

**DJMC 3**  
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ଓଡ଼ିଶା ରାଜ୍ୟ ମୁକ୍ତ ବିଶ୍ୱବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟ  
ସମ୍ବଲପୁର  
**Odisha State Open University**  
**Sambalpur**

**Diploma in Journalism & Mass Communication**  
**(DJMC)**

# **News Desk**



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-3**

### **NEWS DESK**

Block

# 2

## **News Desk**

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**Unit-1**

**Editorial structure of News Organisations**

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**Unit-2**

**Functioning of News desk, Integrated newsroom**

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**Unit-3**

**News flow and editing: Role and Responsibility of gatekeeper**

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**Unit-4**

**Sources of News**

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**Unit-5**

**Managing the news**

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**UNIT-1 EDITORIAL STRUCTURE OF ORGANISATIONS**

1.0	Unit Structure	05
1.1	Learning Objectives	05
1.2	Introduction	05
1.3	The Editor and his men	07
1.4	Editorial Structure of Different News Organisation	09
1.5	Editorial Structure of a News Agency	13
1.6	Editorial Hierarchy & Job Profile of important functionaries	14
1.7	Various important functionaries	17
1.8	Check your Progress	28

**UNIT-2 FUNCTIONING OF NEWS DESK**

2.0	Unit Structure	30
2.1	Learning Objectives	30
2.2	Introduction	30
2.3	Aspects that are checked by desk with regard to copies	31
2.4	Shift and Edition	33
2.5	Integrates News Room	34
2.6	News Room Set-up	35
2.7	News Room Functions	37
2.8	Modern News Room	42
2.9	News Room in Electronic Media	43
2.10	Check Your Progress	44

**UNIT-3 NEWS FLOW AND EDITING: ROLE & RESPONSIBILITIES OF GATEKEEPER**

3.0	Unit Structure	45
3.1	Learning Objectives	45
3.2	Introduction	45
3.3	Theoretical Framework of Gatekeeping	47
3.4	Concept	49

---

---

---

3.5	Reasons of Gatekeeping	50
3.6	Levels of Media Gatekeeping	52
3.7	Key Gatekeepers in a News Organisation	52
3.8	Conclusion	53
3.9	Check your Progress	53

#### **UNIT-4 SOURCES OF NEWS**

4.0	Unit Structure	55
4.1	Learning Objectives	55
4.2	Introduction	55
4.3	Categories of News Source	57
4.4	Primary Sources	58
4.5	Written Sources	59
4.6	Secondary Sources	60
4.7	Tips off	61
4.8	Attribution	61
4.9	Using assumed names	65
4.10	Conclusion	68
4.11	Check Your Progress	70

#### **UNIT-5 MANAGING THE NEWS**

5.0	Unit Structure	71
5.1	Learning Objectives	71
5.2	Introduction	71
5.3	Managing of News-Internal Practice of News Room	72
5.4	Processing of Managing News	73
5.5	The Concept of 'Good' and 'Bad' News	74
5.6	Different Types of Managing News	76
5.7	Conclusion	78
5.8	Check Your Progress	79
	FURTHER READINGS	80
	ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS	80
	MODEL QUESTIONS	87

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# UNIT – I: EDITORIAL STRUCTURE OF NEWS ORGANISATIONS

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## 1.0 UNIT STRUCTURE

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- 1.1 Learning Objectives
- 1.2 Introduction
- 1.3 The Editor and his men
- 1.4 Editorial Structure of Different News Organizations
  - 1.4.1 Editorial structure of a Newspaper/ Magazine
- 1.5 Editorial Structure of a News Agency
  - 1.5.1 The editing department
  - 1.5.2 The Department's Main Task
- 1.6 Editorial Hierarchy & Detailed job profile of various important functionaries
  - 1.6.1 Hierarchy Chart of Editorial Department
- 1.7 Various Important Functionaries
- 1.8 Check Your Progress

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## 1.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVE

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The objective of this unit is to understand the concept of editorial structure of newspaper, magazine, and news agencies. This chapter also explains the editorial hierarchy and job of various functionaries.

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## 1.2 INTRODUCTION

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A newspaper office has three structural parts-editorial, works and establishment. The editorial side consists of two wings- views and news, the views wing coming directly under the editor and the news wing under the bureau chief and the news editor. The works includes composing, processing and printing, and the overall control is in the-

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hands of a works manager. In the establishment there are departments like circulation, advertisement, accounts, office and security, all working under respective departmental heads. This structural organization is the general pattern but in big offices there may exist different



arrangements and that, too, in matters of detail. Technological thrust and modern management are mainly two areas where practices vary.

The editorial branch prepares the newspaper for publication while the works are responsible for printing. The establishment is principally the business office handling money through sales and advertising and keeping accounts. This apart, the administration is also run by it. Yet main concerns are space selling which is advertising and paper selling which is circulation. In the views wing, commonly known as the editorial department, the editor and his men work. The editor is the leader under whose guidance assistant editors write comments. A newspaper airs its opinions on current affairs. Assistant editors also handle by lined articles and middles on 'hard' and 'soft' topics and publish letters to the editor and special features.

The news wing having two sections – reporting room and news desk - two men at the top. One of them is the chief of news bureau under whom the chief reporter and his crew work and the other is the news editor under who work the chief sub-editor and sub-editors. In the news side come photographers and proof-readers, their heads being answerable to the news editor. Some feature editors as well seek guidance from him. Yet the business editor, sports editor and the film editor may be ranked as assistance editors accountable to the captain of the team, the editor. Likewise, columnists are assistant editors, so are cartoonists.

Small newspapers have fewer posts and men. And practices vary. It all depends on individual newspaper earnings. Higher-ups in the classification can afford larger staffs but smaller establishments look for economy. For example a big newspaper can have one picture editor for handling visuals while in a small daily it is the news editor who



does the function. And feature editors in a small paper may be on a par with chief subs; or the paying them a little extra money; similarly, a news editor may be in charge of the reporting room in addition to his normal work in the desk, and in that case the chief reporter, in the absence of a bureau chief, takes his advice and planning though not in routine matters.

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### **1.3 THE EDITOR AND HIS MEN**

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Every day the editors name come in print along with that of the publisher. It is the imprint line, appearing usually at the bottom of the last page. This practice makes the editor responsible for anything that comes in the newspaper. Whenever any legal wrong is done, he is summoned to court. Sometimes he pays a heavy price for his failing or for anybody else's. He is ever on the alert. Being the captain of the editorial team the editor keeps track of all developments, whether news or views. He must be a knowledgeable person, knowing full well men and matters around, since he is to guide his crew in getting comments written or new & possibilities explored. He depends on assistant editors for opinion pieces and on newsroom chiefs for news coverage. He holds conference with his men everyday for ideas.

Some editors are keen on holding two conferences during the day, one with his assistant editors and feature editors in the morning, and another with the bureau chief, chief reporter, chief photographer and the news editor. Some others hold only one conference which is attended



by editorial writers and newsroom planners. At the conference the editor invites suggestions and gives advice. There may crop up an important economic issue. If he desires a comment on it he will ask an assistant editor conversant with the matter to write. But, in general cases, he looks for political write-ups. Politics is so overwhelming. Occasionally, he goes for a lighter para on a 'soft' topic with a punch. Some modern newspapers are making only one editorial, be it political or economic. But there are still some conservative dailies which stick to three every day. In this case the first

editorial at the top is the leader written on more topic of the day. The second comment is lesser weight. But the third piece is generally light reading.

Views contents-editorial, after edits, middles and letters are assembled on the left of the centre spread page. The opened page is a news page. An assistant editor may direct page-making. Usually the edit page is self-contained with no turns to any other page, but there may appear a 'to be concluded' line at the end of an after-edit if it is long and cannot be taken in one installment. Columns come on regular days in a week. The assistant editor in charge of the page gets all the materials ready much earlier. Sometimes the edit page is released late to carry a bite editorial on a developing story written at the last hour. Rarely does an editorial come on a developing story written at the last hour. Rarely does an editorial come on the front page. It comes only when an emergency write-up for front page use. In such a case edit page already in type is not disturbed.

At the conference the editor holds with newsroom high-ups a quick post-mortem of the morning edition is made. Any success or failure taken note of. Discussions are held on the day's news schedules and the extent and manner of coverage. News ideas are placed by the bureau chief and the news editor. The editor, too, has his own ideas. He exchanges notes with his asides. Picture possibilities are explored. Special features are time copies get the clearance. Once in a while, may be a month, the editor holds a broad based conference to make an advance planning for circulation and advertisement drives. Besides editorial bosses, the circulation manager, the advertisement manager, and the works manager attend it. They all talk about the editorial support to programs. As part of the management the editor is instrumental in laying down the policy of a newspaper. He represents the conscience so vital for an orderly housekeeping. His intellectual honesty pays. A man of high integrity as he is, is always looks for credibility, which alone can help to build the personality of a paper.

The editor works under pressures. Pressures may come from proprietors, colleagues, advertisers, readers, officials, politicians. If he wants to go by the book, never relating to bullies, never making honorable adjustments, he will break or may have to quit. Modern editors, excepting a handful few arrogant, try to avoid embarrassing situations. He knows newspaper production is not a one-man's job. It will be his folly if he forgets that the teamwork is behind a publication.

In a democracy like India an editor can effort to bean upholder of editorial independence. Freedom of the pen is constitutionally guaranteed, but it does not mean he will be rash.

## 1.4 EDITORIAL STRUCTURE OF DIFFERENT NEWS ORGANIZATIONS

The editorial structure of news organizations differ due to the basic technological differences of medium i.e. the Newspaper and Magazines fall under the Print Media and have a similar editing set up dealing in largely in written text and still photographs. The Radio and Television are electronic media where the audio clips and video footage are edited and put to broadcast able packages. The News Agencies too have diversified their editorial function and set up in recent times as they collect and disseminate information in various forms.

### 1.4.1 EDITORIAL STRUCTURE OF A NEWSPAPER/MAGAZINE

The key to success of every magazine is the working relationship between its key employees, and those are editor in chief and art director. However the role of designer is also vital because organizational and presentation skills are important to deliver the final product, that has to look good, sometimes under tight deadlines and tight budgets. Depending on the size of the team and the budget that is set for the publication, the individual roles may vary.



### **1.4.2 EDITOR IN CHIEF**

He or she is the key figure in every publication. Editor in chief has to be a person with great vision, because his vision and decisions are crucial for the success of the publication. Editor in chief has to be a person with many skills. First of all it has to be a great journalist. After that he has to be a great leader, because his team has to follow him on a tough and uncertain path. In today's market when magazines are closing down on a daily basis editor in chief's responsibility is even greater. Editor in chief has to be in constant contact with an art director or creative director or design director, whatever title main designer in the publication has. Their collaboration is vital. They have to work together to envision how the publication is going to look and feel and what tone and style will it present to its readers. Editor in chief also works closely with other key figures in the team. He has to be in constant touch with production manager, chief copy editor, picture editor, department editors (such as; beauty editor, fashion editor, lifestyle editor. . .). These key figures in the editorial team have to work together so that the process of publication production runs smooth and with no delays. They can and should have editorial meetings at least once a week if it's monthly publication and sometimes more than once a week if it's weekly publication. Each person in this team knows its responsibilities and has its own role in publication creation..

Editor in chief is the one that has to oversee them. Sometimes it is much work so editor in chief has a deputy or assistant. The role of the editor in chief is the most important one and crucial for the success of the publication. The other person whose role is also crucial is an art director.

### **1.4.3 ART DIRECTOR / CREATIVE DIRECTOR / ART EDITOR / DESIGN DIRECTOR**

As you can see key creative person in the publications team can have many titles, but however you call it, its line of work is the same, although the title of art director is the most common one. Art director is responsible for organization and commission of all the art work that will be included in the publication. He has to deal with its own team of designers, he has to outsource photographers, commission images with picture

editor, outsource illustrations if needed, basically he is responsible for all the creative aspects of the job. His instructions to its designers, photographers and illustrators are vital. He has to give clear instructions to its design team.



Some designer oversees every aspect of the design process and some give more freedom to their team. It all depends who is on the team. Art director generally has one deputy and he will work most of the time with him. Art director is responsible how the magazine is going to look like. The success of the publication also depends on the design. So many times good journalism and good publications were ruined because of poor design.

#### **1.4.4 DESIGNERS**

Their role is to design the publication under art director's supervision and according to its instructions. Designers work closely with art director and their level of involvement and autonomy in designing material is determined by several factors.



The key factor is how much freedom their art director will give them, because some art directors like to oversee every detail of the publication design while others are happy to delegate work and check it once the pages are laid out. Senior designers have more freedom than the junior designers.

The number of pages and the time frame of publication determine the number of designers. When the time frame is short the designers will have more responsibilities and more freedom in their work.



### **1.4.5 PICTURE EDITOR**

Usually responsible for the commissioning of the imagery, negotiating prices for the images from the stock sites, commissioning photographers, works closely with art director and



ensures that the quality of the photographic material throughout the publication is on high level.

### **1.4.6 COPY EDITOR**

This kind of editor is responsible for acquiring text articles from the outsourced writers, also is responsible for the quality of those texts. Copy editor is writing all the display copy like headlines and kickers.



### **1.4.7 PROOFREADERS**

Their role is to check all the text materials for correct grammar and spelling. Proofreaders also cut excess copy. They work closely with a copy editor.



### **1.4.8 PRODUCTION MANAGER**

This is the person that oversees the physical compilation of all the materials by setting a production schedule and makes sure that everyone sticks to it. He is responsible for the communication



with the printing-house; he is setting the deadlines for the commission of the text copy, imagery, design, editing deadlines and so on.

### **1.4.9 DEPARTMENT EDITORS**

Each publication has different departments; such as if you are working in fashion magazine then editorial team will have fashion editor and beauty editor. These persons are responsible for their departments (sections) of the publication.

They are responsible for acquiring and writing text copy, acquiring product images for their departments and they work closely with editor in chief, art director and production manager.

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## **1.5 EDITORIAL STRUCTURE OF A NEWS AGENCY**

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The departments of a News Agency commonly include:

- 1 News Department
- 2 Editing Department
- 3 Information, studies and Investigative Reporting Department
- 4 News Services and Marketing Department
- 5 Training and Development and Foreign Relations Department
- 6 Technical Affairs Department
- 7 Administrative Affairs Department
- 8 Financial Affairs Department

### **1.5.1 THE EDITING DEPARTMENT**

1. Foreign News Editing Section
2. Local News Editing Section
3. Foreign News Section (Translation)
4. Radio and T.V Monitoring Section.

**1.5.2 THE DEPARTMENT'S MAIN TASKS:**

- Editing news received by the agency from inside and outside the country.
- Checking on news items and the clarity and accuracy of their content before transmitting them.
- Transmitting a set of news from the general bulletin to news agencies, FANA and None-Aligned News Agencies Pooling.
- Following up on what is being transmitted by Arab and international news agencies, choosing relevant news items and re-editing and transmitting them.
- Following up what is being transmitted by radio stations to choose what is relevant for the general bulletin or to send them to the Information Department.
- Translating news from Arabic into English and transmitting them through the agencies network.
- Translating news received from news agencies, some Arab and foreign newspapers and Internet sites from the English, French and Hebrew languages into Arabic and transfer them to the Editing department to transmit what is relevant for the agency.

