided news stories into two related categories: those that offer readers immediate and delayed rewards. Human interest stories evoke an immediate emotional response, entertaining or stimulating readers. In contrast, hard news stories about more serious topics offer delayed rewards, since readers may not use the information they contain until weeks or months later. For example, influencing a voter’s decision in a distant election.

News elements

Although journalists cannot easily define news, most agree on its characteristics. Stories that actually gets printed or broadcast are likely to possess the following qualities or elements:

1. Timeliness
2. Proximity
3. Prominence
4. Consequence
5. Oddities
6. Human interest
7. Action and conflict
8. Trends and tendencies
9. Health and sex

1. Timeliness: Journalists stress current information-stories that occurred today or yesterday, not several days or weeks ago. Moreover journalists compete to report the stories ahead of their competitors. If a story occurred even one or two days earlier, journalists will look for a new angle or development to emphasis in their leads.

2. Proximity: Journalists consider local stories more newsworthy than stories that occur in distant places. Proximity is always important since people are more interested in news of local events than in events that happen far away.

3. Prominence: People are more interested in major events and prominent people than in trivial occurrences and ordinary people.

4. Consequence: Consequence is an important element of news. Many events make little impression on our lives. They are isolated occurrences without results. Other events-a Presidential election, for example, may have profound consequences.

5. Oddities: Deviations from the normal-unexpected or unusual events, conflicts or controversies, drama or change-are more newsworthy than commonplace. Journalists must be alert for the unusual twists in otherwise mundane stories.

6. Human interest: Human interest is always an important element of news. People are fascinated by other people and much of the news you read in the newspaper, hear on radio or see on television is built around human interest.

7. Action and conflicts: Reports on action and conflicts-fires, accidents, murders, wars, disasters, political disagreements and so on-tends to fill the pages of newspapers and the minutes devoted to news by radio and TV.

8. Trends and tendencies: Subtle changes in the world around us-trends and tendencies-are legitimate and important topics for news stories.

9. Health and sex: Another aspect of news and an aspect of growing significance is the personal, especially health and sex. There is increasing coverage in newspapers, magazines and on the air of sex and sexual matters. All aspects of health are being given increasing emphasis by the press.

Features

A feature can be defined as a story that stresses the human interest angle. A good feature is about the people in your community and their struggles, victories and defeats. A feature takes a certain angle and explores it by interviewing the people involved and drawing conclusion from that information. The writer takes an important issue of the day and explains it to the reader through comments from people involved in the story.

A feature takes an in-depth look at what's going on behind the news

- Its gets into the lives of people.
- It tries to explain why and how a trend developed.
- Unlike news, a feature does not have to be tied to a current event or a breaking story. But it can grow out of something that's reported in the news.

The feature is the journalistic equivalent of an essay and follows these guidelines:

- Starts with an idea or theme.
- Present information and opinions that back your point.
- Bring the reader to a conclusion.

Features can be classified according to purpose-expository, explaining things or timely topics; descriptive, giving verbal picture of persons, things and places of interest; and narratives which narrates events with plots, settings and characters.

Editorial

Editorial is the mirror of the newspapers opinion. It is the conscience of the paper. It projects the viewpoint of the paper on a particular policy, programme or event. It can inspire, motivate, excite, appeal, criticise or reject certain idea or policy. The expression of opinion is intended to lead the public opinion, and convert the readers to its point of view.

Editorials are written with reason and conviction. The writer should have his heart in the subject on which he is writing. The editorial should not be repetitive of facts stated in the news story. It should give a digest of facts, evaluate them, and arrive at logical conclusion step by step. The structure of editorial should be simple, so that the readers can easily follow it.

Interviews

Reporters interview other people to learn their opinions and to obtain factual information about events in the news. Reporters like interviews because they provide a fast, easy way to obtain news. Often there is no alternative to an interview.

Though interview stories are of many kinds, they can be broadly classified into three categories:

- 1) Interview for getting facts or news interviews.
- 2) Interview for opinions or symposium or group interview.
- 3) Personality interview

In some stories different types of interviews are combined together.

