

UNIT – III

3.0 UNIT STRUCTURE

- 3.1 Objective
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3.1 OBJECTIVES

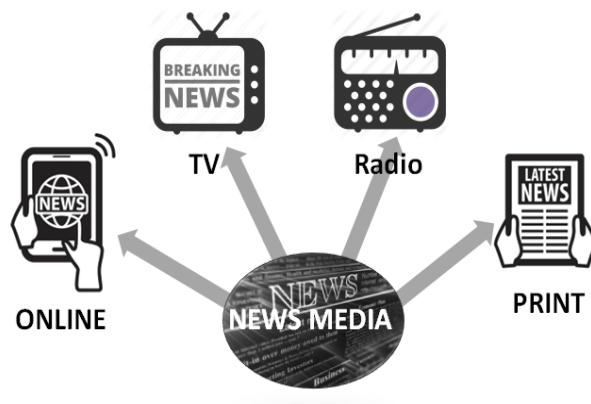
We discussed about the concept of news and news reporting in previous chapters. Though the basic characteristics of news remain same, different type of media platforms influence news reporting in their respective media based on their strength and weaknesses. The objective of this chapter is to understand reporting for various news media platforms.

After end of this unit you will learn about:

- Difference in Different Media Platform,
- Reporting for Print Media News
- Reporting for Radio News
- Reporting for Television News
- Reporting for Web Media

3.2 INTRODUCTION

We use various media platform to find information. With technological advancement, we have more options or channels to get the news. The news media can be broadly divided into five categories: Print (Newspaper/Magazine), Electronic (TV / Radio) and Internet



(Online news portals / websites). Different media deliver us the news differently, though the core information and basic journalistic values remain unchanged. The difference is in use of style and format in packaging and distribution of news.

In this unit we will learn about the difference in news coverage for various media formats like print, Television, Radio and Online media. We will discuss about basics of language and style used in reporting for various media platforms.

3.3 WHY REPORTING FOR VARIOUS MEDIA DIFFER

Same news can be reported in different ways in various media platforms, though they apply the use of the characteristics of news when writing stories. The difference in reporting is not because of the happenstance, but because of the demand of the medium and the target audience. For example, the print media relies more on words and photographs, whereas the television news requires visuals or videos, the radio news is delivered in the form of sound and the online news can present the news using all word, video, audio and photographs. In print news, where space is the concern, a sentence can be about 20-25 words, whereas in broadcast news, where time is a concern, a sentence usually contains 10-15 words. Similarly, People don't read information on the Web in the same way as they read a newspaper or watch television or listen to the radio.

Unique nature of the medium and the way in which it is received by the public demand newspapers, radio, television and online media to adopt different reporting style. For example, we receive a newspaper everyday and it remains unchanged throughout the day. We can reread the story as much as we want. But in case of Television or Radio, the timing is important. The news need to have immediate feel. Reporting must be done on things that are happening now. Each news medium embodies a unique regime of content creation.

The processing of news in our brain is different in case of broadcast media and that in a newspaper / online media. Broadcast media like TV or Radio give only once chance to see/hear and understand the story. If anyone misses the particular visual, in case of TV, or audio, in case of Radio, then the whole news may not be understood. Whereas in case of the newspaper, even online media the reader can linger over a story or go back and re-read if something is not clear.

For a journalist working for TV News or Online media, every minute is deadline because, because news broadcasts could be made at any time of the day. However, for a newspaper reporter the deadline is fixed, since newspapers are printed once a day. This gives more time to the newspaper reporter to write their story and more in-depth reporting. Similarly, the Television has the advantage of showing video and hence required fewer words than print. Websites news reporting can cover text, audio, and video information, all of the ways traditional media are transmitted. Unlike the television or newspaper, the web news portals have more interactive approach by allowing people to personally tailor the news they receive via various tools.

Different media has different approach to influence their respective audience. In television news, the tone of the voice, physical build, gender and dress all influence the audience's perceptions of authenticity and accuracy. Similarly, in radio news the tone of the voice has the influence. People form perceptions immediately based on what they see or hear. But in case of print media and online media, readers are unaware of the physical characteristics of the reporter. (Some online media are giving photograph of the reporter, but not prominently.) Only thing they can know is the gender of the reporter from the by-line. Here the reporting skill and quality of information that counts to influence the audience.