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**1.6 EDITORIAL HIERARCHY & JOB PROFILE OF VARIOUS IMPORTANT FUNCTIONARIES**

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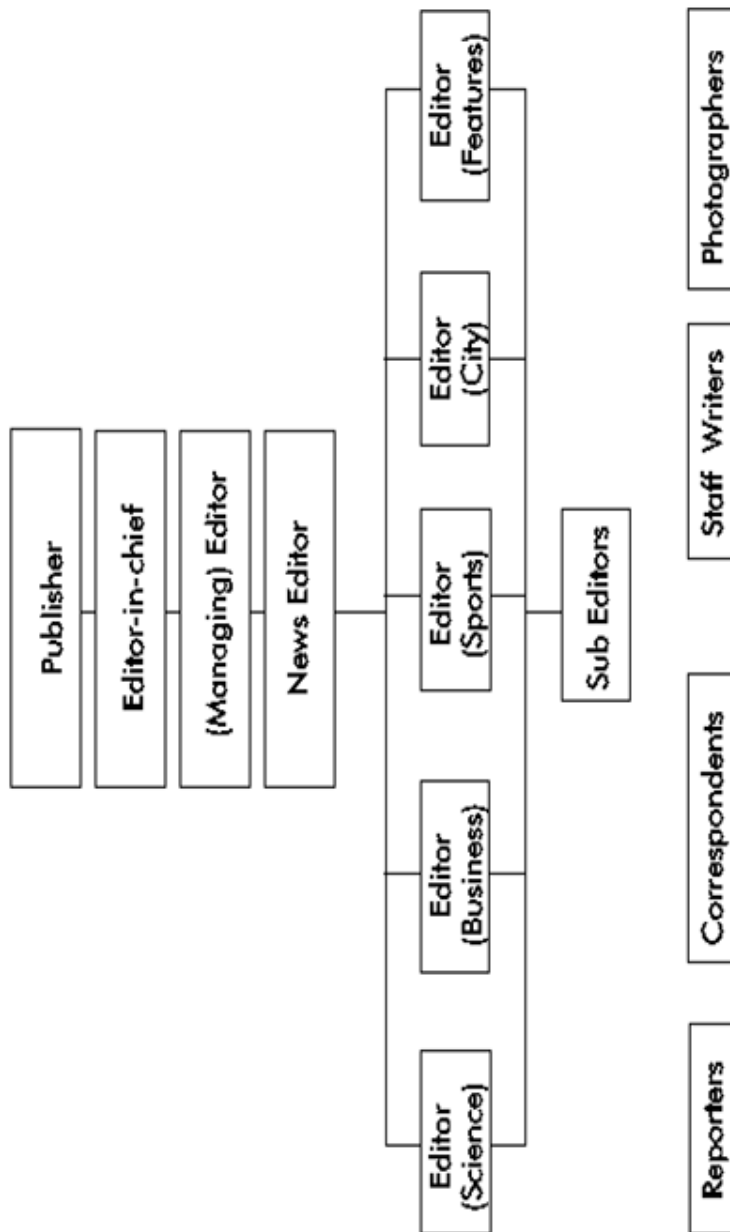
A daily newspaper is a big organization comprising many departments like editorial, advertising, circulation, production and personnel. These departments are knit together in their working so as to make the newspaper organization a composite unit. Each coordination with his/her counterparts and thus, they all ensure the achievement of objectives of the organization.

Broadly two functions are performed in the editorial department of a newspaper-one is reporting and another is editing. The size of the editorial department as also that of the reporting and the editing sections depends basically on two things,(a) the number of pages the daily carries, (B) the number of editions published from that very place.



The structure or setup of editorial department varies from one newspaper to another, the reasons we have discussed above. Despite this the broad structure of the editorial department remains the same. For a better understanding refer to the following diagram of an assistant editor, the magazine or feature section is looked after by the magazine editor or feature editor.

In the editorial department, firstly we will discuss the top hierarchical positions with special emphasis on the status, role and responsibilities of the editor and thereafter we shall take up news room, its set-up and operations. We will not take up bureau here as it is part of the advance reporting.



**1.6.1 HIERARCHY CHART OF EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT**

Managing editor

Editor-in-chief/chief editor

Group editor

Editor

Leader writer

Resident editor

Executive editor

Assistant editor

Magazine editor

News coordinator

News room                      bureau                      local reporting room

Chief Sub-editors                      bureau chief                      chief reporter

News editor                      special correspondents                      senior reporters

Deputy news editor                      principal correspondents                      staff reports

Senior correspondent's                      trainee reporters

Correspondent's                      stringers

News desk                      news desk                      news desk                      news desk

Chief Sub-editors

Senior sub-editors

Sub-editors

Trainee sub-editors

## **1.7 VARIOUS IMPORTANT FUNCTIONARIES**

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Let us know the functions of various editors in editorial department.

### **1.7.1 THE EDITOR**

Editor is the professional head of the editorial department but his/her position is not confined to this department alone. Editor is too big a person in the newspaper set-up and he/she is regarded as the representative of the newspaper in the outside world. Thus he/she becomes the first person in the organization.

### **1.7.2 MANAGING EDITOR**

In any newspaper, the ambition of the proprietor can lead him/her to acquire a position higher than the editor in the editorial set-up. But the problem occurs how to find a designation which is more loaded and catchy. In some newspapers, the proprietors have found a solution to this problem, as they decide to designate themselves as managing editors.

However, the position of the managing editor has no legal or official sanctity if we go by the Press and Registration of Books Act. But it certainly gives the proprietor the satisfaction of heading the editorial department. This satisfaction reflects only the mental state of the proprietor as he/she is either incapable or willing of performing the professional duties of the editorial department.

### **1.7.3 EDITOR-IN-CHIEF**

The editor of a chained publication or multi-edition newspaper is normally designated as Editor-in-chief or Chief Editor. Editor-in-chief is responsible for all the editorial matter published in various editions of the newspaper. He/she takes decisions on policy matters and issues necessary guidelines for the editorial working. There are exceptions to the above rule. We can find editorial head designated as Chief Editor even in newspaper which are published from one place only.

Chief Editor is one who leads all the publications of a group or a chain. Perhaps in the Times Of India Group, Bombay; the chief editor made his first appearance as chief of all editors of individual publications. The Indian Express is a chain newspaper, the

same paper having several editions published from different places. The chief editor is at the head of the chain, individual editions being under the charge of resident editors. The chief editor sits in the headquarters Delhi.

There may be one managing editor or executive editor in a newspaper who comes next to the editor but is above assistant editors. He is a senior editorial manager responsible for assisting the editor in the discharge of his overall duties. In India there may be one or two managing or executive editors but the post is not commonly seen. The Times of India group has executive editors. An assistant editor, as a subordinate to the editor, as a subordinate to the editor, assists him in writing views pieces, including columns, and editing after-edits, letters and features. In some newspapers a deputy editor officiates as editor while his chief is away on leave.

#### **1.7.4 GROUP EDITOR**

Group editor is a designation which we rarely find in newspapers and magazines. There are media houses which have more than and publications-news interest as well as non news from one or more than one places and they decide to make an eminent journalist editorial head of all publications. This editorial head can be designated as Group Editor. Still there are many newspapers which prefer to designate their editorial head as editor whether the newspaper is single-edition or multi-edition publication. We have seen the examples of multi-editions The Indian Express, The Times of India and The Hindustan Times where the editorial head is designated as Editor-in-Chief.

#### **1.7.5 Leader Writer**

Leader writer is a person who regularly writes leaders (editorials). Besides, he/she may also write other kind of articles, reviews, analysis and comments for use on the editorial page as per requirements. In the editorial department of a newspaper, leader writer enjoys the position of an assistant editor.

#### **1.7.6 RESIDENT EDITOR**

Resident editor is a senior editorial person who heads the editorial department in a particular unit of the newspaper. Take for example, The Hindustan Times, which has

Editor-In-Chief: chaitanya kalbag sitting in the head office at New Delhi and resident editors in each of its units, including Delhi unit. The name of Arun Roy Chowdhury is mentioned as Resident Editor in the Delhi edition of The Hindustan Times.

### **1.7.8 EXECUTIVE EDITOR**

In newspapers where the proprietor decides to become the editor himself or herself, a professional journalist has to be employed to discharge the functions of editor. This professional journalist is normally designated as Executive Editor.

#### **1.7.9 Assistant Editor**

A newspaper can have one or more than one assistant editor. An assistant editor is next to the editor in the hierarchy of the editorial department. He/she is a very senior person who is always ready to take up an assignment given by the editor or the management.

### **1.7.10 MAGAZINE EDITOR**

As we have discussed above, magazine editors basic job is to take out Sunday magazine of the newspaper. He/she decides about the cover story or the main story and either writes it himself/herself or gets it written by some expert or freelance writer. He/she takes decision about other articles and features and gets all the material produced by the deadline.

In the editorial department of a newspaper, there could be too many hierarchies depending on the size and the nature of the organization. Most of the top positions we have discussed above, yet we can find some more positions like deputy editor, senior editor, joint editor, associate editor and so on.

### **1.7.11 NEWS COORDINATOR**

The post of the news coordinator is mostly found in big newspapers-one the newspapers which take out many editions from one place, two the newspapers which publish independent editions from different places.

If a newspaper takes out four or five editions from the same place, it should have two to three news editors and one chief news editor. Whether or not the newspaper has a

chief news editor, it can always have a news coordinator among different editions of the newspaper.

### **1.7.12 NEWS EDITOR**

The news editor is one of the most important persons who plan a daily newspaper. His role in a newspaper office is supreme. In a daily newspaper, an active and enterprising news editor is always seen loaded. He/she is an intelligent person who knows how to give the newspaper a new look. He/she is responsible for a steady and continuous inflow of news in the news room.

The functions and responsibilities of a news editor can be discussed with the help of the following points:

- (1) Selection of news stories: an ideal news editor manages to get all the obvious stories into his paper with a good proportion of them as exclusives. While the section of obvious stories is important, greater importance is attached to the original ones produced by his/her team of correspondents.
- (2) Managing affairs in news room: the hurry of daily routine makes heavy demands upon the managerial skills of the news editor and his/her decisions, especially when time is short, yet there has to be accuracy.

There are certain qualities that the news editor must possess. He/she must have an infinite amount of patience and a keen interest in varied kind of news. He/she must have a good general educational background with a fair amount of historical, political and economic knowledge. He/she must try to keep himself/herself informed on every important development in the world. He/she must enjoy reading the newspapers, weeklies, and the magazines.

The news editors maintain a complete hold on the newsroom. He/she issues necessary instructions to the chief sub-editors and sub-editors and ensures that his/her decisions are carried. Besides professional working, he is also responsible for the administrative functioning of the news room. This includes making weekly duty chart, organizing and channelizing the work force, pulling up the errant staff and taking disciplinary action against them in case of need.

The responsibility of enforcing the rules and regulations in the news room lies on the news editor. The instructions normally come from the editor, sometimes directly from the management, and the news editor has to ensure that these instructions are honored.

(3) Monitoring and reporting: usually there is an editorial meeting every morning which is presided over by the editor and is attended by the news editor, chief of bureau, chief reporter, photo editor and sometimes chief sub-editors.

The news editor has a direct hold on the city or local reporting. He/she must mark the dairy and assign the reporters the coverage which need to be specially done and not to be left to news agencies. He/she must allot reporters the news stories which have cropped up the enquiries which may not produce immediate results but which may be the preliminary step towards a first class report a few days later. The news editor also asks the reporters to do follow-up stories whenever he/she finds a possibility.

(4) Coordination with other departments: the news editor maintains a close cooperation with other departments particularly circulation, advertising and production.

The news editor, as the head of the news department, is the pivot of news processing and projecting. For news operation he works in close coordination with the chief of news bureau or with the chief reporter if there is no bureau chief. In the Indian press, unlike in Britain and America, the news editors are enough of an executive to make decisions about coverage. The news editor in Britain is the chief reporter while in America he is the slot man. At the most the slot man is the chief sub. Even if he is called the news editor, he is not empowered with decision making. In Britain there is the sub, enjoying some executive powers. In India the chief sub heads a shift of the desk and works under the news editor. Without the cooperation of all the sections working under him the news editor cannot make the grade. He discusses news matters with desk persons, photographers, proof-readers and feature writers. Desk shifts are alerted about news schedules; photographers get picture ideas; warnings go to proof-readers against typos; feature writers, including freelancers, are often patronized. In doing all this he follows his own ideas, and also such ideas that emerge from news conferences are respected. Finally, his plans are converted into metal or film.

Not all pages of the newspaper can a news editor plan. For inside pages he leaves the planning work to the night editor, who is the chief sub on evening duty. The night editor follows the page arrangement of news organization and the page release schedule which the news editor decided much earlier or which he had inherited when he took over. Front page planning is his primary responsibility. He examines major copies sent out for setting throughout the day and also looks into the running stories kept on the table for handling by the night shift. He plans the order of top priorities like the lead, second lead, third lead and the anchor. The rest of the items marked for page one may be placed in order by the night man. Often news stories considered to be important come late in the evening. The news editor sometimes anticipates developments; sometimes news breaks occurs unexpectedly. At any rate, he leaves instructions to the night editor about what to do and how to do in such cases. Since all printable matters are routed through the desk the news editor keeps his eyes and ears open constantly checking the flow of edited words into the printers territory. In keeping with the conscience of the editor he translates all ideas into printed words. Published editions mostly bear his stamp. His policing defamatory words or libelous terms from getting into print. He detects a breach of privilege or a slant. He throws away colored reports, disguised ads and motivated stuffs. For shaping tomorrows paper well he works round the clock, keeping track of major developments, fixing priorities and sketching the layout plans on dummy sheets. His telephone keeps ringing, whether in office or away home. Even he is roused from his sleep sometimes and his advice is sought by the office on late-night problems. He maintains a dairy of events for necessary exploitation and follow-up. He also enters in the dairy the names and telephone number of important persons for his reference or for special assignments. He prepares the roster and sanctions leave.

### **1.7.13 CHIEF SUB-EDITOR**

An Indian newspaper, according to the general pattern, has three chief sub-editors, each heading a shift and all together contributing to the making of a daily. A chief sub is a senior desk executive who uses his news sense to examine all copies that come to the desk during his duty hours. He selects a few of them considered newsworthy and distributes them to individual sub-editors for editing. He may write his instructions on



copy or tell the sub verbally about what is to be done. After editing, headlines are written by subs and copies are returned to the desk chief for scrutiny. If an edited copy along with the headline is found satisfactory; the chief sub feeds it into the pipeline to press for setting and processing. A maintains a copy control sheet in which edited items are enlisted before they are sent out. The sheet shows serial numbers, key news words, headline sizes and columns, story lengths, pages and locations, and remarks. He alerts his successors about any running news. The chief sub often directs page-making or paste-up going to press himself or may one of his juniors this kind job. Where editing is fully computerized, edited words after corrections are stored in the memory bank of the computer and the desk chief keeps a list of the items so stored. Afterwards, during page making, which is done on the video display terminal, stored to importance. The chief sub keeps a watch on this processing. Pages have to be released one after another according to schedule. And it is the page release schedule which is required to be followed with meticulous care. Each page has a deadline for release. If the deadline is crossed, the printing schedule will be upset delaying the dispatch of the paper to its consumers.