Preparation

Advance preparation or homework of the reporter can be in two parts-reading about the subject concerned and preparing questions to be asked.

Once the reporter has decided the general subject to be covered he must decide what information he wants to get. The more specific his objectives the better will be the preparation. Obviously, he must know the person to be interviewed. If he has written any books, articles or made any speeches about the subject of interview, the reporter should read them. Such materials will reduce the time and effort for preparation and help him in framing better and more precise questions. Reporters who do not prepare questions usually run out of questions. It is always good to tape the interview if the interview is pre-planned. It is also good to take notes while asking questions for it will help if the machine fails. While taking notes one should always note important sentences or phrases which will be useful in assessing the interview and writing the story. Closing of an interview is also as important as the beginning. The end should be smooth and meaningful. The interviewer should not publish off the record comments of the interviewee.

Most interviews are presented in the question and answer structure. A brief biographical sketch is given at the beginning and then the entire interview is reproduced or its excerpts. Another structure of interview is in the form of a speech story giving important facts and quotes.

Reviews

The critics write reviews on a variety of subjects such as books, plays, films, television, and radio plays, etc. While writing reviews, the critics should keep in mind that they are not writing for themselves, but are addressing the readers. Any attempt, therefore, to project too much of critics own viewpoint, or to criticize the work for the sake of controversy would not enhance the value of the writing. The effort should be to find out something good in everything.

The critic need not be a practicing expert in a particular field, but he should have sufficient background knowledge of the subject. The reviewer is free to give his own assessment, opinion and judgment about the work, provided it is not based on untruth or malice.

Cartoons

Comic strips and cartoons are an essential part of mass media today. Almost all newspapers and television channels use them. Social, political and cultural issues are coined as subjects for cartoons. Humorous and simple approach is adopted. It appeals to people in all walks of life. Cartoons or caricatures are not weapons for socio-political criticisms. It is a form of self-expression as paintings and can be considered as a visual art form.

Columns

The personal opinion of a column writer is expressed on a subject in a column. The writer has a fixed style of writing, and he generally writes on fixed subjects and has fixed point of view. However, there are columns in a newspaper where other persons also contribute. There are also columns where the columnist writes on a variety of subjects. Columns are on political, economics, or cultural subjects or on sports, radio, films, books, humor etc. Generally, columnists write once a week though there is no fixed rule about its frequency.

Letter to the editor

The letter to the editor is a sort of feedback for the paper. In a letter to the editor, the individual expresses his personal opinion or grievance on a specific subject of his interest or offers a suggestion to overcome the difficulty. Letters to the editor may also pertain to petty complaints. In some cases, the letters are written in a very forceful style and make great impact on the readers.

Photojournalism

Photojournalism is a particular form of journalism (the collecting, editing and presentation of news materials for publication or broadcast) that creates images in order to tell a news story. It is now usually understood to refer only to still images, and in some cases to video used in broadcast journalism. Photojournalism can fall under all subjects of photography but the image needs to be news worthy to end up being published.

The job of a photojournalist involves immense responsibility. The photojournalists face great difficulties when reporting news. He should have a lot of commonsense, a desire to work hard and an eye for a good picture story. Speed, accuracy and imaginative powers are necessary.

No other medium can bring life and reality as close as photography and it is in the field of reportage and documentation that photography's most important contribution lies in modern times. Not the least of its achievements, photography and photojournalism has proved powerful agents in the awakening of social conscience.

MODULE VI: NEWS REPORTING

Reporting Practices: News Story Structure

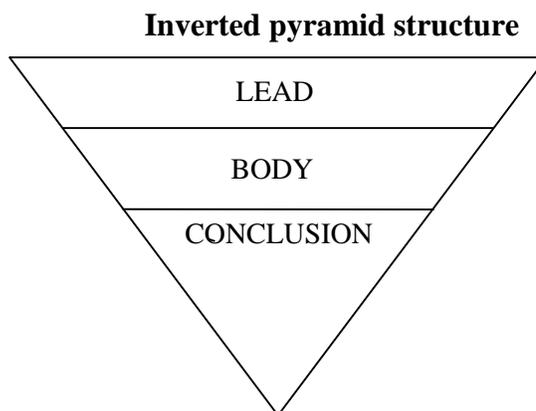
The news items that appear in newspapers are also called news stories. A news story is always based on facts. Further, a news story is normally written in inverted pyramid style, that is, the most important facts come first followed by other facts in order of significance. The inverted pyramid style has developed in journalism over the years.

