



ଓଡ଼ିଶା ରାଜ୍ୟ ମୁକ୍ତ ବିଶ୍ୱବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟ  
ସମ୍ବଲପୁର  
Odisha State Open University  
Sambalpur

Diploma in Journalism & Mass Communication  
(DJMC)

# Specialized Reporting & Beats



Journalism & Mass Communication

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Odisha State Open University, Sambalpur, Odisha  
Established by an Act of Government of Odisha.

## **DIPLOMA IN JOURNALISM & MASS COMMUNICATION**

**DJMC-02**

### **Specialized Reporting and Beats**

Block

# **3**

### **Specialized Reporting and Beats**

**Unit - 1**

**Understanding Beats and their categories**

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**Unit - 2**

**Editorials, Interviews and Special Articles**

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**Unit- 3**

**Backgrounders, Reviews (Books/Films/Documentaries, Magazine Reporting)**

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**Unit- 4**

**News Photography**

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# **UNIT-1: UNDERSTANDING BEATS AND THEIR CATEGORIES**

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## **1.0 UNIT STRUCTURE**

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- 1.1 Learning Objective
- 1.2 Introduction
  - 1.2.1 Cultivating sources
- 1.3.0 City reporting
  - 1.3.1 City/local news
  - 1.3.2 Crime Reporting: sources and related laws
  - 1.3.3 Reporting Political Parties and Politics, Legislative (covering Assembly and Parliament)
  - 1.3.4 Legal Reporting
- 1.4 Specialised reporting (Defence, Science & Technology, Education, Art & Culture, Environment, Business, Fashion & Lifestyle, Entertainment, Sports, etc)
- 1.5 Reporting Conflict (Armed and Social Conflict, Region, Community and Human Rights)

Check your progress

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## **1.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVE**

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The objective of this unit is to familiarise you with the different types of beats covered by journalists. The unit will also help you understand what it takes to become a specialist in either one or several beats.

After the end of this unit you will be able to:

- Understand the meaning of news beats
- Learn how to efficiently cover one or many beats
- Learn what it takes to become a good beat reporter
- Know the challenges faced by a beat reporter

## **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

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News reporting is challenging but interesting. Media companies hire fresh journalism students on probation as trainee reporters. Generally in the first few months, the trainees are asked to cover different events. Sometimes they are also asked to report on developments in several government departments. After the completion of the probation period, reporters are assigned separate news beats. While assigning beats, interest and knowledge of a particular area of a reporter are also taken into consideration. In some small media companies, however, a reporter often has to cover multiple news beats.

You may be wondering now as to what is the meaning of news beat. In simple words, it is a continuing assignment a reporter has to undertake. It may be related to a particular government department; a particular area of interest like sports, education, local municipality, crime, health etc.

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### **1.2.1 CULTIVATING SOURCES**

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News reporters have to collect and analyse facts about current events through interviews, investigations, or observations. For writing an investigative report, you are supposed to corroborate facts with authentic sources. While you will have the freedom to hide the identity of your source, you can't fake it. Not having authentic sources, may harm your career in future.



A source can be a person, publication or other document or a record that gives you information. Here we are talking only about persons as sources. Much of your reporting career will depend on how good you are at cultivating sources.

It is important to quote sources, especially if the news is controversial. Sometimes your sources may not like to go on record and may prefer to go off the record.

As a new reporter, if you are quoting anonymous sources for a story, you would have to get it approved by a senior reporter in the organisation or by your reporting manager. This depends on the policy of news organisations.

While it is imperative for you to have good relations with your sources, you should avoid taking favours from sources. In the shorter term, you may gain with favours from sources, it will certainly harm your credentials as a bonafide journalist in the future.



Experts provide several tips for cultivating sources. Here are some:

### 1. By International Journalists' Network (IJNET)

- Everybody is a source. Having sources who hold senior positions is great, but some of your most valuable information and story leads might come from sources in the lower ranks.
- Know your sources. Talk to them about things unrelated to your reporting. Find out about their lives and find something you have in common to chat about; a favorite football team, a hobby, kids, vacations.
- Keep in touch. Call them occasionally, even if there's nothing you need from them. Few sources want to talk to a reporter who only calls when there's a crisis. You don't want to be best friends; you do want to be friendly.
- Never lie to your sources and let them know you expect the same from them. Also, allow them talk to you about their fears and concerns on the story, or on any other issues.
- Always do background research on your sources and ask them to tell you about anything you don't know and which could be used to discredit them after your report is published or broadcast.
- Double-check everything they tell you and keep asking the question: "How do you know this?" Sources sometimes mix facts with assumptions. Some might exaggerate or engage in selective story-telling. Sources often have agendas. It is your responsibility to fact-check their statements.
- Practice the "rule of threes": After you interview a source, ask them for three other people you can talk to who are knowledgeable about the story. Repeat the process with the next three. That makes the source feel valued and it protects you. You want to get as many voices as possible if you're going to have a complete story.
- Using unnamed sources is controversial, but sometimes necessary. Do your best to convince your sources to go on the record. If they don't agree, make sure their reasons are convincing enough. If you agree to protect their identity, do it sparingly -- you need to be prepared to go to jail to protect a source.
- After publishing a story, call all your sources, as well as the people you investigated, to talk to them about it. It is a great way to develop sources and build respect, even amongst those who were upset by the report.



## 2. Five tips by Poynter.org: Beth Winegarner shares the following tips for cultivating sources.

- **Embrace the small talk:** Many reporters aren't into schmoozing, but a few friendly words can set you apart from reporters who treat sources like information-vending machines instead of human beings. Think of small talk as the mayo in the tuna salad sandwich of your reporting.
- **Don't be a stranger:** If you find someone you think will be a goldmine of information, check in with them regularly, even if you don't need to interview them. This is another good time for small talk, and to ask if there have been any developments on a topic you've discussed before. Look through your contacts and see if there's someone you haven't heard from in a while. Give them a call; they might just have a scoop for you.
- **What happens "off the record" stays "off the record":** We all know reporters who say there's no such thing as "off the record," or who promise to keep a source's information in confidence, and then quote them in the next day's news. Don't be that reporter.
- **Ask your sources to recommend more sources:** At the end of interviews, ask your source whether there's anyone else you should talk to about the topic at hand. It's likely they'll have someone in mind.
- **Avoid getting too friendly with sources:** Getting too close can jeopardize your objectivity. If you become friends, you may find yourself telling that source's side of the story -- to the detriment of the other sides. You may withhold important information to protect the source unnecessarily. You may even avoid writing news articles because your source wants to suppress information.

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## 1.3 CITY REPORTING

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City reporting assignments include coverage of all important events happening in the city. It could be a political rally, an accident, a crime incident, a book launch, a seminar, a cultural programme, a disease outbreak etc.

For the starters, city reporting may seem hectic but as you grow in the profession, you may start enjoying it.

To make you understand city reporting better, we have broken into different segments. We will also provide you with some examples for clarity.

### 1.3.1 CITY/LOCAL NEWS

People are always interesting in knowing what is happening in their surroundings. While they get to know about big national events through News channels and websites, they have to rely on local newspapers or websites for local news. This is the reason why there has been a growth in local editions of newspapers, and also some local news websites.

Here are some examples of local news:

More choices for fliers to Bangalore, Calcutta and New Delhi

# 24X7 airport gets three new flights

SANDEEP DWIVEDI

Bhubaneswar, Oct. 2: Three new flights have started operating from Biju Patnaik International Airport, which started working round the clock since yesterday.

With this development, the airport authorities expect different airlines to make use of the facility to park their aircraft at the airport and provide better connectivity to different metros.

Low-cost carrier IndiGo is operating all the three new flights that are providing connections from the city to Bangalore, Calcutta and New Delhi.

The night flight from Bangalore will reach Bhubaneswar at 11.30pm and depart at 11.30pm.

Airport director R. Mahalingam said the flight would benefit travellers wanting to reach Bhubaneswar late at night after completing a day's work in Bangalore and vice-versa. Fares will be comparatively cheaper for the late night flight, he said.

Abhishek Kog, 30, a software professional working in Bangalore, who is on leave in Bhubaneswar, said "Better air connectivity from Bhubaneswar to Bangalore helps professionals like us who do not want to spend 28 hours travelling by train."

The flight from Calcutta will reach the city at 10.45pm and depart at 5.55am. Mahalingam said the flight would be beneficial for people who want to visit Calcutta on business trips and return the same day.

"Early flights are aimed at attracting passengers who regularly take the Shatabdi and Jan Shatabdi trains, which depart early in the morning," said the airport director.

Trains take around seven hours to travel between Calcutta and Bhubaneswar. The flight takes only one hour.

The third new IndiGo flight will reach Bhubaneswar at 12.05am and leave



An IndiGo aircraft at Bhubaneswar airport. Telegraph picture

### NEW OPTIONS

Airline	Flight No.	Destination	Departure time
IndiGo	6E-678	Bangalore	11.50pm
IndiGo	6E-193	Calcutta	5.55am
IndiGo	6E-104	New Delhi	6.05am

for New Delhi at 6.05am. It will reach the national capital at 8.10am.

Before this, the first flight out of Bhubaneswar was a New Delhi flight operated by full-service carrier Vistara that left at 6.05am.

Two IndiGo aircraft are being parked at the airport since yesterday. These are the planes that leave for Calcutta and New Delhi early in the morning.

Mahalingam said that as of now, Airports Authority of India would not charge the airline parking fees. He said some more airlines have evinced interest in using Biju Patnaik International Airport as a base for night parking. "However, no concrete decision has been taken by any other airline in this regard," he said.

Monitoring that other airlines too have shown interest in starting more flights from the city, he said new flights to New Delhi, Chennai and Bangalore are likely to be an-

nounced in November.

"The airlines operating from the city are presently assessing the passenger flow to different cities from Bhubaneswar. Besides, surge pricing in premium trains have made flying viable and the convenient option for passengers," he said.

The airport director said direct flights from Bhubaneswar to South East Asian destinations were likely to start from the first quarter of 2017.

"Some airlines have evinced interest in starting direct international flights from Bhubaneswar. But they are yet to announce the timing and date of commencement of flights," he said, adding that airlines conduct trial runs for at least two or three months before starting international operations. "Issues such as availability of aircraft for this sector and commercial viability of operations have been discussed by some airlines. The international flights are most likely to start next year."

## A local news of Bhubaneswar

# Despite 'ban' on Pak artistes, artwork from across the border still on display in capital

VANDANA KALRA  
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 2

PORTRAYING THE "vicissitude of war from a neutral perspective", artist Khadim Ali's works at 'Latitude 28' in Delhi appeal for reflection. But when his exhibition opened to art connoisseurs on Thursday evening, the Australian artist was absent. The Pakistani passport holder was unable to travel to India as his visa is yet to be sanctioned.