Chief sub-editor is in-charge of a news desk. He/she is considered a senior person on the copy desk and occupies an important position in the news room. The news editor relies the most on his/her chief sub-editors as they are the people who give the coverage and presentation of the newspaper the final shape.

The functions of chief sub-editor are discussed likewise.

(1) Gate-keeping: the primary and most important task of a chief sub-editor is gate-keeping. He/she is a person who examines every bit of information and decides what news is really. This calls for great skill and what we call a sixth sense. It is all known as having nose for news.

(2) Selection of news items: primarily, it is the chief sub-editor who is responsible for the selection of news on a particular desk. All the copies that go to the press pass through the chief sub-editor, who holds back a lot of material that is received, because to print all that pours into the news room is impossible.

(3) Assigning work to subordinates: chief sub-editor performs the job of editing of main stories. He/she is assisted in the editing job by the sub-editor s working on his/her desk. He/she marks the size of heading, indicates if the story has to be cut or if some matter has to be added, shows if the news is independent, or it is a story related to a major story.

(4) Monitoring and page-making: the chief sub-editor monitors and supervises the work on his/her desk. He/she is not only responsible for the selection and editing of stories but layouting and page-making as well. He/she may take up the job himself/herself or instruct any of the senior subs or sub-editors to do the same.

The chief sub enters the last page release time in the log book after his night work. He may write reasons for any delay; he may mention difficulties encountered during the operation. the news editor will take note of log book entries in the morning next day and prescribe corrective steps where necessary. The night shift sometimes faces problems in accommodating important news developments received near the last page deadline. There are two types of late-night news. One is 'late news'. Though received late, it comes just before the deadline is over or the press runs. The other type is 'stop press', which comes after the rotary starts running. The 'late news' is accommodated by making quick changes in the layout of the front page which is normally released last. But the 'stop press' news is taken after the run. Of the press is stopped and by changing normally the front page plate. A working knowledge of printing mechanics helps to get the work in press done smoothly. The chief sub avoids going by the book. Good relations with press people are helpful. A newspaper is stated to be the handiwork of a chief sub. It is so in Britain. It is not in India. A British chief sub being at the head of affairs in the desk works freely and produces the newspaper according to his ideas and plans. He can claim the paper is his baby. But the Indian counterpart heads a shift only, and is at an opportunity to show off, yet he seldom goes beyond the layout scheme on dummy. It is a collective enterprise for him. His team spirit stands him in good stead. Still the front page mirror at times reflects his image.

#### **1.7.14 SUB-EDITOR**

Eight to ten sub editors, or more, work in a shift. The number may be less in a small newspaper. A British daily may have 20 or 30 hands on the desk. Subs are backstage

workers, working in private away from public view, unlike reporters who move out and meet people. Sub-editing is both mechanical and creative, mechanical when it is just copy fixing meaning ticking t's and dotting I's and creative when it calls for news sense, word care and artistry. A sub-editor marks copy by using set techniques which he learns by habit. Marks are editing marks as adapted from the printer's marks which type-setters understand and follow. Marks are not necessary when it is tube-work. Presswork is highly skilled, and as a sub has to work in press, too, he knows the mechanics of printing. His knowledge of typography helps so dress up copy, and if he can keep pace with the changing technological phenomenon he will be in the good books. But this mechanical accomplishment, too, is flavored with craftsmanship and artistic finesse. Added to his command of the language, his power to read news perspectives, his skill to make copy effectively meaningful, and his layout sense to produce an inviting package. All these indicate the sub's creative faculty, rich and enviable. The sub-editor is the checkpoint ever on his toes checking for errors in copy. He spots all kinds of errors, factual, grammatical, spelling and structural. He finds time to correct them even though he works fast. He also applies his professional skill to, revaluing news. No doubt, he follows instructions as he edits, yet he may find the story he handles is worth more or less than what the chief sub says. He makes suggestions for a change in the decision. The chief may overrule him or give him the nod. Furthermore, he is alert about ethics and laws because he is required to prepare a clean copy for printing.

The sub clarifies copy. Clear editing means working for clarity, which stems from simplicity. Not only does he condense copy but also construct it for meaning. He adds background information; he pads a story with explanation. Rewriting is done for news and communication. Trimming a copy to give it a fine shape is a job he does with utmost perfection. Cutting is not just hackwork. He saves space by cutting, he gains space through surgery. He is not a butcher, he is a surgeon. He only takes out surplus words, he only removes wordy kinks. The news desk is an operation theatre, not a slaughter house. As one of the desk a sub is allergic to wordiness.

Running or developing news is to be handled through completion, which is a challenging task for the desk. A senior sub-editor, aided by juniors, can rise to occasion. By

assembling aided facts supplied by various sources on the same news subject he prepares a composite story and one or two link items. But in doing all this he sees that facts or words are not repeated. When reports are conflicting, he depends on the staffer's version. After completing the editing, he writes the headline. It is the normal practice. Yet a sub-editor may have the itch for writing a headline before editing. It is the wrong way. The headline so written may be misleading, even incorrect.

In subbing he follows the house style, an in-house guidebook for a standard style, for consistency. A sub works in press as assigned by his chief to direct page making or to assist him in the job. He spends time in learning the trade. He has to build good relations everywhere.

Since computerized editing is working on tube, not on copy, it does not require the sub to use marks, but the sub must know the mechanism of operating the computer key board for preparing the edited copy straightway on the screen. If pages are planned on the computer, he stores the material in its memory bank for future assembly. Checking, correcting, classifying, condensing, constructing and comparing are performed by a sub besides headwriting and page making. C6+HP=S, that is, subbing denotes six c's plus head-writing and page-making. Good text editing wants a sub-editor to be careful and critical from the start. He cannot afford to be lax and sloppy. His hawk's eye helps him get through. Locating errors and eliminating them are done fast. In redoing copy his education and knowledge stand him in good stead. He tracks down news and developments for which his interest in men and matters must never sag. He is aware of his responsibility to people and society and profession. A good sub keeps aside his personal likes and dislikes. Public wishes and tastes draw his deep attention. A sub is a fast worker who meets the deadline every moment but cannot be inaccurate. Speed with accuracy is rewarding. His reading is quick, so his judgment. His built-in analytical mind helps. His news sense stands to gain and his language power makes him a perfect practitioner. A strong body with a cool head helps him most to do his sedentary work. For steadfast work he needs good eyesight and nerves. And a disciplined behavior coupled with the team spirit is a lovable quality. Educated though, a sub's willingness to learn never ceases. There is no last word in journalism. The person who performs the job of editing in the news room in the true

sense of the term is sub-editor. The functioning in a daily newspaper revolves around him/her. In view of the nature of his/her job, he/she is silent but expectedly the most efficient and alert worker in a daily.

The significant position of sub-editor has been described by many known/unknown scholars and editors in various ways. To look at their expressions:

- Sub-editor is 'backbone of a newspaper'
- Sub-editor is called 'surgeon of news'
- Sub-editor is 'unknown soldier'
- Sub-editor is a 'creative artist' (Mr. R.D. Bloomfield of Daily Express, Britain.)
- Sub-editor is a 'brave person, who is always remembered' (Rolland E. Woolsey.)
- Sub-editor is an 'unsung hero'. (Stanley Walker)

### **Qualities of a sub-editor**

(1) **Command over language:** a sub-editor must have a good command over the language in which he/she is working. He/she must not only be able to express his/her views in an easy and communicable language but also turn the diffused, roundabout and grammatical incorrect language of others into direct, simple and lucid wording without changing its meaning.

(2) **Self-confidence:** a sub-editor must possess enough self-confidence to perform the job he/she has been assigned. He/she would not hesitate in changing, correcting or improving bad copies.

(3) **Decision-making:** a good sub-editor must be a good decision-maker. He/she is required to make selection of news and on occasions even at the eleventh hour. He/she also takes decision regarding the positioning of news stories on different pages.

(4) **Restrain:** a sub-editor must be mature enough to shoulder the responsibility of editing. He must show restraint while handling sensitive issue.

**Role & Responsibility of a sub-editor**

- (1) The sub-editor, apart from the chief sub's initial screening, takes a deeper look into the news story, evaluates it from many angles, international, national, regional and local.
- (2) The sub has also to see if the news he/she is editing is part of a bigger story that is appearing in the newspaper. He/she must edit it so as to fit into bigger framework.
- (3) The most important thing in the editing is organizing the structure of the story.
- (4) The sub-editor is always conscious of the policies and philosophy of his/her newspaper.
- (5) Editing involves a deep knowledge of the language in which the paper is published, of palaces, personalities and politics of the area of publication and a hundred other sundry things. A sub has to know nearly everyone and everything.



**Check Your Progress:**

1.1 Explain in detail editorial structure of news organization? (Answer Key 1.4.1)

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1.2 Describe the functions of various editors in editorial department?  
(Answer Key 1.7)

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1.3 What are the qualities of a good sub-editor? (Answer Key 1.7)

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## **UNIT – II: FUNCTIONING OF NEWS DESK, INTEGRATED NEWS ROOM**

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### **2.0 UNIT STRUCTURE**

- 2.1 Learning Objective
- 2.2 Introduction
- 2.3 Aspects that are checked by desk with regard to copies
- 2.4 Shift and Edition
- 2.5 Integrated News Room
- 2.6 News Room Set-up
- 2.7 News Room Functions
- 2.8 Modern News Room
- 2.9 Newsroom in Electronic Media
- 2.10 Check Your Progress

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### **2.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVE**

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The objective of this unit is to understand the functions of news desk and various aspects checked by the editor with regard to copies.

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### **2.2 INTRODUCTION**

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The news desk is a popular term for an editorial department of a newspaper. The origin of the term can be attributed to the fact that after the collection of facts and figures by the reporters the writing, composing, rewriting, correction, subbing and proof reading that is all the vital jobs related to editing are desk jobs. The heaps of news items send by the different news agencies are also gathered for copy selection and copy testing at the desk.



The functioning of the news desk is basically of two types, on one hand its functioning starts from the point the reporting section finishes its job that is once the reporters of the newspaper collect different reports and information and submit them on the desk, they are composed and presented to



the sub-editors for subbing. The copy after being composed goes through sub-editors, chief sub-editor and news editor and sometimes even the editor depending upon its importance. The copies are also sent to the proof reader for spelling corrections..

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## **2.3 THE FOLLOWING ASPECTS ARE CHECKED BY THE DESK WITH REGARDS TO THE COPIES**

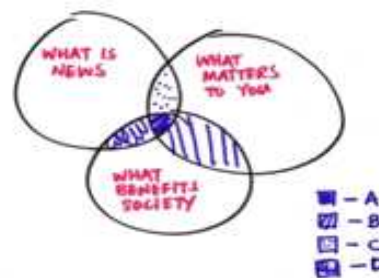
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Let us know the different aspects checked by the desk with regards to the copies

### **2.3.1 NEWS VALUE AND COMPOSITION**

It is extremely important for a report which comes out in the newspaper to be important and relevant to the public and the society.

The desk should ensure that the importance or the news value of the items should be properly reflected in the composition of the report. For this purpose proper headlining and lead is very important.



### **2.3.2 LANGUAGE**

A newspaper is essentially a mass media. It caters to a common man at the same time it should not be obscene or vulgar and should maintain the norms of social acceptance. Therefore, a newspaper should have a language which is easily understandable,

grammatically correct but not cheap. The desk has a vital role to play to maintain the standard of language of a newspaper

### 2.3.3 LEGAL CONSIDERATION

A newspaper is a business entity and also a public entity bound by the law of the land. It has to follow certain rules and regulations in terms of what it can publish and what it cannot. For example, there is a law of sedition which prevents a newspaper to publish anything against national interest.



Then there is official secrets act which prevents the newspaper to divulge any information pertaining to national security. There is also the law of contempt of a court where by a journalist cannot pass a comment on a case which is sub-judice. These are the legal considerations which are taken care by the desk because the violation of the law in any content published in the newspaper will land it in trouble.

### 2.3.4 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Since a newspaper is a fourth estate of democracy it has the moral responsibility of being ethical in its own behavior and practice. The ethics are directly related to the prevailing social norms and the newspaper should be sensitive about it just for the sake of cheap popularity or sale it cannot resort to populist measures like publishing vulgar and erotic photographs, baseless speculative stories or spreading rumors or sensationalizing an issue beyond truth. It should be fair and objective. The desk acts as the internal check for the ethical violation by the newspaper.



Apart from the above post reporting activities the desk also has certain routine activities like-

**Page layout and designing-** the pages of the daily newspapers, weekly supplements and magazines are setup according to their frequency in the desk using page designing software. The news items are placed in the different pages already earmarked on the basis of their importance. The photos are also edited and designed.

**Copy tasting and copy selections-** everyday huge numbers of news, features, photographs arrives at the desk from the different news agencies, features indicates and photo agencies to which the newspapers subscribes. The work of the desk is to read these copies, measure there news values and select the relatively important items for publishing in the newspaper. This process is known as copy tasting and copy selection.

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## 2.4 SHIFT AND EDITION

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The news desk in Indian press works in three shifts. One shift runs for seven hours, including an hour of recess, though the night shift is for shorter duration. Generally the morning shift starts around 9 and continuous till finish. The afternoon desk usually is manned by more sub-editors than in the morning or night shift. The bulk of news stories come within this 3pm – 9pm period, requiring a good many hands to cope with the flow. Each desk person gets a day off in a week and a day’s recess extra after the night week.



The system is different in Britain where one desk shift works, either during the day or at night, and brings out one newspaper. The day shift publishes the evening while the night shift produces the morning. These are two separate shifts, each supervised by one chief sub. The chiefs are independent of each other, being separately responsible for bringing out editions for their papers. The morning has several editions, so has the evening.

But in India three shifts together are responsible for editionising. The editions of Indian dailies are called 'dak' or 'muffasil' editions. 'Dak' issues circulate in outlying regions or faraway states while 'muffasil' issues move into distant rural areas. The edition meant for circulation in and around the place of publication is known as 'town' or 'city' or 'late city' edition. We have to read the newspapers today tend to be one-edition papers and not multi-edition papers in the past. This is a new development and has been due to

- a publication of a number of newspapers in different neighboring state capitals as also in various towns in hinterland areas;
- b ever rising cost of newsprint and other inputs;
- c higher charges for transport of editions to 'dak' and 'muffasil' areas; and
- d more emphasis on local news coverage's and intensive circulation. These factors signal an attitudinal change that puts a brake on peripheral extension of business. It is now the accountant's decision to keep the circulation within limits.

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## **2.5 INTEGRATED NEWS ROOM**

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News room is the most important section or unit in the editorial department of a newspaper. It is, in fact, a place essential to all news organizations be at a newspaper, radio news channel or TV news channel. It is the central point of all news related activities, reporting as well as editing.