Inverted pyramid style

Examples of the inverted pyramid form can be found in writing before the mid 19th century, but most journalism historians say that the concept was developed during the American Civil War. Newspaper correspondents in the field sent their dispatches by telegraph. As they were afraid that the system would malfunction or the enemy would cut the wires, the correspondents squeezed the most important information into the first few sentences.

Reporters using the inverted pyramid style of writing normally summarize a story in the lead and present the facts in descending order of importance. Consequently they place the story's most important details in the second paragraph. They continue to add details in decreasing order of importance. Each paragraph presents additional information: names, descriptions, quotations, conflicting viewpoints, explanations and background data.

The primary advantage of the inverted pyramid style is that if someone stops reading a story after only one or two paragraphs, that person will learn the story's most important details. Moreover if a story is long editors can easily shorten it by deleting one or more paragraphs from the bottom. However, this style also has several disadvantages. Just because the lead summarizes facts that later paragraphs discuss in greater detail some of those facts may be repeated. Second a story that follows the inverted pyramid style rarely contains any surprises; the lead immediately reveals every major details. Third, the style makes some stories more complex and more difficult to write. Despite these problems, reporters use the inverted pyramid style for most news stories.



Types of Intros or Leads

Basic elements of a news story can be found by asking and trying to find answers to six basic questions popularly known as the five Ws and one H. The five Ws are- What? When? Where? Who? and Why?. And the H is how?

There was a time when journalists were supposed to answer all the questions in the intro. But slowly it was discovered that it resulted in over-crowding of the opening Para, loss of clarity which at times confused and irritated the reader.

There are innumerable ways of writing intro or lead. The first paragraph of the story is called the intro or lead. There are various ways to classify the intro or lead depending on different criteria. Based on the number of incidents involved, the intro could be simple or complex.

- 1) **Simple lead** involves a single incident. Even if the event may have several different incidents, the intro takes account of a single incident. Simple lead is very common in newspapers and should normally be favoured as it is easy to write it clearly.
- 2) **Complex lead** involves more than one incident in the intro. It is normally used when similar or related incidents are clubbed together in one story. One has to be careful with this kind of intro as it is normally long and at times confusing.

Another classification is possible on the basis of variety of presentation in the intro.

Astonisher: This intro is of moderate length from twenty five to thirty five words and tries to arrest the reader's attention by presenting the unexpected but not of world rocking importance.

Cartridge or Capsule: This lead is brief and goes right to the point and present news with high concentration of news values.

Descriptive lead: Also known as situation or picture lead, it tries to paint a word picture of an interesting person, place or thing to help create mood for the story.

Staccato intro: It consists of short clipped words, phrases, sentences, sometimes separated by dots or dashes. It is casually disruptive and should not be used if the facts of the story do not justify it.

Miscellaneous freak lead: This type of intro has a novel approach in sentence structure and presentation, in order to catch the reader's attention.

Many of the above leads actually summarise the story and therefore they can be described as **summary leads**.

With interpretative news stories becoming more and more prominent in journalism interpretative leads are also becoming common in newspapers.

Interpretative leads normally do not quote anybody and begin with a statement from the writer of the story. The interpretative lead gives the assessment of the reporter or special correspondents based on facts of the situation.

Thus we see that all sorts of composition can be used in an intro. Its contents must have the highest news value in the story. It must be easy to read and understand.

The body

After the intro is written the body of the story will follow in the logical order of the inverted pyramid style.

The second paragraph can go straight to the next important point of the story, bringing in the source in an easy manner, so that the story is kept moving smoothly.

In the body of the story choice of apt words is essential to ensure precision and better readability. The body should be concise and shorn of all verbiage. It should take notice of all material

points concerning the news event, elaborate or background them where necessary, but should not be burdened with dispensable details.