3.4 REPORTING FOR PRINT MEDIA & NEWS AGENCIES

Print media which includes newspapers, magazines and other printed news source is the oldest media form. Although print media readership is declining across the globe, many people still read a newspaper every day or a newsmagazine on a regular basis. The importance of print media is therefore significant. Regular readers of print media are more socio-politically active. Since print media is used by people who can read and write, the print media readers are mostly educated.

Print media gathers, processes, and produces news in a one-way daily delivery. It has fixed frequency of delivery like a newspaper delivered / produced once a day and a magazine is produced / delivered once a week. It has opportunity for geographical selectivity thus covering a particular geographical region intensively. Since people get it physically and have opportunity to reread, print media helps in communicating complex information. On the other hand, print media has the limitation of using sound and motion. Messages in a newspaper compete with each other to draw the readers' attention.

A Newspapers Report is written so that it may be edited from the bottom up. It has the fixed space. So, what doesn't fit is thrown away. The reader scan the headlines on a page, before reading a story. If the headline creates interest, the reader goes to the first paragraph. If that also proves interesting, the reader continues. The readers have the luxury to select the page or news to go through, skipping others in a newspaper.

As discussed in previous unit, the basic structure of a print media report consists of three main elements: Headline, Lead and Body. Hard news does not have any conclusion. The headline has to be very good and appropriate to create readers' interest. Active and meaningful verbs should be used in writing the headline. Articles and helping verbs should be avoided. It is generally written in present tense and future tense as far as possible and in active voice. Certain parts of direct



speech, which are significant enough, can be used in the headline. It is put in single quotes.

The lead or intro is the next important part after headline, in print news. In most hard news stories, the lead contains the most important information and summarises the story. It usually contains the most important of the 5 Ws and 1H. The lead has to be very precise and pin pointed, and the language crisp and easily understandable. Action verbs should be used to give the reader the best picture of what happened. We have discussed various type of lead in the previous unit.

The details of the news story are given in the body of the news. Most of the hard news is written in inverted pyramid style, which we have discussed in the previous chapters. This style is important for both editing and reading. Accordingly, the more important details are in the early part of the news and the less significant details are placed towards the end, in diminishing order of importance. The body of the news is mostly written in present tense in order to emphasize timeliness. When a news stories that speak about events that will take place in the future are, auxiliary verb is used. In stories where the actual time of an event is not known or is not important, the present perfect form of the verb is preferred.

Print journalism edits more than the broadcast. Newspapers edit for clarity, fairness, and accuracy. They also edit to ensure individual house style. The extensive editing process in print journalism allows more time for eloquence and prose. Broadcast and print journalism also differ in structure. Print news stories use an inverted pyramid structure with the most important items (the facts of the story) reported in the first paragraph. Remaining facts are then presented in descending order of importance. Lastly, broadcast and print news stories differ in length and pace. The average print new piece can vary greatly in length, the reader who dictates the pace of reading. Since print media is geographically specific, news from a particular geography gets priority in such media.

However, unlike print media, a news agency does not publish any newspaper of its own. All the news is transmitted to the newspaper and other media outlets. Speed and accuracy is highly important in news reporting for a news agency. For a News Agency Reporter, the deadline is every minute, the reporter has to file the story as soon as important. Though the reporting structure is same as newspaper reporting, all the news items have to be quoted from someone and should be based purely on factual reports. There is hardly any space of comments or interpretation. The report should be precise and to the point. A newspaper can confine to reporting local stories, based on its geographical coverage, but a news agency cannot limit itself to a particular locality.

3.5 REPORTING FOR RADIO

Radio is oldest news medium, after print media and us accessible to wider sections of the society. Even people who cannot read or who are staying remote part of the country can access radio

news. It is available in villages as well as in cities. According to UNESCO It is “the mass medium that reaches the widest audience in the world”.

Compared to newspapers and television, radio is inexpensive to produce and distribute. it is also the easiest form of broadcasting to produce. Anyone with an ability to talk can take part in a radio broadcast. It can transmit on a local level, in regional language, addressing issues of importance to local listeners. It can be interactive using telephone or SMS.

However, the radio newscast is consumed sequentially. Listeners have to wait. Even if, listeners is bored by one part of the newscast, they cannot skip forward to the next segment or news. If they are interested to listen to the fifth story they have to listen the first four stories. it's like eating in a restaurant in which each dish is served in a sequence. One has to eat each course as it is presented. If one does not like a dish, he or she must wait for the next course to be served. So the stories in a radio newscast need to be chosen and made to be interesting to a significant number of listeners.