News room is a place where news report pour in from different sources-newspapers own reporters and correspondents, news agencies and other sources. These reports are sorted, compiled, selected, edited and prepared for end use. The end use differs in different media. In newspapers news reports are prepared for placement on different pages, in radio and TV reports are produced as per requirement of various news bulletins. News room is regarded as the custodian of the newspaper policy. It is here that the news items are screened and processed on the basis of their relevance to the papers policy. News selection and news testing is a difficult job which demands lot of news sense on the part of the editing staff.

**Integrated News room**

General news desk	sports news desk	business news desk	international news desk	district news desk	local news desk
Chief	chief	chief	chief	chief	chief
Sub-editor	sub-editor	sub-editor	sub-editor	sub-editor	sub-editor
Senior sub-editor	senior sub-editor	senior sub-editor	senior sub-editor	senior sub-editor	senior sub-editor
sub-editor	sub-editor	sub-editor	sub-editor	sub-editor	sub-editor
trainee	trainee	trainee	trainee	trainee	trainee
sub-editor	sub-editor	sub-editor	sub-editor	sub-editor	sub-editor

**2.6. NEWS ROOM SET-UP**

News room is the backbone of a news organization. It remains functional for most of the time in a day. In a newspaper, news room working starts at around 9 a.m. and it is over around 2 a.m. In radio and T.V. news channels, news room remains functional round-the-clock as lights are never switched off.



The head of the news room is the news editor and under him/her are deputy news editors. Below them are the chief sub-editors called slot men in the USA, and at the bottom of the news room hierarchy are the sub-editors, known as copy editors or rim men.

News room comprises several separate desks for general news, local news, sports news, business news etc. every newspaper differs in the number and the functioning of its desks. Generally, sports and commerce desks are separate. Some newspapers also have separate local and district desks. English newspaper even have international desk.

The size of the desk depends on the size of the newspaper in general and the number of pages in that particular section. In a newspaper that carries four pages on sports, there should be five to six persons on the sports desk-one chief sub, two senior subs and two to three sub-editors. If the number of sport pages is only two, there is no need of having more than three persons on the sports desk. A desk is responsible for the selection of news items from the bulk of stories received from news agencies and own correspondents. The selected items are then edited, headlined and placed on the page as per the layout. The editorial staff on the desk is responsible for the layout and makeup of the pages under them. It must be noted that work on a desk does not actually start with the selection of stories. The chief sub-editor in-charge of the desk has also to think from where and how to acquire news stories. News agencies, no doubt, are the major supplier of news to a newspaper but that might not serve the purpose on a particular desk. For this reason, every newspaper tries to develop its own networking of reporting.

It may be reminded that the newspaper gets news reports from the following:

- (a) News bureau in the national capital
- (b) News bureau in the state capital
- (c) City reporting room at the place of publication
- (d) Reporting offices/bureaus at the district head quarters
- (e) Stringers at the cities/towns
- (f) Correspondents abroad

While the general news desk depends on all the above sources, international desk depends on the correspondents abroad in addition to news bureau. District news channel solely depends on the reporting offices/bureaus in the district or on the stringers. Local news desk depends on the city reporting room for getting stories to be placed on the local pages. Sports and business news desks hardly depend on the above mentioned sources. In most of the newspapers correspondents with relevant specialization (sports or business) are posted on the desk itself. Thus, correspondents

form a team with chief sub-editor, senior sub and sub on a desk. While local sports events or business activities are covered by the correspondents, other national or international stories are taken from the news agencies. For photo coverage, the entire desk depends on the staff photographers at the newspaper. Some photographers can also be sent by bureaus or district offices. However, one major source of photographers is the photo service of the news agencies.

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## **2.7 NEWS ROOM FUNCTIONS**

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News room is the centre of activities in a newspaper organization. Newsroom activities are determined by the activities outside (happenings in the country and abroad) as well as inside (the pressure of work and that of deadlines). All the time news reports are received or acquired, received reports are collected and compiled, sorted and distributed, tested and valued, selected or rejected, and selected reports are edited and headlined to be finally placed on the pages.

News room functions are diverse and their handling and demands lot of foresight and efficiency on the part of the editorial staff. News room operations have changed a lot over the years mainly due to advancement of technology. In the conventional newsroom, mainly manual functions have been involved whereas in a modern news room the working is totally computerized.

Here we shall firstly discuss the functions of a conventional news room and thereafter try to understand the changes brought about by technological innovations in the modern news room

### **2.7.1. CONVENTIONAL NEWS ROOM-FUNCTIONS**

News room functions can be broadly divided under six heads:

- (a) Receiving/acquiring news reports
- (b) Selection of news reports
- (c) Editing and headlining of selected items
- (d) Composing of edited news items
- (e) Proof-reading of composed matter
- (f) Lay outing and page-making/pasting



**2.7.2 RECEIVING/ACQUIRING NEWS REPORT**

News reports are received in a newspaper through two sources- news agencies and newspapers through two sources-news agencies and newspapers own correspondents. Normally, a daily subscribes to the services of both the domestic news agencies-press trust of india(PTI) and the united news of India (UNI) so as to get an extensive coverage and reduce the risk of missing the stories. Hindi newspapers can subscribe to Hindi services of these agencies-BHASA(PTI) and VARTA(UNI), and language newspapers subscribe to language services of these agencies subject to availability.

Newspapers in India are not allowed to subscribe to the services of foreign news agencies directly and so they have to depend on PTI and UTI. These domestic agencies collaborate with foreign news agencies- Reuters, Associated press(AP), United Press International(UPI), AFP etc., for the exchange of important newsworthy news items. Most of the newspapers are satisfied with the international news reports provided by PTI and UNI with the help of their collaboration with foreign agencies. However, big newspapers depute their correspondents at important locations in the world for getting some exclusive coverage.

PTI and UNI have their special services as well and newspapers are free to avail those services. For instances, UNI has a financial service UNIFIN which is of great use to newspapers giving more importance to business coverage. Agency services are also categorized depending on the area(national, international, sports, business etc.) covered and the extent or quality of coverage. For instance hindi newspaper with no page on international news can choose a category where less number of international news are provided, and a English newspaper having two pages on international news can opt for a category where more and varied news items are supplied. It may be noted that news agencies quote different rate for different category of services.

Beside these agencies, newspapers own correspondents are also a big source of news. A newspaper needs to have its own fleet of correspondents for two reasons, one to ensure originality and exclusivity in its printing, two to make sure an extensive coverage of areas where the newspaper is largely circulated. The correspondent, reports and stringers are posted in bureau, city reporting room, and all such cities, towns, villages which fall under the circulation area of the newspaper. There are some



other sources like the PROs of public and private sector organizations. On many occasions even the common people could be an important source. The major source of news emanates from teleprinters installed by the news agencies either in the newsroom is flooded with hundreds of agency copies every hour.

The news reports of correspondents also inundate the news room. The correspondents send their reports in three ways:

(A) The reporters posted at the newspaper office/place of publication file their stories after typing on the typewriters installed in the news room or the city reporting room. These stories are directly submitted in the newsroom by the reporters concerned.

(B) The teleprinters are installed at the bureaus and other reporting units of the newspaper at outside locations. The correspondents posted at bureaus/units send their copies through these printers and the copies are received at the teleprinters installed at the newspaper headquarter.

(C) The outstation correspondents posted at locations where no teleprinters have been installed can send their stories through telegrams. The post and telegraph department provides a special service for this purpose. The newspaper concerned has to apply to the telegraph department for availing this service following which the department will issue a telegraphic authority in favour of the correspondent.

A correspondent equipped with a telegraphic authority can send a news item from any telegraph office on a priority basis without any payment. The payment is subsidized and is made by the newspaper to the telegraph department on an annual basis. Thus, the news item is received in the newspaper office in the form of a telegram. No doubt the correspondents need to keep such stories short. These stories may take some time in researching the newsroom.

All the news items land on the table of the news editor who is in-charge of the newsroom. Some newspapers have a system where the news items are first reaching the table of the chief sub-editor in-charge of the general desk who will subsequently send the important news items to the news editor for his/her perusal and necessary instructions. In some other newspapers, the deputy news editor may be first handling the news items.

Though the newsroom is at the receiving end, it is not a passive section or unit. If the news editor or the chief sub-editor in-charge on a particular desk does not feel satisfied with whatever reports have been received, he or she can always give necessary instructions to the correspondents concerned for filling revised or new stories. The news editor is authorized and responsible for arranging or acquiring stories which he/she feels must be there.

### **2.7.3 SECTION OF NEWS REPORTS**

Hundreds of news stories are received in the news room of a newspaper every day. The agency news items received through teleprinters are normally taken out from the machine and collected by some class IV employee posted in the newsroom. He/she tears the pages /takes from the paper roll installed in the teleprinter and will submit all the copies to the sub-editor in-charge of the general desk. The chief sub-editor will arrange the copies by putting the related takes together and arranging or keeping all the copies in proper order.

The chief sub-editor in-charge of the general desk also does the job by sorting. He/she has five or six baskets on his/her table and during sorting will keep the sports items in the sports basket, business items in the business basket and so on. The concerned news items sports, business etc., are submitted to the respective desks. The most important news items of the day-national, international, sports, business etc., are submitted to the news editor who will then decide the treatment to be given to those items.

The news value of each and every news item needs to be ascertained. The job is performed by the chief sub-editor in-charges of different desks under the supervision and instructions of the news editor. The in-charge and general desk will evaluate the national and international items particularly those which could be displayed on the front page and the continued page, the in charge of the sports desk will decide the news value of the sports items and the in charge of the business desk will weigh the news items on the business desk. However, the news value must be ascertained in close coordination with the news editor. The chief subs must consult the news editor and seek his/her guidance at all levels. The news editor is also supposed to give necessary instructions to chief subs with regarding to testing the news value of news items are

either selected or rejected. The news editor plays a key role in the selection of news items. Besides news value, the other factor which plays an important role in the selection of news items include the editorial policy of the newspaper and the space availability on the concerned page/pages.

#### **2.7.4 EDITING OF SELECTED ITEMS**

Selected stories are edited on specific desks by the editorial staff posted there. The chief sub-editor in-charge either edits the copy himself/herself or assigns the editing job to his/her fellow senior sub-editor or sub-editor. Mostly editing is done in a coordinated manner where the chief sub is editing some copies and getting other copies edited by his/her junior colleagues.

#### **2.7.5 COMPOSING OF EDITED NEWS ITEMS**

The edited stories are sent to the composing room for composing. Composing room is a place where news items are typeset by the compositors in the format used in that newspaper. A few decades ago, typesetting was being done manually with the help of metal types. The hand setting was replaced by mechanical devices of monotype and linotype. In huge monotype and linotype machines, the hot metal was being cast to give shape to letters.

#### **2.7.6 PROOF-READING OF COMPOSED MATTERS**

In the proof-reading section, the proof-readers read the typed matter on the printout and mark the desirable corrections. The main job of the proof-reader is to detect the mistakes committed by the DTP operator during typing, and for this he/she has to tally the typed matter with the original copy.

#### **2.7.7 LAYOUTING AND PAGE-MAKING/PASTING**

The proof-read copy is sent back to the composing room/DTP room for corrections. After carrying out necessary corrections, the DTP operator will again take a printout which is then sent to the concerned desk.

If so warranted, the chief sub-editor in-charge of the desk will show the final printout to the news coordinator who may further show it to the editor. However, for routine stories this is not done.

## **2.8 MODERN NEWS ROOM**

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The introduction of computer has changed the shape and working of news room. All manual operations have become mechanical which has brought substantial improvement in its functioning. The working has become smooth and fast and a quality change is noticed at every stage in the news room. The modern news room is paperless as no hard copies are used. Right from receiving news reporters to selection and editing of copies, everything is done on the computer. Since no hard copies are used, the question of composing of news items does not arise. No composing means no proof-reading. And when there are no hard copies, the pasting of page cannot take place. It is not even required as pages can be made on computer itself. Computer with internet has brought 'on-line' working to the modern news room. Now, no teleprinters are required for sending or receiving news reports neither between the bureau and the newsroom nor between a news agency and the news room. Within the news room also, no copies are to be given or taken either between the news editor and the chief sub-editor or between the chief sub and the sub-editor.

Here is an attempt to understand the working of modern news room in comparison to conventional news room.

### **2.8.1 RECEIVING NEWS REPORTS**

Today no underground cables are laid between the news agency office and the news room of a newspaper, since no teleprinters need to be installed. At present, news agencies make their services available directly on the internet and sitting in the news room you can always get an access to news reports if your newspaper has subscribed to the agency service.

There correspondents posted abroad or those in the bureau can send their reports to the news room you can always get an access to news reports if your newspaper has subscribed to the agency service. The correspondents posted abroad or those in the bureau can send their reports to the news room with the help of the net. The reporters sitting in the city reporting room also file their reports directly on the computer terminal from where the reports can be picked by the local news desk for editing.

### **2.8.2 SECTION OF NEWS REPORTS**

The classification of news items is taken up by the news agencies themselves and hence the task becomes easy in the news room. The sub-editors on a desk need not bother where to find news of their requirements. It is too easy to select the news items for the kitty of news agencies. The selected items are marked and downloaded to the file of the concerned desk. If this job is being done by the sub-editor, the chief-sub can easily monitor and supervise it.

### **2.8.3 EDITING OF SELECTED ITEMS**

Editing of selected items is done on-line in a modern news room. This means that editing takes place on the computer terminal itself and there is no need of taking a printout and thereafter editing the copy by pen. Editing is convenient on the computer as errors can easily be detected and spell check is available to the help of the sub-editor. The edited copy is headlined by the sub-editor concerned. Composing and proof-reading of news items. No composing of news items takes place in a modern news room as already a soft copy is available. This has made the composing room or the DTP section redundant in the news room. Since, no composing is taking place, proof-reading becomes out of question. Thus, proof-reading becomes out of question. Thus, proof reading section has been done away in a modern news room.

### **2.8.4 LAYOUTING AND PAGE-MAKING**

The computer terminals installed in the modern news room are equipped with DTP software which could help in layouting and page-making. Earlier, the news papers were using the page-maker software but most of the newspapers now switched over to quark express. Thus, the sub-editor today can easily manage not only with the layouting but page-making as well.

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## **2.9. NEWSROOM IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA**

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Broadcast newsrooms are very similar to newspaper newsrooms. The two major differences are that these newsrooms include small rooms to edit video or audio and that they also exist next to the radio or television studio. The modern newsroom has gone through several changes in the last 50 years, with computers replacing typewriters and the Internet replacing Teletype terminals. More ethnic minority groups as well as

women are working as reporters and editors, including many managerial positions. Many newspapers have internet editions, and at some, reporters are required to meet tighter deadlines to have their stories posted on the newspaper website, even before the print edition is printed and circulated. However, some things haven't changed; many reporters still use paper reporter's notebooks and the telephone to gather information, although the computer has become another essential tool for reporting.