Beat

There is division of labour in the reporting staff. The units allotted to reporters and special correspondents are called beats. A reporter may be in charge of police, crime news or hospital news so the police, crime, or hospitals will be his beats. Reporters can have more than one beat. In fact all the government departments, political parties and institutions where news is expected are listed and distributed as beats among the reporting staff. The allotted beat is the responsibility of the concerned reporter and he should make arrangements to get all the news from his beat.

Big news which is broken by a reporter is called a scoop. A reporter cannot have scoops every day but if he is regular at his beat he will not miss a scoop when it is possible to get.

News sources

Sources of news are innumerable. The innumerable sources of news can be classified into various categories depending on the criteria applied. The sources can be hard or weak. A source is hard when the facts of a report come from the horse's mouth, where they are ascribed to the concerned person or persons by name. On the government policies, for example, the Prime Minister or other ministers, top officials of the concerned ministries or departments, etc., are the hard sources.

When a general opinion within a particular group with a wide base is to be given, the practice is to quote "circles" for example, political circles, trade circles. Such sourcing can relate to reactions, comments, etc., but not to any hard news. These are considered weak sources.

Sources can also be classified as government sources and non-government sources. Government sources include legislative, executive and judiciary and institutions attached to them. Non-government sources include political parties, voluntary and other non-government institutions and members of public.

The main source of news for newspaper is news agencies or wire services. Besides these sources, namely reporting staff and the wire services, monitoring of radio and television stations also serve as source of news. There are other classifications of news sources which find mention in the intro or body of the story and indicate from where or how the news has come to the reporters. These include:

Press conference or briefing: A formal conference of pressmen invited by a dignitary in which after initial announcement he answers questions of newsmen. It is also called news conference.

Press briefing is similar to press conference in that newsmen are told something and they can ask questions. The difference is that briefing is done by a spokesman who is authorized to make a statement and answer questions on behalf of a dignitary, department or party.

Thus though there is a very thin dividing line between them press conference sounds more formal while briefing is less formal.

Meet the press

Here the press club or press association invites individuals to meet press representatives. All arrangements for such meetings are made by press organizations. In these meetings, there are no fixed

subjects for discussion and no background materials are distributed. The arrangements such as venue, refreshments, transportation, etc., are all made by the press organization.

Press organizations usually invite important personalities or officials for such meetings

News releases or hand outs

Signed or unsigned statements issued by a government departments, civic body, political party, institution or organization released to the press is called press release, press note or press hand out.

Principles of reporting

The reporter must report the news accurately and fairly without prejudice and personal opinion. To sum up, the essentials of good reporting are accuracy, attribution, fairness and objectivity.

- 1. Accuracy:** The story should be based on facts. A reporter should strive to make the story as precise as possible.
- 2. Attribution:** Attribution should be made clear and should be placed before what the person said. Failure to do so make a reporters story suspect.
- 3. Fairness:** Recognition of the importance of fair and balanced reporting, in which opinions that differ from those of the writer, or the newspaper or a government official is one of the important principle of good reporting.
- 4. Objectivity:** Objectivity is a significant principle of journalistic professionalism. News is a factual report of an event, not a report as seen by a biased person or seen as a reporter might wish it to be seen. The reporter should be as impartial and honest as possible. Reporters should have a neutral point of view. They should report what “both sides” of an issue tell them. The tenets of objectivity are violated to the degree to which the story appears to favour one pole over the other.

MODULE VII: NEWS EDITING

Editing

Editing is the process of preparing language, images or sound for presentation through correction, condensation, organization and other modification.

Copy editing is the process by which an editor makes formatting changes and other improvements to the text. A person who performs the task of copy editing is called a copy editor. A copy editor mostly reviews and edits reporters copy for accuracy, content, grammar and style. They also provide catchy headlines for the story. The following tasks are their responsibilities

1. Ensuring accuracy
2. Trimming unnecessary words
3. Polishing the language
4. Correcting inconsistencies
5. Making the story conform to style and editorial policy
6. Eliminating passages in poor taste
7. Eliminating libelous statements
8. Making certain the story is readable and complete.