Similarly, in a radio newscast if a news report is confusing, the listeners cannot rewind and re-read the story as it happens in case of newspapers. They have to comprehend the news at once. They cannot go back. That's why, clarity in both sentence length and word choice is important in radio news reporting.

Radio of course needs reporting that is for the listener's ear, rather than the reader's eye; sentences must be crisp and short. In radio, a complete story is called 'wrap' and its duration varies from 30 second to 90 seconds. It includes of the reporter's narration, also called "track," and often includes sound bites and natural sound, sound that occurs naturally on location. The script contains less information than a print story, so the picture building is very important.

The radio report with audio is an informative bulletin about current affairs and does not includes opinion. The reporter speaks during the report – providing the voice-over. The addition of various pieces of recorded material (known as audio clips, cuts, or sound bites) makes the report more lively, authentic, and interesting. These additional pieces can be statements from interviewees, statements made at press conferences, or other recorded material.

Unlike newspaper readers, radio news listeners are hardly, attentive. Usually, people listen to radio while doing something else. The radio listeners are often driving, working, or engaged in some task other than absorbing the latest news. Hence radio news stories are told in familiar words combined into sentences, which run at comfortable lengths in a conversational style.

Guidelines suggest writing as if telling a story to a friend who is trying to catch a bus that is ready to pull away.

Unlike the readers in a print media, it is often found that the listeners of radio news hear the whole story from beginning to end. Therefore, although it is important to give key information at the beginning of the story, we can spread out facts to keep the listeners interested from the start to the end of the story. Radio news is shorter than newspaper news and hence requires comprehension and filtration of facts while writing the news.

As in case of newspaper, the lead in a radio news introduces the listeners to the broadcast item they are about to hear – whether this is a news report, interview, bulletin, or longer report. It focuses on the essence of the broadcast item to follow, avoiding too many facts and figures. The Radio lead consists of three parts. The “ear catcher” should arouse the interest and curiosity of the listener. Then there is an introduction that broadly addresses the topic that the following report will cover; this part of the lead-in will also connect the radio presenter to the report and the rest of the radio program. There are several approaches one can take to writing the lead-in. It could be written in a news style and stick to the facts. But if the broadcast item to follow is more conversational or casual, then the lead-in can be more creative – for example, it could contain metaphors, examples, comments, questions, or interesting contradictions. The presenter uses basic storytelling principles and can be freer in how they introduce the item. However, the content of the lead-in should always have relevance and appeal for the listeners and it should not double up on any of the information in the actual broadcast item.

The radio news writing style includes the choice of simple words with short declarative sentences, since the listeners have no opportunity to go back and hear it again. Sentences in a radio news story generally contain just one idea and do not contain multiple clauses and internal clauses. Jargons or highly technical words are also avoided. Attribution precedes statements as it does in normal conversation. Sentence structure is incomplete at times, such as sentences without verbs. Understanding is more important than grammar to a radio news reporter. The words should sound natural when read. Complicated figure can be told in simplified way like there will be no harm if a radio news reports like 1995429 as almost twenty lakh.

3.6 REPORTING FOR TV NEWS

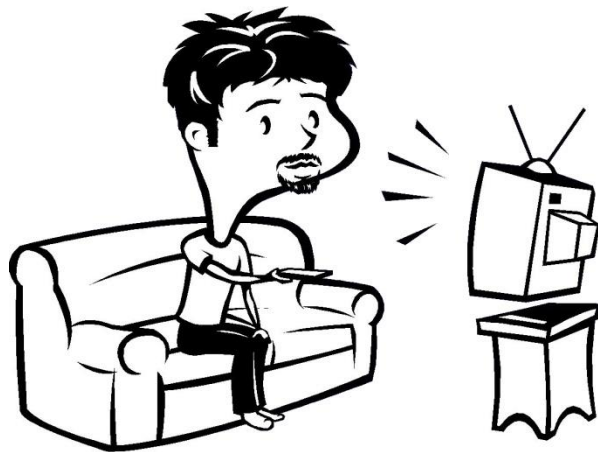
Television uses both audio and video to communicate the message. It is important that the words and pictures match and that they don't give different messages. It is similar to radio news reporting, added with video. Like radio news, television viewer has no control over the pace of reporting. They cannot go back to the story to see or listen it again. As said by former CBS (U.S. TV network) News editor Ed Bliss, “The words are spoken and, once spoken, are irretrievable”.