### **Check Your Progress:**

2.1 Explain the different aspects checked by the desk with regard to copies. (Ans Key 2.3)

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2.2 What are the functions of conventional news room? (Ans Key 2.7)

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2.3 Explain the working of modern news room. (Answer Key 2.8)

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## **UNIT – III: NEWS FLOW & EDITING: ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF GATEKEEPER**

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### **3.0 UNIT STRUCTURE**

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- 3.1 Learning Objectives
  - 3.2 Introduction
  - 3.3 Theoretical Framework of Gatekeeping
  - 3.4 Concept
  - 3.5 Reasons of Gatekeeping
  - 3.6 Levels of Media Gatekeeping
  - 3.7 Key Gatekeepers in a news organization
  - 3.8 Conclusion
  - 3.9 Check Your Progress
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### **3.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVE**

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The objective of this unit is to make aware of the role of gatekeepers in the news organization. Here in this particular chapter you will read about concept of gatekeeping and reasons for gatekeeping. Furthermore, this unit deals with the levels of media gatekeeping.

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### **3.2 INTRODUCTION**

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Today the world has become a global village due to the phenomenon known as globalization. The geographical boundaries and the distant between the countries have ceased. Today sitting in our drawing rooms or travelling in a bus we are getting the information of the latest happenings and updates in our mobile phones due to the advancement of science and technology. Journalism has benefited greatly from modern technology specially in terms of communicating. Information in digital form from one part of the globe to another. The internet and satellite technology has revolutionized the spread of information and news throughout the world. Today there is no dearth of news for a newspaper or for a channel. Every newspapers subscribes to national and

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international news agencies which feed them with a continuous and regular supply of news and photographs. There are also features indicates, photo agencies which supply news materials for the newspapers. Everyday heaps of news gathers in a newspaper house. This is a situation where the newspaper has to be very cautious. A newspaper is a responsible public entity whose content are publicly disseminated i.e.; whatever is published in the newspaper is firstly, open for everybody to see and read secondly, people believe in the content of the newspaper and take vital decisions based on the information provided by it. Gatekeeping describes the process by which news stories are filtered by journalists and editors for dispersal in any medium. The process comes into play every time a blogger chooses to feature a story in a website's top position, a news producer decides to cover one issue but not another or a magazine reporter selects a source to interview for an article. The gatekeeping function of journalism has shifted under the changes of the digital information age. While the Internet has forever altered the way we read the news -- increasingly on websites and mobile devices and less in the print publications of the past -- the principles of gatekeeping still apply in many instances.

In a 2006 study published in the "Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly," University of Iowa journalism professor Jane B. Singer wrote that the proliferation of information on the Internet has diminished the power of journalism's gatekeepers, but journalists can still serve a role in sorting, interpreting and lending credibility to news on behalf of the public. Journalists choose which stories to cover and which to leave behind by attempting to determine the overall newsworthiness of an issue. A 2012 "Journal of Politics" study noted that a number of factors go into this decision-making process, including the interests and needs of the audience. The study also pointed to news content trends that value sensational and unusual stories, along with those that focus on conflict or geographically local issues. Describing the evolving role of journalists, Steve Buttry, digital transformation editor for Digital First Media, argued that journalists no longer function as the primary gatekeepers of news because the proverbial gates have been blown wide open by the proliferation of digital information. However, Buttry said journalists still hold the keys to critical roles as watchdogs over those in power, as investigators and as truth seekers. An article published in 2011 in the journal of "Contemporary Readings in Law & Social Justice" reinforced the importance of seeking



facts in contemporary journalism. In a society where information -- and misinformation -- is so easily distributed, journalists can provide a service as fact-checkers who hold stories up to the light of objectivity. Legitimate news stories tend to rely on straightforward reports and steer away from assumptions and judgments, according to research by George Lazaroiu, the journal article's author. Where once it was the top newspaper editors or television news producers who primarily influenced the public's news consumption, today information flows like a torrent outside of these mainstream channels. The vetting of authentic sources is another key responsibility of journalists, according to the Center for Journalism Ethics at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. By selecting experts to interview or seeking out the most relevant data, a journalist enhances the quality of a report and upholds the standards of ethical gatekeeping. The alternative -- reporting unverified information from questionable sources -- is commonplace in the digital "Wild West" and fails to rise to the standards of good journalism. In the modern media landscape, some journalists are no longer reporting original material, but rather drawing from outside reports to collect and curate the day's top headlines for re-publication. This process is known as aggregation. A study in the "Journal of Mass Media Ethics" noted that even aggregation entails a gatekeeping function, as certain items are selected for inclusion, while others are excluded.

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### **3.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF GATEKEEPING**

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Let us understand the concept of gatekeeping and gatekeeping model.

#### **3.3.1 ABOUT KURT LEWIN**

Kurt Zadek Lewin(1890-1947), was born in Germany. He was a great psychologist and pioneer in social psychology. He developed the concept in the field of psychology called psychological 'field' and 'life space' in order to understand the human behavior and its important consideration of total life space. His studies are more based on to understand a person's own world, physical, social and mental through frequent conversations through frequent conversation between his pre-memories, desire and his goals. And also his works helps to understand the relationship between attitudes and behavior in the group of individuals. Kurt Lewin coined the word called

‘gatekeeper’. It's nothing but to block unwanted or useless things by using a gate. Here the person who makes a decision called ‘gatekeeper’ at first it is widely used in the field of psychology and later it occupies the field of communication. Now it's one of the essential topics in communication studies.



### **3.3.2 THE GATEKEEPING MODEL**

Kurt Lewin used the term "Gatekeeping" to describe a wife or mother as the person who decides which foods end up on the family's dinner table. The gatekeeper is the person who decides what shall pass through each gate section, of which, in any process, there are several. Although he applied it originally to the food chain, he then added that the gating process can include a news item winding through communication channels in a group. This is the point from which most gatekeeper studies in communication are launched. White (1961) was the person who seized upon Lewin's comments and turned it solidly toward journalism in 1950. In the 1970s McCombs and Shaw took a different direction when they looked at the effects of gatekeepers' decisions. They found the audience learns how much importance to attach to a news item from the emphasis the media place on it. McCombs and Shaw pointed out that the gatekeeping concept is related to the newer concept, agenda-setting. (McCombs et al, 1976). The gatekeeper concept is now 50 years old and has slipped into the language of many disciplines, including gatekeeping in organizations.

### **3.3.3 CORE ASSUMPTIONS AND STATEMENTS**

The gatekeeper decides which information will go forward, and which will not. In other words a gatekeeper in a social system decides which of a certain commodity – materials, goods, and information – may enter the system. Important to realize is that gatekeepers are able to control the public's knowledge of the actual events by letting some stories pass through the system but keeping others out. Gatekeepers can also be seen as institutions or organizations. In a political system there are gatekeepers, individuals or institutions which control access to positions of power and regulate the flow of information and political influence. Gatekeepers exist in many jobs, and their choices hold the potential to color mental pictures that are subsequently created in

people’s understanding of what is happening in the world around them. Media gatekeeping showed that decision making is based on principles of news values, organizational routines, input structure and common sense. Gatekeeping is vital in communication planning and almost all communication planning roles include some aspect of gatekeeping.

The gatekeeper’s choices are a complex web of influences, preferences, motives and common values. Gatekeeping is inevitable and in some circumstances it can be useful. Gatekeeping can also be dangerous, since it can lead to an abuse of power by deciding what information to discard and what to let pass. Nevertheless, gatekeeping is often a routine, guided by some set of standard questions.

### 3.3.4 CONCEPTUAL MODEL



Source: White (1964)

This theory is related to the mass media and organizations. In the mass media the focus is on the organizational structure of newsrooms and events. Gatekeeping is also an important in organizations, since employees and management are using ways of influence.

**Example:** A wire service editor decides alone what news audiences will receive from another continent. The idea is that if the gatekeeper’s selections are biased, the readers’ understanding will therefore be a little biased.

## 3.4 CONCEPT

The gatekeeper decides what information should move to group or individual and what information should not. Here the gate keeper are the decision makers who letting the whole social system. The gatekeeper is having its own influence like social, cultural, ethical and political based on personal or social influences they let the information to the group. Through this process the unwanted, sensible and controversial information’s are removed by the gatekeeper who helps to control the society or a group and letting

them in a right path. In home mother plays a vital role and she has to decide what their kids needs and should avoid.

In news medium editor plays vital role. He has to decide what kind of news items will publish and what should not. Every day the news channel receives various news items from all over the world. The channel has its own ethics and policies through this the editor decides the news items for published or aired. In some cases few news items are rejected by the editor due the organizations policy or the news items which are not suitable for publish. An international news channel receives numbers of news items within day like international terror issues, UN discussions, Texas bull fighting and religious abuse on international community. A news channel can't show all those news items to audience because it may affect the channel reputation in public and organizational policy. Here, editor decides the news items especially he can't show the Texas bull fighting because it is not internationally popular story. But the same time the news channel can't show the religious abuse also because it may hurt audience directly and it may affect organizations policy also. But international terror issues and UN discussions are universal common news that won't affect the channel reputation in public and organizations policy

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### **3.5 REASONS OF GATE KEEPING**

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Gate keeping is very important function of media, the channels and news papers have their own ethics and policies through this the editor decide the news items for publish or aired. Gate keeping occurs at all levels of the media structure, from a reporter deciding which sources are chosen to include in a story to editors deciding which stories are printed or covered, and includes media outlet owners and even advertisers. Individuals can also act as gatekeepers, deciding what information to include in an e-mail or in a blog. There are a lot of reasons of Gate keeping in several societies of the world, this process helps in protecting ideology, norms, culture and dignity of any nation.

#### **3.5.1 A LARGE AMOUNT OF NEWS**

Every news medium has a very large number of stories brought to its attention daily by reporters, wire services, and a variety of other sources.

**3.5.2 LIMITED AMOUNT OF TIME OR SPACE**

Due to different practical concerns, only a limited amount of time or space is available in any medium. The remaining space must be devoted to advertising and other content. Today, all over the world, it is fact that every second of the electronic media and every line of print media are sold for their survival, many times a reporter has to cover everything in one minute story in T.V and few line news for newspapers or magazine. Then copy editor has to edit every explanation of the news because of shorter of time and space.

**3.5.3 CRITERIA FOR JUDGING PARTICULAR NEWS**

There always exists a new perspective within any organization that includes a complex set of criteria for judging a particular news story. This perspective is based on economic needs, organizational policy, newsworthiness, conceptions of the audience, and obligations of journalists. Often, it is had to cut out enormous part of the story. Media is also responsible about ethics and norms of society; we can publish or aired a story of rape with girl, but cannot notify the process of rape, have to hide the identity of a particular girl.

**3.5.4 TASTES OF THE AUDIENCE**

Taste of the audience always vary in different societies, the educated people always prefer to see or read the political and social news, laborers are want to see showbiz page and stage dramas, many people are interested in watching movies and dramas, so an editor or director news have to justify its selection according to the gratification of audience, that is way news about crime, showbiz, sports and politics are more popular in media, other stories not get required treatment.

**3.5.5 EVERY TRUTH IS NOT FOR PUBLISH OR AIRED**

Sometimes there comes a very difficult task for a media person, when he has to conceal the truth from masses because of somebody personal identity, national integrity or national interest. It is unofficial advisory by all news organizations not to publish, telecast or broadcast news which could harm the process of dialogue between Government and Militant Groups.

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## **3.6 LEVELS OF MEDIA GATE KEEPING**

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The gatekeeper's choices are a complex web of influences, preferences, motives and common values. Gate keeping is inevitable and in established circumstances it can be useful or dangerous, in this regard some levels should be maintained.

### **3.6.1 INDIVIDUALS**

Decisions are personal; journalist alone selects how the information gets sorted, no one asked him about the source of news, even if he hides some part of the news, even editor cannot do anything against him in this regard.

### **3.6.2 ROUTINE PRACTICES OF COMMUNICATION WORK**

Decisions are made according to a pre-established and generalized set of practices, ethics and policy of organization. Within an environment of media there are many other aspects that affect the gate keeping process.

### **3.6.3 SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS**

Events vary to a degree that they are culturally available as news items. Sponsors, contributors, advertisers and other external forces have a great influence in determining how the information should be organized.

### **3.6.4 SOCIETIES OR IDEOLOGY**

Culture, social values, political and pressure groups and ethnicity always, influenced selection criteria of news in media. News with least interest and importance could not get space or time. For example, media hardly publishes, broadcasts or telecasts news about sex, nudity, factiousness, and ethnicity. Some institutions are respected, some are sacred cow. In recent years news against judiciary and armed forces oare reported with utmost care. The individual journalist forces like values and ideology also influence the news reporting.

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## **3.7 KEY GATEKEEPERS IN A NEWS ORGANISATION**

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In Print Media First of All an individual is a gate keeper, than source, Assignment editor, reports or correspondents, sub editors, news editors and at last editor worked

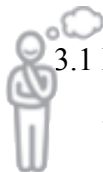
as gatekeeper. In Electronic media Same Pattern follow with a little bit changing, there is also an individual perform as a gatekeeper, than source, Assignment desk, reports or correspondents, copy editors, news editors, Producers, shift in charge, controller news, and at last Director news worked as gatekeeper. On every level every gate keeper not only follow the Policy of organization but also tend to impose his own agenda, by letting some news to go or not included in news paper and news bulletin.

### **3.8 CONCLUSION**

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Gate keeping is the vanilla ice cream of mass communication theories. It may not be Everyone’s favorite, but nearly everyone can tolerate it. And while it may have an unremarkable flavor, it serves as a building block for other theory and methodological approaches. Media gate keeping showed that decision making is based on principles of news values, organizational routines, input structure and common sense. Gate keeping is vital in communication planning. It is can also be dangerous, since it can lead to an abuse of power by deciding what information to discard and what to let pass. Nevertheless, gate keeping is often a routine, guided by some set of standard questions. The gatekeeper’s choices are a complex web of influences, preferences, motives and common values. Gate keeping is inevitable and in some circumstances it can be useful. The expansion to the internet has very much expanded the views regarding the gate keeping process, since any person or organization can publish anything in the way they see fit.

### **Check Your Progress:**



3.1 Explain the concept of gatekeeping and gatekeeper in media? (Answer Key 3.2, 3.4)

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3.2 What are the reasons of gatekeeping ? (Answer Key 3.5)

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3.3 Describe the levels of media gatekeeping? (Answer Key 3.6)

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## **UNIT – IV: SOURCES OF NEWS**

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### **4.0 UNIT STRUCTURE**

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- 4.1 Learning Objectives
- 4.2 Introduction
- 4.3 Categories of News Sources
- 4.4 Primary Sources
- 4.5 Written Sources
- 4.6 Secondary Sources
- 4.7 Tips off
- 4.8 Attribution
- 4.9 Using assumed names
- 4.10 Conclusion
- 4.11 Check Your Progress

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### **4.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

The objective of this unit is to give an analytical study of categories of news sources. Further the chapter deals with the primary, written, and secondary sources. It also gives an understanding how to use sources.

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### **4.2 INTRODUCTION**

The editorial department of a newspaper receives news through a variety of sources and channels.

- (1) From local sources through the newspapers own reporters, who gather news from regular beats, flesh it out with background from news papers library and do most of the writing in newspapers office under the direction of the news editor or the chief reporter.