"He applied more than a month ago, we hope he still gets it," says Bharna Kakar, owner of Latitude 28, who also has a show of Pakistani artist Waseem Ahmed scheduled to open later this year.

While the Indian Motion Picture Producers Association (MPPA) might have passed a resolution Thursday to temporarily ban all Pakistani artists in India, works of several Pakistani artists are currently on



A still from Pakistani artiste Bani Abidi's video, Mangoes. In the video, she has a split screen with two women, Indian and Pakistani, reminiscing their childhood as they eat mangoes.

display in the capital.

While Gallery Threshold's group exhibition "Revisiting Beauty" features works of Pakistani artists Aisha Abid Hussain and Wardha Shabbir alongside their Indian counter-

parts, the Kiran Nadar Museum (KNN) of Art in Noida is hosting an exhibition, "Encounters and each passing day", where the works of Indian and Pakistani artists have more political overtones.

Walking between Berlin and

Karachi, and having spent some years in India, Bani Abidi juxtaposes the two sides of the border in her videos on display at KNN, Noida.

In her first video, Mangoes, she has a split screen with two women, Indian and Pakistani, reminiscing their childhood as they eat mangoes. The encounter turns sour when comparisons begin on the range available in the two countries.

Her two-channel video, News, on the other hand, is a mock news programme being broadcast on either side of the Indo-Pak border, presenting separate versions of the same news event. The comparison is extended to the role of music in the creation of patriotic sentiment, in the video 'Anthem'.

Artist Rashid Rana's video "Ten Differences", also on display at KNN, addresses the rivalry over the Kashmir Valley which has impacted relations between the two nations.

## A local news of New Delhi

### 1.3.2 CRIME REPORTING

Crime news forms an important part of daily news coverage by media. Even as India is one of the fastest growing economy in the world, there is no let down in the number of crime incidents. Every day, a number of incidents are reported in a city. People want to read about them. While some crimes are about greed, violence, sex, revenge etc, some reflect important social tensions. For example: Attacks carried out by illegal cow vigilantes on Dalits, or an organised attack by a community against other, which often leads to riots.

Crime reporting allows you to understand some of the basics techniques of journalism. It helps you learn how to research for a story, how to follow a lead, how to interview people to extract information from them and how to write your story in a way that will draw the attention of your reader.

According to The News Manual, all crime stories carry some news value. Such as:

- **Seriousness:** We usually assume that more serious crimes are more newsworthy. A murder is more important than an armed assault, which is more serious than a break-and-enter, which is more serious than a parking offence. In terms of money, the bigger the amount stolen, the more important the crime. Remember, however, that money has a different value to different people. The theft of \$100 will be more newsworthy when it is money taken from a poor widow than when it is stolen from a rich businessman.

- **Unusual nature of the crime:** The more unusual crimes are generally more newsworthy. A break-and-enter at a school may be more newsworthy than a break-in at a home, but a burglary at a crocodile farm may be more newsworthy still.

- **Size of the community:** Crimes are usually viewed as more important by smaller communities. If you are a journalist on a big city newspaper, an ordinary car theft may not be newsworthy at all. If you are a journalist in a small community, a car theft may be the biggest news of the week. Everybody may know the owner - they may all know the car. It is a sad fact that quite horrible crimes do not make the news in a big city because they are so common and because the chances are small of readers or listeners knowing the victims or caring about them.

- **Identity of the victim or criminal:**

Crimes become more newsworthy if they involve people who are themselves newsworthy. An ordinary person attacked on the street may not be big news, but if that person is a local chief, that will be very newsworthy. A fraud case becomes more important when it involves a leading politician. A robbery becomes bigger news when police reveal that the robber was an escaped prisoner with convictions for murder and rape.

It is generally true that a crime becomes more newsworthy if there is a strong chance of it happening again - usually because the criminal is known and likely to strike again.



As a reporter, you are required to know all details of an incident and not be biased against anyone. Unless an accused has been convicted by a court, you must use the word 'allegedly' while reporting an incident.

Secondly, you need to corroborate your reports with proper quotes from police.

In case of crimes against women and children, you need to be especially sensitive. There are several guidelines for reporting on women and children, that you need to follow.

Here are some examples of crime stories:

### ***Three arrested for double murder***

*BENGALURU: Police have arrested three men who murdered two women in Vasanthnagar, and said it was an off-the-books pawn-broking business which the victims' husbands ran that was the cause for the killing.*

*On Monday morning, Santoshi Bai, 58, and Lata Dinesh, 38, were murdered in their house in Vasanthnagar. Police found no signs of a break-in and suspected that the murderers were known to the women. Santoshi's husband, Sampath Raj, and Lata's husband, Dinesh, told police that they ran an unofficial pawn-broking business, apart from their chemical company. Pawn brokers would pledge gold with them, and Raj and Dinesh would pay marginally higher interest for large amounts of gold. Police are questioning the three arrested men - Manesh, 29, Maheendar Singh, 29, and Devaram, 24 - all pawn brokers. Police said Manesh went into the house on Monday morning and murdered the two women, while Maheendar waited outside on a scooter. They took 3.5kg of gold and cash from the house and deposited it with Devaram, police said.*

*Although police are yet to take the three men into custody and recreate crime, preliminary investigation revealed that Manesh and Maheendar went to the house with a knife. Manesh entered the house and demanded money from Lata. When she refused, he attacked her. Her mother-in-law, Santoshi, who came down hearing the commotion, was killed soon after. As Manesh used to frequent the house to deposit gold, he knew the family didn't have any security. Police said he knew that the gold was kept under the bed. He put the jewellery in a plastic bag and left. Police said Manesh had lost money on bad deals and planned the murder and theft.*

*One of the CCTV cameras on the street caught Manesh leaving the house, leading to the arrest. Police are yet to locate the murder weapon but a napkin he used to wipe blood from the knife was found. Police said the crime was committed in 10 minutes. "When he walked out of the house, there was blood on his shirt but no one noticed," said a cop.*



### ***Spurt in murder cases; Kalady goons still at large***

*KOCHI: Ernakulam seems to be witnessing a sudden spurt in violent crimes with four murders and two murder attempts reported from the district in over a week. Two goonda attacks were also reported this week in the district.*

*The police on Friday arrested a 55-year-old man who stabbed his brother to death, following a dispute over partition of ancestral assets, at Chulikkal near Thopumpady. Vincent Joseph from Chulikkal had gone into hiding after the murder.*

*According to K G Aneesh, circle inspector, Palluruthy, the accused killed his brother Milton following an altercation at their home on September 12. "Vincent brought a knife from Lakshadweep, where he works, to use against Milton. The accused stabbed his brother 18 times after the brawl," he said. The body of the deceased remained at the house for eight days and the murder was reported on September 21.*

*"Milton's mother and another brother, who are mentally unsound, were living in the same house where the body lay rotting for over a week," said a police official. Vincent had spent two years in jail for raping a 3-year-old girl in Kannur in 2011.*

*According to statistics provided by the DCRB, only five murders were reported before June this year in Kochi city. The recently released NCRB data marks Kochi as the second city in the state with highest crime rate in murder after Kollam. As many as 11 murder cases were registered in the city in 2015, whereas Kollam reported 18 murders. Kochi is followed by Thiruvananthapuram (9), Kozhikode (8), Kannur (7), Thrissur (6) and Malappuram (5).*

*Cops, meanwhile, managed to arrest all the accused in the recent murder cases. A cook at a beer parlour near Kolencherry was arrested on September 23 on charges of murdering a bar bouncer. On the very next day in Nedumbassery, a man was arrested for stabbing his wife to death.*

*The goonda attack at Kalady on Monday had resulted in the death of a youth. Though the police arrested five men on charges of facilitating the murder, the accused in the case, Rathish alias Malayattoor Kara, Eldho alias Aachi, Grintesh and Tomy, are still at large.*

*In a suspected retaliatory attack, a 31-year-old youth, Ajish, was assaulted with weapons on Wednesday night. An unidentified assailant had thrashed and stabbed a youth in an attempted murder near Palluruthy on September 23.*

### **1.3.3 REPORTING POLITICAL PARTIES AND POLITICS, LEGISLATURE (COVERING ASSEMBLY AND PARLIAMENT)**

India is a democratic country. Constitution of India allows people the freedom of speech and opinion and also the freedom to take part in the electoral process.

You must have noticed by now that some type of election keeps happening around year across the country. It could be General Elections for the formation of new Union government or Assembly elections for the formation of governments in states or even elections to the local municipal and panchayati raj or cooperative bodies.

So many elections throughout the year and a robust democracy naturally generate people's interest in politics. People want to know about developments, even controversies and scandals in different parties. No wonder why much of the space in a newspaper caters to political reports. This is true also about the web and TV media.

However, political reporting is not as easy as interesting it seems while reading. One requires a solid understanding of political realities, Constitution, history of the country as well as the political parties to become a successful political reporter.

Because of the seriousness and knowledge required to cover politics, fresh journalists are hardly asked to cover this beat.

In the age of paid media menace and social, it has become difficult for political remain neutral and rid their reports from political biases. A reporter hence needs to tread carefully if he wishes not to be labeled as an agent of a particular political party or a leader.

Political reporting involves

- Covering political parties and leaders
- Covering elections, political rallies
- Covering state assemblies, municipal bodies and Parliament
- Covering government actions, structure
- Covering public policy issues



Some tips for political reporting:

BBC political reporter Adam Fleming has given 10 tips for political reporting. These tips are applicable in any democracy. Here are the tips:

### **1. Be a good listener.**

Often politicians will give away things in subtle ways and so you need to listen very carefully to the words they use. They very rarely say: "Listen to this next bit of my interview because I am about to tell you that I disagree with the Prime Minister." It's up to you to spot it.

### **2. Have a good memory.**

If you hear an interesting fact that might not be totally relevant to the story you're working on at that moment, make an effort to remember it because you never know when it might come in handy. Jot down things in your notepad.

### **3. Learn the lingo.**

Politics is full of weird words. Take the time to learn what a "second reading" is or what a "whip" does or the job of a "select committee". It will make you sound very smart but also make things seem less scary.

### **4. Be wary of numbers.**

When you hear a statistic, start asking questions because numbers can be manipulated. For example, a politician might say "We are spending so many billion pounds on this." OK, but over how many years? Spread over how many places and people? Is this new money or have you already promised to spend it?

### **5. Don't be worried if you don't feel like an expert.**

I used to feel intimidated by people who knew more about a subject than I did, but then I realised that it was my job to ask lots of questions and find things out. Although it helps to know a bit!

### **6. Try to get a straight answer.**

Politicians love talking but sometimes don't say very much. Be prepared to ask your question a few times until your interviewee actually tells you something.

### **7. Be polite.**

On TV and radio you will hear big-name interviewers giving politicians a really, really hard time. But think carefully about the difference between tough questions and rude ones.