Lack of editing, in comparison to print media, demands short, sharp, succinct language of a more conversational tone in television news reporting. The format for the story always may not be

inverted pyramid style; important facts are still reported in the first paragraph. It ends decisively and do not trail off as do print news stories. Like Radio, the most of the viewers watch the news till its end. The average television news story is one minute and 30 seconds long. Read at a pace of 180 words per minute these lengths equate to 90 and 270 words respectively for radio and television news stories.

A television report begins with a general, simple sentence signalling the beginning of a story. It consists of reporter's narration or voice over and video, which may include graphics, either static or animated. Each story has a lead or intro, which captures the essence of the broadcast item to follow. The lead contains important information the viewers will need in order to understand the news item to follow. It can come in various shapes and formats depending on the context and content of the news item. A lead-in can be very news oriented, limiting itself to facts. But if the broadcast item to follow is more conversational or casual then the lead-in can be more creative. The reporting follows the basic storytelling principles. The lead may not always include 5 Ws and 1H as it would make it too long and too hard to follow. The two or three most significant points may be selected and used in the lead. Rest can follow the lead.

Sentences in a TV news story should contain just one idea and avoid multiple clauses and internal clauses to make easier for the anchor to read and for the viewer to understand. Shorter sentence are used so it can be read aloud without running out of breath. Reporters for radio and television must be attuned to the sound of the words they use. It is also important to spell correctly for TV news coverage. Misspellings may result in stumbles or mispronunciations on the air. The writing is more conversational than that in print. It is written in the way the audience speak. To maintain a conversational tone, TV news reports don't need to use complete names and titles in news stories. Generally speaking, middle initials are not used on the air unless the initial is an essential part of the name. Attribution can come first. Immediacy is a key feature of television news.



The bites used in television reporting are equivalent to the quotes used by newspaper reporters. This must be carefully selected. It should be clear enough to understand. In addition to sound bites, stories on television can include 'natural' or 'wild' sound, which is captured while reporting a story. Using this sound in telling the story allows listeners or viewers to experience a place or situation for them, instead of the reporter telling them about it.

Video is an essential part of television news reporting. It is combined with words to make the story powerful. The visuals tell the 'what' of the story, whereas the words tell the 'why'. It is

said that 'seeing may be believing but it isn't understanding'. The writing should be synchronised with the video. It is found that viewers understand and remember stories much better when the words and video match. When the video and words do not match, they surely fight each other for the viewer's attention, making it difficult for the viewer to understand the story. Also matching the video and word does not mean that reporters should simply describe what the viewer can see. Instead, the audio track should offer information that adds context and meaning to the picture.

Usually, news for television is written after viewing the unedited video tape. This helps in logically arranging words and visuals. All of the fresh information is given in the words, but it is the pictures that carry the impact for the viewers. For some stories like economy, in which fresh video is not available, file tape and graphics are chosen to explain the story. Numbers can be presented by using graphics such as graphs, pie charts or other visual aids.

3.7 REPORTING FOR WEB MEDIA

The web or online media combines the features print as well as broadcast media, besides having its own attribute. It allows the users to read a news story, examine its sources, and interact in various ways. An online news report can include audio clips from interviews, text of government records, and interactive maps that all can change the way a reader understands a story.

Interactivity is one of the unique features of Online Media. User can give their feedback or choose story to read. Almost all news sites provide space for readers to post their feedback or opinions, which others can also read and respond. Another feature of online media is 'multimedia', a form of presentation that uses audio, video, graphics, or other methods to give users different pieces of a story. Interactivity and multimedia capability is integrated features of the online media and significantly influences the news reporting.



Online media can reach a very wide audience and offer enormous space to for news writing. Like broadcast media, every minute is a deadline for online news reporter. Similarly, unlike newspapers, news published in online media can be rectified or updated instantly. Though like newspapers, online media offers news stories to be read, writing for newspapers and online media is not same. Online news readers not only read the content, they interact with it. Online media is not static or way as print media. It allows the audience to select a video clip or visit a document through hyperlink. It makes the audience active participant.