(2) From national and foreign sources through the wire services and syndicates such as the Press Trust of India (PTI) and the United News of India (UNI). In addition, commercial syndicate provides many of the features and columns used. Some of the material is received by wire and except for copy



reading, is ready for publication. A local story needs no dateline, although some papers use it. Some paper reserve the right to combine stories from various services to which they subscribe. In these cases, the story also carries a byline, saying, “compiled from news agencies”

(3) From state and regional sources through correspondents. Much of this material is written and ready for publication, although many chief sub-editors in charge of ‘stale news’ page either rewrite the stories or heavily edit them. Occasionally a correspondent simply dictates his notes to a state desk reporter who will write the story. Such stories often have “special to the (news of newspaper)” preceding or in the dateline. In addition, some reporters gather stories by telephone from news sources such as police and city officials in communities in newspapers circulation area.



(4) From various individuals and organizations, such as chambers of commerce; public information officer of various social and educational organization; public relations agencies through the mail, by telephone or during personal visits. Most of this material is rewritten by the city staff under the direction of the city editor.



Indian Chamber of Commerce

## **4.3 CATEGORIES OF NEWS SOURCES**

For the coverage of any event, incident or happening, a reporter has to bank on his/her sources. These sources can broadly be divided into two categories:

### **4.3.1 EXTERNAL/IDENTIFIED/SCHEDULED SOURCES**

In this category, all such sources can be included which are available and accessible to a reporter.

The reporters mostly cover public meetings, functions, seminars, lectures, or any other similar kind of programme. These are scheduled programmes where the date, time, venue, agenda, or topic of discussions, occasion, everything is pre decided.

The organizers of any such organizations are supposed to inform the reporters with a request of coverage. The reporters can ask for more details from the organizers, else they can try to collect information from their own sources, i.e., library, reference sections etc. Press conference and press briefings are also regular sources of news. These are scheduled events and the hosts will always approach the reporters for attending them. Not only the date and venue are conveyed to reporters, the hosts also provide logistic support to them, so as to ensure proper coverage.

### **4.3.2 INTERNAL CONFIDENTIAL SOURCES/PERSONAL CONTACTS**

These are the sources developed by the reporter on his/her own. They are termed as contacts of a reporter. Any reporter would have a variety of reliable and highly placed contacts. These contacts are sources of exclusive information for the reporters. These are the exclusive sources who act in close confidence with the reporter. This could be even in the form of some payments which undoubtedly cannot stand on the moral ground on the personal ethics.

However, most of the confidential sources are good people who join hands with the reporter for some good cause. An insider can decide to act as a confidential source for some reporter and this has to be his/her well thought of decision. But in many cases, the concerned people might not be aware of the fact that they are being used by source by some reporter.

**Role of source**

A source can make an off-record statement-

- (a) For wooing the reporter, winning his/her confidence and building a strong relationship with him/her, or
- (b) For saving his/her skin from any possible fall-out of the publication of the information, or
- (c) For maligning the image of any of his opponents without himself/herself coming into light.

**Role of reporter**

If the reporter has agreed not to quote the sources or not to publish the information given by him/her.

- (a) He/she can decide to honor his words because if he/she violates the assurance, he/she loses potential or actual source of information, or
- (b) He/she can ask his/her source as to why he/she chooses to speak only off-the-record, and if she/he is not convinced with the explanation, he/she can make his/her own judgment on the issues involved such as public good; and subsequently can decide to publish the information, or
- (c) He/she can ask his/her source to allow him/her to be quoted. And if he/she may look for another source who agrees to be quoted on the same subject.

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**4.4 PRIMARY SOURCES**

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Often the source is someone at the centre of the story. These are the primary sources. It might be a man who fell from a building and tell the tale; or a union leader who is leading a strike. These are the best sources of information about their part in the story. They can give you accurate details and also supply stories. The fall survivor might say: "I saw the ground from above. 'So this is death'." The union leader might say: "With our hands, we are ready to supply it."



Of course, just because a person was present at an event does not mean that they are either accurate or fair. The fall survivor may have injured his head after landing and so be confused. The union leader will want to present his side in the best light. It is vital to double-check and cross-check facts with other sources.

A word of warning here: If any of your sources, however reliable, gives you information which is defamatory, you can still be taken to court for using it. You are responsible for deciding whether or not to publish the defamatory material.

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## **4.5 WRITTEN SOURCES**

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Not all primary sources will be spoken. Written reports can make an excellent source of information for a journalist. They are usually written after a lot of research by the authors; they have been checked for accuracy and are usually published with official approval. However, just because information is printed, that does not mean that it is reliable. With typewriters, computers and modern technology,



it is relatively easy to produce printed material. You must look at who has produced the document. Are they in a position to know enough about the topic and have access to the reliable facts? Do they have a reputation for reliability?

This is especially important with information on the Internet. Anyone can put information onto the Internet and unless you know how trustworthy they are you cannot judge the reliability of what they write. One advantage of the Internet is that you can quickly cross-check numerous sources, but beware: a mistake on one site can easily and rapidly be repeated by people writing on other sites. Even major online references such as Wikipedia rely on volunteers writing the entries and checking their accuracy and there have been numerous cases of people using entries in Wikipedia and other online reference works to spread untruths.

In many countries, official transcripts of the proceedings of a court or parliament have some legal protection from actions for defamation.

### **Leaked documents**

You may occasionally be given documents which have not been officially released to the press. They may be given to you by someone in a company or government department who does not want to be seen giving them to the media. We call these leaked documents.

Documents are often leaked by people who believe that the public should know the contents (such as an environmental report), but who are unable to reveal it in public themselves, perhaps because they do not have the authority to do so. In some cases, documents are leaked by a person to gain an advantage over someone else, perhaps someone who is criticised in the report. Leaked documents are often excellent sources of news stories because they can contain information which someone wants to keep secret. This might be a plan to do something which the public might oppose, such as bulldozing homes to make a new road. It might be a report on corruption within an organisation which the heads of that organisation do not want to be publicly known. Just because a government, company or other group does not want information to be known, that does not mean that you should not report it. If you believe that it is important to inform your readers or listeners of certain facts, you must do that, even if the information was given to you unofficially. Of course, like any information, leaked documents must still be checked for accuracy before they can be used.

There are also legal dangers to consider when using leaked documents. They might, for instance, have been stolen. It is usually an offence to receive stolen property if you think it could have been stolen, even if it is only a few sheets of paper. As we explain in the chapters on investigative reporting, photocopying the document then returning it is often a way to overcome this problem. Leaked documents could also be covered by copyright, so you could be breaking the law by quoting directly from them. You are on safer ground in reporting the substance of what was said, in your own words.

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## **4.6 SECONDARY SOURCES**

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Secondary sources are those people who do not make the news, but who pass it on. The official police report of an incident or comments by someone's press officer can be called secondary sources. Secondary sources are not usually as reliable as primary

sources. Most eyewitnesses should be treated as secondary sources for journalists because, although they are able to tell what they think they have seen, they are often not trained for such work and can be very inaccurate, without meaning to be.



You have to assess the reliability of secondary sources and if necessary tell where the information came from.

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## **4.7 TIP-OFFS**

Occasionally someone will call with a story tip-off but refuse to give their name. These are said to be anonymous (meaning "no name"). These are the most dangerous sources of information and should only be used with extreme caution. Although anonymous tip-offs can provide good story ideas, they must never be used without a lot of checking. If they are wrong, you will be held directly responsible unless you have checked what they said with other more reliable sources.

Often people who ring up with a tip-off will tell you their name if asked, but on the promise that you do not reveal their name to anyone else. You must still cross-check what they say because, of course, you cannot quote them as your source if there is any dispute about accuracy, for example if you are taken to court for defamation.

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## **4.8 ATTRIBUTION**

Sourcing or attribution means acknowledging the source in the news report. Attribution is necessary in all kinds of news reports except in the case, where the information is common knowledge. When you get information from a source, you normally need to attribute that information to someone. Attribution means to tell your readers or listeners the name and title of the person you interviewed or document you got the information from. You do it, for example, through the verb "to say" or phrase like "according to ..".

There are three levels of attribution, depending on whether your source is happy about being publicly identified or whether they want to keep some secrecy about what they tell you. These three levels (which we will explain in detail) are:

**On the record, which means you, can use both their words and their name;**



**Non-attributable, which means you can use the information, but not the source's name;**

**Off the record, which means you cannot use either the information or the source's name.**

All of these terms are only used to describe reporting methods. They should not appear in your finished story. Let us look at these three in detail:

#### **4.8.1 ON THE RECORD**

Most information you are given will be on the record. People will tell you the details openly and allow you to quote their names and titles. The politician making a speech, the witness describing a crash, the police officer reporting an arrest, the company chairman defending an increase in prices, all are usually prepared to be quoted and to



give their names. Even if they are unhappy about the story you are writing (perhaps because it makes them look bad), most people will understand your need to report fairly and accurately what they say.

It is always best to get information on the record. You can remain accurate by using the exact words people say. You can also make the story seem more human by using direct quotes (or by using their voices on radio and television). But most important, people judge what they read or hear by the person who says it. They are much more likely to take notice if the Justice Minister says he believes in capital punishment than if the man who sweeps the street says it. On the record comments have an extra level of understanding for people because they know who is speaking and exactly what was said.

#### **4.8.2 NON-ATTRIBUTABLE**

Sometimes a source will give you information on the understanding that you can use the information but not attribute it to them. Your source may do this for one of several



reasons. Perhaps they are not officially allowed to give you the information, but they think it could be made public. Perhaps they do not want to be in the public eye.

Politicians sometimes give non-attributable details of a plan so that they can find out public reaction to it without any risk. If the public likes the plan, the politician can then go on the record and claim the credit. If the public do not like the plan, the politician can abandon it without losing face because his name was never associated with it anyway. The danger for journalists is that, if the politician does decide to abandon an unpopular plan, you will be left looking like a fool for writing about a story which the politician will then deny ever having considered. Politicians occasionally leak document to the media for similar reasons - to test public opinion on an issue unofficially. If you agree not to use your source's name, there are phrases you can use instead, such as "a spokesperson for...", "a reliable source at..." or "sources within..." These should only be used if you cannot convince the source to go on the record. They are an admission that you cannot tell the whole truth. If your source refuses to go on the record, ask them if they mind some information being used and attributed to them, but leaving the more sensitive information not attributed specifically to them. They may allow their name to be used for certain parts but not for others.

For example, the Police Commissioner may tell you about a forthcoming operation against drug growers, but not wish to be quoted on the details for fear of offending his Home Minister. However, he will be quoted on the problem itself. You might then write the story:

Police in East Island are to launch a major offensive against marijuana growers.

Extra police will be drafted in from today and helicopters will be used to search out drug plantations.

Sources within the Police Department say this is the biggest operation of its kind ever mounted on the island.

Police Commissioner says drug abuse is a serious menace to the stability of the nation and the lives of young people.

You should try to avoid making any agreement to accept non-attributable information unless it is unavoidable. Your job as a journalist is to pass on news as accurately as

possible. Unattributed stories will not seem as accurate to your audience as stories where information is attributed.

### **4.8.3 OFF THE RECORD**

You will occasionally be given information on the understanding that it is totally off the record. Although you will have to ask your source exactly what they mean by such a phrase, it usually means that you should not even write about what they tell you. And you must certainly not use their name. People usually give information off the record



when they want you to understand the background to something which is too sensitive for them to talk publicly about. For example, you might get a tip-off of a major police operation planned for the next day against the hide-out of a criminal gang. You ask the police chief for more information, but he will obviously not want you to publish anything which might warn the gang. On the other hand, he might not want to say "no comment" because you might start asking questions somewhere else. So he might say he will tell you off the record, on condition that you do not tell anyone else. Because he is asking you a favour - that is to keep secret something you already know a little bit about - you should expect a favour in return. If you agree not to publish details of the story before the raid, ask him whether, as a sign of goodwill on his part, he will allow you to accompany the police on the raid. You will then beat all your competitors to the story of the raid itself and have a scoop.

One thing to remember about any request to treat information off the record is that it is only a request. You can agree or disagree. If a person says they will only speak to you off the record, you must decide how important their information is - and whether you can get it from somewhere else. If you cannot, perhaps you can agree to their conditions. In any case, you should bargain with them to give it on the record or at least non-attributed. If a person gives you an interview and only tells you at the end that it was all off the record, argue that they should have said so earlier and not wasted your time. You are in a strong position because you now know what it is they want to keep a secret.

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## 4.9 USING ASSUMED NAMES

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You occasionally have to protect a source's identity by giving them an assumed name. This arises most often when you are writing about the victims of some kind of abuse, usually in feature articles or documentaries. These people may not mind you telling their story, but they do not want other people to know exactly who they are. Children especially should be protected, although you can use assumed names for anyone with a good reason to have their identity kept secret, such as alcoholics, drug addicts or battered wives.

It is usual in such cases to give the person assumed name, for example "Tony" or "Juanita", and no surname. You must, of course, tell your readers or listeners that this is not the person's real name, but is being used to protect them. If you use a picture them, make sure they are not recognizable in it. If you use their voice, it is common practice in radio and television to electronically change it so it cannot be recognized.

You may also have to disguise other facts of the story if there is a chance that these will lead people to identify the person. This should only be done after careful consideration and with the approval of your editor. As a journalist, you can always decline to accept information from a source unless they agree to be identified. However, once you have made the promise not to identify them, you must never break your word. If you do, people will never talk to you again. This introduces us to the idea of confidentiality, one of the most important areas of journalism ethics.

### 4.9.1 WHAT IS CONFIDENTIALITY?

The words "confidence" and "confidentiality" are based on the Latin word for trust. When you are given information in confidence, this usually means that you promise that you will not tell anyone else where you got it from. Your confidential informant trusts you to keep their identity secret. Agreeing to accept non-attributable information is the most common example of confidentiality.



People usually ask for confidentiality because they are afraid of other people finding out they gave you information. There are all sorts of reasons why they need confidentiality:

- They might fear that their bosses will punish them for giving the information.
- They might be afraid of what other people think about them if certain information is shown to have come from them.
- They might be in a position of power but limited by rules about what they can say officially.

Confidentiality of sources is central to the ethics of journalism. As a journalist, you rely on people telling you things. Sometimes those people do not want their identity revealed to others. Although it is always better to be able to quote someone by name, in certain circumstances you have to quote what your source says without revealing away their identity. If you name a source who has given you information in confidence, you betray their trust. They will probably never give you confidential information again. But more importantly, anyone who knows that you cannot be trusted will probably refuse to give you information in confidence. If people mistrust you, they might carry that mistrust to all journalists. Any journalist who betrays a trust weakens the whole of the profession.

It is important too that you do not give away any clues to the identity of a source who has asked to remain anonymous. This means taking extra care in phrasing the way you describe how your information was obtained. It can also mean leaving out newsworthy pieces of information which would identify the source.