Editing process

The main consideration in editing is to tell the story in fewest words possible. Basic principles of editing lies in its process. The process of editing consists three phases namely, selection, correction and rewriting.

Selection

The selection of news to be covered is based on the editor's personal and professional judgment. The main factor in that judgment can be summed up in a single word: Newsworthiness. Newsworthy stories are generally those that offer the most information with the most urgency to the most people.

Correction

Another consideration is respect for accuracy. It means looking out for small factual errors, which disfigure an otherwise good story. Editing involves making sure words are spelled correctly, language is used properly, punctuation is in the right places and spelling is accurate.

Rewriting

Don't be afraid to ask for a re-write. Try not to rewrite the entire article. Only the presentation style, language and structure of the story is rewritten.

News Headline

Simplicity, informality and impact are the essential characteristics of a modern headline. It should give clear signal about the content of the story and should be economical in editorial production and reading time and in news space. It should be read quickly. It should be proportionate to the news and flexible.

Headline pattern

Headlines can be multi deck or multiline in a single deck. A deck is a distinct headline on its own and as such it may consist of one or more lines. If there are two such units, say of two lines each, the headline will be double deck.

Modern school of thought is against the multi deck. The argument is that multi deck headlines consume more editorial time in writing, production time in setting and the newsprint space. People normally don't bother to read beyond the main heading. In most newspapers one to two top stories on a page are multi deck. One should not go beyond three decks even in such stories.

There is a wide range of possibilities regarding arrangement of headlines. The basic typographic arrangements are flush left, centered, stepped, flush right and hanging indention.

Flush left: Many newspapers have switched to this style. The flush left heading has one or more lines which are set flush to the left.

Centered: In this type of arrangement each line of headline type is centered on the white of the column.

Stepped: In this arrangement the first line is set flush left and the last flush right and the middle lines centered.

Flush right: Each line is pushed against the right hand margin to create a stepped effect on the left.

Hanging indention: The first line is set full out and the others indented usually to the left. It cannot be a regular style but can be used as an occasional variant.

Writing headlines

Writing headlines involves half the skill of a good deskman. The difficulty in writing headlines is in conveying in a few attractive words the essence of a complicated set of facts. In half a dozen words the headline has to inform the reader what the story contains. The headline gives emphasis to a few words in bold types. Hence every word should be weighed.

Headline writing is art and craft at the same time. The art is in imagination and vocabulary and the craft lies in accuracy of content, attractiveness of appearance and practicality.

Newspaper Design and Layout

It is essential to realize that newspaper design is part of journalism. It is not decoration but communication. Newspaper communicates news and ideas and design is an integral part of the process.

A sub editor begins with a blank sheet of newspaper and wants to communicate several ideas and the day's news. It is the function of newspaper design to present that mosaic in an organized and comprehensive way by using text type, display type, photography, line work, white space and a sequence of pages in the most fitting combination.

Layout means arrangement of headlines, text, artwork and white space on a page or pages. Layout could be static or dynamic, vertical or horizontal or even a circus layout is possible.

If one can predict the layout of tomorrow's page today because it has been similar with minor variations day after day the layout is called static. But layout is dynamic when nobody can predict what it will be- the lead may be on left or right and if there is a striking picture, headlines will be submerged to make room for it.

Vertical layout gives the simplest page organization. This oldest layout style has limited range of news value expression. Though it is visually depressing maximum number of stories can be given above the fold. Headlines are set in the width of basic single column grid and the text runs single column.

Horizontal layout is another simple layout but with more capacity for emphasis. It is modular text squared up under multi-columns heads to create a horizontal unit. Page is then made up of a series of these units lying flat on each other. In horizontal layout full use of the width of the page is possible for display. However, there are only a few stories above the mid fold which can be seen at retail outlets.

In circus layout emphasis is on variety, contrast and movement but not on order or news value. There are many points of attraction, not necessarily related to news values. The reader is to be distracted and entertained. The masthead of the paper may appear in any position above the fold.