### **8. Spot a change.**

Compare what people are saying now with what they've said before because a politician changing their mind means there's a story somewhere!



**9. Watch lots of news.**

You need to know what politicians have been saying on other programmes and you need to know what else is going on in the world because politics touches on a lot of other issues.

**10. Keep your political opinions to yourself.**

You can't let your own views come across or interfere with your reporting.

Some examples of political reports:

***In UP, political parties target 12% undecided Brahmin votes for win***

*BY sunitaAron/Hindustan Times/Lucknow/July 19, 2016*

*Ever since the BSP was founded in 1984, founder-president Kanshi Ram had been working on various caste formulas that would pave the way for a series of victories in Uttar Pradesh. Over two decades later, his successor Mayawati meticulously put one - involving a rainbow coalition of Brahmins, Muslims and Dalits - in place to score a particularly overwhelming triumph in 2007.*

*Brahmins formed an integral part of Mayawati's strategy, and she gave the community its due soon after coming to power - cabinet positions in proportion to its population.*

*However, the Brahminical hunger to reclaim their erstwhile political primacy remained. Often, its leaders discussed the Congress days when people from their community used to become chief ministers.*

*In 2017, they may have the opportunity to see one of their own in the chief minister's chair. Eyeing the crucial elections are three players - the BJP, the BSP and the Congress - and they all know the Brahmin community holds the key to winning it.*

*Political expert Gyanendra Sharma believes there is a rush for Brahmin votes because they are not aligned with any political party. "The Congress' decision to project a Brahmin face has again made the community politically relevant. It will compel the BJP to hunt for a matching candidate," he says, adding that the ongoing struggle will help the Samajwadi Party (SP) because there will be a division in "anti-votes".*

*As of now, most vote banks seem to be allied to one party or another. While the OBC block is divided between the SP and the BJP, the BSP has claimed a large chunk of the Dalit pie. Among upper castes, the Rajput and Vaishya communities stand with the BJP.*

*In such a scenario, only 12% of the Brahmin votes and 18% of the Muslim votes are up for grabs. And these communities have been known to be politically fickle - tactically shifting their political allegiances in every election.*

*However, the question that remains is - what would Brahmins have to do to remain politically relevant?*

*Prof Vishwanath Pandey of the Banaras Hindu University (BHU) believes that the community is upset because they have been marginalised over the years. "To make a mark in the upcoming election, they will have to vote en bloc, like Muslims and Dalits," he says.*

*His colleague, Prof Shailendra Tripathi, does not believe that's possible. "Brahmins are not united like the Dalits and the Backwards," he claims.*

*However, Anupam Sharma - a voter from Kaasanj - believes Prime Minister Narendra Modi may succeed in bringing Brahmins together. "The personality of Modi dwarfs all. A majority of the Brahmins prefer the BJP, which will probably declare a Brahmin as its chief ministerial face."*

*The All India Brahmin Sabha, an otherwise non-political group, reportedly plans to appeal to community members that they prioritise Brahmin candidates over political parties*

### ***Backroom boy who changed the rules***

***By Shankarshan Thakur/The Telegraph/Nov 9, 2015***

*About the only thing he did not do in this campaign was to board a chopper and go from dais to dais addressing public meetings.*

*Every place else on the Mahagathbandhan's winner plot lie the footprints of Prashant Kishor, now surely accredited master of the election game. A doubly proven one-man political consultancy that few would now dare take lightly.*

*He left Prime Minister Narendra Modi's side shortly after his stunning 2014 victory, tainted and cast aside by Amit Shah. He resolved to make the Nitish Project his riposte to the BJP president. The ammunition Kishor gathered and positioned threw off Shah's siege on Bihar and packed him off licking wounds. This was as much a grudge match between Kishor and Shah as between Narendra Modi and Nitish Kumar. "He seldom spoke about his deep sense of being humiliated and sidelined by Amit Shah after the 2014 victory," a close aide of Kishor told The Telegraph, "but to many of*

*us it was evident he was working with quiet but steely determination to score this one against the stratagems of the BJP."*

*To those who worked closely with him - from well-heeled data crunchers to hard-boiled politicians - Kishor never once let his confidence down, not even when the Modi-Shah show landed on Bihar with the might of its publicity and propaganda resources, and the Prime Minister's continued ability to electrify rally grounds. "To the very last he maintained that his base figure was 145, not a seat less. We suffered moments of doubt, he never ever did. He has proven to insider and outsider alike he is an entity to reckon with," the aide said.*

*When Kishor arrived to formally join the Nitish establishment this summer, very little was in place other than Nitish Kumar who had resumed as chief minister. Conventional wisdom afloat across Bihar was that the Modi team will do an encore, sweep Bihar. There was no strategy, no resources, no alliance. Kishor was, to begin with, an alliance-sceptic. He thought Lalu an image liability, he believed Brand Nitish was strong enough a base to mount a winner campaign on.*

*That changed dramatically the day Modi addressed his first campaign rally at Muzaffarpur on July 25. The Prime Minister lashed out with equal belligerence at Nitish and Lalu; the message Kishor read in that double-barrel assault was that what really worried the BJP was the prospect of Nitish and Lalu coming together; that is why he was chiding Nitish was sidling up to Lalu, that is why he was jabbing jungle raj.*

*Kishor swiftly changed tack, turned to alliance espousal and put it on fast track. The Nitish-Lalu tandem was ready in a week, the Congress riding piggyback; its launch was a rousing rally at Patna's Gandhi Maidan on August 30. There on, almost overnight, rag-tag turned, against the run of play, into clockwork. Nitish and Lalu began to work with a unison that took even the two by surprise. Of the many things that Kishor deserves credit for, achieving cohesion at the top between Nitish and Lalu was probably the most critical. He cut through party factions and negotiated personally between them. He was seen by both leaders as an honest go-between with no axe to grind other than that which would strike at the BJP. Kishor carried no political or Bihari baggage. Although he did have divided loyalties - there was a mission to run for the Nitish-Lalu combine, there was a personal mission against Amit Shah to wage too. Fortunately for him, the means and ends of both converged.*

*What he privately calls the "breakout moment" of the campaign resulted from the trust he was able to conjure between Nitish and Lalu. That moment was the declaration of all 243 Mahagathbandhan candidates at one go by Nitish Kumar. That spoke of painstaking homework, deep compact between alliance partners, and killer timing. The BJP-led alliance was, at that time, way behind on the sharing and allocation of seats. "That one move took*

*our rivals by surprise and inspired our own ranks no end," said a senior minister in the Nitish government, "We had come back from behind to lead the game."*

*Kishor has two trademark job conditions - a free working brief and proximity to his boss. He occupied the upper floor of the Narendra Modi residence in Gandhinagar; in Patna, he lived and worked off Nitish's Circular Road bungalow. One concession he did make to Nitish in return for the two he got - he forsook his jeans and T and procured a set of white pyjama kurtas for the duration of his assignment - a socialist rather than corporate appearance. Apparently, Nitish Kumar insisted, and ordered a tailor home to have Kishor newly kitted out.*

*On the campaign itself, Kishor was quick to dump horsecart socialism and proceed in unabashedly with latter day market tools and methods. He binned the traditional green of the JDU and RJD and brought on flaming reds and yellows onto the banners - garish colours but closer to those preferred by the masses. He didn't bother with party symbols, at least to begin with, and made Nitish the emblem of his campaign - it was a dare to traditionalists but that is one of Kishor's patents: challenge convention, think out of the box. His bet was that the core theme of this campaign was Nitish - either Biharis wanted him over any other as chief minister, or they were ready to bid him goodbye.*

*But it was not a mindless splurge; Kishor did not have the resources at hand. Cleverly, he decided not to spend on television or print advertising; the BJP would have beaten the Mahagathbandhan hollow in that lane. He went, instead, for the cheaper and longer lasting option of the street. He crafted an audacious empire of billboards and banners across the state. Nitish was everywhere the eye went in Bihar.*

*But to call Kishor a backroom boy par excellence and leave it at that would mean to judge him below par. It isn't true he has been glued most hours to his chair and iPad/iPhone across from Nitish's office. He has taken breaks. He has slipped into the back of his sky blue SUV and run circles around the state. On the eve of each polling phase, Kishor was out in the field, ensuring personally that all was as he planned it, seeing to last-minute requirements, shaking his team up to check for slack or crack. "He has been indefatigable of energy," says Pavan Varma, JDU spokesperson and Rajya Sabha member, "He has been spinning like a top all through."*

*To effectively mind front and back, Kishor had a memory challenge to undertake - so many parties and candidates, such a boggling medley of caste and creed groups, so many complex combinations. His brain seems to have gone like a scanner on all of that. He knows each of Bihar's 243 constituencies like the lines of his palm, down to details of which Independent candidate could potentially help or hurt who. Name a seat*

*and Kishor would tell you which way it was going and why. The result has probably followed his script more closely than anybody else's. It helped that he had a hand-picked team of researchers and techies constantly feeding him; it also helped that he could constantly communicate with "friends" in the BJP from his days in the Modi backroom. Kishor was always cat's paw close to his adversary's game plan. There were those who long suspected him to be a Modi mole in the Nitish tent; Kishor always knew the opposite to be true. Oftentimes during this long campaign, there were adverse leaks from his team members, but Kishor always had more plants on the other side to feed off.*

*He needs no more of it; he's got a plate much fuller than he expected or publicly claimed. Now's probably time to sit back and relish the look of it. Or probably no. What Kishor wants most is a break. The Bihar yoke has meant he's been mostly neglectful of his ailing mother, and wife and child back in Delhi. It has also meant he's not been able to pay attention to personal regime and regimen. What he wants most, aides say, is to get back his fitness. He'd better. The line of clients at his doorstep is getting longer by the minute.*

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### **1.3.4 LEGAL REPORTING**

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With the increasing number of cases in courts and judiciary's increasing interference in matters that should ideally be addressed by the executive, the significance of legal reporting has also increased. If you scan through a newspaper, every day you would find a number of reports of court verdicts, proceedings of a case, condition of the judiciary, legal trends, laws of the country etc. Legal reporting is often used synonymously with court reporting. However, there is a difference. All legal reports do not necessarily emanate from court.

While court judgments cover a major part of legal reports in the media, sometimes you must have also seen interviews of lawyers, retired judges and reports on speeches by judges in public or court functions.

Young journalists, who have interest law and legal matters, often wonder how to start a career in legal reporting. Here are some pointers which may help you:

- To become a legal reporter, a degree in law is preferred, but it is not always necessary if you have interest as well understanding of the law of the land.
- Court reporting at times becomes tedious. For you have to spend your day attending important proceedings of the court and taking notes. Sometimes, if the court room is already packed, you may have to stand through the proceedings.
- While writing about court proceeding and judgements, you must be very careful with the facts and follow court's directions strictly. If a court embargoes a judgment, you can't write about it. If you do so, you may be held for contempt of the court.