For example, the Prime Minister's secretary may have given you secret information in confidence or off the record. If you write the story attributing the details to "sources on the Prime Minister's personal staff", you risk exposing your source, especially if there are only one or two people on the Prime Minister's personal staff. It might be better to attribute it to "sources in the Prime Minister's department" if it is a big department, or even "Government sources" if you feel that will protect your source better. Of course, your readers or listeners will judge the value of information by how close the source of it is to the event or to the people making decisions. You need to balance the need to show that your sources are close to the centre of the information (and therefore reliable) against the need to protect the identity of a confidential source. In some cases, your

editor will ask who your confidential source is. Editors often want to know so that they can assess how reliable the information is. After all, they too can be sued or sent to jail for what is published or broadcast. You must get approval from your source before you reveal their name even to your editor. Once you do so, your editor must guard that confidentiality as strongly as you do. This promise of confidentiality is particularly hard to keep in cases where the law may demand that you reveal your sources. In many countries, courts, tribunals, parliamentary committees and royal commissions can order you to reveal your sources of information if they think that this will help them in the administration of justice. If you fail to obey their order you may be fined or imprisoned (or both) for contempt. In some cases, journalists have been jailed for lengthy terms, to be released only when they purge their contempt by revealing the information first demanded by the court. It is more common for journalists to be released from their promise of confidentiality when the source himself comes forward to give his identity.

It is the legal opinion in many countries that journalists have no special protection under law. Lawyers, priests and doctors are often protected by law in their dealings with their clients, parishioners or patients - journalists are not. The journalist's position is extremely unpleasant in cases where confidence comes in conflict with the law. On the one hand you will be accused of obstructing the law by refusing to name your sources. On the other, you will betray one of the central ethics of journalism if you reveal the name of someone who spoke to you in strictest confidence (even though they may be criminals). Although journalists are always encouraged to work within the law, confidentiality is one situation in which you may have to defy the law for a greater good. Revealing a confidential source may assist the law in prosecuting one case, but you must defend a system of confidentiality which encourages the exposure of many future cases. Journalists are bound by the law; but they believe it is in the best interests of society to have a way in which injustice, abuse and corruption can be made public. It is not in society's best interests to have only one channel (the legal system) through which wrongdoing can be brought to light. The legal system itself has flaws, so there must be other methods of correcting wrongs; journalism can be one of those ways. You must not see confidentiality only as protecting one source of information; it is also protecting freedom of speech. Once you have given your word to a source that you will protect their confidentiality, you must stick to that promise all the way, even if that

takes you to prison. Unless the source agrees, you cannot tell the police, the judge, your editor or even your mother.

So if you do not feel that you can go to jail to protect a confidential source, do not give your promise to them in the first place. Tell them at the start of any interviews that you will reveal their names if ordered by a court. They will probably then refuse to give you any more information.

#### **4.9.2 POLICE REQUESTS FOR MEDIA PICTURES**

It is worth mentioning finally that you may have to defy the law to protect someone who did not even ask for confidentiality. This can happen in particular circumstance when you have evidence such as photographs or video footage which the police need in order to prosecute a case. The most usual example of this is when you take pictures of a mass event such as a protest meeting or demonstration. The police may ask you to give them your pictures because they want to see who was in the crowd. Perhaps they want to prosecute some people but need your pictures to identify them.

You may seem no harm in handing over such pictures, but your action could have a bad effect on the whole of journalism within your society. If people believe that you could be acting for the police in any way, even after the event, they might try to stop you recording the event as a journalist. They might ban you from it or prevent you taking pictures, perhaps by force. Unlike the police, you will have very little protection against such actions. You will not be able to do your job properly. More important, they might ban or attack any journalist they see taking pictures. If they know that you have handed pictures over to the police before, they might distrust all journalists. Again, the profession as a whole will have been harmed.

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### **4.10 RECENT TRENDS IN SOURCE OF NEWS**

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Following are the recent trends in source of news

#### **4.10.1 CHEQUE BOOK JOURNALISM**

Information has become extremely important in today's age where there are so many competing news organizations and each one is looking to hit an exclusive news on every item. The rat race for readership or TRP does not let a reporter rest in peace.

He has to work under tremendous pressure of his higher authorities to bring exclusive and new information regarding issues by any means. Ethical consideration is not at all a consideration. Sometimes people who know the information are not ready to dispense with it. If it is vital then the reporter gets it in lieu of money. And this phenomenon is internationally known as Cheque book Journalism.

#### **4.10.2 EAVESDROPPING**

A final word on eavesdropping - the obtaining of information without the consent or knowledge of the people communicating it. Good journalist should always keep their eyes and ears open for story ideas, even if this occasionally means listening to someone else's conversation on the bus or in an office. If you do this by accident, people may complain, but they cannot usually prosecute you. However, if you do it deliberately, such as opening private mail or bugging a telephone call, you will probably be breaking the law.

The problem arises most often in broadcast journalism, when reporters try to record someone without their knowledge. Journalism codes of ethics usually state that you must tell people who you are and who you work for before doing any interviews for broadcast. Further, in many countries the law itself states that you must ask the person being interviewed if you can use the recording on air. If you believe that you may have obtained information by illegal means, you must be especially careful how you use it. A prosecution will not only mean trouble for you and your organisation - it will often distract people's attention from the main issue for which you got the information in the first place. However, there are many occasions when a good journalist can get confidential information without the need to obtain someone's agreement or break the law.

One enterprising journalism student regularly used to search through waste paper bins next to the university's photocopying machines. He knew that secretaries often threw away poor quality copies of important documents they had photocopied. The photocopies were rubbish to the staff who threw them away, but for the journalism student they were the source of many good stories for the university newspaper.

## Check Your Progress:



4.1 State the difference between external and internal sources of newsgathering?  
(Answer Key 4.3.1, 4.3.2)

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4.2 What is Attribution ? What are the levels of Attribution? (Answer Key 4.8)

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4.3 Explain the term 'Confidentiality'. (Answer Key 4.9.1)

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## **UNIT – V: MANAGING THE NEWS**

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### **5.0 UNIT STRUCTURE**

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- 5.1 Learning Objectives
- 5.2 Introduction
- 5.3 Managing of News-Internal Practice of News Room
- 5.4 Processing of Managing News
- 5.5 The concept of 'Good' & 'Bad' News
- 5.6 Different Types of Managing of News
- 5.7 Conclusion
- 5.7 Check Your Progress

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### **5.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

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This unit has been presented with an objective to make the learner aware, of how to manage the news. Further this chapter deals what are the processes of managing news. It also makes learner aware about different types of managing news

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### **5.2 INTRODUCTION**

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Managing the news refers to acts that are intended to influence the presentation of information within the news media. The expression managing the news is often used in a negative sense. For example, people or organizations that wish to lessen the publicity concerning bad news may choose to release the information late on a Friday, giving journalists less time to pursue the story. Staying "on message" is a technique intended to limit questions and attention to a narrow scope favourable to the subject.

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## 5.3 MANAGING NEWS-INTERNAL PRACTICES OF NEWS ROOM

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A newsroom is a place where vital decisions have to be taken regarding the content of a newspaper or a TV channel. As we know and have discussed in the earlier units of this block, the newsroom is a place where a team of editorial personnel, collectively known as the desk, work under the leadership of the News Editor. They constantly monitor and design the content to be presented before the readers and the viewers. Every day, every moment thousands of news items are flowing in to the desk via the wire through the different subscribed agencies, staff correspondents and other sources. With the arrival of each news item the newsroom has to take some vital decisions regarding the item. In fact there are a number of decisions which have to be taken and this decision making process starts from the arrival of the news. The importance and the relevance of the news items play the crucial role in the decision making process. In fact the decisions are all about acceptance of news, preparation of its content its dissemination and follow up the newsroom and the desk play an important role in this procedure which is termed as managing the news.

The connotation of the word “managing” rises from the fact that the news items which arrive have a problematic angle to it that is on publication it will lead to complications but at the same time the media house cannot ignore it due to sheer importance and relevance.

The following are the considerations or the steps for managing news in the newsroom:

- 1 **Importance of the news:** Every news has to possess certain quality importance or relevance in order to become a news first. In other words it has to be qualified enough to find a place in the media. It should either possess the qualities of proximity, celebrity, public interest etc to become news. The more it will be important the more there will be the need for it to be managed. If it is a positive or good news it will be managed in one way if it is a bad news it will be managed in a different way.
- 2 **Impact:** what is the impact of this news in terms of socio economic, in terms of cultural and political? How many lives it is affecting? Who are the categories

of the people whom it is affecting? Is it the common masses, the middle class the elites the businessman, the politicians? These are some questions which decide the course of news management at the desk/newsroom.

- 3 **Interest:** the media has to calculate whose interest does the news serve when it is published? It also has to calculate whether the interest of that particular side /people/party is in sync with the medias own interest. Here the medias own interest implies to popularity in terms of TRP, readership etc. the editorial policy is an important determinant here.

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## **5.4 PROCESS OF MANAGING NEWS**

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- 1 **Selective Dissemination of Information:** in case the news is bad and controversial and is not comprehensive that is without the concrete evidence but has to be broken on air for exclusivity it is not broken fully. Instead only a part of it is aired so that there is a scope for correction later on if the news is proved to be inaccurate.
- 2 **Clever Use of Language:** in case the news is explosive and inflammatory it is recomposed in such a way so that in is mellowed down or it is spiced up in case it is not very attractive. In case the news is regarding sensitive issues like war, national security, scandal or involving important people words are exercised with caution so that it do not become unethical, seditious or defamatory. Thus language is a great tool of news management.
- 3 **Visuals and Special Effects:** in order to manage news visuals and special effects are used to support the statement of the house. This also acts us the pillars and convinces people about the truth of the information. Sometimes lack of information is supplemented to it through visuals
- 4 **Bytes and Quotes:** a huge no. of testimonials in the form of bytes of people related to incidents directly or indirectly and expert comments from people considered to be experts on the subject are added to the coverage in order to facilitate presentation of news in desired way. Nowadays every media house have their own panel of experts who are well aware of what the house expect from them and although this experts are supposed to be neutral opinion makers

they actually toe the line of the house echo the voice of the house and basically become the toes of managing the news.

- 5 Subtle Changes: it happens that the course of an incident changes and with it the entire implication also changes as a result the public perception of the incident also changes within a very short span of time and people start feeling very differently about the same incident. Then the media house also has to take a U-turn and change its angle of presentation. In anticipation of change it keeps a lot of scope and makes subtle changes so that it is not at all difficult to toe the public line within a very short time. Managing of news provide a news organization with this flexibility specially for volatile and controversial issues where the media fails to take a firm stand and it does not take long for the situation to change.

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## **5.5 THE CONCEPT OF ‘GOOD’ & ‘BAD’ NEWS**

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Good news refers to the news which will prove favourable for the organization, will project a positive image of the organization, its people and its products & services in public eye. The connotation of ‘Bad’ is negative and keeps an organization busy in formulating strategies to handle it. In spite of the presence of truth and facts in the Bad news, it is perceived to be a threat to reputation and the organization now a day's believe in making efforts to control, manipulate, change, edit or restrict-whatever may be possible by its strategy and the entire process is known as *Managing the News*.

### **5.5.1 ORGANISATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY BEHIND MANAGING NEWS**

When institutional or individual embarrassment, hubris or ego get in the way of the honest and candid delivery of bad news, the same dangerous behaviors are inevitably repeated. First comes *denial*. “Problem? What problem?” Then delay. “If we wait long enough, this will just go away.” Sometimes, reluctant messengers go way beyond making excuses or blaming others and cross the moral line into deceit. In other words, they flat-out lie, as in “We did nothing wrong” or “Our tires did not fail” or “I was not privy to those decisions.”

We call this progression of *Deny – Delay – Deceive* the “Death Strategy.” Employ the Death Strategy and you’ll kill your company’s or organization’s reputation by destroying the public’s trust.

Legendary practitioners of the Death Strategy include Enron and Arthur Andersen, whose last trip took them both to the Graveyard of Lost Companies. Ford and Bridgestone / Firestone provided a memorable demonstration of it during the Explorer rollover / exploding tires fiasco. Together over a period of several years, they sent more than ten billion dollars up in smoke by way of lost sales, lost market share, whopping legal fees and settlements, government-ordered recalls, punishing fines, and most entertainingly, travel expenses for their execs' 2001 trip to Washington so they could be dragged before Congress for some public humiliation.

More recently, both Toyota and BP field-tested the Death Strategy for our instructional benefit, further illustrating its ill effects on businesses deploying it. With the exception of fighter pilots and Grand Prix racing drivers, few human beings possess the inherent ability to make good decisions rapidly while under great stress. This explains why bad news and crisis responses are so often mishandled. And it also explains why so much advice peddled by “crisis experts” proves useless (or worse, dangerous). They ignore the basic human factor: delivering bad news is a tough, nasty, unpleasant, unrewarding task. In an emotional state of dread, at a time when individuals are likely to be under the worst stress they'll encounter in their careers, it's impossible for anyone to communicate properly without training, preparation and practice.

Interestingly, many otherwise competent public relations people in Corporate Sector prove to be as uncomfortable and inept with bad news as ordinary civilians. People who—by their training and very nature—tend to believe that all organizational communication must be unrelentingly positive viscerally recoil at the negativity of bad news. As a result, they lack the battlefield skills necessary to be effective communicators when the bullets start flying.

Remember the definition of an organizational crisis: *any situation that both disrupts normal operations and simultaneously threatens the organization's reputation.* Conventional crisis PR wisdom historically identified six categories of risk events capable of triggering business or organizational crises:

1. Operating or business failures
2. Legal or ethical problems

3. Individual misconduct or wrongdoing
4. Political problems or issues
5. Environmental problems or issues
6. Safety and security issues

These six types of crisis triggers correlate closely to the core news topics or “beats” of the traditional news media, which also relate directly to the perceived role of journalists as “public protectors” in the event of any danger. Viewed in that light, the six triggers described above make perfect sense. However, they also date to the time when television, radio and newspaper newsrooms dictated the daily news cycle. In recent years, a seventh set of potential crisis triggers emerged. Classified as “smoldering crises” and thought to be merely early warnings, such things as sudden drops in sales; a plummeting share price; an employee exodus; a partnership breakup; a buzzing grapevine or rumor mill; or speculation about possible lawsuits or government investigations all suggested trouble might be coming. In the good old days when these things were just early warnings, wise managements would take action to prevent a full-blown crisis from exploding.

At present it’s a new game where even hints of bad news—things that used to be mere indicators—are now increasingly capable of triggering a full-blown crisis all by themselves. In other words, crises can begin much earlier, and on much shakier causal foundations than ever before. Something as small as a particle of bad news, no matter how incomplete or underdeveloped can morph instantly into big trouble for any company or organization. What’s worse for crisis managers is that these “bad news”-triggered crises are proving to be more difficult to manage and can potentially do greater damage than a crisis based on a concrete real-world happening.

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## **5.6 DIFFERENT TYPES OF MANAGING NEWS**

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News is ‘managed’ by different kinds of institutions under different kind of circumstances in order to achieve a desired goal. Basically, news management is a tool of a means to an end. Broadly in the history of news and journalism such cases may be classified into the following categories:-

**5.6.1 NEWS MANAGED BY THE STATE**

The state machinery has in different times and in different countries has acted as an instrument of oppression and coercion. People involved in the state administration and the rulers, their dictatorial nature have let to several instances of Human Rights Violation oppression, torture and mass killings. There have been political murders also. The media as the mirror of the society, as the watch dog has reacted to this kind of oppression and performed its duties as a voice of protest of the common people against all powerful states. However, the state with all its might has tried to resist the media to prevent it from bringing the truth to the light. In authoritarian regimes it was done with force, by closing down the newspaper or by hanging the editor. In democratic countries it is done in a more clever fashion by managing the news through bribe, rewards or threats. The content of the news is manipulated in such a way that the allegations against the state are hushed up or mellowed down, edited or censored in a very clever way so that the state is not blamed of its blacked deeds. This whole act of news managing is done with such precision that people do not even get to know that the news has been managed.