The newspaper design and layout must be functional. There should be organization and rational co ordination of heterogeneous material but the news values should get priority in deciding the display. There should be order but prime importance should be given to news values.

Style book

Style of newspaper expresses its individuality. Personality of news media and its policy decisions are reflected in style. Stylebook establishes rules of uniformity in matters of punctuation, form of the abbreviations, capitalization, word division, spellings, numerals and other details of expression. House style is the set of rules adopted by a particular publishing house or a newspaper establishment.

Difference in format, narration and presentation of items are based upon a document which is called stylebook. The stylebook contributes to the uniformity in the style and thus convenience of the readers. Stylebooks are available in print, electronic and World Wide Web based versions now a days.

Printing

Printing is a process for production of texts and images, typically with ink on paper using a printing press. The art and science of making a large number of duplicate reproductions of an original copy is termed as printing. It may be defined as the art of preserving all other art.

Johann Gutenberg of the German city of Mainz developed European printing technology in 1440, with which the classical age of printing began. Gutenberg is also credited with the introduction of an oil based ink which was more durable than previously used water based inks. Printing soon became the first means of mass communication.

Composing methods

Typesetting is the process of putting into type the words to be printed. It is also called composition. Typesetting techniques were: hand composing (where single letters were picked up by hand from pigeon-hole cases, assembled into words, justified into columns and then used for printing) ; linotype (where slug which means full solid line was cast on machine) ; monotype (which casts and assembles single characters with the help of two machines); and ludlow (which was used to cast headlines).

Phototypesetting has replaced hot-metal composition for most printing. It paved the way for faster and cheaper printing. Phototypesetting is a method of setting (assembling) types on photographic paper or film. This paper on film is later used to prepare printing plates.

Desk top publishing is the use of a personal computer to write, illustrate and layout a document or a news story. The use of DTP technology has revolutionized printing.

Desk top printing is important to desktop publishing. It was primarily the introduction of the Apple laser writer, a post script desk top print. Inkjet and laser printer are the most common type of desk top printers and are generally used for personal small volume printing and proofing.

Four major printing processes

The printing processes are mainly of four types-letter press, lithography, gravure and offset.

Letter press: It is the oldest printing process and came into being with the invention of movable types in the fifteenth century by Johann Gutenberg. Printing is done through the relief method, where the raised printing surface of type or block is inked with rollers. The impression is then obtained on printable surface (paper, board, plastic sheet etc.) by contact. Printing in a letter press is a time consuming and laborious process.

Lithography: In lithography and offset lithography or photographic printing, the text or the image is transferred to a flat slab of stone or metal plate with greasy crayons or ink. The surface is then damped. Because of the mutual repulsion of water and oil, the greasy parts repel moisture but catch the ink when rolled on. The image is then transferred to paper. Gradually, the metal plate is replacing the stone slab and the printing matter is generally transferred to it photographically. Offset lithography is a further improvement on this process. This process is generally used for posters, calendars and long-run colour jobs.

Gravure: In gravure or intaglio printing or photogravure, the impression is made from ink deposited in engraved areas or depressions in a plate. The matter or the image is transferred to a copper sheet or roller by photography and etched with acid, the desired depth of colour being determined by the depth of etching. The surface is covered with ink and the surplus ink is wiped off leaving it in the depressions which are impressed on paper. This process is increasingly used for illustrated magazines in many colours, requiring large runs.

Offset technology: This is an indirect method of printing as the ink from a printing plate is transferred to the rubber surface and then to the paper or impression cylinder. All ordinary offset printing is done from the metal surface of plates. The material to be printed is transferred to the plated through a special photographic process. The plates are chemically treated so that only the traced design of the print will take up ink.

Offset printing is very cheap for colour productions. Anything that can be photographed can be used as composed type. It can print on different surface. It can also turn out several thousands of impressions in an hour.

Though it has many advantages it has some disadvantages also as it is impossible to remove the effect of water in this process. The colour appears slightly washed out on account of the effect of water. Printing is expensive for small runs. Anyhow the increased use of offset in publishing newspapers and magazines has greatly increased the use of these presses.

Suggested Reading

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