- You need to develop understanding of the law very fast. For unless you understand, you can't write it in way the readers can understand.
- Court judgements often run in 100s of pages. You will have to scan through it quickly and quote significant facts for your story.



### **Some tips for legal reporting:**

Bob Eggington, a former BBC journalist, shares the following essential tips for legal reporting on [mediahelpingmedia.org](http://mediahelpingmedia.org). The tips are universally applicable:

#### **1: Operating within constraints**

Courts of law are a controlled environment. Court reporters must operate within these controls.

#### **2: Remember who is in charge**

The judge is in charge of the court and what happens inside it. The judge has to keep order and usually has the power to imprison those who show contempt of court. That could include you.

#### **3: Know the local laws**

Most countries have their own sets of laws covering court reporting. You must know them inside-out. Journalists need to act within the law or they may end up in the dock themselves.

#### **4: Focus on the key facts**

The most interesting things about any trial are usually the verdict and the sentence. These will normally provide the lead to your story (assuming the trial has finished).

#### **5: Avoid trying to do the judge's job**

In most countries there is a presumption of "innocence until proven guilty". This should be borne in mind while a trial is in progress and reflected in your copy.

#### **6: Accuracy, accuracy, accuracy**

Ensure you get EVERYTHING right. Check names, spellings, titles and responsibilities. Fair and accurate journalism is the basic requirement.

#### **7: Keep a careful note**

In courts, as in all other reporting, you should make notes carefully and keep them safely. They may be needed later if your report is disputed.

#### **8: Never take sides**

The arguments used by the prosecuting and defence lawyers should be reported in an even-handed way, regardless of the evidence and what is said in court.



### **9: Courts are also theatre**

Dramatic performances by the judge, lawyers or witnesses make excellent copy. Make sure that you capture all elements.

### **10: Give credit where it's due**

Trials often hinge on a clever piece of detective work, or advocacy. Ensure you spot these and highlight them in your reporting.

### **11: Disciplined reporting**

It is not particularly skilful to report everything that has been said. It is much more skilful to use only the most interesting and significant parts of a trial.

### **12: Be ready with the background**

Big stories need big coverage. Before the trial, discover as much background as you can and have it ready for publication after the verdict.

### **13: The trial may be over but the story continues**

Some of the most important elements of your story may be the interviews afterwards with witnesses, family, police etc. Make sure you leave the court in time to get the interviews.

### **Some examples of legal reports:**

#### *SC issues notice to Centre, UP on exemption to minority schools*

*New Delhi, Oct 5 (PTI) The Supreme Court today issued notice to Centre on a plea seeking a relook by a constitution bench on whether minority institutions both aided and unaided were excluded entirely from the ambit of the Right to Education Act.*

*A bench of Justices Dipak Misra and U U Lalit also issued notice to Uttar Pradesh government on the plea which also sought a relook on the issue whether minority institutions were excluded from some provisions like reservation for students from weaker sections.*

*The court had earlier sought the response from the Centre and Uttar Pradesh Government on the petition without issuing notice to them.*

*The plea said minority institutions needed no recognition as mandated under the Right To Education Act after they were excluded from its purview.*

*A five-judge constitution bench in its May 6, 2014 verdict had upheld the validity of the RTE Act, 2009 and said it was not applicable to aided or unaided minority schools.*

*Advocate Ravi Prakash Gupta, appearing for petitioner Independent Schools Federation of India, said after this verdict, minority educational institutions did not need even the recognition provided under Section 18 (No School to be established without obtaining certificate of recognition) and Section 19 (Norms and standards for school) of the RTE Act.*

*Gupta contended that there were over 3,000 schools across India which had zero enrollment of students.*

***Lodha effect: BCCI still "confused" over payments issue***

*New Delhi, Oct 5 (PTI) In the wake of Lodha Committee report, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) brass on Wednesday said the cricket board is still "confused" over the kind of payments that can be made from the two bank accounts which had come under the scanner of the Supreme Court-appointed panel.*

*Sources in BCCI said the cricket board is awaiting the judgement of the Supreme Court on Thursday on the issue to get clarity on the subject, which is crucial for continuance of the ongoing series with New Zealand.*

*Amid the logjam, BCCI president Anurag Thakur on Wednesday wrote a letter to the state associations, saying "confusion" prevails over payments that the Board can make even after Justice (ret'd) Lodha had asked the banks to defreeze the accounts in the two banks -- Yes Bank and Bank of Maharashtra.*

*"When the reports came in the media, the Lodha Committee clarified on 4.10.16 (yesterday) that bank accounts should be defrozeed. The committee said only routine payments were to be permitted without specifying any guidelines on this. The banks asked the commission for these guidelines but they have not yet been given," Thakur wrote.*

*"There is thus still a lot of confusion on what payments can be cleared and in fact the Committee has stated that no payments are to be made to state associations and has also directed state associations not to deal with funds transferred by the BCCI.*

*"Unfortunately, this also affected the image of India and the BCCI adversely as various international newspapers have also carried articles of the freezing and de-freezing of bank accounts of the BCCI," he added.*

*The Lodha panel, however, had told banks to not disburse funds from the BCCI accounts to state associations with regards to only two specific payments, and later clarified that it can carry on with its routine expenses.*

*In another e-mail, the panel also warned the state units not to touch the recent funds disbursed by the BCCI between September 29 and October 1.*



*When contacted to get clarity with regard to the ongoing series, Thakur told PTI, "BCCI does not own any ground. It is the state associations who host matches. If the state associations can host the matches, they must do so."*

*At the same time, he said there will be difficulty in hosting matches if any state association does not have adequate funds.*

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### 1.4 SPECIALISED REPORTING

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**(Defense, Science & Technology, Education, Art & Culture, Environment, Business, Fashion & Lifestyle, Entertainment, Sports, etc)**

Specialised reporting can be said to be the next level of beat reporting. When you cover a particular beat for a long time, you gain knowledge and familiarity that would help you in providing insight and commentary along with the fact. Specialist reporters, or those who have command over particular areas, always in demand in the media industry. But to become that requires years of hard work.

The best reporters are those who possess in-depth knowledge of specific issues, institutions, areas and places. The reporters use their knowledge for crafting special stories that separate a publication from the rest. In every newspaper, you will find specialist reporters who have been writing about a particular subject for years.

While specialised reporting also allows you to explore your interests like sports, defense, film, science, technology etc, you are required to develop your writing skills. Here are some tips:

1. Always avoid plagiarism
2. Read about your area of interest as much as you can
3. Involve yourself in discussions on subjects of your interests.
4. Try to be innovative in your writing. People like to read new perspectives and insights.
5. Be the master of your subject, but never lose an opportunity to learn. Nuggets of wisdom are all around. You just need to keep your mind open.
6. Never try to be biased or let your personal opinions reflect in your writing. For personal opinions, newspapers have separate Op-ed pages, but special stories are still news.
7. Research before writing.



**Some examples of special reports:**

***ISRO gives eyes in the sky to Indian soldiers, watches border day and night***

***By PTI/October 2,2016***

*The precision 'surgical strikes' that Indian soldiers carried out on terrorist camps across the Line of Control were ably assisted and facilitated by metallic birds flying high in the sky unseen by Pakistanis and at least half a dozen satellites helped prepare and execute them. India is fast developing a huge capability called 'C4ISR' or 'command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance'.*

*The country has already put in place an Aerospace Command and experts who understand the nature of the 'surgical strikes' acknowledge that this new tri-services body played a key role in planning and execution of the midnight attacks.*

*The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) evidently does not fight wars and is purely a civilian agency, but the capabilities it imparts to the nation are among the very best in world. From watching over with an eagle eye the terrorist and militant infra-structure in Pakistan to providing two way communication in desolate places to giving out accurate navigation signals, ISRO has built a formidable infrastructure that helps India protect its borders in day or night.*

*Not many Indians know of these deep capabilities that lie hidden within the portals of the space agency as ISRO's missions to Mars and Moon hog the lime light, but silently and steadily the 17,000 strong work force of ISRO contributes to keeping the lives of 1.2 billion Indians secure. ISRO provides the necessary platforms, and then it is the user agencies that utilise its downstream products which means ISRO does not directly participate in the conflict.*

*K Kasturirangan, former chairman of ISRO, says "The space agency has a formidable suit of technologies and all are suitably deployed with each user agency utilising the assets to their best advantage."*

*So a high resolution imaging satellite can help in urban planning while it can also monitor terrorist camps across the border. Kasturirangan says a satellite image does not distinguish between friend and foe that interpretation rests with the users.*

*Nobody doubts that ISRO's eyes and ears facilitated 'surgical strike' in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK) at the staging points for terrorists. In years to come the role of India's space assets will play a much bigger role if and when hostilities break out on our borders.*

*Kiran Kumar, chairman of ISRO, says, "The Indian space agency will not be found lacking in helping secure India's national interests now and in future."*

*Today, India has 33 satellites in orbit around the earth and one in the Martian orbit. These include 12 communications satellites; 7 navigation satellites; 10 earth observation satellites and 4 weather monitoring satellites. This is one of the largest constellation of satellites in the Asia-Pacific region. Each bird is tailor-made for a specific purpose and each when needed helps protects India's supreme national interests.*

*India has some of the sharpest eyes in the sky and to prepare for the 'surgical strikes' India's best bird in the sky, the Cartosat 2-series satellite launched as recently as June 22 played a key role.*

### ***Yes, the Sinhalese have their origins in Bengal, Odisha***

***By AdrijaRoychowdhury/Indian Express/September 14, 2016***

*When three years back, a Sri Lankan envoy sought Indian support on the basis of the claim that the Sinhalese people are descendents of Bengalis and Odias, there was an upsurge of perplexity and outrage among large sections of the Indian population. However, subsequent research has shown that the Sinhalese, who make up about 75 per cent of the Sri Lankan population might very well have descended from inhabitants of ancient East India.*

*The "Mahavamsa", arguably the greatest chronicle of Sri Lanka, narrates an interesting episode that marks the origin of the Sinhalese people. As per the mythological record, the foundation stone of the Sinhalese community was laid by King Vijaya who had travelled there from North-West India in 543 BC and founded the first Sinhalese town by the name of Tambapani. One of the murals at the Ajanta caves carry an elaborate depiction of King Vijaya's travel to the Sinhalese town.*

*Sri Lanka, Bengal, Odisha, Orissa, Sinhalese, Sri Lankan history. Sinhalese history, Sinhalese origins, Sinhalese ancestors, Indian Express One of the murals at the Ajanta caves carry an elaborate depiction of King Vijaya's travel to the Sinhalese town. (Source: Wikimedia Commons)*

*King Vijaya was the son of Sihabahu the ruler of Sihapura in Gujarat. Sihabahu's mother in turn was the daughter of the king of Kalinga in Eastern India. Legend goes that she conceived Sihabahu (etymologically meaning lion's arm) with a lion who had kidnapped her.*