**5.6.2 POLITICAL NEWS MANAGEMENT**

The political parties which are operating in a country have different ideologies and different working styles, different agendas and are always at conflict with each other. Every political party tries to use the media to gain advantage over the rival party. For that they constantly pressurize the editors and journalist to highlight and glorify their leaders and their political activities. At the same time they give equal importance to the maligning and downplaying of their opposition political parties by the same media. Sometimes there are tricky issues controversial incidents and statements and they insist the media to toe their line angle so that they gain advantage over other political parties. This news management has become one of the major functions of every political party so they have to maintain a media cell and some very efficient spokespersons and media savvy leaders who constantly appear before the media and lesion with the media trying to influence them. This news management goes to a extreme height during the elections. Recently a reputed national newspaper was accused to have expected money from a political party for canvassing their candidates and ideology during an election. This phenomenon came to be known as ‘paid news’.

### **5.6.3 NEWS MANAGED BY CORPORATE**

The corporate sector is believed to be the most powerful force which is running the country. They are extremely powerful due to their financial abilities and money can make or break. It is a huge challenge for media to stand on its ground in face of this monetary provocation by the corporate sector. The corporate has an aim to maximize their profit. They are always at a conflict with the law of the land, with the government, the employees, share holders, the public and various other stakeholders. They too want the media to act in their favour, to act as a tool of publicity and serve the purpose of their profit maximization. They do not want the media to highlight anything negative which may put them or their image or their products in negative light. It is imperative that they have nexus with a section of government police administration which is not always holy. The way they conduct their business may always not be moral. Therefore, in order to prevent a negative image and promote positive image and also to malign their opponents. They manage news by bribing a section of media. Since these corporate have a great tie up with the political parties and the governments there news management often transcend the barrier of corporate news management to political and state news management.

Thus, we can see that news is managed at every influential level of the society and media is extremely vulnerable to this kind of management.

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An example cited by the Communication, Cultural and Media Studies InfoBase regards a February 1996 Scott Report on arms sales to Iraq. In the United Kingdom, the report was given early to certain officials.

## **5.7 CONCLUSION**

Managing of news was essentially developed as a tool of editing for the fact that in many cases the media does not receive the complete information at one go. Even if it receives, it is not fully confirmed or backed up with objectivity. In order to tackle the element of uncertainty in a series of events this particular managing tool was developed. But, with the increasing commercialization of media it itself got corrupted. There was pressure on media from the influential sectors like corporate and political forces. Media has started to make it a habit of managing the news as per the desire of the influential.



Presently it has become a convention and is often used to suit the media's commercial purpose rather than editorial purpose. As long as the purpose is editorial there is nothing wrong in managing news but as soon it becomes commercial news is managed, manipulated and crosses the thin line of ethics.

**Check Your Progress:**



5.1 What is 'Managing the News'? Describe the steps for managing news in the newsroom. (Answer Key 5.2, 5.3)

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5.2 Discuss the different types of managing the news. (Answer Key 5.6)

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5.3 Describe the process of managing the news? (Answer Key 5.4)

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## FURTHER READINGS

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1. Editing Manual-Sourin Banerjee (Calcutta Journalists Club)
2. Handbook of Journalism & Mass Communication-Virbala Agarwal & V S Gupta(Concept)
3. Mass Communication in India-Keval J Kumar(Jaico)
4. Fundamentals of Reporting & Editing-Dr Ambrish Saxena(Kanishka Publishers)
5. Mass Communication & Journalism in India-D.S.Mehta(Allied)
6. Modern News Editing-Mark D Ludwig & Gene Gilmore(Wiley-Blackwell)
7. News Reporting & Editing-K.M.Shrivastava(Sterling)
8. Effective Editing-Y.C.Halan(Sterling)
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10. Editing Digital Video-Robert M Goodman & Patrick McGrath (McGraw-Hill Education Tab)

## ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

### UNIT - I

**ANS 1.1** The Editorial Department of a news organization is headed by Editor in Chief, who is crucial for the success of the news organization. Editor in chief also works closely with other key figures in the team. The other person whose role is also crucial is an art director, responsible for organization and commission of all the art work that will be included in the publication. Designers design the publication under art director's supervision and according to its instructions. Photo Editor is responsible for the commissioning of the imagery. The Copy Editor ensure quality of text article. Proof Readers check all the text materials for correct grammar and spelling and work closely with a copy editor. Department Editors are responsible for their departments (sections) of the publication.

**ANS 1.2** The Editor is the professional head of the editorial. The editor of a chained publication or multi-edition newspaper is normally designated as Editor-in-chief or Chief Editor. Editor-in-chief is responsible for all the editorial matter published in various editions of the newspaper. He/she takes decisions on policy matters and issues necessary guidelines for the editorial working.

Group editor is a designation which we rarely find in newspapers and magazines. There are media houses which have more than and publications-news interest as well as non news from one or more than one places and they decide to make an eminent journalist editorial head of all publications.

Leader writer is a person who regularly writes leaders (editorials). Besides, he/she may also write other kind of articles, reviews, analysis and comments for use on the editorial page as per requirements. Resident editor is a senior editorial person who heads the editorial department in a particular unit of the newspaper. An assistant editor is next to the editor in the hierarchy of the editorial department. He/she is a very senior person who is always ready to take up an assignment given by the editor or the management. Magazine editors' basic job is to take out Sunday magazine of the newspaper.

The news editor is one of the most important persons who plan a daily newspaper. He/she is responsible for a steady and continuous inflow of news in the news room. The functions and responsibilities of a news editor are selection of news stories, managing affairs in news room, monitoring and reporting and Coordination with other departments.

A chief sub is a senior desk executive who uses his news sense to examine all copies that come to the desk, selects a few of them considered newsworthy and distributes them to individual sub-editors for editing. The functions of chief sub-editor are Gate-keeping, Selection of news items, assigning work to subordinates and monitoring and page-making

The sub-editor is the checkpoint ever on his toes checking for errors in copy. He spots all kinds of errors, factual, grammatical, spelling and structural. He finds time to correct them even though he works fast. He also applies his professional skill to, revaluing news.

**ANS 1.3** A sub-editor must have a good command over the language in which he/she is working. He/she must not only be able to express his/her views in an easy and communicable language but also turn the diffused, roundabout and grammatical incorrect language of others into direct, simple and lucid wording without changing its meaning. He/She must possess enough self-confidence to perform the job he/she has been assigned. He/she would not hesitate in changing, correcting or improving bad copies. A good sub-editor must be a good decision-maker. He/she is required to make selection of news and on occasions even at the eleventh hour. He/she also takes decision regarding the positioning of news stories on different pages. He/She must be mature enough to shoulder the responsibility of editing. He must show restraint while handling sensitive issue.

## **UNIT - II**

**ANS 2.1** With regard to copies, the following aspects are checked by the news desk

- ◆ News Value and Its Composition
- ◆ Standard of Language
- ◆ Legal Considerations
- ◆ Ethical & Moral Issues

**ANS 2.2** News room is the centre of activities in a newspaper organization. Important Functions of News Room are

- ◆ Receiving/acquiring news reports
- ◆ Selection of news reports
- ◆ Editing and headlining of selected items
- ◆ Composing of edited news items
- ◆ Proof-reading of composed matter
- ◆ Lay outing and page-making/pasting

**ANS 2.3** Modern news rooms are equipped with Computers that has helped in mechanizing the operation and improving the overall functioning. Right from receiving news reporters to selection and editing of copies, everything is done on the computer. Computer with internet has brought 'on-line' working to the modern news room. Now, no teleprinters are required for sending or receiving news reports neither between the bureau and the newsroom nor between a news agency and the news room. Within the news room also, no copies are to be given or taken either between the news editor and the chief sub-editor or between the chief sub and the sub-editor.

### **UNIT - III**

**ANS 3.1** Gatekeeping describes the process by which news stories are filtered by journalists and editors for dispersal in any medium. The process comes into play every time a blogger chooses to feature a story in a website's top position, a news producer decides to cover one issue but not another or a magazine reporter selects a source to interview for an article.

The gatekeeper decides what information should move to group or individual and what information should not. Here the gate keeper are the decision makers who letting the whole social system. In news medium editor plays vital role. He has to decide what kind of news items will publish and what should not. Every day the news channel receives various news items from all over the world. The channel has its own ethics and policies through this the editor decides the news items for published or aired. In some cases few news items are rejected by the editor due the organizations policy or the news items which are not suitable for publish.

**ANS 3.2** There are a lot of reasons of Gate keeping. This process helps in protecting ideology, norms, culture and dignity of any nation. Most of the news organizations receive very large number of stories, but publication / broadcast of all these stories is also not possible because of limited time and space. There always exists a new perspective within any organization that includes a complex set of criteria for judging a particular news story. Taste of the audience also always varies in different societies. News organization needs to cater according to the taste of audience to maximize its reach. Sometimes is also not possible for a journalist to publish the story because of somebody personal identity, national integrity or national interest.

**ANS 3.3** Gatekeeping can be at Individual level, in which the decisions to publish / air are personal; journalist alone selects how the information gets sorted. It can be in accordance with to a pre-established and generalized set of practices, ethics and policy of organization. Sponsors, contributors, advertisers and other external forces have a great influence in determining how the information should be organized. Culture, social values, political and pressure groups and ethnicity always influence selection criteria of news.

#### **UNIT - IV**

**ANS 4.1** Sources which are available and accessible to a reporter are known as External Sources. Public meetings, functions, seminars, lectures, or any other similar kind of programme are best external sources. These are scheduled programmes where the date, time, venue, agenda, or topic of discussions, occasion, everything is pre decided. Press conference and press briefings are also regular external sources of news.

Internal Sources are the sources developed by the reporter on his/her own. They are termed as contacts of a reporter. Any reporter would have a variety of reliable and highly placed contacts. These contacts are sources of exclusive information for the reporters. These are the exclusive sources who act in close confidence with the reporter.

**ANS 4.2.** Sourcing or attribution means acknowledging the source in the news report. Attribution is necessary in all kinds of news reports except in the case, where the information is common knowledge. Attribution means to tell the readers or listeners the name and title of the person interviewed or document from which information is obtained.

There are three levels of attribution, depending on whether source is happy about being publicly identified or whether they want to keep some secrecy about what they tell. These three levels

- ◆ On the record, which means you, can use both their words and their name;
- ◆ Non-attributable, which means you can use the information, but not the source's name;
- ◆ Off the record, which means you cannot use either the information or the source's name

**ANS 4.3** Confidentiality of sources is central to the ethics of journalism. When information is given in confidence, this usually means that source should not be disclosed. Agreeing to accept non-attributable information is the most common example of confidentiality. People usually ask for confidentiality because they are afraid of other people finding out they gave you information. If source who has given information in confidence is named, they feel betrayed and may never give confidential information again. Any journalist who betrays a trust weakens the whole of the profession.

It is important too that you do not give away any clues to the identity of a source who has asked to remain anonymous. If there is a chance that confidentiality cannot be maintained, no promise should be made to the source.

## **UNIT - V**

**ANS 5.1** The decisions are all about acceptance of news, preparation of its content its dissemination and follow up the newsroom and the desk plays an important role in this procedure which is termed as managing the news. The connotation of the word “managing” rises from the fact that the news items which arrives has a problematic angle to it that is on publication it will lead to complications but at the same time the media house cannot ignore it due to sheer importance and relevance.

The following are the steps for managing news in the newsroom:

1. Importance of the news
2. Impact
3. Interest

**ANS 5.2** News is ‘managed’ by different kinds of institutions under different kind of circumstances in order to achieve a desired goal. Basically, news management is a tool of a means to an end. Management of news can be broadly categorised into three types.

Government sometimes forces the media organisations not to bring the truth to the light. This can also be done by clever means news through bribe, rewards or threats. The content of the news is manipulated in such a way that the allegations against the state are hushed up or mellowed down, edited or censored in a very clever way so that the state is not blamed.

Every political party tries to use the media to gain advantage over the rival party. For that they constantly pressurize the editors and journalist to highlight and glorify their leaders and their political activities. At the same time they give equal importance to the maligning and downplaying of their opposition political parties by the same media. This news management goes to a extreme height during the elections.

The corporate sector too want the media to act in their favour, to act as a tool of publicity and serve the purpose of their profit maximization. They do not want the media to highlight anything negative which may put them or their image or their products in negative light. They manage news by bribing a section of media.

**ANS 5.3**      The news can be managed by selective Dissemination of Information. Only a part of the news is aired so that there is a scope for correction later on if the news is proved to be inaccurate.

If case the news is explosive and inflammatory it is recomposed in such a way so that in is mellowed down or it is spiced up in case it is not very attractive. In case the news is regarding sensitive issues like war, national security, scandal or involving important people words are exercised with caution so that it do not become unethical, seditious or defamatory.

In order to manage news visuals and special effects are used to support the statement of the house. This also acts us the pillars and convinces people about the truth of the information. Bytes and Quotes of people related to incidents directly or indirectly and expert comments from people considered to be experts on the subject are added to the coverage in order to facilitate presentation of news in desired way. Although the experts are supposed to be neutral opinion makers they actually toe the line of the house echo the voice of the house and basically become the toes of managing the news.

It happens that the course of an incident changes and with it the entire implication also changes as a result the public perception of the incident also changes within a very short span of time and people start feeling very differently about the same incident. Then the media house also has to take a U-turn and change its angle of presentation. In anticipation of change it keeps a lot of scope and makes subtle changes so that it is not at all difficult to toe the public line within a very short time.



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**MODEL QUESTIONS**

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**A. Short Questions**

1. What are the two sections of news wings?
2. Who are proof readers?
3. Who are sub-editors?
4. Discuss the qualities of a sub-editor?
5. What is news desk?
6. What is Integrated News Room?
7. What is Gate keeping in media?
8. Who are the gatekeepers in media?
9. What are the written sources of news gathering?
10. What are the primary sources of news gathering?
11. What are the national and foreign sources of news gathering?
12. Describe the term 'Managing the News' ?
13. Discuss the concept of 'Good' and 'Bad' News?

**B. Long Questions**

1. Explain the functions of editor?
2. What are the roles and responsibilities of sub-editor?
3. Explain the functions of modern news room?
4. Explain the functions of news desk?
5. Describe the concept of 'Gate Keeping' and Kurt Lewin's GateKeeping model?
6. State the recent trends in sources of news?
7. Define the term in terms of sources of news: Tips off, Attribution, On the record, Non-Attributable, Off the record
8. Describe the different categories of news sources?
9. What are the different types of managing the news?
10. What are the steps in managing the news?

**Comments**



Comments





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