Also consumption of news in a web portal is not same as that in a print media. In print media, the journalist knows what they've read previously, and what they're going to read next. Details can be given in a logical sequence. But in case of internet news users ignore the details to read content faster. It has been found that most of the users scan the page instead of reading word for word, focusing on headlines, summaries and captions. If the quick scan doesn't show them the information they need, they won't spend time searching for it. Instead of in depth reading they prefer short paragraphs. The longer the text, the less likely Web users are to read it. This is because reading from a computer monitor is 25% slower than reading from print and it eye strain and fatigue.

While reporting for an online media, multiple levels - words, ideas, story structure, design, interactives, audio, video, photos, news judgment – should be considered at once. TV is about showing the news. Print is more about telling and explaining. Online is about showing, telling, demonstrating, and interacting.

The most basic form on a online news story is described as 'print plus'. This means a text story like that in a print media with additional elements like photographs, audio, and video, or hyperlinks to more information. By using hyperlinks, the readers can be taken to additional information on separate web pages, some of which may be provided by sources outside the news organization, with more background or history.

A more innovative approach is to use 'clickable interactives' or multimedia graphics specifically designed to illustrate a story. The graphic elements are laid out in linear fashion, but the reader has the liberty to explore them independently in any order.

Online news writing is a hybrid of both print and broadcast writing. Short and simple style used by broadcast media is suitable for online media. A conversational tone like broadcast media is good but grammar and spelling still matter in online media.

Headlines, subheads, and teasers play a more important role in online news reporting. They should be enticing for the readers to click on the story and read more. They must also contain several key words, or tag words, so that the article can be found by search engines. The first three words of the headline must have information about the content, because users often scan down the left part of a list of items in a web news portal. They never see the last words in a link unless the first few words attract their attention.

The lead of the news should quickly indicate what a story is about. Delayed or anecdotal leads may divert the user to click on another story. Though online media has enormous space, the stories are, usually shorter than newspaper stories. a typical online news story is about 800 words and is given in one page. Using subheads and bullet points helps in online news reporting. The content should be brief and actionable.

Another important aspect of online news reporting is search engine optimization (SEO). SEO refers to a process in which the writer will use specific keywords in a particular order on the page in the hopes that the search engines will ‘pick up’ the article and rank it higher in the search results. Though this limits the flexibility in writing and word choice, it is important in order to achieve the highest amount of readability possible while retaining the overall theme of the article.

3.8 Comparing the Differences

From above discussion, we find that though the basic journalist principles remain unaffected, each medium has its own style of news reporting as per their respective features. With changing media environment and interest of audience each media type is trying to improve and blur the line of distinction. For example, after witnessing fall in circulation, newspaper now have stated using less formal style. Online media is integrated with newspaper or broadcast new reports.

Sl. No	Print Media	Radio	Television	Online
1.	Uses words	Uses words (Sound)	Uses words (Sound) & Pictures (Video)	Used Multimedia (Words, Sounds, Pictures, videos, graphic)
2.	Fixed Deadline	Every minute is deadline	Every minute is deadline	Every minute is deadline
3.	Uses Educated Audience	Can have illiterate audience	Can have illiterate audience	Has educated audience
4.	Mostly follows inverted pyramid style	Gives most important thing first	Gives most important thing first	Gives most important thing first
5.	Gives opportunity for rewind / reread	No opportunity for going back	No opportunity for going back	Gives opportunity for rewind / reread
6.	Constrained by Space	Constrained by Time	Constrained by Time	Constrained by Readers' attention
7.	Can include complex sentences	Uses simple and brief sentences	Uses simple and brief sentences	Uses simple and brief sentences
8.	Readers can choose the story to read	Listeners need to wait for their story	Viewers need to wait for their story	Readers can choose the story to read
9.	Less Interactive	Interactive	Interactive	Very highly interactive
10.	Needs correct grammar and spelling	Understanding of audience is important	Understanding of audience is important	Needs correct grammar and spelling
11.	Uses graphic to explain something	No opportunity for using graphics	opportunity for using graphics	Uses graphic to explain something

Choice of news stories, their length, and the choice of leads is important in all the media type. It is the responsibility of all type of media give people the news they want, and that is relevant to them.



Check Your Progress:

3.1 How different Media Platforms require different style of reporting?

3.2 Why writing for online media is different from print media?