*The nature of origin myths is such that it can never prove or disprove a certain theory. However, by becoming part of local folklore, they do give*

*some indication to the way in which the Sinhalese people remember their past. In the case of the hereditary lineage of King Vijaya, while the exact details of the story may or may not be true, what can be said with certainty is that the Sinhalese community does trace some connection to present day Bengal and Odisha. The legend gains particular currency when one realises the importance of the lion's symbol in Sinhalese tradition.*

*In a recent book, "The ocean of churn: How the Indian ocean shaped human history", writer SanjivSanyal remarks that the symbol of the lion that is so important among the Sinhalese is equally revered among the Odiyas and Bengalis. While the Narasimha (God Vishnu as half man and half lion) is worshipped in Odisha, among Bengalis the image of Goddess Durga is incomplete without the lion upon which she rides. In the opinion of Sanyal, the image of the lion on the Sri Lankan flag and the religious symbolism of the lion in Odisha and Bengal have the same cultural origins.*

*But it is not just mythology that reflects upon this connection. In his study titled "Genetic affinities of Sri Lankan Populations", Gautam Kumar Kshatriya found that 25.41 per cent of the genetic make up on the Sinhalese population was contributed by the Bengalis. Linguistically too, scholars have for long remarked upon the Indo-Aryan origins of the Sinhalese speech.*

*In his celebrated account on the development of the Bengali language, Suniti Kumar Chatterjee comments upon the Indo-Aryan content in the Sinhalese speech in the following words: "The first immigrants who carried the Indo-Aryan speech to Ceylon seem to have been from the Western Indian coast. Later from 3rd century BC onwards Ceylon seems to have come in touch with Magadha through Bengal and traditions of intimate connections between Bengal and Ceylon are preserved in Bengali literature."*

*Historically speaking, what further seems to corroborate the link between Odisha, Bengal and Sri Lanka is the thriving trade between the two regions. While Ceylon (old name of Sri Lanka) depended upon Kalinga for import of elephants, Kalinga imported pearl and silver from Ceylon. Records have shown that by the 5th century BC, a strong relationship had developed between the two regions as a result of the commercial ties that spread fast enough to have its impact upon the socio-cultural and political arena.*

*Over the years, Sri Lanka came to be inhabited by several different communities who went on to impact the genetic make up on the population. The colonial encounters with the Portuguese, the Dutch and then the British had its impact on the local population. Genetic studies have shown that Tamils from South India have contributed to the majority of the genetic composition of present day Sinhalese. However, the genetic, cultural and linguistic relation that the Sinhalese population shares with the Bengalis and Odiyas, though of scholarly interest, has remained largely ignored by the popular masses.*

## **1.5 REPORTING CONFLICT**

### **(Armed and Social Conflict, Region, Community and Human Rights)**

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Several parts of the world, including some in India, are witnessing conflicts. A reporter's job is to provide an unbiased report of the conflict. For this, he or she may have to dig the reasons of the conflict, understand the history and culture of the region and nature of the conflict. Reporting from conflict-affected areas is always dangerous for journalists. But then journalism is not always a cosy profession. People need to be informed about conflicts.

Conflict reporting is considered to be dangerous enterprise. For the safety of the journalist is always at stake. Sometimes it is difficult to get access to enough facts that will make a story complete. You can follow some tips provided by journalist Jaldeep Katawala while reporting from a conflict-hit area:



- 1: Don't write in clichés
- 2: Don't believe everything someone tells you
- 3: Don't hunt for the 'definitive truth' as you will have to rely on the information accessible to you, but don't give up caution.
- 4: Don't get things out of context
- 5: Don't accept information without question
- 6: Don't forget the human face of suffering
- 7: Don't be sloppy with words
- 8: Don't be led by another's agenda
- 9: Don't ignore the local pressures
- 10: Don't ignore history

## Some examples of conflict reports:

***Syrian rebels approach symbolic Islamic State village***

*Reuters/Oct 3/2016*

*Syrian rebels backed by Turkey and a U.S.-led coalition are closing in on the Islamic State-held village of Dabiq, the site of an apocalyptic prophesy central to the militant group's ideology.*

*Free Syrian Army (FSA) rebel groups have been pushing southwards into Islamic State's territory in an operation backed by Turkey since Aug. 24, and have taken villages near Dabiq in recent days. A rebel leader said the plan was to reach Dabiq within 48 hours, but cautioned Islamic State had heavily mined the surrounding area, a sign of its importance to the group.*

*Although Dabiq, a village in relatively flat countryside northeast of Aleppo, holds little strategic value, it is seen by Islamic State as the place where a final battle will take place between Muslims and infidels, heralding Doomsday.*

*The group has named its online English-language magazine Dabiq and in April and May sent about 800 fighters there to defend it against advances by the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said on Monday.*

*"If matters proceed as planned, within 48 hours we will be in Dabiq," Ahmed Osman, commander of the Sultan Murad FSA group, said in a voice recording sent to Reuters.*

*However, Islamic State has heavily mined the area, making progress around TurkmanBareh slower than in other areas, said Osman, adding that 15 deaths among insurgent ranks in the past 24 hours were caused by mines and mortar fire.*

*The U.S.-led coalition against Islamic State is actively supporting the rebels as they advance "to within a few kilometres of (its) weakening stronghold" of Dabiq, Brett McGurk, Washington's special envoy for the coalition, said in a Tweet.*

*Islamic State has exploited the five-year-old Syrian civil war to seize swathes of territory.*

*Washington believes taking Dabiq could strike at Islamic State morale as it prepares to fend off expected offensives against Iraq's Mosul and Syria's Raqqa, the largest cities held by the jihadists, officials from a coalition country said.*

*Turkish warplanes hit Islamic State targets in the areas of Dabiq, Akhtarín and TurkmanBareh, destroying nine buildings including a command post, gun positions and an ammunition depot, a statement by Turkey's military said on Monday.*



*The latest fighting marks an escalation since Turkish troops crossed the border into Syria on Aug. 24 to back opposition fighters battling Islamic State in an operation Ankara says is aimed at removing the border threat the jihadists pose.*

*Nearly a dozen air strikes by the U.S.-backed coalition killed 13 militants, while the Turkish army said it also fired on Islamic State from inside Turkey after the jihadists used rockets to target its border town of Kilis.*

***Ex-sarpanch shot dead; sporadic protests on Day 86 of Kashmir unrest***

***Ashiq Hussain/Hindustan Times/ Oct 3, 2016***

*A former sarpanch was shot dead by unidentified gunmen in south Kashmir's Pulwama district, and the 86th day of unrest on Sunday was marked by sporadic protests and clashes in the Valley.*

*Police said Fayaz Ahmad Bhat, 30, was shot at by assailants outside his home in Kandzal area of Pulwama. He was rushed to a nearby hospital, but did not survive.*

*"He was a sarpanch affiliated with the National Conference," said station house officer of the area, Sarjan Ahmad. The five-year tenure of Panchayats ended in July.*

*Sarjan said it was not immediately clear who were the assailants, and a manhunt was launched in the area to track the attackers. Militants, who had warned people against local elections, have targeted sarpanchs in the past.*

*Sporadic protests were reported amid a shutdown as protests over the killing of HizbulMujahideen militant BurhanWani on July 8 entered its 86th day.*

*In the southern district of Kulgam, a few residents alleged that security forces vandalised residential properties during raids on the houses of stone-pelters. They alleged the forces set ablaze some structures, including a house, cow sheds and paddy straw heaps besides damaging vehicles.*

*The incident reportedly prompted the villagers to come out on the streets in the morning, triggering clashes with security forces.*

*Police have denied the allegation. Kulgam superintendent of police, Shridhar Patel, said they were returning after arresting nine stone-pelters when some youth threw stones on the forces. "After we left, some miscreants set ablaze two grass heaps and damaged a truck," he said.*

*Shops, businesses and schools were closed and public transport remained off the roads.*

*Since the protests began on July 9, 88 people have lost their lives and over 10,000 have been injured.*

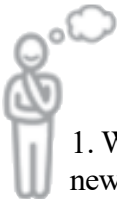
*The latest victim, Muzaffar Ahmad, a resident of central Kashmir's Chek-i-Kawoosa in Budgam district, was hit by pellets in his eye in mid-September, developed infection and died on Saturday at a hospital.*

*Apprehending protests in the district, the authorities on Sunday imposed restrictions in some areas from Narbal to Chek-i-Kawoosa. Road blocks and concertina wires were laid to prevent people from marching.*

*However, the youth in many areas of the district including Chek-i-Kawoosa tried to defy the shutdown and organize pro-freedom rallies, prompting the police and CRPF to retaliate. In the nearby Mazhama, there were clashes between stone-pelting youth and government forces, who responded by firing tear gas shells.*

*In north Kashmir's Bandipora district, people tried to organize a protest rally in Putushai on the call of separatists but were stopped by security forces. The forces fired tear gas shells and used mild force to disperse the protesters.*

*Separatists have been issuing protest calendars, demanding the right to self-determination, even as authorities have been imposing curfew, on and off. The latest protest programme has been extended to October 6, with a relaxation on three days from 5 pm to 6 am.*



## **CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

1. Write a news report of a recent political rally in your area and compare it with news of the event published in different newspapers?

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2. Write a special report on problems faced by schoolchildren in your area?

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3. Take three old newspapers and classify all news items according to their beats?

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## **UNIT-2: INTERVIEW, SPECIALIZED WRITING**

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### **2.0 UNIT STRUCTURE**

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- 2.1 Learning Objectives
- 2.2 Introduction
- 2.3 Interview types and techniques
- 2.4: Opinion writing: Editorial, Op-ed page and Middle, Special articles, Week end pull-outs, Supplements

Check your progress

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### **2.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

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The objective of this unit is to familiarize you with the different ways in which views are published in a newspaper. An interview is the view of a particular personality on a particular matter, while editorials reflect the view of the publication. This unit will help you understand different types of interviews and specialised writings that regularly find place in newspapers.

After the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- Understand the types and techniques of interviews
- Learn how to write editorials, op-ed and middle articles
- Learn about special articles, weekend pull-outs and supplements
- Learn tips and techniques to be a better writer

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### **2.2 INTRODUCTION**

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A media publication, be it print or digital, is the sum total of news and views. While news covers the major part of a publication, views gives it vibrancy. A newspaper publishes views of important personalities, people and journalists. The views or opinions play important role in a democracy. Sometimes they set the agenda for the country, sometimes they let policy makers or people know the different viewpoints on a particular issue. Different viewpoints are essential for the survival of a democracy.

As India starts to embrace the digital age slowly, views have become more prominent than ever. There is a technical reason for this also. Today people can access information from a variety of sources, such as: TV, radio, newspapers, websites and social media. The increasing penetration of smartphones in India has allowed more and more people to express their opinions and views on all matters of their concern. This has also made it imperative for media publications to give space to all types of views for

the sake of fairness and journalistic ethics. This has also opened new avenues for opinionated individuals, especially in the digital media.

Newspapers publish views in the form of editorials, op-ed and middle articles. Apart from them, special articles, weekend pull-outs and supplements on topical issues are also published to provide a detailed perspective on them. As an aspiring journalist, you must learn all these forms of writing. The only way for this is to start writing from now itself. In the process of writing, you will automatically start equipping yourself with necessary knowledge also.

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### 2.3 INTERVIEW TYPES AND TECHNIQUES

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The important thing before an interview is to understand the very objective for it. Interviews are generally conducted for these goals:

- a) To find out what and how much an interviewee knows about a particular subject.
- b) Sometimes interviewees are themselves the subject of the interview.
- c) To find out what the interviewee thinks about a particular subject.

Here are some examples. First, if the interview is for finding out opinion of a person on different issues, then all you need to do is to ask question. In such types of interviews, you should give the interviewee full chance to express his views. You should make sure that you are not misquoting the person while writing the interview.

Second, if the objective of the interview is to get out certain facts from a person, then you should prepare in advance and ask pointed question. The success of such interview would mostly depend on your ability to understand all eventualities in advance.

Third, there could also be many occasions when you would have to interview a victim -- may be of a terror attack, child abuse, sexual assault, police atrocity, caste atrocities etc. In such cases you must never sound insensitive to the victim and avoid asking questions that look too silly to be asked to a victim. For example: Instead of asking a victim how he/she is feeling, you can start the conversation by asking how the incident happened. When the interviewee is full drawn in the conversation, you can insert the question as to how she/he is feeling.

Experts believe that a good interview is a conversation. It is like a natural exchange of ideas, views and facts.



Here are some techniques you should need to know before an interview.

- a) Do some homework: In other words, have some basic knowledge about the subject, objective or purpose. Try not to look stupid in front of your interviewee. For example: You should never ask Virender Sehwag about the number of triple centuries he has made in Test cricket. You should know such facts in advance.
- b) Try not to outsmart your interviewee: You should give the interviewee a fair time to response. Too much interference while he/she speaks, may not lead to your desired goal.
- c) Always have a list of questions and also facts with you, incase you need to pose some counter-question. Hence, homework is necessary.
- d) Don't hesitate or feel scared in asking difficult questions. But yes, try to remain polite. Your job is to interview, not to get into a verbal brawl. Noise may help TV on occasions, not the print media.
- e) Think about the medium: If interviewing for print, you should keep you questions short as it will help you get concise answers. For audio or video, you can ask two part questions. It will allow the interviewee to speak for a considerable amount of time.

There are two types of questions asked in an interview.

**1. Open-ended questions:** These allow the interviewee to open up on a particular subject. For example: What do you think about Prime Minister Narendra Modi? Do you think demonetization can end corruption?

**2. Close-ended questions:** These encourage short replies, sometimes even a single-word response. For example: Is Narendra Modi the best PM of India? Is demonetisation the only way to end corruption?

Based on the above discussions, interviews can be broadly classified into three types.

**1. Informational interview:** This helps in revealing certain facts or even opinions of a person on some important matters.

For example, if you are interviewing the government representative responsible for minimising the impact of cyclone in Odisha, then you can ask these questions:

- What rescue measures have been planned for villages that are likely to be hit by the cyclone?
- How many civic and police personnel have been deployed for relief work?
- Has the government asked for the Centre's help in case the situation worsens etc.

**2. Emotional interview:** An emotional interview is tricky. It helps in bringing to the fore all shades of emotional experiences of an interviewee. The emotions may be

about pain, excitement, happiness, tragic, anger or love. While conducting an emotional interview, it is important to maintain a certain amount of silence as it allows the interviewee to gather his/her thoughts properly. You can spot several examples of emotional interviews in a newspaper daily.

**3. Interpretative interview:** A BBC training manual says, "The interpretive interview is quite different. The subject of the interview needs to interpret some facts which are already known. The fact is that interest rates are rising again; the financial expert can be asked what effect this will have on mortgage rates.

"You should still, though, ask questions using the word 'what'. In this case, you are no longer dealing with an existing situation; the expert is being asked to look into the future and sketch the probabilities, usually based on knowledge of what has happened in similar circumstances before."

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## 2.4 OPINION WRITING

**(Editorial, Op-ed page and Middle, Special articles, Weekend pull-outs, Supplements)**

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As discussed earlier in this chapter, Opinions, or views, form important part of any news publication. In this section, we will learn about how to write editorial, Op-ed and middle, special articles, weekend pull-outs and supplements.

**Editorial:** An editorial is the official view of a publication about a certain issue. Newspapers have played important role in the country with their editorial. For it has the potential to drive the agenda of a country.

The editorial is usually unsigned. It influences public opinion, promotes critical thinking. Sometimes an editorial even urge or inspire people to take action on an issue. One can say that an editorial is opinionated news story which has official backing of the publication.

The editorial is considered to be the soul of a newspaper. It reflects the policy and stand of the newspaper on the important issues of the day. Editorials not only mould public opinion and act as catalysts of change, they also serve as watchdog of public interest. They do so by pointing out anomalies and irregularities in public policies and developmental works. Editorials also offer suggestions and solutions to prevailing problems the society.

Though editorials are published in the name of the editor, they are not always written by the editor himself. A newspaper generally has a panel of editorial writers who are assigned subjects of their specialised study by the editor. Sensitive issues are often handled by the editor himself or someone who is acquainted with the newspaper's policies.

Editorial writing has always been considered an art that needs to be mastered by practice and judicious use of language. It is neither written in the style of a news report nor in the format of an article. Writers have to use words smartly. A good editorial not only provokes the thought process but is also readable.

If you are asked to write an editorial on an issue, you should try to have these elements in your write-up:

- a) The editorial should have an introduction, body and conclusion like other news stories
- b) It should provide an objective explanation of the issue, especially of the complex issues
- c) It should contain a timely news angle
- d) The editorial should also have opinions from the opposing viewpoint to give a complete perspective to the reader.
- e) The editorial should try to engage readers on issues, not personalities. You should refrain from name-calling or other petty tactics of persuasion.
- f) The editorial should provide an alternative solution to the problem or issue being criticized.
- g) Finally, it should have a solid and concise conclusion. You should give it some punch.

Some more writing tips for an editorial:

- Make the beginning interesting to grab the reader's attention.
- Provide strong evidence to support your stand use active voice
- Write in third person most of the time.
- Don't try to be a preacher. Use credible arguments and back them with authentic facts. Your readers are not fools.

Here is an example of an editorial on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's demonetisation decision by the Indian Express:

### ***Bold and Sweeping***

*The dramatic announcement on Tuesday night by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, scrapping or taking out of circulation high-value notes of the denomination of Rs 500 and Rs 1000, is a major signaling of his government's intention to curb black money and move to an economy where the use of cash as a medium for transactions and stashing savings is minimised. Coming as it does on the heels of a voluntary disclosure scheme, which offered an opportunity to those dodging taxes to pay a penalty of 45 per cent and come clean, the Modi government is evidently walking the talk on its promises both before and after the 2014 elections.*

*The current withdrawal of high-value currency notes marks the third attempt at demonetisation in the country. The PM has justified the latest attempt, which is far bigger in sweep and scale, by pointing to how the*

*widespread use of cash in high denominations has led to an artificial increase in the cost of goods and services and is reflected in the government's success in bringing out Rs 1.25 lakh crore of unaccounted money. It is difficult to disagree with that logic though there could be quibbles on the modalities of this decision which could lead to economic disruption in the near term. It may well be that this government is betting on a structural transformation which the drive against black money could bring about in the medium term and the political gains that can be leveraged. There could be a progressive shift to a cashless economy with a greater focus on electronic transactions and the formal banking sector, and attendant benefits in the form of consumption growth and revenues besides audit trails and transformation of businesses, especially the real estate sector. The three-fold increase in electronic payments through the banking system, such as the RTGS and NEFT, and the seven-fold rise in mobile banking transactions between 2012 and 2016, and the emergence of electronic wallet providers and new payment banks, are a testimony to the success of the drive mounted by government and the central bank.*

*India is not alone when it comes to scrapping high-value notes. In May, the European Central Bank had announced that it was phasing out the 500 Euro note from 2018 because of heightened concerns of money laundering and terror financing, especially after the terror attacks in Paris. At a time when private investment has been hit and with factory output contracting, scrapping high-value notes may prolong the economic pain. What the government needs to do now is to follow up the demonetisation with a vigorous push to ensure greater universal banking access, and nudge the real estate sector to move towards greater transparency, besides offering more incentives to encourage electronic payments and use of cards. The challenge is not just in pulling out 85 per cent of the high-value currencies in circulation but also to ensure a culture of compliance progressively.*

### Op-ed page and Middle

Merriam-Webster dictionary defines an Op-ed page as a “a page of special features usually opposite the editorial page of a newspaper; *also*: a feature on such a page”.

Op-ed is also synonymously used for an article or essay giving the opinion of a writer on an issue. The dictionary defines it as: “an essay in a newspaper or magazine that gives the opinion of the writer and that is written by someone who is not employed by the newspaper or magazine.”

The University of Illinois in the US has provided important tips on the writing process of an Op-ed. These are useful in the Indian context as well.

- Ask, what is the message you want to get across?
- List all your arguments in no particular order.



- Pick four or five arguments that will most appeal to your readers.
- Write your first draft. Connect your theme to your peg in the first paragraph, followed by one to three paragraphs for each supporting reason, with the most important reasons first. One or two paragraphs should conclude by reinforcing your theme.
- Now read your draft and ask: What is the most powerful paragraph here? Is it the closing paragraph? Does a paragraph about one of the four or five arguments point up a particularly absurd part of the plan?
- Whichever one it is, rewrite the op-ed with the most powerful, most exciting paragraph first to grab the reader's attention, elaborate with two or three supporting points in the following paragraphs. Make sure your paragraphs are short and contain one main idea.
- Use facts, statistics and studies to support your arguments.

### **Middle**

The Middle forms an important part of the editorial page of a newspaper. Its main objective is to provide humour and wit on a page that mostly contain serious content in the form of editorials, articles and letters to the editor. While writing middle, you should keep these points in mind:

- The length of a middle should be around four hundred words.
- Middle is generally positioned between the two articles of the editorial page.
- Pick up a topical subject and try to give it a humorous twist.
- End the Middle with a punch line that provides the reader a humorous or satiric fare.
- You can experiment with the language while writing a Middle. No journalistic restrictions will come in your way.
- You can even use colloquial words and slangs. However, please ensure decency and decorum. You are writing for a newspaper. So don't get abusive.

### **Special articles, Weekend pull-outs, Supplements**

Newspapers come up with special articles, weekend pull-outs and supplements to increase the reader engagement. Special articles provide a detailed analysis as well as perspectives on an issue, a place and event. While a special article is generally published inside the newspaper, weekend pull-out and supplements cater to different tastes of readers. All major newspapers publish weekend pull-out and supplements regularly these days.

Writing principles for special articles, weekend pull-outs or supplements remain more or less the same. You must try to write in an interesting and legible manner. Your objective should be to get the attention of the reader and engage her or him. While writing, always keep your target reader in mind and write accordingly.



## CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Take interview of your local elected representative about the problems in your area and ask about his plans to solve them.

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2. Write an editorial on India's space programme.

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3. Write an op-ed article on Indian cricket under ViratKohli.

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4. Write a Middle on demonetization.

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5. Write a special article on traditional festivals in your village

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## UNIT-3: WRITING BACKGROUNDEERS, REVIEWS

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### 3.0 UNIT STRUCTURE

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- 3.1 Learning Objectives
- 3.2 Introduction
- 3.3 Review Vs Backgrounders
- 3.4 Writing Backgrounders
- 3.5 Book Review
- 3.6 Film/Documentaries/Performing Arts Review
- 3.7 Magazine Reporting
  - 3.7.1 Current Trends. Style And Future

Check Your Progress

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### 3.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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Writing reviews and reporting for magazines require in-depth knowledge and experience. After completing this chapter, you will be able to learn

- The difference between reviews and backgrounders.
  - How to write a backgrounder
  - How to review books, film, documentaries, and performing arts
  - Basics of magazine reporting, future of magazines, current trends and style in magazines
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### 3.2 INTRODUCTION

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All journalists do not always write about news, editorials and articles on politics, business etc. They also provide readers authentic insights, in other words reviews of new books, films, documentaries and performing arts. Depending on the area of your interest, you can become a reviewer yourself. These days a new trends technology, food, travel places have also started. These all provide a break from the monotony of serious business that is news. Not only this, readers like to get some expert insight on a book they want to read or a film they want to watch.

Journalists also provide historic details of an issue to readers. These are called backgrounders. Backgrounders are also used by Public Relations profession as a part of the media kit to be given to journalists.

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Apart from these, journalists also write for magazines. These are different than newspapers in many. Magazines aim to provide more insight on an issue than newspapers. For the latter has to operate within time constraints. This is not the case with magazines. However, with the influx of digital media, print magazines are facing survival threats. In this chapter, we will learn about all of these in detail.



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### 3.3 REVIEW VS BACKGROUNDEERS

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In simple words, a backgrounder is an informational document. It is often provided with a press release, press advisory or as part of a larger media kit. The backgrounder provides a more detailed background of an issue, event or person of interest or launch.

In contrast, a review is an article that presents a critical evaluation of a text, performance, or production (for example, a book, movie, concert, or video game). According to about.com, a review customarily includes the following elements:

- identification of the genre or general nature of the subject being reviewed
- a brief summary of the subject matter (such as the basic plot of a film or novel)
- a discussion supported by evidence of the specific strengths and weakness of the subject reviewed
- a comparison of the subject with related works, including other works by the same author, artist, or performer

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### 3.4 WRITING BACKGROUNDEERS

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The backgrounder provides more information to the media or a reader. However, it doesn't compromise on the readability.

While writing a backgrounder, start with a short introduction to the given topic. Then, include subtitles in accordance with the additional information that you want to provide. At last, fill the subtitles with adequate information.

Try to use as many subheads and easy-to-reference graphics you can. For writing a backgrounder, you may even have to interview your client or other members of the organization. While mentioning outside information, make sure to use proper citations or mention the sources.

A backgrounder may include history of issue, event or topic at hand, applicable statistics or other data, the names, descriptions and qualifications of important people, direct statements about why the event or issue is significant, geographical or population data related to the issue, and some emotive, interesting vignettes to attract the reader.

A backgrounder is also often referred to as a fact-sheet.

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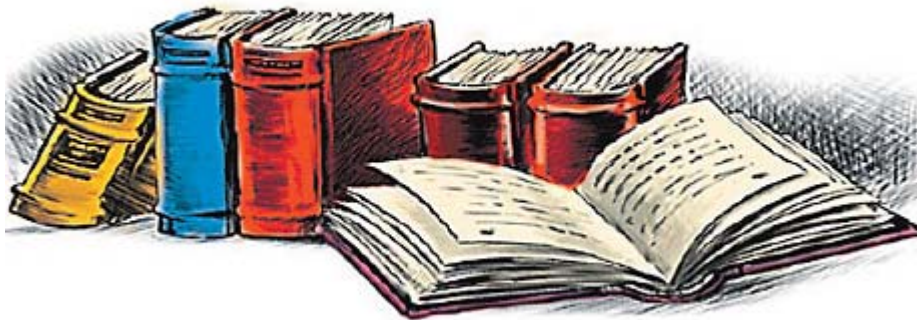
### 3.5 BOOKS REVIEW

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Book reviews evaluate recently published books. They offer a brief description of the text's key points and often provide a short appraisal of the strengths and weaknesses of the book. People often confuse book reviews with book reports, but both are not identical. Book reports commonly describe what happens in the work, book reviews provides an analytical insights about a work. Book reviews are often published in magazines, newspapers, and academic journals.

Book reviews typically range from 500-750 words. They may be sometimes longer or shorter.

Book reviews aim to give readers a sneak peek at what a book is like, whether or not the reviewer enjoyed it, and details on purchasing the book.



#### **Tips for writing a book review:**

Read the book thoroughly. But before starting to read, consider the elements you will need to include in your review. These are: information about the author, his/her past works, awards, writing style etc; genre of the book - whether it is a fiction, nonfiction, romance, poetry, youth fiction, etc.; intended audience of the book; purpose of the book; title of the book and how it is related to the content of the book; preface/introduction and table contents; book cover.

While reading the book, take notes on key book's key points, characters, and/or themes.

While writing the review, you can start with a short summary or background of the work, but do not give too much detail in the start itself. Most of the reviews limit the readers to one or two chapters of the book or lead the reader to important plot or point of the book. The final part of the review should include your opinion of the work.

These are just general guidelines. Writing styles are constantly changing these days. Hence, you should try to read published book reviews as much as you can.

### 3.6 FILM/DOCUMENTARIES/ PERFORMING ARTS REVIEW

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Reviewing films, documentaries and performing arts is interesting. You need to have deep interest in the task. Writing reviews is an art and only a few people manage to master it. You should regularly read reviews by famous writers. This will help you develop your own style and understand the nuances



**Here are some tips that may be helpful:**

**Know your subject:** In the digital age, everyone is a reviewer. You may have read politicians like Arvind Kejriwal writing on films. So, to beat the competition, you should know your subject better than the rest. To write with authority, learn everything you can about your area of interest - be it films performing arts or documentaries. If possible, you can also take courses on history of films/documentary or performing arts and read as many books as you can.

**You don't need to a director to review a film, documentary or performing art.** But you should be an interested and well-informed layman, at least.

**Read other critics:** Try to read and analyse other established reviewers. It won't hurt you in the long run.

**Have your own opinions:** As a reviewer, you shouldn't be afraid of having your own strong views about the subject of review. Take strong stands, with authority. Also try to avoid misleading words like "I" or "In my opinion"

**Provide background:** Provide your readers with some background on the subject. For example, if you're reviewing a movie, give an outline of the plot but also inform readers about the director, actor or the screenwriter and their past works.

**Never spoil the ending:** Never reveal the end of the film or documentary you are reviews. Leave something for the audience.

**Know your readers:** You should know about your readers. Whether they college goes or some grown-up intellectuals or just the laymen. Adjust your writing style accordingly.

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### 3.7 MAGAZINE REPORTING

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Reporting for magazines is different from reporting for newspapers. A newspaper is different from a magazine in content and style, because of the way in which it is produced and who it is produced for. People who subscribe to magazines usually are on a break, or plan on spending some time reading the magazine at their leisure, (therefore, having plenty of time to browse) an article can be longer than it ordinarily would be in a newspaper.

Also, magazines more advertiser-driven than the newspapers. So content in large magazines is often very carefully checked against guidelines from those advertisers. Newspapers are more driven by readership.

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## SPECIALIZED REPORTING AND BEATS

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Magazine reporters get more time to research, plan and package their content. While in newspapers, editors often focus on catchy headlines, in magazines editors aim to make the entire content catchy.

Magazines have a longer shelf-life as subscribers like to keep them for long. This is not the case with newspapers.

### Some writing tips for magazine:

- Length of write-ups: 500-3500 words
- Writing should be gratifying, longer. You should use more relaxed grammar and punctuation.

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### 3.7.1 CURRENT TRENDS, STYLE AND FUTURE

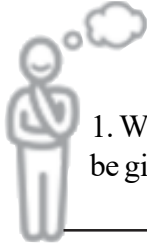
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Magazines are facing survival threat from digital publications these days. Though some legacy magazines are managing to keep their businesses afloat because of huge demography, experts believe that the days of magazines are numbers. In the last 1-2 years, a number of online magazines have been launched. Even the legacy magazines like India Today, Outlook etc are focusing their energy and resources on digital platforms.

While the basics of writing such as grammar, not deviating from facts remain intact in the digital arena, the content is styled as per the search engine optimization tool. This helps in improving the ranking of the site on search engines and brings more revenues.

Magazines are becoming obsolete. They are often forced to offer heavily discounted rates to subscribers in order to have enough circulation to justify their advertising rates. The articles tend to be written to fill space for ads so there is little demand for good writing or meaningful information. Indeed, many articles are simply ads in disguise.





## CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Write a backgrounder on your previous school's academic performance to be given to the media.

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2. Write a review of a recent book you have read.

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3. Watch a new movie and write a review.

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4. Write a story on changing political scenario in your state for a magazine in about 1200 words.

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## **UNIT-4: NEWS PHOTOGRAPHY**

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### **4.0 UNIT STRUCTURE**

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- 4.1 Learning Objectives
- 4.2 Introduction
- 4.3 News Photography Basics
  - 4.3.1 News Photography Equipment
  - 4.3.2 News Photography Tips
  - 4.3.3 News Photography Vs News Story
  - 4.3.4 News Photography Challenges



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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### **4.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

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Any media publication is incomplete without photos. Hence news photography, or photo-journalism is one of the pillars of journalist. After reading this chapter, you will be able to learn:

- The basics of news photography
  - Basic equipment required for news photography
  - Difference between news photography and news story
  - Challenges of news photography
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### **4.2 INTRODUCTION**

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There is a saying that a photo can say what even 1000 words can't. Pictures tell stories. According to photographer Cameron Knights, one can say that photojournalism is the most universal form of mass communication. While writing and speaking require the knowledge of a specific language, an image can convey the meaning across the barriers of language, culture, regions etc. In photojournalism, facial expressions, emotions, movement and body posture as well as composition, light and shadow can tell a story in the same way that words can.

Knights writes on [photography.tutplus.com](http://photography.tutplus.com): News photography can be defined as the art of telling stories with photographs. But the stories created by photos must adhere to the basic rules of journalism. Photos must not mislead or spread a lie. A photojournalist should try to tell the story in the most fair, balanced and unbiased way possible.

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The life of a photojournalist is often every exciting, but at the same time not easy. You can be sent anywhere to meet any kind of person, providing you variety and diversity of experiences.

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### 4.3 NEWS PHOTOGRAPHY BASICS

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Photojournalism is an extremely competitive field. Having the right skill sets is essential to having a successful career. First, people skills are the most important thing. A photojournalist need to be able to quickly gain the trust of their subjects and do in their work in a way that will not violate that trust. Strong journalism skills go hand-in-hand with that. Knowing how to determine the most important aspects of a story and how to report that to the public is crucial. This means that most photojournalists are trained in other aspects of journalism as well including writing and interviewing.



The three elements of a great photograph are light, composition and moment. Knowing how to use a flash when needed and looking for dramatic natural light are good skills to have. Also knowing the fundamentals of composition such as the rule-of-third, leading lines and repetition of form will take you a long way. But, finding that perfect moment is essential.

A modern photojournalist must also be able to digitally tone and transmit their images and be well versed in online tools like blogging and social media. The trend right now is moving toward more and more video for the web. Photojournalists now often carry video equipment to capture footage when needed. With video also comes the need to have a basic knowledge of video editing software.

The most important thing, the thing that separates photojournalism from other forms of photography is trust. The audience must be able to trust that the image they see is a true representation of what was happening. This comes down to two main issues: interference and manipulation. A photojournalist must never interfere with a situation. He/She can never direct or pose their subjects, unless the situation calls for a portrait, then they follow the rules of mentioned above in the photo assignment section. Portraits are also labeled as such in the caption by using phrasing like "Mr. ABC poses" and the like.

It can be argued that a photographer's presence alone can alter the situation. While this sometimes is true, the impact can be minimized by patience and practice.

The manipulation of photos is also strictly forbidden. This especially applies to post-production. Nothing should be edited into or out of an image. Post-production work should really only focus on correcting color problems, exposure and latitude problems, and slight sharpness problems.

Cameras are still not as good at rendering images as the huge eye, so we sometimes have to make up for their sort comings.

Cropping is also fine. But wrinkles stay, bags under the eyes stay, stains on shirts stay. A photojournalist cannot move a basketball around in the frame or take one out or put one in. Adding dramatic effects like vignetting, artist filters and so on are also against the rules.

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### 4.3.1 NEWS PHOTOGRAPHY EQUIPMENT

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Here is a list of basic equipment required for news photography suggested by [photographylife.com](http://photographylife.com):

**1) Camera:** The core of photography is a camera, or at least the sensor of a camera. At the moment, one of the biggest debates in the photography world is between two different types of cameras: mirrorless and DSLR cameras. Both have their merits, but a beginning photographer on a tight budget should be looking more closely at DSLRs. With entry-level models, new mirrorless cameras cost about the same as new DSLRs, and sometimes less. However, you can still buy older, high-quality DSLR equipment (including lenses) for a lower price than similar mirrorless gear. Mirrorless cameras are filling this gap quickly, but the best camera for a beginner on a budget is almost certainly a DSLR.



**Still Camera**



**Video Camera**

**2) Lenses:** Whereas a camera sensor will record the light that it receives, a lens's job is arguably even more important: help the light get to the sensor in the first place. Lenses range from the "free" - those which come in a kit with the camera - to the unbelievably expensive. As a beginner, it can be tough to determine which lenses are worth their asking price, especially if you have no prior knowledge of which lenses even exist in the first place (although our lens database can help).

If you want a high-quality beginning lens for the lowest possible price, you should look at prime lenses (those which do not zoom) or third-party lenses.

**3) The Tripod:** Often overlooked and undervalued, a tripod doesn't seem nearly as important as it really is. After all, three aluminum sticks glued together are no more complex than three sticks glued together. Right? Unfortunately, that logic is why many photographers choose to buy the least expensive tripod they can find, then leave it at home all the time because it's cheaply-made and hard to use. A tripod should be as popular as its buddies Camera and Lens, but somewhere along the way it got the short end of the stick.



**Tripod**

You will realize over time whether or not you need a tripod for your photography (and if you do, you will want a more expensive model at some point in the future), but it is important for a beginner to have a solid model as well.

**4) Software:** There is a lot of competition for software that processes images, with the two most popular options being Capture One Pro and Adobe Lightroom. These two programs are similar - they both allow you to organize and edit your photos - but Lightroom is far less expensive. Some argue that Capture One Pro is better (whereas some argue the opposite), but Lightroom is ideal for those on a budget, since it costs half the price.

**5) Monitors:** If you are a just starting photography, your current monitor probably is not good enough for serious editing work. Specifically, the colors on your screen will almost certainly be wrong - you will not be editing anything how you think you are.

Try to use the latest monitors.

**6) Lighting:** Most photographers will need a flash at some time or another, whether for portraits or for creative still-life photography.

You may also want some light modifiers (such as reflectors), but I don't recommend getting anything more until you are sure that you want to do portrait photography. There is no end to the world of light modifiers, and a beginner should learn the basics before deciding which complex lighting setups to buy.

**7) Filters:** Filters are another essential element of a photographer's toolbox. With digital cameras, only a few filters are even necessary in the first place (the old color-correction filters for film can be replicated using software like Adobe Lightroom) - but some filters cannot be replicated in post-processing. The single most useful filter for digital photography is a polarizer. Just like polarized sunglasses, these filters cut glare from shiny surfaces (other than metal), they darken skies, and they reduce haze. Plus, they make images look more vibrant and saturated.

If you are not a landscape photographer, you will want a polarizer because of these benefits - and if you are a landscape photographer, you will probably never remove the polarizer from your lens! Depending upon the lens or lenses that you use, you will need to get a polarizer of a specific size. Polarizing filters (and filters in general) are sized in millimeters - just like the front rings on a lens. For a lens with a 72mm ring (like the Sigma 18-35mm f/1.8 that I suggested above), you would need a 72mm filter.

**8) Extras:** Camera bag, cleaning spray, extra battery, memory card.

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### 4.3.2 NEWS PHOTOGRAPHY TIPS

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UK-based Times news photographer Ben Gurr's has given these tips for photojournalists:

- 1: Photographers have to be totally familiar with their equipment. You should not need to think about the technical side of things. Take lots of photographs and your thinking will soon be devoted to the image.
- 2: Study your subject with childlike curiosity and do not forget the background.
- 3: Use the light that exists naturally and record the scene as you see it.
- 4: Try not to influence or "mock up" your subjects. Let them behave as though you are not there. The photograph will be more truthful.
- 5: The camera is a simple tool: do not get carried away with gadgets.
- 6: Advances in camera technology mean that mistakes are rare but if you do make one, learn from it.
- 7: The use of computer software to enhance images is overrated and overused.
- 8: Captions need to enhance and explain your picture and must be 100 per cent accurate. Always check the spelling of names.
- 9: Talk to people: they are full of useful information.
- 10: Your award-winning pictures are useless if they are not seen by the picture desk before deadline. Understand how to transmit your images in all situations. And just for good measure: ensure your batteries are charged, keep a few coins at hand for parking meters, always have plenty of fuel in your car and be ready for anything!

### 4.3.3 NEWS PHOTOGRAPHY VS NEWS STORY

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A news story tells about events as objectively as possible. It conveys only what the writers and editors of the newspaper believe as the truth. In such a case, news story should uphold the truth and credibility. All of this is same for news photography. A photojournalist does the same thing a reporter does, only they use a camera instead of a notebook.

A photojournalist goes out and experience life for others, to capture an event on film, and hopefully capture the emotion that was experienced, so the readers can see and feel what it was like to be there.

News photos must also capture the truth. It should be only about what has happened, when it happened. It shouldn't recreate a situation. It shouldn't move things around on the scene of an event to make the pictures look better.

Ideally, a reporter and a photographer work as a team to cover a story. Sometimes, a photojournalist pursues a story on her/his own and uses a series of photographs to tell a story. This is called a "photo essay" or "picture story." Some photo essays rely mostly on the photographs to tell a story with the only words being from "captions" which describe what is happening in the picture. Other photo essays may have stories with them, most of the time written by reporters.



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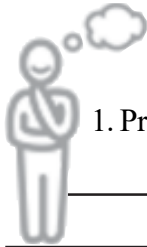
### 4.3.4 NEWS PHOTOGRAPHY CHALLENGES

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Here are some of the challenges faced by photographers:

- Plagiarism and copyright problems.
- Increasing use of smartphones and social media also pose challenges to photojournalists to stand out.

- Photojournalists often face life-threats in war and conflict zones.
- In developing countries like India, photojournalists are often underpaid.



### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Prepare a photo essay on a recent festival in your locality.



## **SUMMARY**

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☞ In the age of digital media, traditional journalism is undergoing tremendous changes. There are lot of trained journalists in the market hence there is also a stiff competition for jobs. At the same time, there is a lot of scope for talented and committed journalists.

☞ These days the traditional role of a reporter is also changing. You are no longer free to write and hope it will be edited or corrected by someone else. Media organisations want people who can write error-free copies on their own. Moreover, it is also important for you to embrace technology. In the digitized media space, a journalist should be as competent with the pen as with the computer keyboard and cameras (both in front of it as well as behind it).

☞ Media world is more challenging and competitive than ever. But at the same time, it has become more exciting as well.

☞ Despite the new developments the basics of journalism has not changed. You are still required to be as objective as possible and tell your readers the truth – an nothing else.

☞ The subject matter of this booklet is not a wholesome guide. There is no such all-in-one guide in journalism. Media professionals learn as they grow. But this booklet will certainly help you take the first step in the challenging and ever-evolving world of media today.

## **ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

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### **UNIT-1**

1,2 and 3. Do it by yourself.

### **UNIT-2**

1,2,3,4 & 5: Do it by yourself.

### **UNIT-3**

1,2,3 & 4: Do it by yourself.

### **UNIT-4**

1: Do it by yourself.



## QUESTION BANK

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### Write Short notes on :

1. Sources for a Reporter
2. City Reporting
3. Legal Reporting
4. Editorial
5. Op-ed Article
6. Middles
7. Review
8. News Photography



### Long Questions:

1. Why Legislative Reporting is a tricky job? Describe.
2. How to cultivate sources in administrative reporting?
3. Why Editorial is the opinion of the Newspaper ? Discuss.
4. Film reviews give an angle to the audience to watch the movie. Discuss.
5. A photograph speaks a thousand words. Elaborate.



**Comments**



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